



Minutes of Meeting

Meeting Name: **Shropshire Towns & Rural Housing Limited**

Meeting Location: **Shrewsbury Town Football Club**

Date and Time: **Tuesday 12th July 2022**
1.00pm- 17.00pm

Members present:
Chair – Tony Deakin (Independent) TDk
James Wood (Independent) JW
Paul Hayward (Co-Optee) PH
Val Jones (Tenant) VJ

Steve Robinson (Independent) SR
Mark Jones (Shropshire Council) MJ
Emma Jones (STAR) EJ
Yordan Tolev (Tenant) YT

Non-Members Present:
Sue Adams (STAR) SA
Ayyaz Ahmed (STAR) AA
Mandy Pullen (STAR) MP
Lucy Heath (Shropshire Council) LH
Steve Thorpe (STAR) ST (Board Training Session 1-2pm only)
Steve Ogram (STAR) SO
Angela Simpson (STAR) AS
Jane Trethewey (Shropshire Council) JT
Andy Menzies (STAR) AM

1.	Welcome and Apologies	<p>TDk welcomed everyone to the STAR Housing Board meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Weston (Co-Optee) • Rob Gittins (Shropshire Council) • James Willocks (Shropshire Council) 		
2.	Declaration of Interests	<p>TDk asked the Board if they have any interests to declare on any items on the agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EJ noted a declaration of interest in the Pay Policy and Tenant Voice & Involvement Strategy 		
3.	Minutes from STAR Board Meeting 24 th May 2022	<p>All members confirmed that the previous minutes had been received and were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>A copy of the minutes will be electronically signed and kept for record.</p>		
4.	Matters Arising	<p>The matters arising had been circulated for information.</p> <p>There were no further matters arising.</p>		
5.	Policy Development Framework (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Framework sets out how policies are developed at STAR and has an attached schedule that notes the delegated authority to approve any policy and major revisions of that policy. • This Policy was due for review in November 2021 but due to a backlog of Policy review work following the pandemic emergency the review was postponed until this meeting. <p>Changes made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an update to the Schedule attached to the policy noting changes in names to policies and a review of the authorisation level of each policy. • There is also a review of the requirements in respect of considering equality considerations as part of policy development in line with our new Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI) Strategy. There is now a 		

		<p>requirement to consider EDI issues as part of the report to be considered when reviewing, changing or implementing policies.</p> <p>TDK poses the question if any of the Board members have any issues with the level of delegated authority? No issues voiced from the Board members.</p> <p>The Board approved the revised Policy Development Framework at Appendix 1.</p>		
6.	Pay and Reward Policy (SO)	<p>SO noted the policy is reviewed continually by SMT but there is a requirement that it is formally brought to the Board every 3 years. There are no major changes to the past approved version, just the National Living Wage increases.</p> <p>Queries were raised in relation to the proposed award of a cost of living increase to the incoming new MD ahead of other staff who are awaiting the outcome of NJC negotiations.</p> <p>SO advised that the recruitment agency feel it would aid the recruitment for the post of STAR Managing Director if the 2022/23 suggested pay would be approved for the start of the post rather than waiting for the Pay Award.</p> <p>TDK noted the post of appointing SA's successor is absolutely critical. There is feedback from the recruitment agency that it is very much a candidate's market at the moment. We need the flexibility to pitch it to attract a suitable candidate- we do not want to lose a candidate over a small percentage of pay.</p> <p>PH queried if a 2-3% increase over the 100k original posting is going to make a difference or not? TDK said a consultant has said using a figure of 90-95k would have a negative impact, and that the 100k figure includes this 2-3% increase.</p> <p>MJ asked how long the recruitment process may take. TDK replied they are looking at late September. They will need to complete long and short listing, recruitment / tests, etc which will all take time. He has noted that they very much want the Council's involvement as this is absolutely key. We need to think about how they meet the Board as well, as it is not just technical knowledge but also how they fit into the business.</p>		

	<p>JB asked how this changes the wage ratio from bottom to top employees.</p> <p>SO noted there was two approaches- we could advertise on current salary (fixed salary) subject to 22/23 pay award increase, or move this higher % forward to now. It would initially change the differentials until everyone else in the company also caught up to the original planned date of pay award. He notes we did set aside contingency funds and planned for a 2-3% increase. From discussions with LH and the Council he is not anticipating this will be an issue for us. There is capacity within the base budget, however should the final sum come in higher than this it would be something to look into. There is always a degree of uncertainty, but what we have experienced in the past 2-3 years is we just do not know where we will be until the pay award percentage comes through.</p> <p>SO noted that Unions have been requesting up to an 11% increase. As with all things it is a balancing act to leave some contingency to deal with a final settlement whatever it may be.</p> <p>JB noted that we need to be mindful of staff moral if the top role is getting a decent pay increase earlier and lower paid roles do not see the same type of pay increase.</p> <p>EJ noted this all needs to be transparent.</p> <p>SA noted we wouldn't be having this conversation if this was happening closer to the Pay Award settlement, however we haven't had this and it seems to occur later and later each year, so settlements are made and backdated which is unfortunate. We have in the past made increases in anticipation of what they would be, but at that point we had information that suggested what the Pay Award would be. At this time, we have no idea whatsoever what it will be.</p> <p>SO noted that we re-align with the NJC settlement roughly four years ago. We are not required to do this but the Board approved the suggestion that we do so. As with all things we call it as best as we can.</p> <p>PH queried if this is the only role we are adding the increase onto.</p>	
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	<p>TDK noted that it is just for this post as it is an extremely important, time sensitive post.</p> <p>PH does not think 2-3k will make a massive difference either way.</p> <p>SR noted that they have been recommended that the actual salary for this post should be higher than what we are actually offering compared to other parts of the social housing sector.</p> <p>The Board approved the Pay and Reward Policy (version 3) attached as Appendix 1.</p> <p>The Board approved the Chair of the Board having the authority to agree a starting salary for the new Managing Director that incorporates a pay increase for 2022/23 in advance of the final agreement with any subsequent difference to be corrected at a future date.</p>		
7.	<p>Tenants Voice Strategy (EJ)</p> <p>This Strategy focuses on developing STAR Housing's aims to be accountable to customers, reduce inequalities and build strong, collaborative relationships through developing inclusive, modern and insightful engagement that places customer influence at the forefront of business planning.</p> <p>This Strategy has been written to ensure STAR Housing remains responsive to emerging requirements and best practice guidance to ensure we continue to engage residents effectively.</p> <p>EJ noted we consulted with all tenants by way of a survey to gauge the desired level and method of involvement, as well as looking at preferred communication methods. Both paper copies were sent out as well as text messages for those we had the relevant details for.</p> <p>We received over 300 responses and the results of the survey highlighted the importance of communication, with the majority of our tenants stating that they just want to be kept informed of changes that affect them directly and about their local neighbourhood rather than be actively involved.</p>		

	<p>EJ handed out the Action Plan and asked for feedback outside the meeting as well as today. Of course, if there are changes then we will seek further approval for the final version by email.</p> <p><u>Objectives from Tenant Voice and Involvement Action Plan:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplifying the Tenant Voice and Value of Engagement • Delivering Continuous Improvement by being Accountable • • Supporting Wellbeing and Maximising Customers Skills and Potential • Investing in Communities to Deliver Improved Outcomes • Keeping Our Promises and using Feedback to Improve Service <p>EJ noted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63% of tenants just wanted to be involved in updates/informed, not to be actively involved • 58% want to ensure the tenant voice is heard vs 35% were concerned with how to improve their local neighbourhood • 66% chose text message vs 15% for completing a survey in regards to being contacted <p>EJ noted the idea of an “Armchair Senate”, as the area panel has diminished over the last few months. She noted there are still tenants who want to come but in general tenants want to be involved in a way that suits them. She noted for the Armchair senate, we are hopefully to get 100 tenants to sign up to ongoing surveys and are especially looking to encourage younger tenants as generally it is only the older tenants who become involved in the area panels.</p> <p>She is hoping to involve the tenant Board members and meet with them every three months to help hold her accountable for the scheme. She invites the Board to contact her if anyone has further ideas around this.</p> <p>SR queried how STAR will measure the journey, and given what was said about what the customers want to know, how can we make sure we are doing what they wish rather than ticking boxes.</p>	<p>Email suggestions to EJ and if adopted it will be circulated for further approval.</p> <p>Plan dates to meet with Tenant Board members regarding Arm Chair Senate</p>	<p>EJ and Board.</p> <p>EJ</p>
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	<p>EJ noted that according to the survey done, many tenants weren't actually aware they could be involved in STAR. Now they are aware with the ways we contact them and communicate, hopefully this number will rise. She notes it may be worthwhile adding information for Parish Council into our tenant newsletter to combine ideas and bring together.</p> <p>EJ further notes we are meeting with a potential new Tenant Board member, on the 26th- she is in Albrighton (Bridgnorth Patch). She was a housing support officer in the past and is very passionate about representing tenants. She would bring us up to the full capacity of Tenant Board Members.</p> <p>SA notes national suite of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) from the Regulator for Social Housing will be very important in terms of monitoring the success of this strategy and how we then reflect that information back to our tenants. There are some national things happening that will help us with the Tenant's Voice. She noted that in terms of listening to tenant's views and acting on them, we are in the top quartile. Tenants do feel that we are reflecting their views back to them.</p> <p>EJ noted that STAR is recruiting a Communications Officer and that interviews took place on Monday. Once we can recruit into this position we can look at how we feedback to our customers.</p> <p>People want that very local information; even down to their estate. The opportunity is present to help the housing officers make that connection with the very local area. This could mean doing things such as mini surveys within estates as well as displaying complaints and how we have responded and resolved them.</p> <p>TDK noted he has been at a couple of conferences lately which involved the Regulator and Ombudsman. The Ombudsman referenced powers now to go beyond individual complaint and to look broader to see if there are wider issues present within these individual complaints.</p> <p>What concerns TDK now is IT within housing. In a future meeting it would be interesting to see how we monitor complaints and to pick out trends and respond to any issues that arise in the future.</p> <p>AA is working with Voicescape on the TSMs, so hopefully we can use them to monitor TSMs in the future. He noted we are looking at automating this process</p>		
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		<p>rather than sending out expensive paper copies. He notes this is how we can innovate to be at the forefront. We will be a pilot in this project.</p> <p>The Board approved the Tenant Voice & Involvement Strategy and Action Plan and that any further changes will be subject to further approval by email.</p>		
8.	2021/22 Financial Statements (SO)	<p>SO noted we have been subject to the external audit from Grant Thornton. They made very positive comments, in fact the director who attended the meeting described it as a very boring report- which is a very good thing to hear from our end. He notes the positive reflection of AM and the finance team for doing a good job to make this audit go smoothly.</p> <p>There are still four blank pages awaiting the auditor's opinion but we have had assurances from them that they will be able to offer a clean opinion. The Local Government Pension Scheme will be a separate strand of work to be reviewed (LGPS scheme) and signed off once they believe there are no potential issues. At this point we will be able to sign off our own accounts.</p> <p>Hopefully that this will be slightly sooner this year but this is currently out of our hands as we wait.</p> <p>Appendix 2 cannot be signed right now but once finalised TDK will be asked to sign on behalf of the Board and this can be given to Grant Thornton.</p> <p>TDK noted we did have the in-depth discussion regarding this at the FAR meeting. The pension's issues is always an issue nationally, so it is not a problem specifically with the Shropshire scheme- everyone is waiting.</p> <p>The Board approves the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 (Appendix 1) subject to confirmation from Grant Thornton that any outstanding audit work including the Shropshire Pension Fund has been completed.</p> <p>Should there be a need to make any amendment to the Directors' Report and Financial Statements, authority is delegated to the Director</p>		

	<p>of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p>In the event of any amendment arising from 2.2 a revised Directors' Report and Financial Statements will be circulated to all Board Members for information.</p> <p>Subject to fulfilment of recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 above, the Chair of the Board signs the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 on behalf of the Board on the 3 pages required.</p> <p>The Chair of the Board should sign the letter of representation (Appendix 2) on behalf of the Board.</p>		
9.	<p>Annual Action Plan 2021/22 Final Report (SA)</p> <p>The Board is updated on the delivery on the Annual Action plan activity in the period April 2021 – March 2022. In addition, there is an assessment of the success in delivery in this period.</p> <p>SA notes every year we produce the AAP report. This has been agreed prior to the year starting with the Council. Suffice to say the conclusions have been that there was more differed actions than normal due to Covid. They are started, just not yet completed and will be rolled over to the next year. We did still complete many and this report gives details around this.</p> <p>PH queried which have or haven't been completed as it was not clear to him.</p> <p>SA said yes this information should be available and the summary Dashboard was completed. She will send a copy of to the PH.</p> <p>TDK noted he was a bit surprised at the number of measures. He queried if we should slice this into ones that are looked into by the Board, committees, or SMT? However, it is linking it to what the Council's expectations are. He noted it may be something to look at.</p>	<p>Send Board a copy of the final Q4 Dashboard Summary of AAP Actions</p>	SA

	<p>SA noted there is a bit of tradition in how it is presented and we can review and amend this process if desired. As the AAP gets approved by the Council, it would need to be discussed with them first if any changes were made.</p> <p>JT notes ideally, we could take this and update how it is presented with the new MD.</p> <p>SA noted for 2024 this could be an opportunity, as the '23 version has already been completed. There is one more year to go on current Business Plan, which would then give us the opportunity to work with the Council. TSM will not be reported until 2024 so this is an opportunity to dovetail this all together.</p> <p>AS noted how it is currently laid out helps to sell to Housing Officers how their role fits in. They can see where it fits into the Business Plan and that they are not just being asked to do something for the sake of it. In its current form it may not work for the Board, but it makes sense to the people working on it.</p> <p>SA noted there is a golden thread that goes from the AAP to meetings with managers and onward. All of this is debated and discussed at this operational level and then onto one-to-ones. If we do change it, we do not want to lose this.</p> <p>The Board noted the report on the delivery of completed actions in 2021/22.</p> <p>The Board noted the rolled over actions to be included in the Annual Action Plan 2022/23.</p>	<p>Update AAP template for 2024 with new MD?</p>	JT
10.	<p>Update on Sustainability Strategy (AS)</p> <p>AS talked through a verbal presentation.</p> <p>AS advised we are looking at recruiting a Sustainability Officer. We have managed to recruit someone via a recruitment agency. We are waiting on references so we do not yet have a starting date but we are fortunate to have a good candidate. They are aware it is a three-year fixed term contract.</p>		

	<p>SHDF: We are working with consultants and Fusion21 (a framework company) to carry out an insulation report. We carried out similar schemes previously but did not have enough funds to carry out phase two.</p> <p>We are doing external wall insulation, new front doors/back doors- all external items that we can. She noted there is a quarter of a million grant for this project.</p> <p>AS further noted STAR were looking at getting in an additional administrator and have recruited someone this week via an agency.</p> <p>Environmental works are continuing by the ground maintenance team and they are continuing to plant trees as a part of the Queen's Canopy.</p> <p>It is noted we have done some work with the Rotary to plant daffodils last year and had many positive comments around this. We are working with them again going forward into the new year and have signed up to "Operation Pollination" to look where we can put more wild flowers and bulbs to go around the Oswestry area to help improve the environment. Grounds maintenance, Rotary, as well as schools are all involved.</p> <p>STAR is also working with Shropshire Council's Tree Team and have forwarded information to be included in bid for grant funding to get an officer to help with additional environmental improvements.</p> <p>Previously noted was the concern over damp and mould becoming more of an issue with energy prices going up. The issue that we do not yet have an answer for is what we do when we cannot service oil heated properties due to tenants who cannot afford to fill their tanks. How we can work with the tenants to work around this, ideas are needed such as involving the financial inclusion team. How do we help our customers? It is not an easy question.</p> <p>JB asked if grant funds could be used to convert to other types of energy.</p> <p>AS noted we are struggling around items such as heat pumps- tenants still cannot fund. We cannot actually give them the money. The expense of being able to run whatever goes in may still be more than tenants can afford. MJ notes of systems</p>	
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	<p>that can be cheaper in respect to wood over oil. He queries over the report from 12 months ago stating a figure of 130 million to refit.</p> <p>AS notes Paul Sutton from Bratch Consultancy will be at next Board meeting at the informal session at the start to discuss this.</p> <p>SO noted this is an incredibly complex area.</p> <p>TDK noted the concern is that 12 months ago we had a report with a large price tag and 12 months later we are getting closer to commitment deadlines, so he thinks it would be useful to hear from the consultants what exactly has changed in time.</p> <p>SO noted we need to get to band C as a target and address the pressing need to get our properties up there. At least 50% of our stock is not at that level, whether it be marginally or substantially failing. It is a looming deadline but we would be well advised to focus on this target as it is achievable along the way.</p> <p>JT noted from a staff perspective we need to talk about what is actually achievable and how we accomplish this- to discuss what the options available are. This is what we need to see next.</p> <p>AS noted MP and ST met with the Greenhouses from Oswestry and explained the situation and the practicalities and they were quite receptive. They understood there is not a bottomless pit of money.</p> <p>SO noted the education program may be helpful in getting tenants in looking into how to reduce their carbon footprint as well as fuel costs, but queried how we measure this.</p> <p>JB mentioned we are trying to find the worst properties and improve them. Band C is the decent standard that we can get to and is the most vital thing to improve.</p> <p>AS noted there is always a section in the service report that details how we are working to improve our carbon footprint.</p> <p>EJ asked about grants for solar panels if possible?</p>	
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		<p>AS noted for solar panels, when we do new roofing we include the specifications for adding solar panel fittings. Although we aren't doing anything at the moment we are future proofing the houses for possible solar panels in the future.</p> <p>The Board noted the presentation.</p>		
11.	Complaints Review Q3/4 2021/22 (AA)	<p>AA talked through a presentation. This is attached to the minutes.</p> <p>AA discussed the Q3/4 complaints review and reported on those targets that have not been met.</p> <p>TDK noted the previously discussed item of IT and trends. Do we go through them to pick out trends?</p> <p>AA noted we have a spreadsheet; however we are only looking at a smaller number of complaints (circa 40, roughly 5 per month).</p> <p>JB noted it would garner a lot of trust with tenants if this information was shared with the clients to show them we are opening the doors and being frank with them.</p> <p>EJ noted the report is quite visual and could be good to show.</p> <p>JB noted it may help with people who haven't complained but felt the same way, being able to see the resolution to the issues.</p> <p>AA is also looking at customer service training throughout the business and he has found a consultant who can support this training. This is ongoing but coming along.</p> <p>The Board noted the presentation.</p>		
12.	Update on the Management Agreement (JT)	<p>JT noted the review of the Management agreement has started. The principles remain unchanged, it is just more a question of updating it. It was noted that the development of a relation between STAR and the Council can be done via the Business Plan for the most part.</p> <p>Currently in terms of the discussion, a draft agreement was presented to STAR in June and discussions happened between SA SO and LH. A further revised draft</p>		

	<p>will be shared with STAR today and hope this will be met with approval. They are aware that this will likely be sent to Anthony Collins before approval.</p> <p>In terms of the next steps, assuming the final form of the agreement is approved, they will simultaneously approach the Regulator and go to consultation.</p> <p>Consultation will occur over a six-week period with the hope for the new agreement to come into effect for October. Consultation will include six mostly open questions as not to drive residents down a yes/no response. This will give them the opportunity to see residents view of STAR, but they do not expect anything untoward to surface from this.</p> <p>SR noted happy tenants may not be likely to reply if too many open questions and queried if there is there a percentage of replies that will be sought.</p> <p>LH replied that no, they do not have a specific amount of replies to target. They would be happy with the idea that they have given tenants the opportunity to reply if they wish.</p> <p>Consultation will be purely paper based with return envelopes, no online or mobile responses.</p> <p>JB noted it may be worthwhile not doing it in the peak of summer holidays to avoid cynicism around it being sent while people may be away.</p> <p>TDK summarised that we do not need to do an early Board meeting, rather the consultation may be brought forward regardless if the management agreement has been finalised.</p> <p>The Board noted the Update</p>		
13.	<p>Development Subcommittee 01/06/22 (JW)</p> <p>JW gave an update on the recent Development Subcommittee meeting:</p> <p>JW noted the main word to describe the last discussion at the Development Subcommittee meeting would be “challenging”. They note the lack of materials and contractors being a major issue- contractors have to pass financial liability checks</p>		

	<p>from Shropshire Council which has knocked out many local contractors from the available pool.</p> <p>SO noted we need to be realistic about this and even on a temporary basis may need to re-evaluate our checks. We need to be realistic in terms of our parameters.</p> <p>JW noted our schemes that are at planning/tender stage which are smaller are affected. The risk of course is contractor failure. The team are aware of this and managing this. We are working close with the team to see how we can help smooth matters along.</p> <p>MJ queried if we need to put pressure on Shropshire Council to amend parameters for being able to hire contractors as he quotes the example of one local contractor being unable to take on the project and problems around bankruptcy in regards to this.</p> <p>JT noted smaller companies will always have a higher risk of bankruptcy.</p> <p>JB noted the goal should be to help local businesses being aided to come up to standard rather than us bringing our standards of procurement down to them.</p> <p>MJ noted one of the standards was eight million pounds of turnover where this local company only had four million- no amount of our help would double their turnover as a smaller company.</p> <p>JW noted that turnover means nothing in reality, and that something like this could be a point to look at changing.</p> <p>JT noted Cornovii is having the same issues as the local contractor base is shrinking regardless. This is a conversation to have with the procurement team.</p> <p>JW noted it would be good for us to demonstrate that we've had this conversation back down to the team to try and help them as much as we can and to improve moral.</p> <p>SO noted first and foremost we need to protect the resources that we have. There are smaller contracts that we could look for smaller providers to manage. With the</p>	<p>Explore flexing procurement practices</p>	JT
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	<p>pressures on the industry he would be hesitant to change our standards for procurement.</p> <p>JB noted we need to encourage conversations about STAR To Parish Councils to better inform them who is responsible for what. So many Councillors do not know where STAR actually operates or what they can do to assist. They would love to be able shape decide and influence where housing goes in their patch. It could help identify some of the sites we are desperately seeking. Even providing them with a map with our sites would be helpful. It is noted there could be potential there.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the minutes.</p>		
14.	<p>Finance, Audit & Risk Subcommittee (FAR) 22.06.22 (MJ)</p> <p>MJ gave an update on the recent FAR Subcommittee meeting:</p> <p>MJ noted there were no major issues with the audit which was discussed at the latest FAR meeting. Nothing much to report within this meeting.</p> <p>SO noted the Board has already discussed the financial statements in this meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the minutes.</p>		

	<p>Date of next meeting: 27th September 2022 – Shrewsbury Football Club</p> <p>The meeting closed at 4:20pm.</p>		
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Chair of Board Date

Managing Director Date:

6 Monthly Review of Complaints

Q3/Q4 2021/22

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

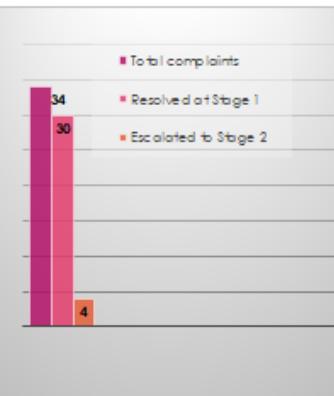
Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code was published July 2020 and amendments/additions were introduced in **April 2022**. We have updated our procedure inline with these changes.

These changes include:-

- ▶ The complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known. It must not be delayed until any outstanding actions are completed. Outstanding actions should be tracked and updates provided to the resident.
- ▶ Complaints should be logged and acknowledged within 5 days of receipt.
- ▶ Landlords must carry out an annual assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements and publish the results.

Complaints Received October 21 – March 22

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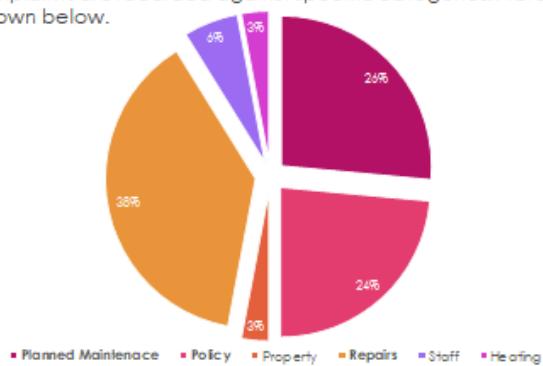
There was a total of **34 complaints** in Qtrs. 3 & 4.
Out of those complaints:

- ▶ 33 were acknowledged within the target timescale (3 days) (97% - target 100%)
- ▶ 31 were responded to within Stage 1 timescales (10 working days) (91% - target 86%)
- ▶ 30 were resolved at Stage 1 (88% - target 95%)
- ▶ Of the 4 cases that were escalated to Stage 2, 3 were responded to within timescales (20 working days 75%) and 3 were upheld.
- ▶ There were no cases taken to the Housing Ombudsman for either Quarter

Complaint Categories

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All complaints are recorded against specific categories. A breakdown of these for Q1 & Q2 are shown below.



Top three categories for complaints are :

1. Repairs – 13
2. Planned Maintenance – 9
3. Policy – 8

Lessons Learnt

1. The Head of Assets has reinstated the quarterly meetings with the Project Manager and Strategic Repairs Manager to review complaints, to see if there are any trends and to review changes in working/lessons learnt. Updates from this meeting are then forwarded to Head of Neighbourhoods, so that he is aware of how the Asset Management team is reviewing this area.
2. Our Customer Relationships Team now meet with the Head of Neighbourhoods on a monthly basis to discuss any learning identified and also use this opportunity to discuss any complex cases.
3. It is the investigating officer's responsibility to identify any lessons learnt and to implement any changes required. These lessons are logged centrally by our Customer Relationships Team – this information can be accessed by all managers.

Examples of Identified Learning

"Work with contractors to improve lines of communication"

"Ensure staff know how to access company policies"

"Ensure work is completed before property is handed over to incoming tenant"

"....ensure that a flexible approach is used when dealing with bereavement."

"Consider the need for fencing to be included in our letable standards"

Quality and Quantity

The number of surveys completed is now at a level where the results are valid, allowing us to more accurately gauge satisfaction in our complaints procedure.

Satisfaction surveys (accumulative for whole year) showed that:

1. % Complaints responded to in target time (10 working days) – 92% with the target set at 86%
2. Satisfaction with complaint handling (own survey) – 63% - although this is below the target of 72% we were unable to report on this last year due to low numbers of participation
3. Satisfaction with complaint outcome (own survey) – 47% - again, this is slightly below the target of 50% but we were not able to report on this last year

Change of practices

- ▶ Since implementing the new procedure, we have seen an increase in complaints being acknowledged and dealt with on target and have received positive feedback from the investigating officers who are happy with the complaints being held centrally.
- ▶ We will ensure that we continue to make improvements to this area of the business to ensure that we are implementing changes identified and that we continue to meet the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

