

Assets and Sustainability Panel

Chair's Report

Topics Discussed & Presenter

1. **The role and challenges of the Platform Property Care planning function** – Tara Mitchell (Resource Scheduling Manager)
2. **Net Zero Carbon journey** – Stephen Edwards (Head of Sustainability)
3. **The role of the Platform Property Care Board** – Marc Mayall (Director of Operations – Property)
4. **Modern Methods of Construction** – Katie Gilmartin (Head of Business Development & Innovation)

Observations, Recommendations & Actions

1. The panel are pleased to see that system improvements are being implemented to make appointment scheduling more efficient and reduce duplication of jobs. It was also positive to note that a system is being introduced to enable operatives to book appointments from customers' homes to avoid delays. We asked about what measure is in place if there are language barriers with customers in reporting repairs, both initially and also communicating with operatives in their homes and were informed that there are different services available throughout Platform including a translation service however we were keen to understand if operatives were aware of options inside customers' homes- as an **Action** Marc Mayall will cover this in the next Toolbox Talk with operatives as this element sits more with PPC than the Planning team.

We also asked about the availability of female operatives for customers to suit customer needs and preferences. Tara advised that there are a number of female operatives however the workforce is mostly male, where possible they will send female operatives but if there isn't a female operative for a particular trade, they will send a female operative to accompany the male operative. We also heard about Platform's Apprentice programme and ambition to recruit more female trade operatives as an Action a CVP briefing will be arranged for the panel to hear more about this.

We understand that measure need to be taken for all operatives but we're aware that female operatives may be more vulnerable so we would like to know more about the approaches that PPC take to safeguard female operatives and considerations around customers who may prefer to not have a female operative in their home i.e. for cultural reasons.

2. Stephen Edwards provided an update on Platform's current work and plans to retrofit customer homes and improve their energy performance certificate (EPC) rating and provided an overview of the work that has been carried out funded by Platform and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDC). The presentation covered various technical aspects of the programme and how homes have been allocated and commented on how this will benefit customers and how they live in their homes which is positive to see, as an Action we have asked for more information on how this is benefiting customers in the form of customer feedback and case studies as this information become available. We would also like to hear more about how Platform are communicating these plans to all customers to promote the benefits (financial and environmental) to themselves and their community.
3. We received a presentation about Platform Property Care and were given an overview of how the company operates as a Cost Saving Group (CSG) for the three housing providers that are part of it. We asked about plans to expand PPC to include other organisations and Marc explained that any further partners in the group would need to benefit all existing members. We learnt that PPC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Platform Housing Group and as such they are the parent organisation. We have had an invitation for one of the Assets and Sustainability Service Panel to represent CVP and Platform at Platform Property Care Board meetings along with customer representatives from Rooftop and Stonewater, as an **Action** we will be provided with further information about meeting arrangements and following the meeting we have selected a nomination who will represent the CVP and Platform.
4. Katie provided us with an overview of Platforms approach to Modern Methods of Construction and how the building specifications might differ depending on how Platform acquire properties to develop e.g. land led providing more control compared to properties that are purchased as part of wider existing developments. Katie gave an overview of different components that are going into properties to reduce their carbon emissions and increase efficiency for customers who live in them. Examples include air-source heat pumps for heating instead of gas and the installation of electric vehicle charging points. We are extremely pleased to learn about these approaches and feel that the plans are comprehensive and inspirational. We were told about a site where 'zero-bill' homes are being developed in Nottingham and we observed that this raises questions about the equity of some customers having homes where they don't have any bills with others having to pay for utilities. There was consensus that this is an important reflection and something Platform would like to explore in the future through conversations with customers. As an **Action** we would like the Board to consider and discuss the ethical considerations of some customers living in zero-bills home with CVP.

Summary

Overall, we found the updates and information provided to be positive and provided assurance that steps are being made towards improvements that will benefit the experience of Platform customers. The update about system improvements for repair planning is welcomed and we hope this this will bring improved efficiencies for customers and Platform in scheduling repairs. We found the updates about retrofit and modern methods of construction extremely interesting and inspirational, and we look forward to further updates and discussions about how these plans are implemented, with a focus on customer communications and how the approaches are implemented equitably.

The update about Platform Property Care (PPC) has provided us with a greater understanding of how the entity operates and we welcome the opportunity to take part in their board meetings in collaboration with representatives from Stonewater and Rooftop.