

## Mill Farm Close Housing Management Sub Group Meeting

3 March 2009

### Resident Representatives in attendance:

Jackie Fineman, Phil and Olive Balch, Jayne Starrett, Mariam Yabou

**Advisors:** Alison Pegg – Harrow Council; Louis Blair – First Call

**Catalyst Housing Group:** Ian Scott (District Housing Manager), Roger Heyes (Maintenance Manager)

	Action
<p><b>1. Introductions</b></p> <p>LB introduced the meeting the purpose of which was to hear about Catalyst's proposals in relation to how they would repair and maintain the estate if the transfer was to proceed.</p>	
<p><b>2. Matters Arising</b></p> <p>A revised Tenancy Agreement giving details of the preserved rights will need to be brought back to a future meeting.</p>	MC
<p><b>3. Repairs and Maintenance Proposal from Catalyst</b></p> <p>RH explained Catalysts approach to repairs and maintenance. All calls are made to their Call Centre which has 10 staff. There is a 24 hour emergency service. It may not be a Freephone number (as provided by the Council – Catalyst to confirm). They run an on the spot appointment system convenient to the tenant. So whilst they have the same categories for repairs and standard response target times as other landlords the time at which the repair will be fixed is agreed with the tenant. This means performance against targets doesn't always look positive although tenants are happy with the convenience of the appointment system.</p> <p>LB – Catalyst will need to consider how the appointment approach is an improvement on the current Council service</p> <p>They have moved to a right first time service rather time based in terms of monitoring performance.</p> <p>Alongside day to day repairs they also carry out Planned Maintenance (Decent Homes works), external painting, stock reinvestment eg replacement kitchens), gas servicing and voids.</p> <p>RH circulated the Repairs handbook. This aims to help people give the correct information to the Call Centre so that the repair is correctly diagnosed so that it can be fixed as quickly as possible. The contractors carry parts in their vans to deal with the most common reported repairs.</p> <p>LB commented that the booklet is not as clear on the priorities between different repairs (as the Council's handbook). The link between this and the appointment based system will need to be made clear.</p> <p>JF stated that people need to understand that only necessary repairs will be carried out on flats due to be demolished. What works can be done to make the flats more liveable which don't cost too much money? RH suggested the type of works which could be considered is installation of extractor fans, draught stripping prioritising the last blocks to be demolished first.</p> <p>MY asked about the windows and RH suggested "meanwhile" works might include easing and draught stripping as replacement would not be an option if</p>	MC  MC  MC

they are to be demolished.

New buildings will have materials that reduce future maintenance costs. Eg they will put in new double glazed windows although Catalyst does not use uPVC for environmental reasons.

The timescale for the works is currently: ballot – summer 09, transfer of estate Early 2010, building works start April 2010 in 3 phases over 5 years.

LB asked about internal decorations programmes and assistance to tenants. Catalyst offer discretionary repairs and assistance with gardening – there is no blanket programme to decorate for example all 1 beds. They have access to a charitable fund for people who do not have the ability to pay for things themselves. They fully redecorate all void properties.

They hold estate Inspection meetings quarterly which are attended by surveyors and estate managers.

PB asked who will maintain the communal gardens. IS advised there are different services for estates depending on what residents want. Larger estates do have residential caretakers, however this service is more expensive and the service charge will be higher. A mobile service (similar to the existing one) would normally be offered to an estate like Mill Farm.

MC advised that as Catalyst are committed to keeping the service charge the same as it is now; all services will need to be contained within the current cost levels. At the present time they haven't costed to provide additional services such as communal cleaning.

LB suggested Catalyst might want to consider what additional services would be offered as a gesture within the first "100 days" that would make an immediate difference.

PB/JF suggested a one-off deep clean within the blocks.

In response to concerns about rubbish, Catalyst advised this can be costly. Where this is a problem they have a system for additional monthly rubbish collections at a fixed price with their contract.

Recycling options will be designed in to the new homes.

Skips will be provided when residents start to move home.

Catalyst has installed mobile CCTV to catch residents who regularly dump rubbish rather than arrange for proper removal.

LB suggested that an estate walkabout with residents is arranged with the Catalyst managers. MC to organise. Suggested date: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 3 pm.

MC

**4. Any Other Business**

None

**5 Next Meeting**

**Tuesday 10th March 7 – 8.30 pm. Topic – Rehousing including decanting**