



Minutes of the 4EF Meeting

7pm on Tuesday 14th October 2025

St John's Community Centre, Glengall Grove, Cubitt Town, London E14 3NE

Present	
Residents:	Candida, Jenny, Maggie, Tracy, Daniel, Jackie, Pam, Jill
Advisor:	Mike Tyrrell
Riverside:	Andrea Thorn (Director of Homes & Communities) Sophia Da Costa (Housing Manager)
Apologies:	Arthur, Lesley
1	Introductions and apologies
1.1	After noting the apologies, Andrea Thorn introduced herself and explained the role she is now doing. Sophia Da Costa introduced herself.
2	Programme for addressing London's issues
2.1	AT reminded everyone that she been freed up from her normal duties to concentrate on London – an interim Director of Homes & Communities, Anne-Britt Karunaratne is covering her substantive job to allow AT the time to make a difference in London to bring services in London up to the National Riverside standards. AT was asked to address the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress made • Any changes proposed • Housing Officers • Housing Offices • Repairs • Major works • Comms
3	Progress Made
3.1	AT been working on a number of the big ticket items that have been raised by residents.
3.2	<u>Lifts</u> This is a big issue for London. There are 308 lifts and there are 30 out of service because so many of them are beyond the replacement life cycle. Riverside have £5.8m for lift replacements this year and £55m is needed for the next 9 years. In order to keep some of the lifts going, Riverside are looking at more than condition, such as taking into consideration vulnerable residents, breakdown history etc. In addition, all lifts are being serviced every 2 weeks to prevent breakdowns and those with a record of overheating are having fans installed. Those such as Kelson where lifts are being renewed are out to tender, but this is painful as only a few companies will tender for open protocol lifts. Once tenders are

	back, there will be stage two consultation with leaseholders. As it is a tall building it require a building regulation application, and that could take 40 weeks to get this through. Riverside met with the LBTH mayor yesterday to get lift applications up the list. He agreed.	
3.4	<p><u>Complaints</u></p> <p>As reported before, there is a team dealing with backlog and normal team dealing with new complaints The separate team working on the identified 500 backlog, them taking into account vulnerability, damp and mould etc. There are still 320 to deal with.</p>	
3.5	<p><u>Emergency plans</u></p> <p>Riverside have to have a plan for each block and are working with LA who have a duty to support in emergencies. This has been completed and now working on PEEPs, but the issue is that the data on residents is not strong enough. So Riverside have a lot of work to do on this issue.</p>	
3.6	<p><u>Focus on colleagues</u></p> <p>Riverside have been organizing roadshows for their staff on the new culture they are trying to instill. Poor attendance to start with but 118 attended the last roadshow. Riverside want to emphasise that their staff should be doing “the right thing at right time by empowering them” as at the moment colleagues are frightened to do the right thing and whether they will get the backing from the organization.</p>	
3.7	<p><u>Key stakeholders</u></p> <p>Working who on who are the key stakeholders. Riverside’s work with Tower Hamlets Council is paying off, and AT gave an example of their work at the Flower & Dean Estate in Spitalfields.</p>	
4	Any changes proposed	
4.1	<p><u>Cross cutting projects</u></p> <p>Riverside have inherited 62 blocks in London which have managing agents which makes managing those blocks problematic.</p>	
4.2	<p><u>Service charges</u></p> <p>In order to reduce service charge queries, Riverside are ensuring that the evidence of what the costs charged are easily available to share with residents.</p>	
4.3	<p><u>Estate Services</u></p> <p>Some of the neighbourhoods look nice. mainly where inhouse teams are in place. Where there are external contractors and managing agents there are more issues. Riverside are working on this and in addition on estates with inhouse teams they are ensuring that the schedules working together so that an estate is done in one day.</p>	
4.4	<p><u>Assistant Director of Operations for London</u></p> <p>To bring services together this new post is being introduced and the interviews are being held shortly. Should have someone in post in early January.</p>	

5	Housing Officers	
5.1	The training of the new Officers has been completed, but there will always be an ongoing programme. Housing Officers though feel dumped on and as a result cannot get out an about on the estate as envisaged. For example, the London based Housing Officers have 90 workflows per day compared to 10 for outside London. There have been 3 resignations, as people do not like the role and recruitment in place.	
5.2	Riverside have introduced apprentice housing officers and two out of three apprenticeships are now in place. This is unique for London and well ensure that future Housing Officer vacancies can be filled with well trained apprentices.	
5.3	Riverside are piloting Neighbourhood Plans for estates in Tower Hamlets firstly on the Flower & Dean estate in Spitalfields and Virginia Quay in Blackwall. Developing the plan with residents includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door knocking • Local Offers • Local Newsletters • Surgeries This will then be rolled out to all estates.	
5.4	Partnership working between Housing Officers, Property Officers and Leasehold Officers is underway and will be aided by a new part of the IT on salesforce so all Officers are working in the one system.	
6	Housing Offices	
6.1	AT advised that Riverside only have Housing Offices on the Island and that the Millwall office is open daily and the Castalia Square Office is open every Monday. They are planning to hold local surgeries for residents, for example on money advice.	
7	Repairs	
7.1	Repairs zones went live is September. This means that there is an Isle of Dogs zone, where a team of operatives only work on the Isle of Dogs, cutting down travel time. In addition 32 supply depots have been introduced across London to create faster turn round meaning supplies are only 10 minutes away.	
7.2	The changes to the IT system for repairs have identified that 3000 repairs appointments shown as complete, but they are not. This therefore had a knock on effect to the complaints. Riverside are now working on tackling these 3000 repairs.	
7.3	Awaabs Law comes into force this month, and Riverside have been preparing for the change in timescales for certain repairs. This includes the appointment of two additional Resident Liaison Officers to work on damp and mould cases.	

8	Major Works	
8.1	<p>AT advised that they have spent £46m on the former OH stock this year on the issues that have to be resolved because they are on the Government's agenda; such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £3.5m on cyclical work • £7.2m on decarbonization – roofs, windows, doors, insulation • £28.9m on cladding remediation <p>Whereas on £42k is being spent on new bathrooms and £82 on new kitchens for HHSRS. This sort of work will continue this for the next three years, and this will have a knock on effect on internal repairs because of lack of investment on internal cyclical replacements.</p>	
9	Communications	
9.1	<p>AT advised that Riverside are reviewing comms in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleagues • Stakeholders • Residents <p>Resident Comms are around item such as lifts and neighbourhood plans. AT stressed that this was especially important for London.</p>	
10	Questions	
10.1	<p><u>Comms</u> Are Riverside actually undertaking lift comms with residents to advise them that that engineers are coming out and estimated times? AT advised that they go out to residents by email. The problem is ensuring that they have up to date email addresses. AT agreed that Riverside need to work on how to improve how to get the information out to residents and to look at WhatsApp groups that exist.</p>	AT
10.2	<p><u>Alpha Grove Major Works</u> TW gave a really poor example of how not to do major works with the window renew on the houses where she lives. The example demonstrated a lack of care for residents, especially the elderly; failure to listen to residents in planning; and a lack of communications. AT agreed that this was unacceptable and she will make a case study of this so that it turns into a learning piece.</p>	
10.3	<p><u>Ebikes</u> TW has been reporting that a neighbouring property has 4 Deliveroo ebikes in the property with a lack of action. Even the window replacement contractors reported on this when they were in the property. When will Riverside take action given the concerns across London about ebike fires? AT will raise this with the housing team.</p>	AT
10.4	<p><u>Kelson</u> The main issue for Kelson residents is the lift failures and stacks. When will Riverside deal with both issues? AT responded that the plan for the lifts is as reported earlier and she will get Stephanie Allen to respond on the stacks?</p>	AT

10.5	<p><u>Parkguard</u> Why do Riverside use Parkguard for this role? AT assumed that the procurement tender allows Riverside to call upon Parkguard for a variety of functions.</p>	
10.6	<p><u>PEEPs</u> How do you identify visitors that require PEEPs? AT responded that Riverside do not have a duty towards visitors.</p>	
10.7	<p><u>Major Works Expenditure</u> How are residents being involved in the decisions on expenditure? AT responded that they are not at the moment because the expenditure is driven by responding to regulatory issues.</p> <p>Surely they should be involved in decisions regarding bathroom and kitchen renewals which are 30 and 25 years respectively under the decent homes standard? – AT said that this is the concern she has that there is no money to carry out those works, resulting in more repairs.</p>	
10.8	<p><u>Talia House</u> Money is wasted by the lack of communication on works. For example at Talia House where the scaffolding has been up for ages with no visible sign of works. The scaffolding costs must now outweigh the repair costs.</p>	
10.9	<p><u>Comms</u> Can Officers be trained in plain English, as the minutes from the st Johns Leaseholder meetings show that Riverside are asked one question and Officers choose to answer a different question, meaning that actions remain outstanding for months. AT asked for the information on this to be forwarded to her.</p>	
10.10	<p><u>Lifts</u> How will the open protocol help with lift repairs? AT responded that with an open protocol, Riverside can use any lift contractor to repair it. For example at the moment on the Stanna lifts with a closed protocol, they have a 4 week backlog, and cannot use any other contractor.</p>	
10.11	<p><u>Repairs</u> What does the repairs service look like going forward? AT responded that what they are putting in place has the aim of 85% of repairs being responded to on target time. It is currently 70% at present. Riverside will not be taking away the sub contractor support until yje target is met. What has not helped with the former One Housing stock is that repairs volumes have doubled because residents had given up with ask, and are now started reporting repairs again.</p>	
10.12	<p><u>Managing Agents</u> Is the problem of blocks having management agents new? AT responded that this is not new to Riverside but they have very few, the number inherited from One Housing though was much bigger than anticipated.</p>	

10.13	<p><u>Riverside Merger</u> Was the merger with One Housing worth it now that Riverside know what they have to deal with? AT responded that the merger will have long term gains for Riverside, despite the short term pain.</p>	
10.14	<p><u>Insulation</u> The news in the last week that the installation of poor insulation in homes that has been undertaken nationwide has failed is of concern to residents. Doe this affect Riverside? AT responded that Riverside benefitted from some early European external funding in Liverpool which resulted in much earlier learning, so Riverside are not affected by the issues in the recent new report. This experience has also raised concerns about air source heat pumps, which means Riverside are not rushing into large scale programmes of installations and keeping a watching brief on how this progresses.</p>	
10.15	<p><u>Major works</u> How will you involve residents in major works schemes? AT responded that this is being worked on and stressed that AT Tracy's experience should not have happened.</p>	AT
10.16	<p><u>Alice Shepherd House Lifts</u> MP asked about what is being done specifically for the Alice Shepherd House lifts that are frequently breaking down, as residents are concerned dit is being maintained badly because of the regeneration scheme? AT responded that the lifts will be maintained and that she will look into it.</p>	AT
10.17	<p><u>Major Works Updates</u> JS wrote to Stephanie Allen in September 2025 for an update on Major works on the St Johns Estate and she has had no response. This is recorded in the minutes for the St John's Leaseholder Association and still not responded to. Can AT ensure that Riverside give the response requested? AT will ask Stephanie Allen to come back to the 4EF with an update.</p>	AT
10.18	<p><u>Housing Office</u> The offer document commits Riverside as the successor body to Island Homes, to maintain the local offices on the Island. The one day a week at Castalia Square is not good enough. Why aren't Riverside looking at what teams could spend a day a week there, so that it is open more days, and residents will know what days a service they want is present? AT responded that at the moment, the only Riverside Offices are on the Island and at the moment they can not commit to more days.</p>	
10.19	<p><u>Housing Officers</u> To be effective, Housing Officers must have certain powers as per the strategy that DL was developing with the working group? AT agreed and stressed that this is the position Riverside want the Housing Officers to be in.</p>	

10.20	<u>Call centre</u> Residents were concerned at the length of time that it was taking to answer calls at the call centre. AT advised that this has now reduced to an average of 17 minutes.	
10.21	<u>Playpark Security</u> TW asked why are the small play parks not being locked as the one at the Northern end of Alpha Grove is attracting ASB? AT agreed that this will be looked at.	AT
10.22	<u>Photocopying</u> Will Riverside rethink the refusal to photocopy minutes, posters and agendas for Resident meetings? This is proving difficult for voluntary organisations who are working hard on residents behalf. AT agreed that this will be reviewed.	AT
10.23	<u>Estate Inspections</u> When will TRAs be invited to take part in Estate Inspections as promised at the previous meetings? MP and JS have been trying to get invited to the St Johns Estate Inspections all to no avail.	AT
11	Any Other Business	
11.1	The Chair thanked the Riverside officers for coming and looked forward to hearing about progress at the next meeting with AT in the New Year.	