

# **NOTE OF MEETINGS HELD 5 & 6 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**Subject: Developing Digital Services – stage one of tenant consultation**

**Venue:** Aberdeen office

## **People present 5 September:**

Ash Reid – Support Services Manager  
Samantha Hough – Customer Participation Officer  
Mahmood Qasim – I.C.T. Manager  
Gail Pritchard – I.C.T. Team Leader  
RB – Tenant, Aberdeen  
LVdL – Tenant, Aberdeen

## **People present 6 September:**

Ash Reid – Support Services Manager  
Samantha Hough – Customer Participation Officer  
Mahmood Qasim – I.C.T. Manager  
SC – tenant, Aberdeen  
BM – tenant, Aberdeen  
KP – tenant, Stonehaven

## **Background**

The purpose of the meeting is to have tenant input right at the very beginning of the Association's project to develop digital services for tenants. This is to ensure that tenant's priorities, requirements and opinions are taken into account at the outset and before any big decisions are taken.

The format of the meeting was explained as follows:

- A finished product demonstration video shown to the group in order to establish what the final outcome may look like (from Caledonia Housing)
- An initial demonstration from the Association's current housing software provider to show the range of functions that would be available through a tenant facing web-portal
- A demonstration of a mobile App product that shows the range of services that may be possible in the fullness of time

## **Discussion Points**

The following two tables cover the main points raised at the meeting. Table one covers design and layout and table two covers the services on offer.

| <b>Table 1: Design and layout</b> |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Item discussed</b>             | <b>Notes</b>  |
| <b>Logging in</b>                 | Login should be very simple and using familiar information rather than a tenancy number or similar  |
| <b>Use of symbols</b>             | Using pictures for services is good for people who can't read, but there also needs to be a label to make sure that it is clear what the symbols mean. On the website, this could be a label that shows when you hover over the symbol, but a solid label on an App |
| <b>'How to' videos</b>            | If possible, instructions would be useful in a web portal and keep the number of clicks needed to a minimum   |
| <b>Colour options</b>             | Tenants would like to choose the colours – an option using the web site colours or red, black and white was suggested   |
| <b>Buttons</b>                    | These must be a good size, be clear what they are for and have good contrasting colours so they stand out   |
| <b>Language used</b>              | Language must be plain and simple – with further explanations available for more complicated terms – don't use words like pending/submit/debit  |
| <b>Size of text</b>               | Avoid small text as far as possible within the App as it can't be altered   |
| <b>Traffic light system</b>       | If a warning or alert system is to be used for any aspect of the service, then it could be based on traffic lights as this is very easy to interpret  |
| <b>Rent statement</b>             | Colours for debit and credit balances would be helpful in finished product  |
| <b>Instructions</b>               | These should be consistent throughout e.g. always tick the same coloured box, always use the same symbols and wording for the same thing, use very plain language and make it clear when a process has been successfully finished                                   |
| <b>Log out</b>                    | Again, make sure this is clear: ask 'are you finished?' then Exit and Goodbye   |

| <b>Table 2: service options (to feed into a wish list for service development</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Item discussed</b>   | <b>Notes</b>   |
| <b>Gas servicing alert</b>  | It would be good to have the gas servicing due date as an alert rather than an alert for overdue services (as they don't happen). This will make tenants aware when they need to think about making themselves available for appointments  |
| <b>Announcements</b>  | It was suggested that the web portal could have a panel that contains up-coming meetings and other events and news (the FB page and web news page would be available in the design)  |
| <b>Appointments arranged</b>  | Any appointments already arranged would be useful with reminder pop-ups and a facility to change the appointment if possible   |
| <b>Staff photos</b>   | This was raised as being very useful as people worry about fraudulent visitors coming to their door – if they can check who is coming to their home it provides a bit of confidence  |
| <b>Supporting tenants</b>   | A point was made that this type of service would be excellent for people who support tenants and applicants as they could have access to accurate information about their tenancy and help them to access services (with their permission)   |
| <b>Former tenants access to information</b>                                       | It was raised that former tenants that have arrears should have access to the service so they can check their balance and make payment plans   |
| <b>Too much information</b>   | Tenants requested that they don't have to provide too much information through the portal or App – this was after seeing the demonstration of the ASB reporting form which asked for a lot of detailed information and what looked like personal questions about how the tenant was feeling about the incident |
| <b>Taking photos to send in</b>   | This was met with enthusiasm   |
| <b>Providing a signature</b>  | This was also met with positivity – especially for the idea of being able to sign to terminate the tenancy via an App  |
| <b>Information newsflashes on an App</b>  | It would be good to have some facts and figures available – perhaps once per year like the annual report – performance and spending information as people might have an explore through the App when sitting with their phones   |
| <b>Available properties</b>   | This would be useful for housing applicants and people looking for a transfer  |
| <b>Scheduling repairs appointments</b>  | This was met with enthusiasm. It was explained that this may be quite hard to develop due to our widely dispersed geography but it may be possible in the fullness of time   |
| <b>CCTV requests</b>  | Tenants can put in a request to have the unit in their area  |
| <b>Confidentiality</b>  | It needs to be clear where something can be kept private or shared (budget planner)  |
| <b>Complaints</b>   | It would be good to have the facility to make an ASB complaint anonymous if possible   |
| <b>Office closures</b>  | It would be useful to have these listed somewhere as an alert  |

## **Additional discussion points**

- It was asked that if digital services were coming in did that mean that staff would lose their jobs if tenants were logging work straight to the system. It was explained that housing is an increasingly complicated sector to work in, and there are always things that we need staff to do. This includes an increasing amount of working with tenants to develop and review services as well as dealing with our most vulnerable tenants who need a bit of extra help and support from staff at times, especially with the welfare system being difficult to navigate.
- It was suggested that once the service is up and running that all new tenants are 'trained up' to use the portal or App so that they are helped to get registered and know about all the services that can be accessed. Then they might help their neighbours to get onto digital services
- It was suggested that the weekly meetings at Fraser Court would be a good place to help people use the new service – get out into the communities to help the tenants that need help. Also, the common room would be a good Community Digital Classroom

## **The votes for what tenants would be using**

- 2 for the App
- 2 for the portal
- 1 for both