

Partners Residents Open Forum Meeting 15 November 2018

Partners' staff: John Venning, Head of Asset Management, Katrina Dalby, Service Improvement and Engagement Advisor

Islington Council staff: Helen McNeill

12 Resident attendees

Discussion Item	Response if applicable	Actions
<p>Dealing with correspondence A resident wanted to know how Partners manages correspondence to ensure that it is replied to on time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners should reply to correspondence within 10 working days. The only exceptions to this are mutual exchange requests which have their own target response time (42 days) and service charge challenges. All enquiries received via post or email are allocated a unique reference number and tracked to ensure that they are responded to within 10 working days. Monthly reports are shared with Islington Council showing how well we're doing against this target. We're currently replying to 96% of PFI1 correspondence and 94% of PFI2 correspondence within 10 working days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that all enquiries are responded to within 10 working days please send them to enquiries@partnersislington.net or send them to Partners, 4-6 Colebrooke Place, London, N1 8HZ.
<p>Fire Safety A resident asked about Islington Council's fire safety programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islington Council will be starting a programme to install fire detection systems in the internal communal areas of all their street properties including those managed by Partners. The programme is expected to take 2-4 years to deliver and the Council will be writing to residents with more details on the fire detections systems and when their property is likely to be completed. Some residents have started to receive letters. Larger blocks will be prioritised. Flats will be fitted with heat sensors which will be linked to an integrated fire detection system in the communal areas. Residents' individual smoke alarms will not be linked to the integrated fire detection system. All front doors will be assessed to check that they adhere to fire regulation FD30 (doors withstand 30 minutes of fire). It is expected that 	

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	<p>most doors will already meet this standard and all that will be required is the fitting of a door closer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intumescent strips will be fitted around front door frames. These expand when they get hot to minimise smoke spreading. 	
<p>Cyclical Decorations - Tenant Section 20 Notices A resident asked whether tenants can have a copy of the cyclical decorations section 20 notice which details the planned work. They also asked whether we'd remove an external timber staircase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we're completing cyclical decorations, all residents will be allocated a Resident Liaison Officer. Their job is to guide residents through the process and answer any questions they may have. If you have any questions during your works please speak to your RLO. They should provide you with their mobile number but you can always contact them through our main number, 0800 587 3595. • Partners would only remove and replace a staircase if it was rotten. • Section 20 notices are for leaseholders. They detail the proposed work and leaseholder's share of the cost. Tenants are not given this information as a matter of course, however if a tenant would like details of the planned work we can share details of the survey taken once scaffolding is in place. If a tenant would like this they should ask their Resident Liaison Officer. 	
<p>Leaseholder service charges Residents raised concerns that when they have contacted the Service Charge Team they were told that they can only submit their queries via email.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents can contact our Service Charge Team by phone, email or letter. Staff have been reminded of this. We're sorry if this hasn't been the case. • If a resident is told that they have to put their query in writing, please contact Partners Service Improvement and Engagement Team on 0800 587 3595 or enquiries@partnersislington.net who will investigate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners to investigate 2 residents' individual service charge queries.
<p>Move incentives, Housing Benefit payments A resident enquired about moving house, incentives offered by Islington Council and whether Housing Benefit can be claimed where someone is privately renting from a relative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your home is too big for your needs you can consider downsizing to a smaller property. • Islington Council operate a scheme that can help with this. Full details are available on their website https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/moving-home/downsizing or you can call them 020 7527 4140 and choose option 3. • If you want to move home because you want to live in a different area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners to update individual resident.

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	<p>or your home is too big or too small for you there are various schemes which may help you including transferring or a mutual exchange. Full details are available on Islington Council’s website: https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/moving-home or you can contact your Housing Services Officer at Partners on 0800 587 3595.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeswapper is a scheme to facilitate mutual exchanges: https://www.homeswapper.co.uk/ • Where a person wants to claim Housing Benefit where they are renting from a private landlord who is their relative, they would have to demonstrate that they have rental liability. The landlord would have to prove that they are the landlord. The final decision would sit with Housing Benefit. For all specific enquiries, please speak to Housing Benefit direct on 020 7527 4990. 	
<p>Partners’ structure Residents asked for an explanation of Partners structure because they felt that our set up was confusing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structure chart is attached appendix 1 and has been added to Partners website. • Any questions about Partners structure should be directed to Partners Service Improvement and Engagement Team on 0800 587 3595 or enquiries@partnersislington.net. 	
<p>Partners’ Complaints Process Residents asked for an explanation of Partners complaints process as they felt it was difficult to access and understand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners has adopted Islington Council’s formal complaints process. Full details can be found on our website www.partnersislington.net or you can speak to a member of our Complaints Team on 0800 587 3595. • If it’s the first time you’ve spoken to us about an issue, we will treat it as a Service Alert, unless you tell us you want to formally complain. We will respond to Service Alerts within 10 working days. • Stage One Complaint • You can make a complaint over the phone, via our website, by email, by letter, or by filling out a complaints form and sending it by post. Tell us what’s gone wrong, and our Complaints Team will investigate the issues you have raised. They will contact you by telephone to discuss your complaint and then formally respond to you within 15 working days. • Stage One Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners to investigate individual resident’s complaint.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are unhappy with the Stage One response you receive, you should contact our Complaints Team within 1 month, explaining clearly the reasons why you have remained dissatisfied and what remedy would resolve your complaint. This is known as a Stage One review and will be responded to within 10 working days. • Chief Executive Stage • If you remain dissatisfied following the Stage One review you can ask that your concerns are looked at by Islington Council’s Corporate Customer Service Team at the Chief Executive stage of the complaints process. • Your request will then be considered by the Central Complaints Team at Islington Council who will let you know if they intend to proceed with an investigation. • Please note there is no automatic right to an escalation of your complaint to the Chief Executive Stage. If the Central Complaints Team decides that the complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily at Stage One, no further investigation will take place. • Finally, if you still aren’t satisfied with the outcome, you can complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The Housing Ombudsman Service will investigate a complaint only after you have completed all stages of the local complaints procedure described above. • The Complaints procedure will not operate in these circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where you are reporting an issue to Partners for the first time • Where you are taking or have taken or appear likely to take legal action against Partners. This is because decisions reached by a court cannot be overturned. • Where you are pursuing your legal right to an independent arbitration service. • Where you are making an insurance claim against us. • Where you are disputing your Leasehold service charge or major works bill. We will deal with your concerns under our 'Service Charge Challenge' procedure. • Where you are complaining about a service that Partners do not 	

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<p>No smoking signs/Zero tolerance/Airbnb Residents asked whether we can install no smoking signs in communal hallways. They also asked whether we are implementing the zero tolerance rules without exception and whether Partners has an Airbnb policy.</p>	<p>provide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners do not routinely install 'No Smoking' signs in communal hallways. If residents are experiencing issues with smoking in communal hallways they should report them to our Housing Services Team on 0800 587 3595 or enquiries@partnersislington.net. As part of their investigation the team may decide to install 'No Smoking' signs. Partners are implementing without exception Islington Council's clear and safe policy. Partners are following Islington Council's Airbnb guidance. If a resident has questions or concerns about Airbnb they should contact our Housing Services Team on 0800 587 3595 or enquiries@partnersislington.net. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners Housing Manager is attending the January 2019 meeting to answer residents' questions about Airbnb.
<p>Listed building alterations A resident asked for clarification of the alterations policy and whether retrospective permission can be granted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full details of Partners alterations policy are available on our website: https://www.partnersislington.net/leaseholders/alterations-and-improvements-to-your-home/ Depending on the type of alteration that is planned there are various permissions required. Some are issued by Islington Council and some are issued by Partners. If alterations are carried out without permission, residents have to apply for retrospective permission. If permission would have been granted then retrospective permission is usually granted. If permission is not granted then the alterations made would need to be reversed and the property returned to the original state. 	
<p>Contact Names Two residents shared that Partners staff were unwilling to provide their full names.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked, Partners staff should give their full name. If a member of staff refuses to give their full name, please contact Partners Service Improvement and Engagement Team on 0800 587 3595 or enquiries@partnersislington.net who will investigate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise at Partners Management Team meeting.
<p>Islington Council's Repairs Service A resident stated that Islington Council have a new process for managing repairs and wanted to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islington Council's Housing Repairs Teams use two systems which have been in place since August 2017. Synthesys which is used by Housing Direct as a diagnostic scripting tool for call handlers to help log repairs. This feeds into Oneserve which is the service's primary repairs scheduling and repairs management system. This manages repairs 	

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<p>know whether this meant that direct managed tenants were getting a better service than Partners residents.</p>	<p>carried out by the in-house team, supporting contractors and also links to materials suppliers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the service operates is described in the repairs guide on the council website under housing/repairs and maintenance. https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management. • Partners Repairs Team has similar tools to manage repairs. 'Housecall' provides our online diagnostic tool to help residents and staff identify repair issues. Our staff use our Repairs management database 'Planet' to record all current and historical repair requests. Planet feeds into our real time appointment and operative management system called 'Opt-time'. This system updates our operatives in real time via a handheld PDA. 	

Date of next meeting – Thursday 17 January 2019 – Islington Town Hall, Committee Room 3

Partners for Improvement in Islington

Partners is an organisation set up to deliver the two PFI (Private Finance Initiative) projects in Islington. Partners manages 6400 homes in Victorian and Georgian street properties owned by Islington Council. The Partnership brings together organisations with a wealth of experience in refurbishment, maintenance and management of housing. Each team has a specific role in the partnership.

	<p>Partners Housing Management Team Delivered by Hyde Housing Association Ltd</p> <p>Based in Partners' offices in Islington Customer Services Team – Answer calls to Partners main telephone number and respond to general housing and rent enquiries Housing Services Team – Deals with housing enquires Accounts Team – Collects rent from tenants and major works charges from leaseholders Anti-Social Behaviour Team – Investigates claims of anti-social behaviour</p> <p>Based in Hyde's offices at London Bridge Home Ownership Team – Deals with queries from leaseholders Service Charge Team - Manages leasehold service charges.</p>	<p>The SPV Team (SPV – Special Purpose Vehicle)</p> <p>Based at Partners Colebrooke Place Office. The staff of the SPV is provided by Hyde Housing Association.</p> <p>The SPV Team was set up to specifically deliver the PFI projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runs the two companies set up to deliver the PFI1 and PFI2 contracts. • Leads liaison with Islington Council • Monitors and reports performance • Manages the finance of the companies including payments from the Council and to the different teams • Overseeing strategic business planning, quality management and communications • Ownership of Partners complaints process. <p>The two holding companies (set up for each project, PFI1 and PFI2) are owned by 3 companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BOS Infrastructure No3 Ltd (a Bank of Scotland company, part of Lloyds Banking Group) - Palio (No 8) Ltd (a Jlif company) - Hyde Housing Association
	<p>Partners Repairs Team Delivered by Rydon Maintenance Ltd</p> <p>Based in Partners' Colebrooke Place Office Responsive Repairs Team – Deals with repair requests via their Dartford Help Desk. A team of operatives and supervisors deliver a responsive repairs service. Major Repairs Team – Deals with repairs which are beyond the scope of the Responsive Repairs Team. Cyclical Team – Delivers a rolling programme of external decorations for every property, approximately every 7 years.</p>	
	<p>Partners Heating Team Delivered by United Living</p> <p>Based in United Living's Swanley office</p> <p>Gas Team – Delivering a responsive repairs service for tenants' heating and hot water systems. Also carries out Landlord's annual gas safety checks.</p>	