

# News Update regarding Co-op Homes

Date 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**From: The Co-op Homes/FPHC Working Group (Roger, Gandha, Spud)**

As you may have heard, in autumn 2022, FPHC made an initial contact with Co-op Homes, who are a housing management service for housing co-ops in London and the South East. They would be able to offer us a full range of services: rent account, maintenance, cyclical testing, advice on policy and procedure. This decision was made to ask for help with management of FPHC bearing in mind that a number of MC members are now retired or approaching retirement and we need to consider the future efficient running of our housing co-op.

## **October 2022 : Initial Meeting with Co-op Homes**

Roger, Gandha and Spud had a face to face meeting with 3 executives of Co-op Homes: Neil the then CEO; Alex Forsyth (Accounts) and Wayne Lee (Maintenance). The initial meeting was a chance to get to know each other if somewhat briefly and to carry out a partial due diligence process regarding our accounts. Our management accounts were deemed to be in a very healthy state. We went on to discuss what services they offer, namely: accounting and auditing; rent account and reporting; maintenance and cyclical testing, cyclical management; as well as advice on policy and procedure and regulatory practices.

The meeting ended with Neil stating he would be sending out the initial documents forthwith.

It is very important to note and this was stated at that initial meeting - that any arrangement between FPHC and Co-op Homes would be a partnership. They will not be a distant cloud based organisation managing us from afar but will work in conjunction with the Management Committee regarding decisions, policy and budgetary and accounting concerns and FPHC will continue to be involved in any decisions regarding the running of our housing co-op. We will receive regular reports from them and there will be a dedicated Housing Manager who will be our main point of contact.

Co-op Homes expect to attend Management Committee meetings every few months in order to check that meetings are carried out efficiently and are dealing with relevant business in a collaborative way. They also requested copies of our minutes and agendas which we will be sending later.

**So...where are we now:**

## **The initial receipt of documents from Co-op Homes**

We received two documents in late December: a generic draft **Management Agreement** and a document regarding the **Split of Tasks** which outlines who will be responsible for what; e.g. who will be responsible for finding new members and arranging allocations; who

will be responsible for setting the maintenance/cyclical budget, etc. etc.. Some of the tasks will be FPHC's responsibility; some a joint concern and some organised by Co-op Homes. These areas will still need to be clarified and we had a number of questions regarding these tasks.

The Working Group worked through both the very lengthy documents at a number of meetings and created two reports outlining a number of questions we had at the time. These documents were sent to Co-op Homes and we awaited their response to our questions.

### **February 2023: Co-op Homes email response to our communication and document submission**

We were informed by email in February 2023, that Co-op Homes had acquired a new CEO; Neil Tryner who is an executive with Richmond Housing Partnership (the umbrella organisation of which Co-op Homes is a member) moved onto Westminster Housing Group. There is a new CEO at Co-op Homes who replied to our letter stating:

*Co-op Homes is currently undergoing restructuring, modernisation and development and will be opening up to new members in April 2023. We were asked to wait till April for their further communications regarding going forwards.*

In light of this waiting period we decided there was no point in sending out the Co-op Homes documents and our questions as we envisage these will change or be altered in some way. **We now await their communication and/or documents in April**

**Other organisations we researched:** We found 3 other organisations who deal with housing management: CDS Co-operatives who charge a great deal more than Co-op Homes; MB Housing based in Camden who did not reply to two lots of emails; and MBM Co-operative Housing based in South London who did not reply either to their phone or to our emails.

**The CH Working Group**  
**24<sup>th</sup> March 2023**