

Minutes of the All Panels Meeting 8 March 2023 – 2pm – Council Chamber, Harrogate Civic Centre

Involved tenants: Pauline Lockley; Lesley Peplow; Jenny Pateman Harrison; Barbara Rickards; Richard Hinson; Arnot Wood, Duncan Morris

Staff: Lucy Tyne (Tenant Involvement Officer); Dawn Saxby (Independent Living Manager); Stephen Wilson (Neighbourhood Services Manager)

Action:

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Lesley welcomed all to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies for absence had been received from, Teresa Fox, Leigh Thompson, James Jenner

3. Minutes of the All Panels' meeting held on 28th September 2022

3.1 The minutes were approved as a correct record; they will now be placed on the Councils website. No issues were raised.

4. Review of minutes of recent panel meetings

4.1 Housing and Property Services Panel held on 1st November 2022

The draft minutes of this meeting had been circulated previously. A number of points were raised -

4.1.1 **3.4** Duncan asked if there was any news on the compensation policy. Steve confirmed that there had been no final decision yet, he is hoping there will be before the 1st of April. Lucy will speak to Jim Clemans about this and confirm.

4.2 Neighbourhood Services and Housing Needs Panel meeting held on 17 November 2022

The draft minutes of this meeting had been circulated previously. A couple of additional points were raised:

4.2.1 **3.9** Lesley asked about the Fern house visit that was discussed – Lucy confirmed she will get this arranged with Maggie as soon as possible.

4.2.2 – **4.7** Steve gave an update on the 50 households on a list who were thought to be willing to move into smaller properties, he explained the team had been going through the list and have removed 8 people who at the moment have decided they do not wish to move.

4.2.4 - **5.2** Steve then went on to give an example of who the allocations team are working hard to reduce the few refusals that we do get. Were possible the allow applicants the time to make a decision based on all the information they are given. In this particular example it paid off and they individuals signed for the property.

5. Local Government Reorganisation

5.1 Steve began to give an update on LRG, he stated that staff had their final update from Wallace this week and Richard Flinton is giving weekly updates as we move closer to vesting day.

5.1.1 Work is going into getting all official letter, forms and communications re branded for North Yorkshire Council.

5.1.2 The council will have a new contact number but it will not be shared until April 1st. As far as we know extension numbers will be remaining the same. Steve reiterated that services will remain the same.

5.2 He then went on to say rent review letter had been sent and along with them was a flyer explaining the transition to NYC. Some members of the meeting had received this flyer and found it useful.

5.3 Duncan queried if rent cards will be changing, Steve confirmed eventually the cards will be rebranded to North Yorkshire Council but they will still be operational after the 1st April with the Harrogate branding on.

5.4 It was also queried if people need to alter their direct debits to reflect the change to NYC. Steve confirmed direct debits do not need to be changed.

6. Independent Living Update – Dawn Saxby *Independent Living Manager*

6.1 Dawn began by describing what the independent living team do, she explained they look after 6 schemes across the Harrogate District. Between the 6 sites they have 188 flats – there is a manager on site during weekday mornings.

6.2 She went on to explain the lifeline service the team also provide. There are around 900 lifeline units out in community, these are made up of a mix of both private residents and council tenant's. The lifeline is a device that has a panic button and comes with a pendant for the individual to wear – both buttons can be pressed in a case of emergency or when the individual is in a situation where they require assistance. When pressing the button you would be transferred to a 24 hour call centre – the call handler will then decide the most appropriate level of action. This can mean calling an ambulance, their GP or family members. During working hours the call handler can get in touch with the independent living officer assigned the patch where help is needed.

6.3 There are different levels of service that people can chose when paying for lifeline. Individuals can pay to have a visit once a month from the officer assigned to their patch. During the visit they are able to signpost people to help that is needed. The visits also allow a relationship to build – making it easier for the officers to spot if someone is declining and needs additional support.

6.4 Dawn went on to explain the staff reivew that took place within the team. Before the pandemic, a lot more lifeline users opted for the visit option, this meant staff were always busy and out and about. However during the pandemic people got used to not having visits and around 50% of customers chose to remove the visit from their plan. This means that the team could reduce slightly the demand for visit was less. The team went from 14 member to 11.

6.4.1 She then expanded on this and explained that pre pandemic the team had 2 staff of duty out of hours – 1 in the north and one in the south. The pandemic meant that emeegeny calls out of hours were not dealt with by independent living officers – a consequence of this meant that calls only came through that really were genuine emergencies. This has remained the case and allowed the team to change in that onlt 1 person is not needed on call. Dawn explained that they use a rota and it has been working very well. The team work together to ensure its suitable.

6.5 Dawn then touched on the future with North Yorkshire Council. She is sure nothing much will change for the first 12 months. The way in which the different areas in the new council procure and run the lifeline service differs. The contract Harrogate have is for 12 months therefore it has been agreed that no changes will happen during these 12 months. Dawn shared that she is looking at way the service the team provide

can be made more efficient and beneficial for users. For example linking with the home from hospital teams.

6.5.1 Dawn revealed that the team always try and keep fees around the same figures but she shared North Yorkshire Council have decided on a blanket 6% rise. She shared that for the lifeline service with the visit it will be £9.50 a week and without a visit it will be £7.40 a week.

6.5.2 In response to comments about waiting times once pressing the panic button, Dawn confirmed that there were some serious problems with the call centre and the call handler. Dawn explained that she did report this to telecare standards. Things are operating much better now and call handling times have improved greatly.

6.6 Dawn touched on the fire safety changes that are coming to independent living schemes. She confirmed fire stopping methods stopped the unfortunate fire from spreading at Blossomgate Court, however the event has meant that the scheme fire safety measures are being reviewed. All fire alarm systems will be upgraded along with other changes in the near future.

6.7 Arnot made a comment about the door entry system still not working at Carlton Lodge. He explained that he felt contractors should make contact with the specific tenant who is experiencing the issue before they leave site when attending to the job. Dawn said she would raise this with the contractor.

7. New build update

7.1 Lucy explained that she had been in contact with James Robinson and unfortunately an update on new builds in the district could not be given. James had raised a complaint with the developers about lack of updates and notice. Lucy stated if she had received the update before the minutes for this meeting are sent, she will enclose it.

8. Scrutiny update

8.1 Lucy explained that the involved tenant void inspection exercise has progressed. We now have a working group of 3 tenants. The plan is to evaluate pictures of the void property once it has been vacated along with having sight of the proposed works. We will then visit the property once the work has been carried out. The purpose of this exercise is to see the standard that our properties are let at and if this meets what is outlined in the void standard.

8.2 A few members of the panel expressed their disagreement with using pictures of the property in the first instance. Lucy and Steve explained that the point of this exercise is to assess the property against the void standard once all repairs had been carried out. A visit to the property before works have started did not seem necessary. Lucy

added that if tenants feel that this has an impact of the success of the exercise then plans can be altered but for the moment picture will be used.

8.3 The way in which the group that were going to visit void properties were chose was also questioned. It was suggested that these people are alternated more frequently. It was agreed that this can be the case.

9. Tenants' training

9.1 Yvonne Davis is coming to Harrogate to conduct a training session to tenants on Thursday 23rd March, it will be centred on meeting and charring skills, as well as some general tenant engagement information and tips.

9.2 Lucy explained that we have had a good response to this but reminded attendees if they hadn't yet confirmed attendance please could they do so.

10. Tenant Involvement Budget

10.1 A report summarising spend on the budget was shown. As previously anticipated some aspects of the budget were showing an overspend, but overall the total budget was fine.

10.2 Barbara commented that it was agreed the newsletter would be printed on glossy paper and it was not. Lucy said she would check we were not changed for this.

11. Any other business

11.1 Barbara queried some legislation that may be coming into force surround housing managers holding relevant qualifications. She asked what the implications on tenant would be should some officer need to gain qualifications. Steve explained this has not yet come into force but if it does, individuals can carry outs studies alongside their work. It shouldn't have an impact on tenants.

11.2 Lesley thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

13. Date of next meeting

13.1 The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 14 June at 2pm in The Stray Room, Civic Centre.

The meeting was closed at 4:05pm