



**MINUTES OF THE HERTFORD AND OUTER LONDON RESIDENT PANEL MEETING
HELD ON 4 JULY 2022
MEETING HELD AT PRIORY HALL, WARE**

PRESENT	AD MIQ JJH DC PL SR CR	Hertford Panel Chair and Customer Service Committee Member Hertford Panel Member Hertford Panel Member Hertford Panel Member Hertford Panel Member Councillor & Independent Hertford Panel Member Councillor & Independent Hertford Panel Member
IN ATTENDANCE	SH SA TH DG AT	Resident Engagement Manager Performance & Data Quality Manager Resident Engagement Officer Executive Director of Development Complaints Officer
APOLOGIES	ZH MM JR CB	Hertford Panel Member Head Of Resident Engagement & Customer Insight Executive Of People & Partnerships Senior Communications Manager (Building Safety)
NOT PRESENT	NR BS	Independent Hertford Panel Member Hertford Panel Member
MINUTE TAKER	TH	Resident Engagement Officer

1	Introduction to new Chairs	Action
1.01	SH introduced AD as new Panel Chair acknowledging her existing relationship with panel as a previous panel member and thanked PL for his involvement previously. SH advised she'd be supporting meeting in absence of MM and handed meeting over to AD as Chair.	
1.02	AD introduced herself to the panel and advised that she has attended various induction sessions as she is new to the role.	
2	Welcome and Apologies	AD
2.01	The Chair welcomed the panel.	
2.02	Apologies were received from MM, JR, CB & ZH. BS and NR were not present.	

3	Declarations of interest (declarations of interest to have been provided to the Chair)	AD
3.01	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.02	TH advised the meeting would be recorded for the benefit of the minutes and the recording would be disposed of accordingly once the minutes had been approved by Chair.	
4	Matters arising – Action Log	AD
4.01	SH gave updates on action that are currently awaiting completion and advised on all completed actions.	
4.02	An outstanding action to arrange a separate session/meeting with the Hertford Neighbourhood team is ongoing. SH queried the purpose of the meeting to check the action would achieve the panel members intended purpose and the action was from the panel meeting in July 2021. MM had already asked the team for dates of evening session.	
4.03	PL said yes to still go ahead, mentioning it is a small team so wouldn't be difficult.	
4.04	AD advised that the panel would still like this to go ahead	
4.05	SH stated that the action would remain on the log	
5	Governance	SH
5.01	SH introduced the item which highlighted, based on the review process, discussions throughout Network Homes' governance structure were resident focussed.	
5.02	The papers were taken as read and opened the item up to panel members to ask questions.	
5.03	MIQ questioned where the results from the surveys came from, as the panel wasn't asked for their input in the governance review.	
5.04	SH responded that the independent review wasn't open for resident feedback in this way other than Resident Committee Members and the consultant came to his conclusion following reading previous minutes of all committee meetings for two quarters and observing committee and board meetings which highlighted discussions and decisions were resident focussed.	

5.05	MIQ shared she didn't feel the review was objective if the consultant was only interviewing Network Homes.	
5.06	SH advised that all members of the customer service committee were invited to attend an interview to offer feedback relating to governance such as each committees purpose including resident Panel Chairs.	
5.07	PL said he was not invited to an interview with Mark, and the consultant didn't ask any questions when he came to the previous panel meeting. SH clarified the consultant was only in attendance to observe.	
5.08	SH confirmed she would check previous emails to see if PL was invited along with all other committee members.	SH
5.09	DC referenced a personal matter where he has had to deal with Network Homes on several occasions and he has found that the focus isn't always customer/resident focussed feeling it can take time get things resolved. He stated that he would find it a lot easier to have a direct phone number for certain teams, rather than having to call the contact centre.	
5.10	DC commented that the cost-of-living crisis is making life very difficult for many, and that a lot of the newer homes being built for purchase are more energy efficient, than those for renting residents. Suggested a pilot at his block for solar panels and electric car charging points as feels they would be low cost.	
5.11	SH advised that there is a full sustainability strategy to look into how to improve efficiency of homes and work towards net zero, in line with government, by including retrofits of older homes and electric car charging points etc. Explained there is currently a pilot project for 200 low energy performance homes in Herts and Outer London to see if residents bills can be reduced.	
5.12	DG advised that there is a new development in the Hertford region being built, and that the panel would be welcome to do a site tour to see the specification and how properties are being built to be more efficient. He will be happy to work alongside the RE team to arrange this.	
5.13	DG To arrange a site visit for the Hertford panel to view the works on a local development, Thieves Lane, that is currently under construction.	DG/RE Team
5.14	PL raised he didn't feel the information about decisions once they go to committees is shared with panels or updates on panel members' feedback.	

5.15	SH commented the access to the Customer Service Committee is to enable these conversations but takes the feedback on board so we can improve on how feedback is used, and updates come back to panels.	
5.16	PL highlighted the review mentioned the panel aren't involved in strategic decisions and the agendas are very full which makes it difficult to feel the panel have a voice to influence. MIQ, JJH and AD agreed.	
5.17	PL added it feels as though decisions have been made before they come to panels and the panel feel they are a tick box.	
5.18	SH said it was interesting to hear the panel members say this as the agenda is often including more information linked to consultation, the 'need to know' topics and what we need to share for compliance with consumer standards. SH asked what do the panel feel are strategic conversations such as performance.	
5.19	MIQ stated that she doesn't feel resident's views are required in decisions as much as they could be.	
5.20	SH advised that the Resident Engagement Team send out emails to all involved residents frequently asking for volunteers to join us in resident focus groups and consultations. We also send out surveys every year to all Network Homes residents. We don't always get many responses from residents in these cases and would like many more, but we do offer the opportunity to get involved and give us resident insight in a variety of ways such as email, texts, post and online events but have struggled with getting residents to respond so we welcome more ideas from residents which is on the agenda to discuss.	
5.21	MIQ confirmed she has seen this content, such as the survey about preferences for services and communications as an example.	
5.22	MIQ asked if the residents input will be required for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys.	
5.23	SA advised that Network Homes do not set the survey questions and are not being involved in setting them, as they are put in place by the government but resident feedback on how Network Homes ask the questions has been completed.	
5.24	SH advised that residents will be further encouraged to offer feedback on their landlords as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measure initiative	

	where residents will be asked to complete surveys with themes for questions set by the RSH (Regulator of Social Housing).	
5.25	AD asked if residents will have the opportunity to feed into what the questions will be in the planning of the project.	
5.26	SA advised that there was a meeting earlier in the year with involved residents giving feedback on the content and the questions. SA also stated that this was offered to all involved residents to take part.	
5.27	Panel members didn't recall the invitation, but PL clarified there was no mention of it in a meeting. PL commented the request to be involved was in the meeting but not sent out to panels.	
5.28	TH will clarify when the tenant satisfaction measures was presented to Local Panels for feedback and request to be involved in a focus group.	TH
5.29	AD closed the agenda item due to time and reiterated the panel would like to be more involved in strategic decisions and conversations.	
6	Consumer standards and the role of the panels	SH
6.01	The item was introduced by SH.	
6.02	SH re-iterated the importance of the panels in terms of our governance and meeting our consumer standards and using the Customer Service Committee to advise if the panel feels we aren't meeting the standards, holding Network Homes to account or highlighting areas of improvement from a strategic resident perspective.	
6.03	MIQ stated that people often don't stay engaged to assist us in meeting these standards, due to being let down and stated that not all residents are reached out to offer feedback.	
6.04	SH re-iterated that every winter we send out surveys to all residents. Last year we contacted over 17,000 properties to offer the opportunity to have their say and we only had 1,500 responses.	
6.05	CR stated that some residents may find it difficult to give feedback in this way.	
6.06	SH stated that this is something we're very conscious of, and we try a variety of methods to ensure all residents can give us feedback.	
6.07	SH acknowledged that not all residents are digitally enabled, and may need other methods of contact in order to have their say, and this is something we discuss regularly.	

7	Complaints	AT
7.01	This agenda item was introduced by AT.	
7.02	MIQ asked whether the findings from the housing ombudsman's complaint handling code have been published and are available to residents.	
7.03	AT & SH advised that the findings have only been analysed and is still being worked on, so isn't available for residents to view yet.	
7.04	MIQ referenced a personal complaint where she was advised to escalate her complaints to the Housing Ombudsman if dissatisfied with Network Homes' response, but her ideal outcome was to find a resolution to her complaint without the Ombudsman which made her feel disregarded.	
7.05	AT and SH advised including the escalation process to the Housing Ombudsman is a requirement we must follow and is to support residents getting resolutions to their complaints if still unhappy with the landlord's responses.	
7.06		
7.07	MIQ referenced her complaint taking two and a half years to resolve as she wanted Network to resolve the issue without having to go to the Ombudsman.	
7.08	MIQ advised that when she has made complaints previously, she was immediately offered compensation for a missed appointment rather than resolving the issue.	
7.09	AT advised that residents do not have to request compensation, but it is offered as well as redress without being a complaint being logged.	
7.10	PL stated that it isn't sufficient to offer someone £10 compensation if a contractor had failed to turn up to an appointment, as people may have had to take time off work unpaid or arrange for someone else to be there to allow access.	
7.11	PL would like to know if alternative options are being looked into for compensation awards and for Network Homes to do more cause analysis for lessons learnt.	AT
7.12	AT advised that it was previously a £10 Love 2 Shop voucher that was awarded to a resident in this instance, outside of the compensation policy. This changed to a £10 cash award to the residents' rent account and has now changed to the resident's bank account following continuous reviews.	

7.13	AT added the team has a lot of complaints to support with at present, which is continuing to grow so additional support has been approved and the additional capacity will help the team do more analysis for internal lessons learnt sessions.	
8	Building safety	SH
8.01	The item was introduced by SH on behalf of CB.	
8.02	SH added that we did an internal lunch and learn information session for colleagues to give guidance on the new building safety legislation.	
8.03	SH also advised that within the new building safety bill, there is a lot of focus on social landlords empowering residents to know more about building safety and safety in the home, and their rights and responsibilities.	
8.04	DG stated that it has also given more rights to leaseholders not to be financially charged for building safety works and measures on certain items but having clear lines as to what these are will be set by Government.	
8.05	DG said that there will be some work to do to communicate this to residents.	
8.06	AD & PL asked if there are alot properties in the Hertford region applicable to the high-rise building safety checks.	
8.07	DG sated that there is a vastly lower number of these properties compared to in the London region.	
8.08	DG stated that he is happy to arrange a site visit to a new development in Hertford, so the panel can see the current buildings under construction from a building safety viewpoint.	
8.09	SH referred the panels to the recommendation of the papers to review the building safety communications plan for feedback and additional considerations. Asked the panel how we should communicate this information to residents in an engaging way as letters go out all the time, how do we make it eye-catching as we must inform all residents over 16 years old.	
8.10	MIQ responded that having something colourful and eye-catching on communal noticeboards. DC agreed. Also having a 'community matters' information in the resident newsletter as a place for all general, and specific information, in a ' <i>did you know</i> ' style.	

8.11	DC suggested making use of different methods for London engagement to Herts and Outer London such as notices in parish halls. SH thanked DC for this insight as it is something we can investigate to move forward and welcomed more ideas by email.	
8.12	MIQ also mentioned making best use of Neighbourhood Officers as 'on the ground' liaisons to share information. She added she doesn't see her officer anymore.	
8.13	SH advised tenancy visits are no longer conducted on a programmed basis but are active in communities to resolve queries.	
9	Network Homes' Performance Report	SA
9.01	Panel chair asked if we could re-visit this item another time due to time constraints in the meeting.	
9.02	PL stated that he has seen no change in performance over the last three years that he has been on the panel.	
9.03	SH stated that one of the things to note from the report was the implementation of fines to the contractor for poor performance.	
9.04	SH followed up that this was discussed with the London panel, so it's positive to see this implementation as a result of ongoing resident discussion.	
10	Resident engagement update	SH
10.01	The item was introduced by SH.	
10.02	SH advised the panel that the updates on what the team has been working on are in the provided document and asked the panel if they had any questions in response or suggestions to connect with more residents.	
10.03	The panel had no questions but suggested ensuring opportunities are included in newsletters.	
10.04	SH confirmed we currently do this and will try to make them more tailored to people who've recently had the services.	
11	Panel Business	ALL
11.01	AD suggested that running order of specific agenda item could be changed, so panel business could be at the start of the meeting, as the meeting often run over and there is less time for panel business at the end.	

11.02	AD stated she would like to add Right to Buy to the next agenda, and sustainability updates.	
11.03	SH responded our Sustainability sponsor would be delighted to hear this as he wants more resident involvement in this discussion.	
11.04	Peter Benz to be invited to next panel meeting.	RE Team
11.05	SH to share sustainability strategy from Network Homes website.	SH
11.06	SH responded that we do have an internal sustainability group and we have x 2 sustainability themed face to face events coming up in Summer.	
11.07	AD added that the panel would like an update on estate management in Hertford, cost of living support, an update on the Plentific project and the results of the consultation of the damp & mould policy.	
11.08	SH advised she was unable to give updates on these topics due to not being fully informed of matters within different teams but would be able to share information after the meeting or propose on the next agenda.	
11.09	AD agreed this would work to move forward.	
11.10	Any other business tabled at the end of the meeting by SH was to ask panel members if they wanted tablets to view panel papers on.	
11.11	AD to receive as a Committee Member. JJH requested an iPad. SH advised JJH would need to return the device she has already to be able to reset this. JJH is unable to find her current device. MIQ, PL and DC don't need devices.	
11.12	Any other business by SH regarding venue to clarify if panel feel it is suitable. MIQ and PL queried why Yeomans Court is not being used, SH advised the venue is not suitably accessible for all panel members.	
11.13	Venue is appropriate and discussions regarding internet access reliability to be raised with venue. SR advised he can support with this.	
12	Minutes from the meeting of 11 April 2022	
	<i>For Information, not to be discussed unless so requested</i>	
13	Housing Sector hot topics	
	<i>For Information, not to be discussed unless so requested</i>	

Next Meeting Scheduled for 3 October2022

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Chair

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Date