

Riverside Tenants & Residents Federation Executive Committee
Held on Thursday 29th October 2015 @ 11.20am in
The Brain Charity, Norton Street, Liverpool L3 8LR

1. Welcome & Introductions:

In Attendance: Walter Macfarlane, Richie Kelly, Sally Trueman, Barbara Fitzgerald, Heather Bruce, Janice Murray, Jean Williams, Ian Caldwell, John Gray, Richard Austin and Maria Milford (NSC observer).

Staff: Anna Bishop, Mark Hoskisson, Sharon Hutchinson, Maxine Davis, Juliet Blackburn.

2. **Apologies:** Patrick Rice, Ann Robertson, Julie Moss, Kathy Forsyth Smith, Michael Hulme, and Kate Jungnitz.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting held 24 September 2015: Agreed

4. Matters Arising:

Item 5 – CHIN WAG. Noted there are no age restrictions as long as driver has the relevant valid license.

Item 7 – Noted that Count Me in Panel members would attend a focus group on 20th November 15. ST& JW agreed to attend to represent the Federation.

Ian Caldwell raised a concern that his point made at the previous meeting regarding cover during staff absences was not in the previous minutes. Ian requested clarity on situations where a tenant or resident contacted Riverside with a query but is told it cannot be dealt with because the relevant staff member is off work. Ian was concerned that within Riverside other staff should have sufficient information to be able to answer queries. Riverside agreed that routine day to day queries could and should be dealt with by other staff. But certain queries – for example, plans for programmed works or work on service charge budgets – could only be answered by the lead member of staff and if they were off there would be delays in responding.

5. Think Forward – Target Operating Model (TOM) – J Blackburn for information.

Noted that Riverside had decided to look at TOM before the new Government budget. The objective is to deliver quality services to customers with a one

Riverside approach and now support closing the post budget gap of £30million per annum by 2019/2020. It will be done fast and done right with the business case presented to Riverside Group Board in February 2016. The Fed was presented with a list of Riverside's strengths and weaknesses and consulted on their opinions - raised issue of tenants not being mentioned and emphasised that Riverside consults and listens to tenants. Federation asked that consideration be given to how tenants and residents can feed into the process and were assured that Riverside would have a conversation about this and manage the process in a flexible way. **ACTION:** JB to send the staff information pack to SH to forward to Fed members.

6. **Service Charge Policy:** SH explained that Steve Ward (Income Collection) had asked to consult with the Fed about the updated Service Charge Policy and asked for feedback. The group made some initial comments (listed below) but asked for further time to consider the policy.
- Too in-depth
 - Very jargony
 - Need an explanation of variable service charge

However the Fed recognised that it is a Riverside policy and made a recommendation that we produce a user's guide explaining what service charges are for (a condensed and plain English version of the policy for tenants and residents).

It was agreed a deadline of 12noon on Friday, 6 November for any further comments.

7. Feedback on 2015 national Tenants Conference held on 2 October:

The Federation looked at positive feedback given by delegates on the day and was pleased that 62% of delegates said it was the first time they had attended a Federation event and that 87% said they would attend another event. The workshops were interactive with lively discussions and relevant topics based on suggestions from tenants and residents. The moving speech by Sean Percival-Scott a former serviceman was a real highlight of the event with 95% of delegates finding it interesting. The Fed agreed that the conference was a success and was an interesting informative event with almost 250 tenants, residents and board members gathered from across the country. SH reported that we have received some interest in the Tenant Inspector role as a result of the conference. MH reported that Carol Matthews said thank you to the Fed and well done.

ACTION: SH to produce a report for the December Fed meeting. **ACTION:** KJ to find out whether the report goes to HSDs or the HSC for information.

8. Budget Update

- 2016/17 & 2017/18. The current balance was noted. WMC is

putting together a new 3 year budget plan which will be ready to present at the December 2015 meeting.

- Fundraising– WMC confirmed that the Fed is legally allowed to fundraise and due to the budgetary constraints over the coming 3 years WMC has asked the Fed to think of innovative and positive ways to do some fundraising for activities and projects and invite local groups to send in ideas for the Fed to consider.

9. Implications for Federation Workplan

MH explained that the Fed needed a very clear and precise budget (informed by previous spend). Agreed Fed should be able to get an idea of running costs from the previous 18 months and the new budget will also reflect the reduction of grant for 2016 and the impact of that going forward means;

- May need to look at some previous commitments made and put some on hold i.e. The Community Chest.
 - Follow up work – look at how we translate our successes
 - How to communicate to Tenants & Residents that they are part of the Fed. AB suggested including a certificate in new tenant starter packs.
 - Try to increase the level of involvement in the Divisions.
- It was agreed that Fed members would re-look at the work plan and feedback on any ideas they get locally to help the Fed sustain the activities of the Fed.

10. Minutes from the National Scrutiny Committee meeting held 24 June 2015 – Noted.

MM explained that the NSC have received 170 recommendations from the Divisional panels, 80% of these have been formally accepted and the majority have national implications. Sue Powell from the Project Management Office is working with the NSC to push the recommendations through and track them.

11. Feedback from Federation's Annual Report 2015 working group – SH

gave feedback from the Working Group meeting on 12 October 15. The group is made up of 3 Fed members, and 2 NSC members. The budget is £10k. **ACTION:** Fed reps to liaise with their RI worker on at least 2 articles for inclusion in the News from our Communities and Digital Inclusion sections of the report.

12. Report from Group Board meeting 14 October 2015

- Group Board Headlines – The headlines from 14 October were not available. **ACTION:** MH to follow up.

13. Report from Board Members Conference held 15 October 2015.

RA, BF and MH thought the conference was very interesting and the afternoon had

been interactive. Fed felt that it was very reassuring that Carol Mathews delivered the same message as she did at the Tenants Conference.

14. Housing Services Committee Update – It was agreed to ask KJ for an update on what issues and concerns had been raised regarding the new RI policy.

15. Agenda for joint meeting with NSC on 2 December 2015 - the following Agenda items were agreed.

- Working with Leaseholders/Right to Buy. SH has contacted TPAS to invite a guest speaker.
- FED & NSC updates – 12 months on.
- An interactive play
- Update on Comprehensive Spending Review

16. Completion of Core Brief - It was agreed the three key topics will be

- Think Forward – Target Operating Model (TOM)
- Feedback on 2015 National Tenants Conference
- Fundraising

17. Any Other Business

Agreed to invite Evolve Director and Ian Gregg from Riverside Asset Management along to the February 2016 Fed meeting to discuss their long term plans and visions for improving services. Agreed to prepare some formal questions in advance. **Action – SH to send invite on Fed's behalf.**

18. Date & time of Next Meeting:

- Federation Executive Committee – Tuesday, 1 December 2015 @ 11.30am
- Joint Meeting with the National Scrutiny committee – Wednesday, 2 December 2015 @ 10.00am
At the Brain Charity, Norton Street, Liverpool, L3 8LR