

Area Panel Meeting
26/01/2023 – 7pm on Zoom

Present:

Grainne Mullin – Community Investment Man
 Judith Gray – Senior Head of Assets
 Lesa Kelly – Tenant Engagement Officer
 2x Seymour House
 1x Kinnaird Close
 1x Tullaghmurry Fold
 1x Cromlyn Fold

Apologies:

	<p>Welcome and Introduction Grainne Mullin Community Investment Manager for Radius Housing welcomed everyone on zoom, this is our first evening meeting and we appreciate everyone taking the time to join us. A round of introductions took place.</p>	<p>Action</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Communities</p>	
	<p>Shared on screen the Communities, Assets and Corporate Services Scorecard for November 2022. Grainne gave a brief explanation on each of the Communities Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p><i>Voids</i> At present our voids are sitting at 3.54%, our target is 2.20%, slightly higher than we would like but are working hard to reach our target and working closely with our colleagues in Assets to reduce this figure.</p> <p><i>Rent Arrears</i> Rent Arrears are sitting at 10.54%, our target is 9%, with our newly created income and financial inclusion team we will have a number of staff focus on financial inclusion and income management which will help reach our figure.</p> <p><i>Relets</i> Relets are sitting at 31.19% which is target of 30 days. This is a joint target with our Assets colleagues to ensure we meet our target of reletting properties within 30 days.</p> <p><i>Transfer Assessments</i> Are sitting at 99.39% and our target is 100%. We are happy with this figure and working hard to ensure transfer assessments are carried out within 21 days to support tenants who have requested a transfer to another Radius property or another Social Housing provider. Sometimes it can be difficult to contact tenants in relation to their transfer requests which also affects Radius not meeting the target.</p>	

	<p>Grainne asked if there was any questions in regards to Communities Key Performance. A number of questions were raised in relation to standard of work and allocations. Grainne explained that there will be an opportunity to Ask questions about performance, allocations or anything else during Any Other Business.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Assets</p>	
	<p>Gas Servicing</p> <p>Judith informed everyone that the tender for the MTC Heating and Gas Contract was issued last year and has been delayed. Due to Radius receiving a challenge from one of the unsuccessful bidders. Radius has a responsibility to follow procurement guidelines and the challenge was dropped before Christmas. We will now have 3 new contractors covering different areas across Northern Ireland, CTS for Belfast and greater area, CFM for the Northwest Area and ATS for the South East area of the province. A more streamlined service will be provided to our tenants</p> <p>Radius will have access to the contractor's calendar ensuring tenants can be contacted in advance and an appropriate date organised for the repair to be completed. All dates, times and contact details would be provided to ensure the tenants are updated in the process.</p> <p>Contractors will be more accountable for their standard of work, penalised if they don't attend appointments that have been prearranged with tenants. There will be a settling in period.</p> <p>Our new contract has different terms and conditions which will ensure a better standard of work from the contractors.</p> <p>At present we are now in the mobilisation period linking both computer databases with the aim to start the Contract at the 1st April 2023.</p> <p>A tenant asked if there is new contractors for Maintenance Works? Judith explained that the All Trades Contract was procured, challenged and unfortunately Radius had to restart the procurement stage again and go back out with another challenge received, so unfortunately we have no update in this. In today's market we are finding that contractors are extremely competitive and are prepared to challenge contracts they haven't received. Our current contractors are CFM who carry out work within the Northwest area, CTS Belfast and greater area and ATS the Southern area of the province. These contracts will be in place until at least August 2023. Hopefully at our next meeting we will have an update for you. Unfortunately, you find coming near the end of a contract the performance from contractors isn't as good.</p> <p>A tenant asked if Radius will be changing the Grounds Maintenance Contractors? Judith explained that the contractors left their contract early due to not been able to meet the high standard of work Radius expected from them. This has caused our schemes gardens to suffer and are working hard to have a new contract in place. At present we have a number of smaller grounds maintenance contractors in place.</p> <p>Safety & Risk</p> <p>The aim is to have Gas Safety targets sitting at 100%. In the month of November, we had 26 properties take hadn't received their yearly gas service. We have had problems with gaining access to the properties to carry out the servicing. I am happy to report that we currently have gained access to 24 of those properties and have started legal proceeding to gain access to the other two properties. Fire risk and Legionella are both sitting at 100%</p>	

	<p>Repairs The response repairs team aim to complete 91% of repairs within target. Emergency (93.86%) and Routine (88.58%) are within target with Urgent repairs just below at (90.78%). Radius continue to work closely with our contractors to ensure these targets are met.</p> <p>Inspecting Work Radius aims to post inspect 10% of repairs at a value of £600 or below and all repairs that are over the value of £600. As of November 2022, 100% of repairs over £600 have been inspected and 9.79% of repairs below 100% were inspected. A member asked how does Radius know that a contractor has completed a job? Judith explained that the figures from post inspections are brought to our monthly meeting with contractors, contractors are also responsible to take photographs after completing jobs which is part of the post inspections. We do appreciate feedback from our tenants if they aren't satisfied about the standard of work for the contractors as we can bring this to them during the monthly contractor meetings.</p>	
4.	<p>Corporate Services</p>	
	<p>Grainne apologised explaining that our Corporate Services Manager Andres Han was unable to attend the meeting tonight and would go through the Complaints figures.</p> <p>Radius have received 93 formal complaints within this financial year 89.76% of complaints received have been responded to 24.73% of complaints have been upheld this financial year</p> <p>A tenant raised an issue in regard to a complaint they had raised over a year ago and still the matter hasn't been resolved. Grainne explained that the figures discussed above are official complaints made through the Radius Complaints Policy. At present we are working closely with our tenants and updating our Complaints Policy. This differs from a situation in which someone is dissatisfied with a repair issue but hasn't made a formal complaint. As part of the Complaints Service Improvement group we are working to ensure our tenants understand the difference. Lesa informed everyone that a member here tonight is part of this group and is helping us test information that will be going out on our website informing tenants on the different ways to make a complaint, all the different stages and who to contact.</p>	
5.	<p>Tenant Engagement Strategy</p>	
	<p>Tenant Engagement Structure Grainne gave a brief background on the Tenant Engagement Structure and explained that after a review and discussions with the Tenant Engagement Strategy working group the team have implemented a new structure for the Area Panel Meetings going forward. Instead of having 5 separate Area Panels we will now have a panel for our Sheltered properties and a panel for our general properties. During this process and from listening to our tenants and what is important to them, we are also introducing a Communications Panel, Rural Panel and a Youth Panel. A discussion took place and everyone agreed the importance of Communication between Radius and that this could improve. A tenant suggested that on the Noticeboards Radius should have information on who their Housing Officer, Asset Officer and the different ways to contact the office.</p>	

Lesla suggested we speak to the Marketing Team to see if a poster is put up on all Noticeboards with this information and specifically concentrate on schemes that don't have a Scheme Coordinator.

A tenant asked if calls/queries should go to the Housing Officer? Grainne explained that our aspiration is for the Customer Contact Centre to be able to answer 80% of queries, unfortunately they have had difficulty with recruiting staff but are working hard with recruitment to reach their full potential.

A tenant said he used to email his repairs but is unsure if they are responded to. Lesla will check with the Contact Centre as they receive these emails if there should be an acknowledgement email to tenants to say they have received the email or if the repair is an emergency to phone the office. To report a Repair by email the address is:

ResponseRepairs@radiushousing.org

A tenant asked if there is a problem with Connect 24 at the weekends as they had waited 34 minutes before their call was answered. Grainne explained that Connect 24 are extremely busy at the weekends and a cord should only be pulled in an emergency. A suggestion was made by a tenant to try pulling the cord after 5pm as a test to see if there is an issue with Connect 24 picking up. It was explained that cords should only be pulled if there is a need to contact Connect 24 and tenants shouldn't be "trying" the system outside of normal hours as this will tie up resources which may be needed for genuine emergencies. Scheme Coordinators can and do test the system weekly.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Grainne informed everyone that Radius are in the process of procuring for the 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Survey and are looking for tenant representatives to be involved in designing the survey with questions. Some questions are a tick box and some are more in depth. A sample of over 3600 tenants are sent a letter saying they could be asked to participate in the survey, with the expectation that approx. 1500 surveys are completed by tenants from a range of Radius properties.

A tenant said he took part in a survey on how his experience was reporting a repair, filled out his details and this is how he has become involved in Tenant Engagement and this meeting, so it is a good idea participating in surveys.

Housing Policy Panel

Grainne explained that we now have 2 Radius tenants who would be sitting on the Housing Policy Panel with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Department for Communities where issues and concerns can be raised at a higher level. These tenants will then feedback information to our tenant representatives. Both tenants are active members of our Panels from Belfast and Limavady.

Newsletter and Area Panel Topics

Grainne asked the group that we would be keen to hear some feedback regarding our tenant newsletters. Any ideas, views, topics of relevance etc would be greatly appreciated. Please get in touch with the tenant engagement team at tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org.

Grainne asked if there are any speakers in regard to Housing, Radius Staff or Radius Board Members you would like to see during our panel meetings please also forward this information to us.

A.O.B*Seymour House*

Used to be a beautiful building but over the years has been neglected and become very dilapidated and is now in disrepair and shabby looking, overgrown bushes, shrubbery, a van left abandoned, rubbish dumped in the car parking area, washing machine repeatedly breaking down with dirty water.

There was a biodiversity project two years ago but there would need to be a lot more done to make improvements. Is there anything Radius can do to make the place better?

- Housing Officer to contact tenants in regard to an issue which is not allowed to be discussed within an open forum.
- Radius will write out to tenants asking them to leave the washing machine in an acceptable condition for the next person using it.
- Organising an Estate Walkabout and inviting Housing and Assets staff to attend, while inviting statutory agencies such as local council, dog warden. Having this walkabout is an opportunity to talk to staff directly and see what type of plan can be put in place.
- Possibly run a small project similar to the biodiversity project as long as tenants would be happy to get involved in the project.

Kinnaird Close

Wanted to know how Radius decide who lives in their properties?

Grainne explained that the Social Housing System is regulated by the NIHE and assessed by the NIHE, we are duty bound to allocate by housing need, we don't have discretion to not allocate someone a property. A discussion took place about how unfair this is and that some tenants within properties. Grainne explained that Radius work closely with PSNI, Probation, Social Services firstly to support an individual. If this fails then the only route is to remove the tenancy with evidence to show a judge asking them to take away someone's tenancy. We do have an ASB process in place and also depend on other tenants phoning the police to report a crime which gathers evidence. Grainne suggested joining the Service Improvement Group on ASB will help us, so contact Lesa for more information.

Is there a security company in Kinnaird?

Judith explained that Insec are a Security company carrying out regular Security and Health & safety Checks.

The Communal Door release isn't working?

Judith will speak to Response Repairs about logging a job for the door. Grainne will add Kinnaird Close to the Estate Walkabout list and invite external agencies to the walkabouts. Grainne explained that it takes time for Estate Walkabouts to be organised but will be added to the list.

Tullaghmurry Fold

A tenant raised concerns in regards to the number of Contractors coming and going within the scheme over recently. At times the tenants or Scheme Coordinators don't know who the contractors are.

Judith informed the tenant that Tullaghmurry had a new Cold water Storage Unit installed at the end of last year and there was a number of contractors involved in this work due to an issue and which contractor was responsible. This has now been resolved.

Does the heating be on 24/7? At Tullaghmurry this shouldn't be the case but there is a single pipe system which remains warm but the heating isn't on.

Judith will investigate this further.

	<p><i>Heating</i></p> <p>A tenant at Cromlyn Fold said that tenants were paying for the heating in their properties even though they weren't using it.</p> <p>Judith explained that as part of the tenancy contract heating charges cover all of the communal areas. It is also important that heating is kept on to ensure damp and mould doesn't surface, having windows open is important for ventilation but heating is required also.</p>	
8.	Close Meeting end: 9pm	