

Mill Farm Close Housing Management Sub Group Meeting

11 February 2009

Resident Representatives in attendance:

Jackie Fineman, Darrel Alexander, P Omkararuban, Harry Hilliard, S Alderson

Advisors: Alison Pegg – Harrow Council; Ian Simpson – First Call

Catalyst Housing Group: Andy Reid

	Action
<p>1. Introductions</p> <p>IS introduced the meeting the purpose of which was to hear about Catalyst's proposals in relation to how they would manage the estate if the transfer was to proceed.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the low turn out. SA suggested that some of the meetings be held on a Saturday morning to enable working tenants such as her to attend. IS/AP agreed to consider this.</p>	IS/AP
<p>2. Management Proposals from Catalyst</p> <p>AR from Catalyst spoke about their proposals. He repeated that Catalyst want to hear from residents about what sort of management service they require so that their final proposals reflect residents wishes.</p> <p>Catalyst's key drivers are that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They have enough people both pre and post ballot to provide the required information and deliver the agreed service 2. There is a smooth transition – that they build on what already works well and make the improvements residents want. <p>HH commented that lots of promises have been made and that residents will need to see them in writing. IS/AP confirmed this is the purpose of the formal "Offer" document – it commits Catalyst to deliver everything that is written in it and which tenants vote on.</p> <p><u>Local Management base</u> – AR confirmed that there will be a local base during the pre-ballot period; either a vacant flat or a portakabin will be set up in Mill Farm Close.</p> <p><u>Management service</u> – Catalyst have 12 Neighbourhood managers who are responsible for around 400 properties. There are 2 District Housing Managers who oversee around 2500 properties each plus a Maintenance Manager and surveyors. There is also a Community Development officer</p> <p>A call centre takes all enquiries from residents. Most people make contact by telephone. The Call centre deals with 80% of calls which are answered within 20 seconds. More complicated enquiries are passed to the Neighbourhood managers who will arrange to meet residents in their homes if necessary.</p> <p>AR offered to organise a visit to the Call centre is residents want to see how it works and call are dealt with.</p> <p>There is an emergency out of hour's service so these can be dealt with 24/7.</p> <p>IS suggested that AR bring along a copy of the CHHA tenants handbook to a future meeting.</p> <p>Responding to a question regarding a permanent local office, AR advised that most tenants make their enquiries by telephone rather than personal visit.</p>	AR

<p>Neighbourhood Managers visit their estates rather than expecting tenants to travel to them and they find this more effective than having a local office.</p> <p>SA asked about when the building would start, how people will be moved and will it be 5 years before tenants are rehoused. AR confirmed that as the design is progressed it will be possible to see if the rehousing process can be speeded up. There will be a specific meeting on the rehousing and decanting process.</p> <p><u>Anti Social behaviour</u> - IS asked Catalyst to explain how they deal with anti social behaviour. AR advised there is no specialist team as there are not enough problems in their stock to support this approach. The Neighbourhood managers provide a general service which includes dealing with ASB – Catalyst take this very seriously.</p> <p>They define low key ASB as noise, dogs, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and serious ASB would be dealing with something like a crack house. They approach ASB as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevention – the Tenancy Agreements is specific about what constitutes ASB. The use Probationary tenancies for new tenants – these would not be applicable to existing Mill Farm tenants. This enables tenants who cause ASB to be more easily evicted if necessary in the first 12 months of a tenancy. For example they evicted a tenant in Barnet within 6 months due to constant complaints of ASB by neighbours. 2. Enforcement – they initially adopt a mediation approach by getting neighbours to talk to each other and recognise the impact their behaviour has on each other. All complaints are logged on a system so they are properly monitored. The Neighbourhood Manager visits the complainant and perpetrator and talks to other witnesses as well as getting independent views from for eg the Police etc. The ASB may be dealt with by mediation, if there is clear evidence of a breach of tenancy conditions then action will be taken – warning letter followed by NOSP. They have evicted tenants for ASB. Will also consider ASB contracts, demotion of tenancy. Obviously all of the above does rely on support from residents who may need to provide witness evidence. <p>HH asked if it would be possible to designate some blocks for over 50's to help prevent ASB. AR suggested this be discussed in the rehousing meeting. However it's not always possible to deal with it in this way as this constrains how you let properties in the future.</p>	
<p>3. Tenancy Agreement</p> <p>It was agreed to defer this discussion to a future meeting. AR was asked to provide a draft Tenancy Agreement reflecting all the preserved rights that would be included as opposed to their standard Agreement which would not be suitable for transferring tenants.</p>	<p>AR</p>
<p>3. Any Other Business</p> <p>It was agreed to defer the discussion on Rents and Service Charges to the last meeting which will now be on the 24th March.</p> <p>It was agreed that the draft Offer document will be put on the website as it is developed</p>	<p>MC</p>
<p>8 Next Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 3rd March 7 – 8.30 pm. Topic – Repairs and Maintenance service</p>	