



## Summary of Resident Panel meeting held on February 18 2021 via Zoom

**Residents Present:** Liam, Dot, Janice, Chris, James, Fenan

**Staff/Board:** Susan French (SF), Asif Mahmood (AM), Nancy Korman (Board member) (NK), Dean McGlynn (DMc), Sean McLaughlin (SMc) (BHA Chair), Barbara Sidnell (Board member)

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Apologies were received from Steve and Logan. SMc was welcomed to his first Resident Panel meeting.

### 2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

### 3. Digital Inclusion

DM informed the panel that BHA had received some quotes for works to add communal Wi-Fi to some BHA blocks. These will be shared with the panel to discuss whether to move forward with this project.

BHA are also conducting a survey of residents with children to find out what difficulties they are experiencing in acquiring suitable devices and getting online, as well as other materials such as pens and paper. The results of this survey will inform BHA's approach to supporting residents and their children and identify any possibilities of linking up with organisations working on this.

### 4. Take Stock Exchange

Take Stock Exchange provided an update on their work with BHA staff, residents and board members. They have been carrying out workshops with and collected their feedback and insights into BHA's community. They will be holding a follow up workshop with the panel in March.

### 5. Resident Engagement

SF informed the panel of upcoming changes to the Social Housing legislation that will affect how BHA operates. The "Charter for Social Housing Residents" requires landlords to demonstrate that they listen to their residents and will be a big topic for BHA to continue to improve how we communicate with residents and provide opportunities to be involved in shaping our service.

The Resident Panel agreed that the changes this legislation should be communicated to residents, as should the ways that they can get involved with BHA's service, including the panel and other groups. This would include making clear the difference between involving residents and engaging with residents.

This will be followed up with the Panel having the chance to attend part of a BHA board meeting to discuss Resident Engagement. DM will also share the results of a survey of panel members on how they've found the Resident Panel to be so far.

## **6. BHA's Opening Hours**

The panel discussed BHA's existing opening hours of 9:30am – 5:30pm, closing for lunch between 1:00pm – 2:00pm. The panel agreed that the opening hours generally work fine, including while staff are working remotely.

However, the panel also agreed that that BHA should look to review the lunch time closing if staff are able to provide cover during the hour instead of closing.

## **7. Tenant Improvements Policy**

The panel discuss the policy to tenants' right to make improvements or alterations to their homes. It sets how BHA approach these adaptations, how tenants can apply for permission and how BHA will give permission for these alterations. The purpose of this is that BHA spend significant time and money fixing non-standard alterations made by residents that have been done without permission that impact service charges.

The panel agreed it was useful to have this made clear to residents. There were concerns that residents may have made alterations many years ago before this policy was in place. BHA confirmed that they would take a flexible approach to this and weren't seeking to penalise people for making changes to their homes but want to ensure they are safe and good quality. BHA would take the age of the alteration into account along with any health and safety considerations.

**If there are any adaptations you have made to your home that you would like to retrospectively ask for permission for please contact BHA to arrange a visit.**

It was also agreed that specific safety requirements should be made clear to residents – especially around electrics, windows and doors. Residents will be required to make the scale of their works clear in their application, including the details of the qualified contractor carrying out the works.

## **8. At the next meeting the panel will discuss:**

- Complaints process – how this works and the role of panel in this
- Resident Involvement/Engagement
- Anti-Social Behaviour Process Update
- BHA's Digital Strategy

**The next resident panel meeting will be held in April.**

**Minutes are published on BHA's website:**

**<https://barnsbury.org/get-involved/resident-panel/>**

**For information on the panel please contact Dean McGlynn ([dean@barnsbury.org](mailto:dean@barnsbury.org))**