

Meeting Name:	Resident Priorities Service Improvement Forum (SIF)	
Date of Meeting:	13 September 2022	
Time of Meeting:	10am	
Location:	Zoom	
Present:		
Kevin Farrell (KF)	-	TPAS (Chair)
Eunice Clarkson (EC)	-	Resident
Maureen Kershaw (MK)	-	Resident
Malcolm Goodall (MG)	-	Resident
Hina Gillani (HG)	-	Resident
Jude Thompson (JT)	-	Resident
Jai-Ana Simon (JS)	-	Resident (Observer)
Deborah Pepper (DP)	-	Resident (Observer)
Diane French (DF)	-	Board Observer
Christine Fox (CF)	-	Director of Neighbourly Places
Epiphany Kidd (EK)	-	Senior Manager Neighbourly Places
Jonny Longden (JL)	-	Senior Manager Business Assurance
Sophie Jenkins (SJ)	-	Business Assurance Officer
Lisa Stead (LS)	-	Tenant Engagement Officer
Oliver Jaques (OJ)	-	GEM Tenant Engagement Officer
Natalie Brook (NB)	-	Business Assurance Administrator (Minutes)
Apologies:		
Chris Sharp (CS)	-	Resident
Nicola Sharp (NS)	-	Resident

Actions Arising from this Meeting		
1.	CF to pick up with Senior Manager Income Services to discuss options for communicating information to customers re: rent payment holidays	CF
2.	LS to liaise with Senior Manager Property Services and escalate resident's comments relating to maintenance work at Endecliffe Mews	LS
3.	EK to pick up with JT outside this meeting to discuss specific issues raised	EK
4.	OJ to share further detail with SIF members around the headline Connect Commitments	OJ
5.	JL to pick up with Service Manager – Planned and Estates Maintenance to discuss scope of gardening services and obtain an update for the next SIF meeting	JL
6.	EK to update the incentive proposal and bring to the November SIF for discussion.	EK
7.	SJ to disseminate additional EDI report notes/presentation	SJ
8.	CF to send a note out regarding rent setting policy	CF

9.	EK to circulate information relating to the draft Annual Resident's Report	EK
10.	JL to arrange for the repair line phone message to be changed	JL
11.	EK to circulate the NHF Code of Conduct to SIF members	EK
12.	LS to communicate all outstanding information to SIF members	LS

1. Introductions and Minutes of the June "Resident Report" SIF

KF welcomed JS, DP (residents) and DF (board member) in attendance as observers.

KF announced that Patrick Hardy had resigned as a resident SIF member, and thanked Patrick for his time and contributions over the years. LS confirmed that although Patrick had resigned from SIF, he would continue to be involved in other aspects of tenant engagement.

LS confirmed that HG had formally joined SIF as a resident member.

LS also advised that going forward, two board members shall attend SIF meetings as observers.

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

Actions arising - noted all actions were either completed or on the agenda for discussion, except:

Action 2. CF to follow up with Senior Manager Income Services on customer communication on rent payment holidays and rent statements
 - CF confirmed that the Senior Manager Income Services had spoken directly with EC to discuss the individual query raised at the last meeting. CF also advised that rent statements had now been issued to all residents and that information relating to rent holidays had been published on the Connect website. EC commented that not all residents had access to computers, CF agreed to follow up on other ways of communicating this information, e.g., in Connected and on rent statements. **Action 1**

Action 15. CF to send a note out with updates on the In-Depth Assessment (IDA), cyber incident, post-covid working arrangements and rent statements – action completed, however, CF confirmed that Helen Lennon (Chief Executive) is due to attend the November SIF and will include an update on 'lessons learned' from the cyber incident.

2. SIF away day feedback

LS provided an overview of the SIF away day which took place 21 July 2022. SIF members were asked to review a range of information to identify priorities for

residents. The review established that communication, repairs, and landlord/estate services remain a top priority, along with tenant scrutiny. SIF members felt that the digital involvement of residents, staff turnover and sickness, and Covid recovery plans were no longer priorities, although post-Covid plans were still important and necessary. SIF members are keen to ensure that hybrid working should not impact service delivery or customer service levels.

LS advised that the relevant service managers from Connect will be invited to attend the November SIF to provide an initial response to the priorities identified and provide updates around any long-standing priorities.

In respect of repairs, both MK and JT raised issues around a recent painting and decorating programme at Endecliffe Mews. MK raised the issue of Value for Money (VfM), stating that costs could be kept down by combining roof works with (external) painting. JT commented that there was water damage in communal areas due to roof/gutter damage, resulting in additional decorating costs. Additionally, residents had not been made aware that work was to be carried out. JT also raised health and safety concerns around the use of ladders on a three-storey building. LS referenced Connect's commitment to contact residents prior to work being carried out and agreed to take MK and JT's points away and escalate to the service manager. **Action 2**

In respect of the health and safety concerns, JL confirmed that special extension ladders are used, but that the service manager would address as part of their overall response to the points raised.

SIF members were also asked to use a scoring matrix to select a potential scrutiny review topic, based on the various information they studied. Communication in complaints/expressions of dissatisfaction (EODs) came out top. SIF felt that this would be a great topic given that Connect had recently implemented a new process to capture 'grumbles', on the back of a recommendation from a previous scrutiny review. The scrutiny review is currently in the planning stage, recruitment for panel members will consist of a social media campaign and targeted recruitment sent directly to residents who have expressed an interest in being involved and/or have made a complaint within the last 12 months.

When looking at overall performance, there was a discussion around accountability and strategic links to Board and one of the actions agreed was to look at ways of strengthening the relationship between Board and SIF. DF commented that this was the subject of conversations at Board, and that Board are keen to ensure that all residents' voices are heard and that there is a connection between SIF and Board.

3. Connect's approach to Housing Management

EK provided an overview of the Tenancy Management Paper. The paper outlines contractual and legislative obligations and provides clarity around

tenancy agreements and sub-letting. EK gave a brief overview of Connect's process should they be notified of a potential breach. EK also noted that some residents had mentioned a lack of visibility of the Community Housing Officers (CHOs). EK stated that there was a need to recognise how resources were being used and that currently CHOs were focussing on specific issues or projects such as community development, asset mapping and reports of anti-social behaviour.

MK asked EK to define sub-letting. EK confirmed that a lot of terms are defined by legislation, but in respect of sub-letting, the proviso is that requests must be approved by the respective landlord. In terms of Connect's approach, each sub-letting request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If following investigations, Connect became aware that the property was not the resident's principal home, then a notice to quit could be issued.

JT raised a specific issue. EK to pick up with JT out of this meeting to discuss the issues raised. **Action 3**

4. Review of Connect Commitments

OJ gave a presentation on the review of the Connect Commitments and advised that CF would feed back any thoughts or comments from SIF members to the Leadership Team.

Following consultation through surveys and workshops three headline commitments were identified:

- Repairs and Maintenance
- Value for Money
- Planned Work

In addition to confirming the three headline commitments, OJ gave an outline of the project so far, how the Tenant Engagement Team had recruited to both phases of the review, and how resident feedback was collated and will be used to create a new set of meaningful commitments.

OJ also touched on the success of the review so far in attracting newly involved residents to other involvement activities, such as JS to SIF (one of the meeting's resident observers). The presentation concluded with the next steps for the project.

CF noted it would be helpful if detail around the three commitments could be shared. OJ confirmed he would share with the SIF members and invite comments/feedback prior to the November SIF. **Action 4**

EK thanked everyone involved in the consultation and work on this to date.

5. Scrutiny recommendation updates (from Audit Tracker)

JL gave an update on the 3 outstanding tenant scrutiny actions from the Audit Tracker. Following JL's update and explanation, all SIF members agreed that the actions on estate boards and frequency of grass cutting could be closed.

MK commented that the issue was wider than just grass cutting, and that there were other gardening issues. Tenants need to know what they are paying for in respect of gardening services. JL agreed to pick up with Senior Manager – Planned and Estates Maintenance and obtain an update for the next SIF meeting. **Action 5**

6. Tenant Engagement incentives proposal

EK discussed the proposal to introduce incentives and provided some background to the work undertaken, i.e., research and benchmarking. EK outlined the proposed incentive structure, that it would be a blanket offer, although there would be the opportunity for individuals to decline the incentive payment. Connect recognised some people may be impacted adversely by incentive payments. EK stated that the Money Matters team was available to provide support and advice to individuals.

MK asked whether Connect could provide shopping vouchers instead. CF queried whether Connect could offer a choice between payments or vouchers. LS agreed that this was a great proposal, but stated that if vouchers were to be considered, they would need to be generic for all residents selecting this method of incentive, such as Love2shop vouchers.

EK agreed to update the proposal, specifically the section about how residents can choose the method of incentive and how that will be managed. To be discussed at the November SIF. **Action 6**

KF stated that TPAS supports incentives and asked all SIF members to also consider the non-financial rewards such as funding training opportunities.

7. EDI Report

SJ noted the main findings and recommendations of the 2021/22 EDI report and agreed to disseminate additional notes/presentation following the meeting. **Action 7**

JT commented that the report was a phenomenal piece of work and very detailed. In respect of the tenant census, JT asked how this was going to be conducted. EK advised that the finer details of how the census would be carried out was to be discussed at a senior manager meeting next week.

8. Policy Approval

No policies to approve.

CF to send a note out regarding 2022-23 rent setting policy. **Action 8**

Director of Finance & Resources is due to attend the November SIF to discuss proposals for the rent setting policy for 2022/23. Connect has started to review this earlier this year in light of the cost-of-living crisis, and there is a lot of work underway looking at how Connect can best support residents. Government is currently consulting on a proposed cap on rent increases, this will be considered at the next Board meeting.

9. Draft Resident Report

Due to time constraints EK agreed to circulate information via email. Both resident observers confirmed that they would also like to receive updates. **Action 9**

10. Performance Report

JT suggested emailing the report in advance of future meetings to give members the opportunity to review prior to the meeting.

JL discussed quarter one performance. There had been a slight increase in low-level anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases, customer satisfaction had fallen slightly yet the number of residents who would recommend Connect as a landlord had increased, outstanding repair figures has also improved.

MK commented that the recorded message when reporting a repair still states that there is a backlog due to COVID-19 and adverse weather conditions. JL to take an action away to get this amended. **Action 10**

11. Any Other Business

EK to circulate the NHF Code of Conduct to SIF members via email. **Action 11**

EK announced staff movements – SJ is being seconded into another business area and Dipa Mistry is being seconded into SJ's role. Recruitment has already commenced to fill Dipa's role as a Community Housing Officer.

KF also wanted to bid farewell to JL, thanking him for his contribution to SIF.

KF invited feedback on the meeting. JT stated the meeting was positive and constructive and things felt like they were moving forward. As a newcomer, JS found the meeting very interesting, better than expected and was looking forward to the next meeting. DP found the meeting easy to follow and interesting, having as much background information as possible will help to follow the agenda.

Both JS and DP hope to attend the next SIF meeting.

LS noted that OJ is on annual leave after today. LS to send outstanding information to SIF members next week and respond to any questions whilst OJ on holiday. **Action 12**

12. Date of next meeting

8 November 2022.