# Minutes of the RCVE Meeting 08/02/2024

# Teams (10:00 – 15:00)

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|  | **Attendees:**  **RCVE:** Vic Andrews, David Otty, Carole Warburton, Keith Harkness, Julie Jackson,  Rachel Roche, Jackie Lewis, Linda Jackaman  **Riverside:** Elaine Bateson, Chris Colman, Jo Young, Steve Hewitt, Rebecca Gorman,  Charlene Little, Andrea Thorn, Rajvinder Vine, Sarah Wall, Karen Little,  Helen Reddington, Claire Snowdon | |
| **1** | **Welcome and Introductions**  VA opened the meeting and thanked all for attending today’s session. | |
| **2** | **Apologies** | Jonothon Laycock, Paula Simpson, Patrick New |
| **3** | **Previous Minutes** | Minutes from previous meeting on 12/10/2023 were agreed as a true record. |
| **4** | **Matters Arising** | None noted. |
| **5** | **Pet Policy**  Karen Little | KL shared the updated Pet Guidance. This had previously been shared with the RCVE in May 2023. Comments from that meeting have now been incorporated in this new draft.  KH asked if there was a limitation on the size of dogs allowed. KL replied that customers are encouraged to be mindful of the size of the accommodation they are living in, when making a decision on pets.  KH felt there should be some mention of size and KL confirmed that they would be taking on board KH’s suggestions regarding size with a view to possibly including some guidance on this.  LJ enquired what would happen if a dog were brought in without knowledge and was concerned this would go under the radar if not reported. KL acknowledged that this could happen but not so much now with the XL Bully as owners are now required to have an exemption to keep one. KL also felt that if there were issues with a dog then neighbours would almost certainly alert Riverside.  AT confirmed that Riverside are moving away from the need to ask permission, to setting guidelines and ensuring that customers know tenancy enforcement action will be taken if dog owners do not act responsibly.  KL added by saying that Housing Officer’s would hopefully offer support to customers who want to report issues and deal with it sympathetically.  JL felt that this subject was very triggering and felt that as an independent tenant she would fight it all the way. KL enquired if there was anything specific that was cause for upset. JL felt that limiting the number of pets was ridiculous and that this should be a personal decision based on individual circumstances.  AT reassured JL that if the pet is looked after and guidelines were followed, and if the pet does not cause a nuisance, then no action would be needed. She reiterated that these are guidelines to assist Riverside if problems should arise. Riverside would work with customers to help ease any worries.  VA enquired if thought has been given to other customers who may be traumatically triggered by new or existing tenants bringing in pets. He felt that this could be life changing to some people who are afraid or have a phobia, of dogs for instance.  KL confirmed that there is nothing specifically in the guidance but would hope that site managers and HO’s would be able to look at any issues such as these sensitively.  RR raised the issue of noise concerns and asked if customers had the option to go to Environmental Health if they did not want to report it to Riverside. KL confirmed that they could, and AT added that EH would report back to Riverside to work together to resolve any issues.  VA felt that the guidance was very positive.  AT enquired if the RCVE had now approved the policy/guidelines.  This was put to members, and whilst it was clearly a very emotive subject among RCVE members, it was approved by a RCVE Majority. |
|  | **Comfort Break** | |
| **6** | **ASB Scrutiny Update**  Rajvinder Vine | ASB update was shared on the action plan to show where they are on track for actions listed.  VA thanked everyone for their hard work and commented that everything seemed to be moving in the right direction. He then asked what was in place to ensure training was completed by new staff.  RV confirmed that this was now incorporated into the New Starter Package for all employees to complete in their initial training.  RR discussed the app that is sent out to record noise and pointed out that, from personal experience, this did not pick up noises efficiently enough.  RV confirmed that in the coming months noise will be focused on with staff, and that it needed to be looked at as a bigger picture. She also confirmed that there is another resource that can be used by frontline workers to identify noise issues when customers cannot download the app.  JJ felt that it was a pity that it had to be left up to the customer to make the complaint and RV reassured her that anonymity can be used. Riverside would work with the customer to work on an action plan together.  VA thanked RV for her presentation and observed that it was good to see that Scrutiny had made a meaningful impact.  SW confirmed that action has been taken as a result of RCVE feedback and that this is now on the website. |
| **7** | **DM&C Communication**  Keith Harkness | KH reported back to the members on the scrutiny project so far. He outlined what had been discussed so far and what plans were in place for further meetings.  VA asked the panel to bear in mind that another scrutiny had been completed about customer journey through planned maintenance. He suggested that this was looked at to cross reference some good ideas to support the present scrutiny topic.  VA also referred to the wording in the documents sent out to customers that said, ‘leaving home as we found it,’ and asked why customers would not expect home to be returned to the state it was at the beginning.  KH explained that this could be open to interpretation.  VA asked the panel to be mindful to send the final report to the RCVE to approve.  VA asked if there might be value in reaching out to find a small group of tenants/customers to form a communication group – they could then be tasked to read through documents etc.  AT felt this was a very good idea to help get away from jargons and abbreviations.  CL to review. |
| **8** | **CI&E Strategy Update**  Charlene Little | CL shared the Involvement Strategy and updates since October.   * Customer complaints – panel is now established, and two meetings have been held so far. * Changes to constitution now ready for RCVE to sign off. * Recommendation of letter writing now being fed into training and this is now on the website. * Regional Hubs – LCR held first meeting last week, North meeting due in next week or two and S&C to be held in March. * Website is now live. * New listening web page. * Training for PS on Facebook now completed. * New ED&I panel meeting monthly.   JJ relayed to the group that the service charge letter had not been received CL explained that she had now received this and it will be sent out in the coming days.  VA informed members that they will shortly be receiving the suggested new wording of the Constitution in relation to complaints. He asked that any comments be returned to him.  He also enquired if the Hub meetings were being minuted.  CL explained that notes of actions were being made rather than full minutes.  AT explained that RCVE should be receiving a summary of the meetings and also suggested that Heads of Housing should perhaps begin feeding back at these meetings. |
| **9** | **Finance Update**  Elaine Bateson | EB advised that account balance as of 08/02/2024 was £42,426.45 .  Debits for the year were £34,466.80 and this included a recharge figure of £26,961.00 on the 27.09.23. |
| **10** | **Reports** | Reports had all been circulated prior to the meeting.  Not received Complaints report for last three meetings due to staff absence.  CC to liaise with Justine Lennon to send these direct to EB moving forward. |
|  | **LUNCH** | |
| **11** | **Tenanted Sales**  Helen Reddington | HR talked about updates to this policy and explained that this was a light touch review. Changes were as follows:   1. Updated purpose section to reflect operations in OHG. 2. London updated to include GLA funding guide. 3. Risk section. 4. Appendix section.   HR then looked at the different schemes in place including Right to Buy, Right to Acquire, Right to Shared Ownership and London Live in Rent.  DO commented that when this was last discussed it was suggested that more information and advice was needed, and he asked if this had now improved.  HR confirmed that this had been completely transformed in the last 2 years due to lots of new requirements from Government; it was stipulated that more accurate information was required.  JL asked if a customer takes out shared ownership do they have to comply with Riverside Tenants Policy.  HR explained that they will have a lease which will reflect what you would expect to see in a tenant’s agreement. This is called a ‘model’ lease, and this is the contract used.  VA asked if tenants in London are receiving this information.  HR explained that she has not seen the policies but would assume the same information is being shared.  VA asked for clarification on what Riverside is doing to improve on this and what support is being given to customers to support their choices.  HR talked through the following:   * Panel of solicitors and advisors in place to signpost customers to other people with specific knowledge of these products. * Work on website to make it easier to navigate. * Product guides to offer information in a consistent way.   JJ commented that it sounded like Riverside had improved things massively since she purchased her property. |
| **12** | **Complaints & Customer Satisfaction**  Claire Snowdon | CS shared her presentation and explained that monthly summaries will be available soon. Information was given on what to expect in the reports and looked at how these will be set out.  VA asked which area of the business is performing best and CS explained that from the figures C&S is performing best at the moment, but a lot of factors affect how we read these figures.  JJ shared that she had an ongoing complaint since May that was now at stage 3 and with the Housing Ombudsman; a resolution still had not been found. She shared that she felt complaint resolution is not working.  AT explained that the Housing Ombudsman have a large backlog and that these are being ranked as opposed to being looked at in date order. She also explained that passing complaints at this stage to the Ombudsman is a requirement that Riverside have to complete.  CW shared that she is on a stage 2 building safety complaint and felt that the complaints process was very time consuming. She felt that the same questions were being asked repeatedly and that the figures do not seem to mean a lot to the customer. VA suggested that he met with CW after the meeting to discuss further.  CL asked CC and CS if slides were going to be provided to the RCVE at bi-monthly meetings as part of the meeting pack but not in person. This was confirmed by CC.  CS then shared a second report showing the key headlines to support performance management.  VA shared that he felt members would need to look at these fully to understand how to interpret them. He felt this would be an ongoing process that might need reviewing when the reports start being received. |
|  | **Comfort Break** | |
| **13** | **Diversity Panel Feedback**  Charlene Little | CL reported back to the group upcoming plans:   * Riverside will be undertaking a consultation on accessibility of services – what are the barriers that are experienced from customers with protected characteristics? * Quality Assurance exercise to look at barriers. * An online survey will be shared soon. * A session with the ED&I panel. * RCVE session. * Projects that look at a particular service – calls, letters etc. * Training needs to be completed on GDPR before calls are listened to – this will hopefully take place in March.   ED&I panel have looked at 3 policies so far including Neighbourhood Planning Frameworks, Hate Crime and Allocations & Lettings Policy.  There will be a Patch Plan for Charlotte Court. CW had not heard about this so CL will follow up.  LGBTQ+ events where outlined – CL to work closely with SH on these.  PS and CC presented to managers at the PFI scheme in Hull about promoting the ED&I panel. PS & CL to visit in March.  JL asked if ARC Cumbria had been considered, (Anti Racist Cumbria).  CL explained that she had considered linking in with them and exploring the potential to do a joint project. This would need to be explored further.  VA enquired if once an ED&I officer had been appointed, would they be invited to these group meetings. CL replied that they would not be invited to the different groups, but the link would be through the panel that brings the groups together.  VA enquired if the EM group would be open to an ally. CL explained that this was a topic of discussion that had not yet been concluded.  VA said he would leave this discussion there for now, but that the whole idea of the National Customer Framework was to ensure close working, understanding and feedback to RCVE from all groups. |
| **14** | **AGM Proposals**  Vic Andrews | VA reminded the RCVE members of the proposals that were raised at the AGM in December.  Proposals on behalf of the RCVE Officer Group as follows:  Whilst the RCVE remain extremely disappointed that Riverside have ignored numerous RCVE requests to discuss the content and recommendations of the TPAS Report presented to our Officers on 11th July 2023. That opportunity having been wasted we feel it is now incumbent upon us to pro-actively consider the recommendations in so far as they may improve the functionality of Riverside Customer Voice.  It is therefore proposed that:   1. It was proposed and agreed that RCVE scrutinise the TPAS report as evidence of its validity.   VA advised that an extensive review of the report was produced and has been brought to the attention of the GRC. This will be shared further as and if necessary, but only once legal advice has been sought.   1. RCVE undertake general review of the constitution –   RCVE need to speak with Riverside staff about how they will progress things agreed.   1. Review of expenses policy to ensure there is no ambiguity.   The TPAS report strangely did not identify any ambiguity, but made this recommendation anyway, so the RCVE will look at this.   1. RCVE to develop governance training policy. Again RCVE will progress this with Riverside. 2. ED&I officer appointment. Agreed.   RCVE will elect an ED&I Officer within the upcoming elections of all Officers, to be held by the April meeting.   1. Recommendation of how to review tri-annual process of selecting RCVE members. VA felt that more outside of the box thinking was needed to enable more RCV members to take part in the Election/selection of RCVE members, who then serve a 3year term of office. RCVE to work with Riverside to progress this.   DO asked about the six co-opted member positions.  VA explained the many good reasons why the RCVE had adopted those co-opted positions, and that they still applied to ensure that wherever possible the RCVE can comply with 4.2 & 4.3 of the constitution.   1. RCVE to develop new induction training package for new members. RCVE will implement this once it was agreed what it needed to cover. 2. Continue to develop clear partnership working with RCVE.   VA felt that there is a good relationship with the current CI&E team, but we were still missing the final piece of teambuilding joint work which was agreed.   1. Legal entity – JL, who was asked to supply further information on the options, was not present today. VA to make contact with JL regarding this. 2. Redefine objectives of customer complaints panel – this was looked at earlier with the presentation from CS.   VA confirmed to the meeting that all the proposals were agreed at the AGM and that RCVE now once again seek to work collaboratively with Riverside on this. VA further explained that the RCVE mantra when Riverside seek consultation on policy changes already decided is “was there a customer in the room” Bearing in mind our Constitution and any changes to it, are sent to TRGB for note/approval, it is only reasonable we include them in our deliberations on these matters.  AT felt that there needed to be some thought put into clustering some of these together, e.g., triannual elections and induction.  AT felt that the review of the expenses policy could be looked at immediately.  VA agreed that the overall review of the constitution would take care of those other constitutional matters, including the election/selection and the expenses policy. |
| **15** | **AOB** | Bankline – VA asked what is slowing this down and why can’t documents etc be sent direct to the customer. He pointed out that there was still a need for both parties to authorise payments (staff and RCVE); checks need to be in place.  CL informed the meeting that she had previously been working with the treasury team to try to resolve this issue. At present everything has to go to Head Office in Speke and there has been issues with post getting lost or delayed. Treasury has been asked to look at a different way of doing this that is more streamlined. CL to pick this up again.  VA said that it remains unacceptable that the checks and balances agreed and put in place that ensured that neither Staff or RCVE have complete control over Bankline have not existed for far too long, and it is the RCVE (customer) role that is missing. This needs urgent correction.  VA thanked everybody for joining the meeting. |
|  | **Meeting ended at 3pm** | |

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| **Appendix 1** | | |  | |  | |  |  |
| **No.** | **Description** | | **Owner(s)** | | **Deadline** | | **Status** | **Notes** |
| 1 | Pet Guidance | | Riverside | | Next meeting | | AGREED REMOVE | RCVE members approved 9.2.24 |
| 2 | BANKLINE | | CL | | NEXT MEETING | |  |  |
| 3 |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 4 |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 5 |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 6 |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 7 | IT Issues with email | | RN/CC | | NEXT MEETING | | Ongoing | Waiting on any potential issues with "Convene" |
| 8 | Earlier production of RCVE minutes | | RN/CC | | Complete | | Agreed REMOVE | Last minutes sent out & agreed within 2 weeks of meeting date |
| 9 | Digital roadmap assistance | | SW | | Not set | | No update yet |  |
| 10 | Damp & Mould e-learning roll-out | | LP | | Not set | | Complete REMOVE |  |
| 11 | Void item retention | | PN | | See action 12 | | Complete REMOVE |  |
| 12 | Void item retention | | AT/SW | | Not set | | In progress REMOVE | Prep complete, go live Mon 26 June for 3-month validation |