

Name:	Action Planning - Service Improvement Forum (SIF)
Date of Meeting:	14 March 2023
Time of Meeting:	10am
Location:	Hybrid – 21 Bond Street, Dewsbury & Teams

Present:	
Kevin Farrell (KF)	TPAS (Chair)
Eunice Clarkson (EC)	Resident
Maureen Kershaw (MK)	Resident
Nicola Sharp (NS)	Resident
Christopher Sharp (CS)	Resident
Hina Gillani (HG)	Resident (joined via Teams)
Jude Thompson (JT)	Resident
Deborah Pepper (DP)	Resident
Diane French (DF)	Board Observer
David Wilmshurst (DW)	Board Observer
Christine Fox (CF)	Director of Neighbourly Places
Epiphany Kidd (EK)	Senior Manager Neighbourly Places
Dipa Mistry (DMJ)	Business Assurance Officer (Minutes)
Lisa Stead (LS)	Tenant Engagement Officer
Richard Baggott (RB)	Senior Manager Customer Experience and Change (Joined via Teams for TSMs)
Apologies:	
Jane Grace (JG)	Senior Business Assurance Manager

Actions Arising from this Meeting		
1.	MA to inform MK who to contact regarding what the service charge includes.	MA
2.	LS to distribute the detailed plan when it is ready and arrange a meeting to discuss it should anyone want to.	LS
3.	CF to distribute organisational change information and LS to subsequently arrange a meeting to discuss it if required	CF / LS
4.	The ASB Deep Dive will be shared with the group in some form.	EK
5.	LS to contact Money Matters Team to look into what has gone wrong there and ask them to email JT.	LS
6.	LS to ask JG to include TSM feedback in the quarterly performance report.	LS/JG

1. Introductions and Minutes of September “Resident Priorities” SIF

KF welcomed all staff and resident attendees. Two board observers, DF and DW, were welcomed.

LS opened the meeting recognizing Malcolm Goodall’s contribution to CRF and SIF. Not only was he a key member as vice chair of CRF but also heavily involved at a local level with his hosting of coffee mornings and setting up an allotment. LS acknowledged his hard work and felt he would be really missed. LS and CF had the privilege of representing Connect at the funeral.

Actions arising – noted that all actions were completed, except:

MK advised outstanding action was that she hadn’t had a call from Marko regarding the service charge. LS apologized and will chase this. *(MA - Action 1)*.

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

2. Review of the Draft Change Plan Action Plan (presented by CF)

CF explained that usually a draft change plan action plan would be brought to this meeting, setting out the key activities for the next year (2023/24) to deliver on our overarching corporate strategy (2021-24).

This year a detailed draft plan isn’t available to share at this point, it is currently being finalised ready for approval by the Board at the March meeting.

CF shared the headline themes, already discussed with Board, which include:

- **Connect is where everyone can be at their best** with the focus on Customer Voice and EDI, new ways of working (e.g., IT improvements) and reviewing our young people’s supported accommodation services.
- **A safe home is a foundation for life** includes building homes that have been delayed by planning, consolidating our approach to building safety, ensuring full compliance with the Building Safety Act, working on an integrated approach to investment in planned maintenance and carbon reduction work, continuing to be proactive dealing with Damp and Mould.
- **Places are neighbourly** which includes a focus on Customer Voice linked to new consumer standards and regulatory regime, and our work in neighbourhoods using a co-production approach and tools. In addition to this having an integrated approach underpinned by an integrated Customer and Communities Strategy and continued partnership working.
- **Action is taken to help protect the planet** our priorities will be around building sustainability capacity so e.g., training colleagues and working in partnership where possible. Continue and implement learning from phase 1 of the retrofit pilots and developing a sustainable workplace strategy which includes improving Bond St & Scheme offices & potentially decommissioning Roundhay Road.
- **Business Resilience feeds a strong social purpose** is mainly focused on efficiency, finishing implementation of the new IT system and roll out rest of

Office 365 tools, a new HR system, improved telephony, adoption of a new self-service system/ portal for customers, a better focus on data and how we use it and a potential for including residents in board recruitment.

There is recognition by the Board that 2023/24 needs to be a year of completion and is not about taking on too many new activities. The impact of Covid and the cyber incident has meant the focus in 2023/24 needs to be on completing what we have started.

CF advised that the resident priorities discussed at the last SIF are reflected in the proposed priorities.

CF also advised that there will also be a Board recruitment exercise, including potential for resident Board members.

Questions CF asked SIF were: Do you feel these headlines reflect resident priorities; is there anything you would have expected to see that isn't there?

SIF were asked to consider which of the headline areas should be tracked and how:

The options are:

1. Don't decide on any priorities. We are not asking Board for their priorities this time. We provide a full update to Board and given it's a shorter plan than usual we could do the same for SIF.
2. Prioritise now against the headline areas discussed and we can map across to the detailed actions once finalised, then send out for sense checking/comment.
3. Don't do it now and wait for the detailed plan to be available. We can send the plan out and propose a methodology for feeding back priorities. A meeting could be arranged for SIF resident members to meet with CF to discuss priorities.

Decision: *LS to distribute the detailed plan when it is ready and arrange a meeting to discuss it should anyone want to. (LS - Action 2).*

Organisational Changes

CF informed SIF of organisational changes taking place.

The driver for change is to move resources to areas where they are going to be most needed for the next few years. As part of this we have had to make some difficult choices; we have tried to avoid redundancy by removing vacant posts first, but the changes do mean three people are at risk of redundancy with two agreeing to take this. One post is available as a potential re-deployment opportunity for two of the people at risk. There is also some moving around of responsibilities and some changes in line management, to make sure we have our resources in the right places, and this is mainly at director & senior manager level.

CF reassured the group that the changes are aimed at ensuring we can continue to deliver on our corporate strategy, as we've just discussed, and will be effective from 1 April.

CF will write to SIF to explain the new structure, what we've changed and why; and if anyone wants to meet to discuss it this could be arranged. ***(CF - Action 3).***

Discussion/Comments:

- EC commented that she feels resources could be used better to achieve cost savings such as at the Roundhay Road office, which is closed to the public, as well as Thrive being offered for use for free to some groups. CF responded that we are looking at alternatives to the Roundhay Road office, and SIF will see this in the change plan action plan.

3. Scrutiny Review Update (presented by LS)

LS explained that the review on Expressions of Dissatisfaction (EOD) is underway. The review has included a panel led focus group with staff and a digital survey being sent to staff.

Richard Baggott (Senior Manager – Customer Experience and Change) has assisted and will provide responses which will be included in the report that will go to Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) in April.

LS flagged that the report would come back to the SIF as the commissioner of the review. This would mean a delay and that the report and subsequent recommendations wouldn't go to ARMC for consideration until after the June SIF. DM confirmed the next ARMC meeting after that was August.

KF proposed that SIF give prior approval for the report to go to ARMC in April, as all the scrutiny panel are also SIF members and that the delay would be unnecessary. SIF agreed the proposal and the report will be delivered to ARMC for their meeting in April.

Decision: *SIF agreed for the EOD Scrutiny Report to go to ARMC in April.*

Discussion/Questions:

- LS noted that the increased digital engagement of residents due to Covid, had given the scrutiny panel the appetite to do things differently. This review has been carried out 100% online and had been really positive.
- KF noted that other organisations were also looked at for best practice. LS responded that she had also tried to contact the Housing Ombudsman for best practice but had not received a response.

4. Performance Report (LS in JG's absence)

LS gave a summary of the report highlighting the key points.

Tenant Satisfaction and Net Promotor Score dropped in quarter 3 compared to quarter 2. A smaller sample size was used than normal which means you don't need a lot of negative feedback to see a drop. This downward trend is also across the sector.

CF noted that there has been an increase in serious ASB cases categorised as assaults. EK advised that there is work being done on the reporting of ASB and categorisation of cases as high level data is not giving an accurate picture of reality. Only three of the cases are assault. The ASB Deep Dive will be shared with the group.

(EK - Action 4)

Discussion/Questions:

- JT asked if there is a target time for a response from the Money Matters Team as she contacted them in December but hasn't had a response. CF responded that she was surprised to hear this. LS to contact Money Matters Team to investigate what has gone wrong there and ask them to email JT. **(LS - Action 5)**

5. Review of Connect Commitments (LS)

LS gave an update following Board consideration of the new Connect Commitments (CCs), and asked SIF for any amendments that might be required.

- **Title:** LS asked if "Planned Works" should be changed to "Kitchen and Bathroom replacements" as people don't immediately know what *planned works are*. DF commented that the explanation helps for explaining what planned works are and CF suggested there could be an explanation on the website. NS also commented that icons can be useful for people such as those with dementia.

Decision: *To keep "Planned Works" as it is as it does include more than bathroom and kitchens and work on the explanation of it.*

- **Value for Services You Pay For:** Discussion on the wording.

Decision: *SIF agreed to replace "Transparent" with "clear"*

LS advised that the next steps are to share the CCs with contractors and to regularly keep the CCs on everyone's agenda.

The new CCs will go live on 1 April 2023 and there will be a social media campaign, they will be placed prominently on the Connect website.

Discussion/Questions:

- EK noted to make sure community housing officers and lettings agents let customers know about it when they carry out sign ups.
- JT hopes there will be buy in from managers.

6. Progress Report - Resident Voice and Influence Strategy 2022-25 (EK)

EK provided an update against the themes of the PACT (Power, Accountability Connection and Trust) framework.

Power - the asset maps are complete so this work can be built on, the co-production toolkit is ready, five co-design projects are underway, identified or complete, seed funding is being accessed.

Accountability – a scrutiny review is underway, TSMs will be used as the measurement tool for accountability.

Connection - there is a target to recruit 10 new engaged members, some progress has been made.

LS advised we have exceeded this target in terms of expressed interest, but some of the projects haven't started yet so some of those expressing a desire to be engaged have yet to start working with Connect.

LS advised that the CCs were a great example of how working flexibly (e.g., use of digital methods of meeting up and working collaboratively) can allow more people to get involved.

Trust – we are publishing SIF minutes on the website, using social media to encourage involvement and demonstrate what has been done as a result. Going forward we are aiming to develop a coaching and mentoring scheme.

Discussions/Questions:

- NS asked if the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) could include questions on whether the tenant would recommend Connect to a friend. EK explained that the Net Promoter score is driven by that question. LS explained that TSMs are something new on top of our existing satisfaction survey and RB will explain more in today's meeting. The TSMs have a very prescribed set of questions so Connect cannot add to or take away from the content.

7. Scrutiny Recommendation updates from Audit Tracker (LS in JG's absence)

LS advised that there are no outstanding recommendations.

8. Policy Approval (LS in JG's absence)

LS advised that there are no outstanding policies to approve.

9. NHF Code of Conduct (EK)

EK gave a summary and introduction to the code explaining what it is, who it applies to and why to use it. It provides clarity and applies to everyone. The full code explains how it can apply in each role and focuses on behaviours and acting with integrity which sits well with Connect's values. Training will be rolled out, so everyone understands how it relates to them. SIF were asked if they formerly want to adopt the Code of Conduct.

Decision: *SIF agreed to adopt the NHF Code of Conduct.*

SIF terms of reference and role profile have been updated to reflect the NHF Code of Conduct.

10. AOB

- SIF agreed to meet in person for the next meeting.
- EK informed the SIF of the Customer Task and Finish Group (CTFG). The Board is leading this, looking at how customer voice is captured and heard in and how customer experience can be improved. EK thanked the SIF members

who had responded to the request for residents to be involved. EK will liaise with the chair of the CTFG and provide an update following the discussion.

Discussions/Questions:

- No comments or questions

11. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (RB)

RB gave an overview of the TSMs that will come into effect from 1 April 2023. The TSMs are designed to allow tenants to scrutinise their landlord's performance and it is now a regulatory requirement for social landlords to survey all their residents annually, using the prescribed questions.

There are 22 measures broken into the following seven themes:

- Overall satisfaction
- Keeping properties in good repair
- Maintaining and building safety
- Safety checks
- Respectful and helpful engagement
- Effective handling of complaints
- Responsible neighbourhood management.

Some will be measured via tenant perception surveys and others by management data we hold e.g. % of gas safety measures complete.

Information will be collected from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, will form a return to the regulator.

RB gave a summary on some of the rules around the surveys and how Connect intends to deliver them. We currently intend to survey all tenants and to phase it over 12 months so we can listen and learn from the feedback as we get the responses.

RB explained we will also continue with some simplified transactional surveys which would be sent after a repair for example.

Discussion/questions:

- LS asked how and when the results will be shared with SIF. RB said it will be reported internally so at whatever frequency SIF require. LS advised she will ask JG to include it in the quarterly performance report. **(LS/JG - Action 6)**
- KF commented that due to the way the surveys are constructed landlords should expect a drop in satisfaction levels. KF asked if RB has any thoughts on how this. RB agreed that there is likely to be a drop in satisfaction. Also, there is a question as to how high the response rate will be as people tend to respond more frequently to transactional surveys rather than general surveys, and to make it statistically significant we need a 20% response rate. There are also challenges around rolling it out to managing agent customers who traditionally haven't had direct involvement with Connect. There will be a lot of lessons learnt and tweaks

for the second year of the TSMs.

Connect are using the TSMs as an opportunity to grow and develop how Connect responds to feedback in real time by using the Customer Sure platform to administer the TSMs and track how the feedback is processed.

- LS asked if we had thought about incentivising responses. RB advised that current thinking is that we don't think we'll need to as we believe we'll get a big enough response. There may also be issues in terms of getting into legal challenges, people not being able to take part on religious grounds of it is seen as gambling. However, if our responses are low, it is something we can consider.
- DF asked if the regulator has provided an easy read format as it would be good if there was a national response to it. RB responded that this was fed back, and a national easy read version would be better so that the meaning isn't lost in translation and the integrity remains however, there isn't one. Connect is having conversations to understand what the needs of supported tenants are and how we can best capture the TSMs with this group of residents.
- CF asked KF if this is something he could feedback. KF advised that he can. TPAS has given feedback to the regulator previously, but no response has yet been received. It seems the regulator is concerned with meeting the deadline of rolling out the surveys and hopefully will take the lessons learnt for next year.
- NS commented the regulator should be giving the resources to carry out the survey due to the costs involved.
- RB commented that at Connect we have Customer Sure already which will help us deliver these surveys without a huge additional cost.
- HG commented that Connect could use the website and 'Connected' and put some positive outcomes in there. RB said this is a good comment about sharing results and learning and sharing this with tenants. It's not worth doing if we're not learning from it.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Resident Report SIF

13 June 2023, 10am - 12.30pm

21 Bond Street, Dewsbury, WF13 1AX