

Notes from Partners' Open Forum – Thursday 18 March 2026 – 1800-1900

Staff Attendees: Katrina Dalby – Service Improvement and Engagement Manager, Michelle O’Toole, Head of Contracts, Sarah Raw, Service Charge Team Leader, Daniel Miller, Home Ownership Team Leader

Council Attendee: Ross Treseder

Resident Attendees: 4

Subject	Record of Discussion	Action Points	Key
<p>Action updates from January’s meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability data collection form – Thank you to everyone who reviewed the amended form. It was significantly changed following resident feedback and was sent to residents for the first time at the beginning of March. We have also added it to our website and have QR code which we are including in letters so people can complete it online if they prefer. We also will include the QR code in the Gazette. • The Cyclical Text message sent too close to the appointment date was investigated by Paula Redpath and the resident was updated. • The Cyclical Decorations leaflet was updated following residents’ feedback and is on Partners website: www.partnersislington.net/publications/cyclical-decorations-information-leaflet/ 	<p>Send updated vulnerability form to residents to see</p>	
<p>Information from Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Regulator completed their inspection of Islington Council’s services which includes Partners and we await their feedback. • We’ve started work on contacting residents who may require a PEEP, thank you to everyone who has helped us with this process. Letters were sent last week to around 300 residents who live in a property over 11 meters tall. We’re starting to get returns from the residents and booking appointments to discuss PEEPS. 		<p>PEEPS – personal emergency evacuation plans coming into law in April 2026</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We included 2 competitions in the latest Gazette which resulted in a good rate of return. The purpose of the competitions was to encourage people to read the Gazette as it contains lots of useful and important information. • Partners Cinema Club is happening on Wednesday 25 March. There are still spaces available if anyone would like to come. 		
<p>Partners Annual Service Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the time of year when we start planning for the year ahead. We have contractual deliverables around the service that we must deliver to residents and the Council, but the Annual Service Plan is about the non-contractual work that we want to do to help us improve our service and become more efficient. • Internally we've discussed the 2026-27 plan and what improvements we want to make, and we've asked the Council to provide their priorities for our service. We also want to know what residents think. We will include information in the next Gazette to tell people what we're planning to deliver and ask them to tell us if there's anything they'd like included. <p>Currently the draft plan includes actions around these areas of the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree high level milestones for the PFI1 handback. • Review resident communications regarding repairs appointments • Maintain satisfaction with Cyclical, Kitchen and Boiler programmes • Complete any ombudsman spotlight reviews on Partners service • Implement recommendations from Regulator's inspection. • Maximise collection of resident vulnerability data • Review process for leaseholder management fee and ensure comms are clear <p>Residents were asked for their suggestions on what our priorities and improvement areas should be.</p>	<p>No suggestions were made during the meeting, and residents were asked to provide any feedback directly to Katrina Dalby.</p>	

<p>Service Charge Follow Up Questions</p>	<p>A leaseholder at the meeting raised follow up questions regarding service charges from the previous meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service charge capping occurred from 2003 to 2011 and was then phased out during 2011-2016. An adequate explanation as to why the cap was removed has not been provided by Partners. Was it a mistake to initially apply the cap? If it wasn't a mistake, why was it removed? • The total management fee more than tripled from 2011/12 to 2024/25 (£187>£613), and took a leap just in the last year. This leap seems to relate mainly to office overheads (£160k for 24/25 compared to an estimate of just £53k, and to an actual of £68k for 23/24), but this huge increase in office overheads has not been explained by Partners. Also, was there a cap in 23/24 that was released for 24/25 and if so, why? <p>At the meeting, Islington Council explained that they did implement a cap between 2003-2016. When the contract started in 2003 it was agreed that the service charge should be set at the same rate as the charge applied to Council leaseholders. In 2011 it was established that applying the cap resulted in the costs charged to Partners leaseholders being significantly below the actual costs incurred, and therefore the cap was phased out over several years. The Council are not aware of any cap being applied since 2016.</p> <p>It was agreed during the meeting that Partners would create a timeline detailing service charges and caps to help explain what the history behind them.</p>	<p>Check wording of their questions with the leaseholder.</p> <p>Partners to provide a timeline of service charge changes.</p>	
<p>Soundproofing</p>	<p>A resident submitted the following question in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some local authorities include improvements in social housing where there is a community need. There have in my particular instance 		

	<p>been numerous reports of noise nuisances due to poor noise insulation, when will this be addressed and why has it not been addressed previously given that the properties are so old and realistically should have been maintained to a higher standard?</p> <p>Response from Islington Council:</p> <p>Islington Council’s street properties are mainly Georgian and Victorian buildings converted around the 1970’s. These homes provide much needed homes for the borough but as properties that were converted from single family homes, they do not have the same sound insulation as would have been achieved for purpose-built flats. This does result in residents experiencing noise transmission between properties and this can cause problems and complaints between neighbours where lifestyles or noise levels vary.</p> <p>This can be upsetting for those involved and can often result from a simple difference in lifestyles between two households such as washing machines in anti-social hours, loud audio devices or residents working different shifts patterns from one another. The council has explored some of the complex technical remedies available to address this type of problem and the outcome of this piece of work concluded that the costs and major disruption involved to residents living in these properties, often having to be temporarily re-housed during the works process, outweigh any quantifiable reduction of noise interference. A key component to the improvement in noise transmission is the installation of carpets and underlay in upper properties and is the most effective and affordable remedy to noise issue problems.</p> <p>In most cases, structural or invasive works would cost tens of thousands of pounds per property and would require planning and building control consent and, if lifestyle issues remained the same,</p>		
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	<p>significant improvement from works could not be guaranteed. The continued strain on public sector finance considerably limits the council's ability to fund such works to social housing stock and, as outcomes are uncertain, this does not represent good value for money.</p> <p>The council attempts to work with neighbours with these issues to try to improve any difficult situations and manage expectations by providing guidance on managing lifestyles and offering mediation where appropriate.</p> <p>Resident Question: A resident at the meeting cited her experience where her neighbour is carrying out DIY in the early hours of the morning.</p> <p>Partners Response: Partners reminds residents when they move into their home that they must comply with the terms of their tenancy or lease. This includes not carrying out DIY between 11pm and 7am. If a resident has any concerns about their neighbour's behaviour in the first instance, we recommend talking to them. Try explaining what they are doing and when you can hear them. They may not realise that their activities are affecting you. If this doesn't help them, please contact us so that we can investigate. Leaflets about noise transmission are available on our website: www.partnersislinton.net/publications/noise-information-leaflets/</p> <p>Resident Information: A resident explained that they felt that noise in their home had increased since their neighbour removed their chimney breast. They had spoken to them about it, and this had helped but the noise had still increased since the breast was removed.</p>	<p>Partners to ask Housing Officer to contact resident about noise. Partners to send resident diary sheets.</p>	
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	<p>Partners Response: If a resident wants to carry out alterations to their home Council/Partners must give permission for the work they plan to do. This would include ensuring that any change wouldn't have a negative impact on their neighbours. The property in question is not owned by the Council and therefore the same requirements do not apply. If a resident has any concerns about work someone is doing to a property not owned by the Council, they should contact the Council's Building Control department for guidance.</p>		
<p>Rent Increase</p>	<p>Question submitted in advance of the meeting from a resident:</p> <p>1) As a tenant who has only recently moved into the area and been subjected to increased rent, I have failed to see improvements from last year's rental increase (if any at all). Can the team elaborate on what substantial improvements can be noticed with rental increases. Rent increases and works to be completed with said increase.</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <p>Rent increases are used to help provide all landlord services to council residents. There are increased costs each year, relating to items such as increases to staffing costs (national pay settlements, changes to employer's contributions) and contractual costs (which usually include inflationary cost increases) including Partners, repairs and maintenance contractors and material costs where services are directly delivered. Rent increases help to fund these increasing costs and any additional services, for example the door checks that are required on some properties under building safety requirement. The rent increase letters will usually set out areas that the increase will go towards in that coming year and also try to explain additional costs – for instance there has again been a lot of work that has gone into our approach to damp</p>		

	<p>& mould in preparation and response to the regulation changes that came into effect in October 2025 and in readiness for further legislative changes around how we respond to other hazards. However, the actual rent increase is based on the guidance we receive from our regulator about the maximum increases that social landlords can apply.</p> <p>Improvements from the last year's increase- Islington Council and Partners continuously work on improving services. Some of these improvements do not always cost money and can be achieved by process changes etc. However, Islington Council has invested significant money to improve the fire safety of all of its buildings including Partners properties. This remains an ongoing programme involving installing fire doors, emergency lighting and smoke alarms in communal areas. Some improvement, or legal changes about how we manage properties will lead to additional costs but as set out above, cost rises in employment, material and contracted services, all need to be covered by rent increases.</p>		
<p>Windows</p>	<p>A resident at the meeting enquired about whether their windows can be replaced with double glazed windows as they were feeling the cold.</p> <p>Windows are subject to planning regulations and properties in conservation areas which many Partners properties are located cannot install double glazing.</p> <p>In the first instance if residents have concerns about their windows, they should contact Partners Repairs team on 0800 587 3595. The team will check that no window repairs are required, or whether they need replacing.</p> <p>Following this if residents are concerned about the temperature in their home, they can contact the Council's SHINE team who can advise on</p>		

	energy efficiency and warmth. www.islington.gov.uk/environment-and-energy/energy/shine They can also arrange for an energy doctor to visit and make recommendations to help keep the home warmer.		
New Boiler	A resident at the meeting explained that she had had her new boiler fitted and that the team were trying to reach the flu with a ladder. This has happened before and she told them that they would need a scaffold to reach. The resident asked why Partners don't already know that scaffolding would be needed as this has happened previously. Partners thanked the resident for their feedback and noted that she had raised a very good point which we would investigate internally and update the Forum.	Check how teams share property information.	
Next Meeting May 21st 1800-1900 Partners Insurance Officer			