

## Partners Residents Open Forum Meeting 18 July 2019

Partners' staff: Michelle O'Toole, Complaints and Communications Manager, Katrina Dalby, Service Improvement and Engagement Advisor

Islington Council staff: Helen McNeill

Islington Councillor: Mick O'Sullivan

7 Resident attendees

Discussion Item	Response if applicable	Actions
<p><b>Partners Gazette Consultation</b> After our last review 3 years ago, Partners are reviewing Partners Gazette to ensure it continues to meet residents' needs. The Forum were asked for their views on Partners Gazette.</p>	<p>Resident comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gazette is easy to read and it's good to get information about Partners</li> <li>• I like the booklet format</li> <li>• There aren't enough events relating to the north of the borough</li> <li>• Brickworks community centre runs good events which could be advertised</li> <li>• More community events</li> <li>• I like the pictures</li> <li>• Don't want long biographies about Partners staff</li> <li>• I like the information about Partners staff</li> <li>• More about residents</li> <li>• Jazz on the green</li> <li>• Glossary of events in the borough over the year e.g. Islington festivals.</li> <li>• Information to help stop social isolation – buddying, companionship, gardening schemes etc</li> <li>• Ask people if they'd rather get it via email to save paper</li> <li>• Social events for Partners residents e.g. trip to Christmas markets, Rochester</li> <li>• Information about Cyclical decorations – when we'll be working in which areas</li> <li>• Resident training – DIY – giving the skills to residents to do the things that they are responsible for in their homes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners to consider resident feedback during the Gazette review.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alterations/Listed Buildings</b> A resident expressed concern over</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners website details the alterations policy and advice for residents is available via our website:</li> </ul>	

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<p>the length of time taken to arrange removal of an unauthorised alteration where the Council had asked Partners to deal with it.</p>	<p>Tenants:  <a href="http://www.partnersislington.net/tenants/improving-your-home/">www.partnersislington.net/tenants/improving-your-home/</a>            Leaseholders:  <a href="http://www.partnersislington.net/leaseholders/alterations-and-improvements-to-your-home/">www.partnersislington.net/leaseholders/alterations-and-improvements-to-your-home/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact a proposed alteration may have on neighbours, listed building and conservation guidelines where applicable will always be considered as part of the alterations considerations.</li> <li>• If Partners become aware of an unauthorised alteration, the responsible resident would need to apply for retrospective consent. The same criteria are used for determining whether retrospective consent is granted. If consent is not granted residents would be expected to return the building to its original state.</li> <li>• When Islington Council's Planning Department notify Partners of a breach, Partners contacts the responsible resident and instructs them to comply with the Council's request. Partners would check whether the resident has complied and if not Partners instructs Hyde's Legal Team to take action. They will send an initial 'Letter Before Action' and deal with any resulting enquiries. If the resident doesn't comply with the request Partners will issue legal proceeding via Hyde's Legal Team.</li> <li>• It is impossible to put a timescale on any case where we take legal action. There are too many variables, and Partners are subject to the Court in terms of when they set a hearing date once an application has been issued.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Making Good</b>            A resident's intercom had been replaced but the remnants of the old intercom had not been properly removed. The resident asked whether Partners would return to make good.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making good an area should be included as part of a repair.</li> <li>• If a resident is concerned about the quality of a repair they should report it to us on 0800 587 3595 or <a href="mailto:enquiries@partnersislington.net">enquiries@partnersislington.net</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners to arrange appointment for resident</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Partners Communication</b> A resident raised concerns that the meaning within Partners replies to their correspondence was actually the opposite of what was being said. They felt that managers blamed staff within the process for errors, when the staff didn't have the authority to make the decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We know it is vital that the information we give residents in our communications is accurate and well written.</li> <li>• All new staff attend a Partners induction where they are given Partners style guide which explains how they should communicate with residents.</li> <li>• Partners Service Improvement and Engagement Team audit 10% of all Partners correspondence and complaint replies each month to ensure that they meet our expected standards and to identify any training needs.</li> <li>• The scores and feedback are shared with staff each month to help us continuously improve.</li> <li>• If a resident feels that our communication with them is unprofessional or unclear then they should raise this with our Complaints and Communications team via <a href="mailto:enquiries@partnersislington.net">enquiries@partnersislington.net</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners to arrange meeting with residents to review specific examples which they believe demonstrate their concerns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fire Safety</b> A resident asked about the fire safety programme and whether Partners will carry out any work Islington Council identify.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islington Council have started 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 and inspections.</li> <li>• Larger blocks will be prioritised.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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 most doors will already meet this standard and all that will be required is the fitting of a door closer.</li> <li>• Intumescent strips will be fitted around front doors. These expand when they get hot to minimise smoke spreading.</li> <li>• Any work identified by Islington's surveyors will be managed by</li> </ul>	

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	Islington Council.	
<p><b>Scaffolding</b> Residents raised concerns about scaffolding and being given adequate notice for its installation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We know that residents find scaffolding inconvenient and want it in place for as short a time as possible.</li> <li>Last summer we introduced a new range of letters to improve communication when scaffolding is required by our Responsive and Major Works Teams. This included additional letters to neighbours which keep them updated throughout the repair process.</li> <li>If residents have any questions about scaffolding they should contact us on 0800 587 3595 or <a href="mailto:enquiries@partnersislington.net">enquiries@partnersislington.net</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners to investigate individual cases and respond directly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners Complaints Procedure</b> A resident raised concerns that when they made a complaint the Complaints Team dismissed their concerns and involved the person who their complaint was about rather than trying to resolve the complaint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners Complaints Team are an independent team who investigate Stage 1 complaints. They do need to speak to staff members involved in a case to gain an understanding of the issues, but they are independent and their response and decision as to whether to uphold the complaint is theirs alone.</li> <li>Complaint responses are reviewed monthly with managers from across Partners to ensure that we are learning from our mistakes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resident was asked to send an email which they claim to have received in error to Michelle O'Toole.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ASB Language</b> A resident was concerned about the use of the term 'perpetrator' in relation to ASB where an individual has mental health distress at the Council's Scrutiny meeting in February 2018. They felt that Partners hadn't responded to the Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners Head of Housing, Doug Pope, had previously apologised for causing any offence whilst using this term.</li> <li>Where ASB is reported, staff will carry out a full multi agency investigation and will be clear on any additional needs a resident may have and consider these when taking any action. We always use the term 'alleged perpetrator' until the facts of the case are known.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners ASB Manager is attending the November 2019 Open Forum and we can discuss the terminology used.</li> </ul>

**Date of next meeting – Thursday 19 September 2019 – 222 Upper Street**

