

Panel Meeting
24th Oct 2024 – 11am
Hollywood & Teams

Present:

Joe Galbraith, (AHM and Chair)
 Michael Lyons, Director of Assets
 Sharon Patterson, Director of Corporate Services
 Caroline O'Hare, Senior Head of Assets
 Bridie Doherty, AHM
 Andrew Han, Corporate Services Manager
 Stewart McClean, Assets Manager
 Ashleigh Mulgrave, Tenant Engagement
 Lesa Kelly, Tenant Engagement
 Paul Fagan, Marketing & Comms Team
 Bobby McConnell, Tenant Board Member
 1x Beersbridge Road,
 1x Longlands Road,
 1x Laurel Hill Gardens,
 1x Claremont Court,
 1x White Glen
 1x Glenravel Fold
 1x Garvaghy Close
 1x Clifton House
 1x Rathain Fold
 1x Knock Road
 1x Glentoran Fold
 2x Cromlyn Fold
 1x Foyle Fold
 2x Spafield Fold
 1x Lisavon
 2x Sherbrook Close
 1x Cromac Wood Court
 1x Tonic Fold
 1x Knock Road
 1x Ballyvarnet Lodge

Apologies:

1x Foyle Fold
 1x Scrabo Fold

1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Joe introduced himself as one of the Housing Managers for Independent Living and Chairperson for today's Meeting,</p> <p>Joe explained that everyone should have received in advance of this meeting a copy of the Agenda, the August easy read scorecard and the Hybrid Housekeeping guide. This is a public forum, and we would like to remind everyone that we are unable to discuss any personal or staffing issues due to GDPR. If you have a first-time repair that needs to be reported, please call the office or report after the meeting. Joe gave a round of introductions of Radius staff.</p> <p>Apologies were received and noted.</p>	
2.	<p>Communities</p> <p><i>Update on Communities Key Performance</i></p> <p>Shared on screen the Communities, Assets and Corporate Services Scorecard for August 2024.</p>	

<p>a.</p> <p>b.</p> <p>c.</p> <p>d.</p>	<p>Voids sitting at 3.42% with our target of 1.6%. We continue to work closely with our colleagues in Assets to have properties available to rent. The voids have unfortunately increased since our last meeting. The senior management team are now focusing on Voids alongside management and staff. We will be looking at redecoration, incentives etc to increase interest. Radius staff are also looking at working with the Simon Community and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to allocate these void properties to people in need</p> <p>Rent Arrears are sitting at 9.19%, our target is 10%. We continue to work hard to maintain our targets and reduce rent arrears, by having the Income Management Team now established along with the support of four dedicated Welfare Advice Officers who are helping our tenants with benefits advice. This has all helped reduce our rent arrears.</p> <p>Relets are sitting at 38 days, our target is 35 days. This is a joint target with our Assets colleagues to ensure we continue to reduce this figure and meet our target of reletting properties in less than 35 days. We are continuously working hard to reduce this figure.</p> <p>Transfer Assessments Are sitting at 98.88% and our target is 100%. We work hard to maintain this figure ensuring 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.</p> <p>A member asked when people moving people into properties, how does Radius assess who can receive these properties? Joe responded that the NIHE have a number of criteria that an individual must fulfil before they are allocated from the Common Selection Scheme. As Social Housing Providers we must follow the guidance set by the NIHE when allocating properties.</p> <p>What is the main reason that properties are hard to let? There are a number of reasons i.e. there is just no interest in the area, there is a lot of competition for new builds in the area that people prefer rather than older builds, some older properties have damp issues which make them hard to let and some communities have ongoing ASB in particular areas that Radius and external agencies work together to reduce the ASB.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	
<p>a.</p> <p>b.</p>	<p><i>Update on Complaints Key Performances</i> Radius has received 70 formal complaints within this financial year to date. 89.4% of complaints received have been responded to 17.14% of complaints have been upheld this financial year. Sharon Patterson the Director of Corporate Services explained that Radius have been working hard in reducing the number of complaints received and thankfully happy to report that this figure is starting to reduce, the main repeat complaints are commonly in regard to repairs not been completed on time etc. We are working closely with our colleagues in Assets and contractors to ensure jobs are completely within the timeframe. Senior Management receive regular reports on the complaints that are currently upheld and work with the teams to try and resolve these matters.</p> <p><i>Customer Performance Report (CPR)</i> Lesa shared on screen the CPR for 2023/24 highlighting</p>	

<p>Overall Radius Tenants are happy with the services we provide with a score of 74% but we know there is room for improvements. We are working hard especially after feedback from customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting in contact with Radius over the phone was difficult, we have added call-back functions to our phone systems and extended the opening hours of the Customer Contact Centre and now operate from 8am to 8pm Monday-Friday enabling customers to call us earlier and later in the day to report repairs. • We have recruited a new Senior Housing Officer dedicated to ASB to promote sustainable communities and reduce tenancy failure. <p>A member commented that they recently requested a number of copies of the Annual Report 2023-24, and it was well received from tenants within the scheme who enjoyed reading the stories and seeing yearly stats of performance.</p>
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4. Assets

<p>Update on Assets Key Performance</p> <p>a. Repairs The response repairs team aims to complete 91% of emergency and urgent repairs within target and 90% routine repairs. Emergency (95.73%) with Routine (86.59 %) and Urgent repairs just below (91.16%). Radius staff are continuously working to improve these figures.</p> <p>b. Inspecting Work Radius aims to post-inspect 10% of repairs at a value of £1000 or below and all repairs that are over the value of £1000. As of August 2024, 100% of repairs over £1000 have been inspected and 10% of repairs below £1000 were inspected.</p> <p>c. Safety & Risk The aim is to have Gas Safety Risk targets sitting at 100%. In the August Scorecard the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas Safety 99.89% • Fire Risk 99.87% • Legionella 99.79% <p>Questions A member asked why is it when a tenant is given a date that the contractor leaves it until the last day to come to the tenants' home and look at the job? Stewart McClean explained that contractors are contractually obligated to attend to repairs within the specific target date set as laid out below and sometimes depending on their workload leave routine jobs to the end target date: Emergency – 24 hours Urgent – 4 working days Routine – 20 working days</p> <p>A member said then if the contractor leaves it until the last day to come out to the job and that the time doesn't suit the tenant, it is the responsibility of the tenant to phone the office and rebook the job again or the job can't be repaired that day and the contractor has to order parts or ask for other tradesperson to get involved which delays the job been repaired? Michael Lyons, Interim Director of Assets, explained that Radius are aware that contractors are working to stay within their key performance indicators even if that means they are attending repair jobs on the last target date. Radius know from regular contractor meetings that there are issues such as labour shortages and struggles to meet the demand of particular tradespersons, so unfortunately customers can be left waiting longer. For example, if a part is ordered or another</p>
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	<p>tradesperson is required. We want our customers to know we are holding contractors to account and please keep us updated if a contractor hasn't attended a job in the timeframe they are supposed to.</p> <p>Radius are taking this feedback today and from other tenants who have brought these issues to our attention. If anyone would like to provide us with other similar examples, staff will see if this is a pattern and bring this to our contractors as part of their monthly meetings.</p> <p>Email sent to all attendees at meeting asking for examples of when contractors attended jobs/ or not attending.</p> <p>How does Radius assess the requirements from a Fire Risk Assessment to ensure the work is completed?</p> <p>Michael explained that Radius have a responsibility to carry out risk assessments each year, the fire risk assessment is for communal areas of the building and not individual apartments, and if they do have access to individual apartments, it is only to check the doors to ensure they meet the standard. Fire Safety is paramount to Radius and will continue to be a priority for us.</p> <p>A member commented that the last call he made was dealt with effectively and the repair was complete to a high standard and would like to thank staff for being so attentive.</p> <p>How does Radius decide who will receive cyclical maintenance and how far in advance would you know that works will be carried out?</p> <p>Stock condition surveys are carried out every 5 years to find out what condition a property is in helping Radius develop a short, medium and long term planned major cyclical programme. The annual programme takes into consideration fire risk assessments that have been carried out, compliance requirements and any ongoing maintenance issues which can take priority depending on their urgency.</p> <p>A member suggested that after a property has received a stock condition survey, should they receive an update?</p> <p>Stewart explained that at present tenants aren't given feedback on the stock condition survey that takes place every 5 years, this is something that we could investigate further and will have a discussion with the Planned Maintenance Manager who could come to the next panel meeting and give feedback.</p> <p>Email sent to Planned Asset Manager inviting him to next meeting 25/10/24.</p> <p>Another member explained that the radiators are an older pipes system and can't be turned off, at present there is a lot of noise coming from the radiators. Is there anything Radius can do about this issue? SMcClean to follow up with AO for Rathain Fold.</p>	<p>AM</p> <p>LK SMcC/ JH</p> <p>SMcC</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Tenant Engagement</p>	
	<p><i>Update from Tenant Executive Committee</i> Bobby McConnell, Radius Tenant Board Member, welcomed two new Tenant Committee members who have officially joined the team back in August/September. Both Gillian Hill and Muriel Gillespie are very welcome and are part of the committee along with Bobby, Julia, Dean, Isabel and Pat.</p> <p><i>Monthly Contractor Meetings</i></p>	

Bobby explained as his role and Julia Gavins role of Tenant Board Member and Radius Foundation Board Member they will now attend some of the Measured Term Contract (MTC) monthly meetings. Bobby explained that Radius are holding the contractors to account and raise any concerns brought by tenants.

Tenant Participation Accreditation

Bobby went onto say that without the help of all the tenants involved over the years from the ground attending meetings, taking part in surveys, service improvement groups etc Radius could not have achieved the Gold Level Standard in the Tenant Participation Accreditation. Bobby also commended Loma, Lesa, Ashleigh and the Communities Team for their work prioritising Tenant Participation which has benefitted Radius tenants.

Housing Policy Panel Update

Members within the HPP have recently piloted a new training programme and will receive an OCN Level 1 on Housing, which will be rolled out and will be of great interest for anyone who'd like to work more on Housing Issues.

The Housing Policy Panel are also working with 5 regional colleges to support tenants how to work heat pumps, how best to ventilate houses, and how best to set boilers etc.

At the last HPP meeting, Bobby explained that himself and Mary Smith as Tenant Representatives for Radius Housing are working alongside the Department for Communities, tenants from the NIHE and other Housing Associations on the draft programme for government and discussed the priorities which will be worked on through the duration on the mandate. This includes:

- Grow a Global Competitive and Sustainable Economy
- Deliver more affordable childcare
- Cut health waiting times
- Ending violence against women and girls
- Better support for children and young people with special needs
- Provide more social, affordable and sustainable housing
- Safer Communities
- Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment
- Reform and Transformation of Public Services

As tenants and panel members we should be more vocal on how the money coming from the UK government is spent by our devolved government. A copy of the Draft Programme for Government 2024-27 can be found

www.northernireland.gov.uk/PfG

Tenant Engagement Structure Rural Panel

Lesla explained when the current Tenant Engagement Strategy was launched, within the structure we wanted to set up a Rural Panel specific to Radius tenants. Over a period of time, we tried to set this up but unfortunately there wasn't enough interest to have our own panel within Radius, we decided to partner with the NIHE who already have an established Rural Residents Forum in place.

On Tuesday 1st October we had a number of Radius tenants from rural areas attend a meeting at the Rural Community Network in Cookstown discussing housing issues from a rural perspective, going forward we will have the following Radius tenants Dean Kelly, Myrtle McKenna and Susan Byrne who will be attending this forum to help represent Radius tenants living in rural areas on housing issues from a rural perspective. If you would like to raise any issues to the rural forum through our members contact Tenant Engagement for more information.

<p><i>Tonic Fold</i> Would like to say well done to the Tenant Engagement Team for organising a fantastic day at the Tenant Celebration event.</p>	
<p>Independent Living Breakout Room 1</p>	
<p>Joe asked if everyone accepted the minutes from the last meeting as accurate with no items outstanding and happy to move on. Everyone happy to move on.</p> <p><i>Cromlyn Fold</i> Has had an ongoing issue with the contractors repeatedly coming out to fix water temperatures and not resolving the issue, wondering are contractors paid for every visit. SMcC explained that as part of the new MTC Contract contractors get paid for one visit unless it's a separate issue that requires another job, in relation to the ongoing issue he will ask the AO to follow up to ensure this matter is resolved.</p> <p><i>Glenravel Fold</i> Wanted to know what Radius Housing thought about the new NI Health Bill? LK explained that within this panel meeting isn't something we could deliberate on but happy to help outside the meeting to gather more information. LK forwarded information on the COPNI and Age NI Joint letter about make our ageing population a priority in the programme for government. BMcC added that this is also part of the draft programme for government in relation to health matters.</p> <p><i>Gardening Schedule</i> The new gardeners are doing a good job but neither they nor us know what their schedule is and what they are supposed to be doing during their scheduled visit out to schemes. SMc C explained that there is an activity schedule for the gardening contractors, LK added that there is a draft activity schedule with Spring/Summer & Autumn/Winter schedule but there hasn't been published in noticeboards. SMcC to speak to his colleagues in Assets about the activity schedule been added to noticeboards soon.</p> <p><i>Spafield Fold</i> Wants to know when the fur trees at their scheme will be cut as they are very overgrown at present. SMcC to speak to AO for this area.</p> <p><i>Tonic Fold</i> Has an issue with one part of their car park and the green area which has flower beds on both sides, tenants are only able to work on the one side of the car park due to the layout of the car park, and the position of the flowerbed to the side of the car park. Is this something Radius can look at such as adding a footpath? SMcC suggested asking the Asset Officer to take a visit out to Tonic Fold to see is there anything Radius could do to enable tenants to be able to work on this part of the car park?</p> <p>The member from Tonic commented that the Single Water tank that has recently been installed is an excellent job.</p> <p><i>Car Parking</i> A discussion took place between staff and members in attendance about the lack of car parking in a number of Radius schemes. JG explained that Radius work hard ensuring that car parks have signage in schemes to identify that the car parking is private and for tenants only, some schemes have</p>	<p>SM cC</p> <p>LK</p> <p>SM cC</p> <p>SM cC</p> <p>SM cC</p>

additional signage specific for visitors to the schemes. Unfortunately, there is limited car parking in schemes for the number of cars and no one has their own space. Members gave examples of carers, family members etc parking in tenants spaces and Foyle Fold member gave example when events are taking place in Derry City that the general public are coming into the Fold Car Park and parking for free which prevents tenants having access to the car park or even worse if there was need for an ambulance to attend the scheme they wouldn't have access due to inconsiderate members of the public parking. JG explained that tenants should be reminding their family members visiting schemes to not be parking in tenants parking spaces, in regard to the General Public unfortunately this is something we can't control but we can all agree its frustrating for our tenants living in the schemes with limited parking.

Upgrades within schemes

Can we get an update on the upcoming Planned Maintenance programme?
Lesa will contact the Director of Assets to see if an update can be included in the December newsletter.

Email sent to Michael Lyons 25/10/24

Cromac Wood Court

Informed members that recently their building had no water and wanted to know what Radius's position was on this?

JMcL who joined the breakout room, said this was not a good enough response from Radius in dealing with this matter in supporting tenants adequately in a time of need and we need to do better.

SMcC to investigate this matter further with colleagues from Connect 24 who took this call initially to find out when NI Water were called, why there was a delay in getting the water back on and can there be learnings from this to ensure tenants are supported in the future.

Concessionary TV Licences

A member asked Radius to find out if tenants living in independent living schemes are entitled to concessionary TV Licence within their own apartment and who pays the TV Licence if there is a TV in the Common Room? To ensure the information is correct, we will find out after the meeting and report within the minutes.

Common Room TV licences are paid for by tenants living within a scheme and not Radius Housing, schemes fundraise, pay through their comfort fund, tenant association etc. Scheme Coordinators help complete the TV Licence form on behalf of the tenants living within the scheme and the licence is stored in the office or noticeboard.

Individual TV licences a number of schemes have a concessionary licence in place, Radius advises tenant that if they are over 75 years, they are entitled to a free TV licence (tenant needs to inform TV licensing of this). If tenant is under 75, they pay £7.50 per year for their TV licence via Coordinator.

If preserved licence is in place, tenants are advised that if they are over 75 years they are entitled to a free TV licence (tenant needs to inform TV licensing that there is a preserved licence in place). If tenant is under 75, they need to pay full TV licence, and this is the responsibility of the tenant to arrange their own application.

Details in regard to the TV licence are discussed with new tenants by the Housing Officer and Scheme Coordinator when they move in.

General Breakout Room 2 1x Beersbridge Road, 1x Longlands Road, 1x Laurel Hill Gardens, 1x Claremont Court, 1x White Glen Rise

LK/
ML

LK

<p>The group had a discussion around Stock Condition Surveys. Michael Lyons gave an overview of how we intend to carry out improvements across our housing stock.</p> <p>Longlands Road A member of the group asked why we use an external company (RAND) to carry out stock condition surveys?</p> <p>Michael responded that we use an external company for two reasons: cost and time efficiency. It is more efficient for Radius to employ an external company than use valuable staff time to complete surveys. Radius use the data collected by RAND to assess condition of properties and how we can pre-empt issues that may take place in properties over time.</p> <p>The member went on to say that issues with their property had been identified before moving in but had not been addressed by Radius at move in date. The job was completed, but after the tenant had been moved in for a while. Michael agreed to look at this as the job may have been completed but something out of Radius Staff control may have happened between the property being void and the move in date. Michael will ask the Asset Officer follow up. Email sent to Michael Lyons to follow up</p> <p>The group then went onto have a discussion about the contractors and often times they will arrive at a property prepared for a different job that was logged. Michael responded that this is likely due to the current system set up or jobs being logged incorrectly. In future, the Assets Department will be looking at a new system that will eventually get to a place where pictures can be uploaded of repairs. The group agreed this will be much better.</p> <p>Michael reminded the members to please continue to give us feedback about repairs, contractors etc as this informs us as soon as possible.</p> <p>Lisavon Court A member of the group asked how Radius have the money to develop new builds, yet other homes and schemes are left without redecoration for years.</p> <p>Michael explained that the money for new builds comes from a separate funding account. New homes are built through the Social Housing Development Programme which are managed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) Development Programme Group which provides grant funding to housing associations so that they can build or acquire new social housing. Money for redecoration comes a separate planned maintenance budget.</p>	<p>ML</p>	
<p>Meeting End</p>		
<p>Meeting ended at 12:30pm.</p>		