



BIELD HOUSING & CARE

Minutes of the meeting of the Partnership Forum

3rd of August 2023

Stirling Court Hotel

Present:

Maria Duncan	MD	Inchkeith Court
Deborah Docherty	DD	Bridge Court
Gillian Merrett	GM	Ashgrove Court
Iain Kirkman	IK	Dean Court

Apologies:

Margaret Smith	MS	Gordon Court
William Smalley	WS	Lynn Court Oban (Chair)
John Thompson	JT	Craigengar Park (Via Teams)
Joe McLean	JM	Jamaica Court

In Attendance:

Zhan McIntyre (ZM)
Head of Policy & Customer Standards

David MacInnes (DM)
Head of Housing

Alan Morris (AM)
Tenant engagement and participation lead

Robert Black (RB)
Customer Standards Administrator

- Action 1. ZM/DM to contact Ron to get an update on Dean Court and the issues raised.
- Action 2. DM to provide presentation on Housing team (moving, resources & recruitment)
- Action 3. ZM/DM to reissue good housekeeping guidance to Developments.
- Action 4. ZM invite asset management team to Partnership forum meeting to give PF update on planned works schedule.
- Action 5. RB to communicate with tenants and book them onto events
- Action 6. ZM to auto generate numbers for winner to be selected
- Action 7. Zhan to send over information regarding conducting visits and the process as part of the new allocation policy
- Action 8. ZM to Check who the winner is and issue voucher.
- Action 9. DM – to consult with the owners and see if this would be interested in joining the partnership forum.

1. Welcomes & Introductions

ZM extended a warm welcome to the Partnership Forum (PF) meeting. All members introduced themselves.

Special Introduction: **Alan Morris**, Tenant Engagement and Participation Lead.

2. Apologies & Absence

Apologies were received from Margaret Smith, William Smalley, Joe McLean and John Thompson (due to technical reasons).

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and matters arising.

Minutes were agreed.

IK raised issue regarding the thermostat monitoring equipment at Dean Court. Several tenants had complained, and a member of the energy team had been in touch at the outset of the complaint but there has been no contact since

New Action 1 – ZM/DM to contact Ron to get an update on Dean Court issues.

MD no thermostats in communal areas at Inchkeith Court. The heating in the communal areas has been totally switched off.

DM provided insights into the thermostat programme, highlighting that the roll-out programme of thermostats in communal areas. Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRV) have been installed at 5 different developments so far, and considerable energy savings have been made. Not all developments are appropriate for this, but Bield will look to see where this can be done to help reduce costs as well as reduce Bield's CO₂ emissions.

IK expressed concerns about charges despite the heating being off and lack of communication to tenants.

DM confirmed that these measures will reduce the energy cost across the business and the tenants will be able to see the benefits of this in the future.

DM explained that Bield was awarded funding and are using this to help tenants. Bield is working with an organisation called Change Works to offer energy advocacy and advice. The team are currently working on an outreach campaign in Inverclyde.

IK emphasised the need for improved communication regarding the installation of the thermostats to the tenants and local staff.

GM enquired about the protocol for staff updates

DM – We have several channels of communication with our staff.

1. Bimonthly CEO update to all staff, highlighting policy updates, housing update, property updates, joiners and leavers, tenant engagements & any projects that are ongoing.
2. Housing updates from heads of service regarding operational, staff, Patches & policy issues.
3. Area housing managers – Brief staff locally.

4. Local development team meetings
5. Property services involve local managers in prestart meeting before major works to ensure the staff are aware of what's going on and to assist tenants throughout and after the works have been completed.

IK asked what information are local managers allowed to share with Tenants?

DM explained there is a mechanism in place for staff to share information to ensure privacy & confidentiality is being adhered to.

IK highlighted that neighbours are not aware of what is going on within the development, and that he only knew because of these meetings.

GM discussed the perception of older individuals in the social health and care system, that infantilises older people. Often there is stigma associated with older people in these sectors. Over 20% of the Scottish population is going to be over pension age by 2030

DM shared that Bield has a wide range of tenants from 50 to over 100 with the average age being about 70.

We have to balance the information we want to share with what is going on in the background to ensure we get it right.

The customer contact centre along with the customer portal will help ensure tenants are getting the information they require.

Action 2 – DM to present on Housing team (moving, resources & recruitment)

IK highlighted there is still an issue at the developments with notices being everywhere.

DM confirmed information & guidance had been issued to local managers on good housekeeping on what notices were required by law to be on display and what ones should be taking down.

Action 3 ZM/DM to reissue good housekeeping guidance to Developments.

Business development team have committed to come to the PF meeting in November

Parking issues

GM asked if tenants could be issued with Residents only parking signs for their cars?

IK suggested bollards be put in place.

DM argued bollards would not be the solution due to the limited parking at developments. If we used bollards, it would mean future tenants would be left out if the spaces had been taken. We would not ask our staff to police parking for their own safety so the notices would have little effect.

MD highlighted that there is still an issue with staff using flat that requires works as a staff room.

DM confirmed there is a programme of works and the property will be on a list to be repaired and brought up to suitable standards for rental accommodation. This is what is probably causing the delay. It is not unreasonable in the meantime for the staff to be using it.

New Action 4 – ZM invite asset management team to Partnership forum meeting to give PF update on planned works schedule for closed assets.

Carpet cleaning

GM asked if carpets could be maintained and cleaned regularly before marks are noticeable on the to ensure they last their lifespan and to ensure our developments are welcoming.

DM explained that a small budget for carpet cleaning included in the furniture replacement budget. Last year some managers asked for a carpet cleaner and this is shared between developments.

GM argued there should be a programme of works for this especially for high traffic areas like the main entrances.

DM agreed to keep this in mind and ensure money is left in the budget.

4. Membership Update

Di is currently taking a break from the partnership forum.

A thank you letter has been sent to Kath Harrow as she has stood down from partnership forum.

5. TP Updates

PF Current Membership - 8

BIG Current Membership – 5 Looking to recruit

No meetings held – resource issues, group will reconvene when TEPL in place
Next meeting TBC.

Communication Champions Current Membership – 6

Current programme of work:
Performance report
Rent setting
Bield Calendar
Bield Bulletin
Next Meeting 10th of October 2023

Compliments & Complaints Collective Current Membership – 3

Current Programme of work:
Reviewed five complaints, including delay to refund, boiler and lift breakdown.

Next Meeting 24th of October 2023

Equality & Diversity Network Current Membership – 4
Current Programme of work – TBC

RTO's – 0.

Interested tenant list - 53 tenants on list.
Letters issued: Tenant portal & Allocation policy review.

6. Learning and Networking Events

Opportunities for latest quarter

- SFHA, Governance conference 1st of September 9.30am - 4.30pm (Glasgow)
- TPAS, Social Media Part 2 (Using Facebook to engage your tenants and partners) 6th of September 2pm – 3pm (Online)
- TIS, Rent setting and Affordability 13th September 10.30am - 3.30pm (Dundee)
- SFHA, Environmental Social and Governance conference 14th of September 9.30am - 2.00pm (Glasgow)
- SFHA, Tech Housing Event 19th of September 10am – 5pm (Glasgow)
- TPAS, Planning Consultations 20th of September 2pm – 3pm (Online)
- TPAS, Future of Committees and tenant groups 4th of October 2pm – 3pm (online)
- TIS, AGM 5th of October 2pm – 4pm (online)
- SFHA, AGM 11th of October 10am – 12pm
- TIS, National housing conference and Exhibition 9th & 10th of November 9am – 4.30pm (Glasgow)
- SFHA, Energy & Net zero conference 28th of November 10am – 4pm (Glasgow)
- TIS, Tis the season- Christmas Gathering 7th of December (TBC)

New Action 5 - RB to communicate with tenants and book them onto events

7. Energy and Sustainability update

Initiatives and Energy Changes so Far

- Energy Efficiency and working towards a target of Net Carbon by 2045 remains a huge focus for Bield.
- Through all the efforts consumption savings for 2022-23, a reduction of 5.84% was achieved, along with cost savings of 9.38%.
- Bield communicated to tenants September 2022 to advise of ongoing energy crisis, support available and to notify tenants of temperature reductions
- Reductions were only completed to developments where heat is provided via a communal boiler and connected to a building management system (BMS).
- Each system requires to be adjusted individually ensuring temperatures are set per area (i.e. flat, common area, lounge etc) and specific times are programmed.
- There has been some concerns raised of areas being too cold, tenants are being advised to report any heating issues to our repairs team as normal. This has lessened as the system was adjusted to meet demand.
- Majority of energy efficiency projects implemented throughout 2022-23 were to upgrade existing thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's) with new smart thermostatic valves in common areas.
- These sites are
 - Dean Court
 - Manderston Court
 - Gordon Court
 - Stirling Court,
 - Turnbull Court and
 - South Port Court.
- The saving so far have equating to circa £12,000.
- In order to support our tenants in dealing with energy issues, Bield were awarded £40,000 via Independent Age Fund.
- 514 people have been supported via this service. 104 of those supported stated that they had an increased level of financial awareness and 80 people of those supported have gone onto claim

additional benefits that they previously didn't claim. This equates to an estimated £222,591 of additional benefits secured.

Future Initiatives and Energy Changes

- Bield are looking to apply EnerPHit standards (or equivalent) to existing buildings, and PassivHaus (or equivalent) for new homes.
- The aim of EnerPHit is to reduce the need for heat as far as is reasonably possible and to include ventilation. Designing retrofits to minimise heating demands supports Bield in delivering affordable warmth to our tenants, mitigating fuel poverty, and maintaining a healthy indoor environment for tenants.
- PassivHaus is a standard for the design and construction of comfortable, highly energy efficient buildings with set performance targets. It is the gold standard and first step towards achieving a net zero operational carbon building.
- Our Development & Sustainability team have commenced the review and implementation of energy efficiency projects for 2023-24. Projects include installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels at our offices and various developments where feasible.
- Works has already commenced to install a small PV at our Glasgow office saving 1,035 kgCO₂ and £1,088 a year based on current fuel prices and grid carbon density.
- Carron Court has been identified also for the PV panelling in the near future.
- Various communal lighting projects have also been identified by installing LED light fittings. This saving on running costs immediately, through lower energy use and longer product lifetimes, which significantly reduces maintenance bills over time when compared to traditional lighting solutions.

8. Policy Review – Allocation Policy

ZM explained we have written to interested parties that includes our interested tenant list and there has been a good response. We have also spoken to colleagues to help shape the policy.

ZM - Summarised Topic report overview paper

- **Legislation** – PF Happy with proposed rewording in relation to Wheelchair as set out in paper.
- **Nomination agreements** – PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.
- **Equalities** – PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** – PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.
DM confirmed that the Contact Centre will be aligned with KPIs to ensure better communication and best processes are in place.
ZM confirmed KPIs will help us manage this going forward.
- **Taking ownership into account -**
GM asked who would be offered SSST?
ZM explained SSST could be used to assist people who have their own homes move out to have adaptations done to assist them to live in their properties.
DM stated that SSST are very complex
GM suggested the whole thing would be cumbersome
ZM confirmed not known any SSST to be issued so far across the sector
- **Local Letting initiatives -**
ZM – Local letting initiatives are used for properties that are highly available
DM explained Bield currently has 30-40 Local letting initiatives, these are currently reviewed annually.
- **Veterans -** PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.
GM stated this could be useful especially as the next generations come through that have been active in recent conflicts.
MD asked if they should be given points?
DM confirmed this was discussed at length but it was felt it would be better to focus on housing needs.

ZM suggested if we have the information we can do more to make it work for the tenants to help with support.

IK stated that there is lack of support for veterans same as there is for clinical workers.

ZM said this was a good point about clinical workers and it was something we did not consider.

- **Harassment & domestic abuse** - PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.

DM – It was discussed that points for Harassment & domestic abuse would be combined in relation to domestic abuse to maximise points. PF agreed with this proposal.

ZM explained harassment points will be given as one lot of points. In the past they would be separated into categories of harassment. We would still ask for information on any harassment that has been indicated to ensure that we are able to give the right support to the applicant. PF Agreed with this proposal.

- **Medical Assessments – Questions & evidence**

GM explained over the past year there has been an increase of new tenants with dementia being allocated flats in complexes which are not designated as “very-sheltered”. This creates a number of complex issues, for the individual and the tenants. These individuals normally have a care package from Social Services at certain times of the day, but the vast majority of the time they are on their own. Due to their cognitive impairment they are unable to comprehend the function of Bield 24 if they require assistance. This can result in them falling and not being discovered, unless by chance, as staff have no remit to check on them throughout the day.

Potentially pose an increase fire risk in attempting to undertake simple cooking tasks eg. making toast or leave water running causing damage to their flat and other adjacent properties.

They present with a particular problem in regards to their own safety. They can leave the building at will and become disorientated, placing themselves in dangerous situations ie. standing in the middle of the road with the potential of injury or worse.

ZM said Bield did not disagree with the seriousness of the situation that has been outlined, it is not Bield’s responsibility to assess the

care needs of individuals and the packages they have in place. This is an ongoing challenge and is down to the local authorities to assess. There are steps Bield can take to satisfy themselves that support will be available to those who need it. The Social care and health system is not in the best place and this is made harder for us as a social housing landlord when care homes throughout Scotland are closing.

GM explained interaction and communication with other tenants can cause confusion and lead to inappropriate responses which are upsetting for both the individual and other tenants. Tenants too can become involved in “the care” of these individuals and even intervening to avert a potential harmful situation. Relatives may be under the impression that their elderly relative now living in the complex and is being “cared for”. This is not the case.

DM confirmed relatives are made aware of the tenancy that is being agreed to and that care is not a part of this for the majority of our tenancies.

Both Area Housing Managers & local staff will make the tenant and relatives aware of what services are provided at the development prior to signing and tenancy agreement.

GM – the premise of Bield “Free to be” meaning independent living of the individual. Staff are not there to assist individuals in their daily living. However this is now creating confusion and a contradiction of this premise. Staff are increasingly having to assist and “keep an eye on” individuals with cognitive impairment. They have no power to prevent an individual leaving the complex although they are fully aware this may be potentially harmful for that individual.

DM confirmed Independent living is being able to live at home, this includes those who are living with a health condition such as dementia. They are able to live independently at home with the support of care packages that are put in place by relatives and the local authorities.

GM - The principle concern is the care of the individual with cognitive impairment living in a safe and appropriate environment suitable to their needs.

ZM suggested that technology can help to assist with helping people living with dementia. It can monitor living patterns and send alerts to family. For Example having sensors to monitor movements and door alarms on the tenants door.

DM confirmed funding for technology and adaptations can be applied for to help those live independently through our stage 3 adaptation process.

GM suggested a better assessment during the interview process for flat allocation, especially face-to-face in the home, may indicate the suitability of that individual.

ZM confirmed the allocations Policy cannot discriminate as if these people are not housed they could be made homeless and there for we cannot exclude people on those grounds.

ZM agreed this was a serious issue that could perhaps be better managed that when a medical condition has been highlighted on an application that we action this with a face to face visit instead of a telephone assessment.

New Acion 6 – Zhan to send over information regarding conducting visits and the process as part of the new allocation policy

- **Verification**

DM stated that verification would help flag any fraudulent applications and would formalise the application process. PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.

- **Management discretion**

PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.

- **ASB Evidence**

DM stated that the evidence that Bield would be looking for would be police and social work reports of ASB. This Evidence would then allow the points for ASB to be awarded.

ZM suggested if ASB is mentioned in the application process this could trigger a home visit?

PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.

- **Managed offenders**

PF agreed with proposals as set out in paper.

9. CX customer portal update

ZM thanked PF for comments on Customer portal.

Customer portal will be called (My Bield)

The portal has just currently went through a software update and we are hoping to launch this October/November time.

Role out plan is as follows

Phase 1 – Role out to all tenants with email addresses

Phase 2 – Role out to all POA & Guardians

Phase 3 - Role out to all amenity tenants

Phase 4 – monthly role out to all developments 1 per area (east & west) until rollout is complete.

ZM explained there will be videos to assist tenants getting used to the portal but we understand it will not be for everyone.

GM suggested also including this in local lets meets so Area managers can assist with helping tenants get logged on and used to the portal

DM suggested a tablet be set up in lounge so we are being inclusive to everyone to get connected to My Bield

10. Complaint satisfaction Survey – Voucher winner

One winner to be selected

New Action 7 – ZM to auto generate numbers for winner to be selected

New Action 8 - ZM to Check who the winner is and issue voucher.

11. AOB

DM asked if PF would be happy if shared owners to join partnership forum?

DD suggested if they are still paying a service charge then they should still have the same right to join the Partnership forum. All other Tenant engagement groups feedback into the partnership forum.

New Action 9 DM – to consult with the owners and see if this would be interested in joining the partnership forum

GM asked if Bield were now using recycled paper and congratulated Bield for adopting this.

Dates for 2023/24

Date of next meeting: **2nd of November 2023**

1st February 2024