

Residents' Forum update from Jon Cuming-Higgs.

Jon is Chair of the Residents' Forum and a Newlon resident



I was pleased to welcome Residents' Forum members, Newlon staff and guests to our January Forum meeting, including observers from the Regulator of Social Housing. This meeting gave us the opportunity to reflect on how services are performing, to hear directly from residents about their experiences, and to understand the steps Newlon is taking to improve in the areas that matter most to you. As always, it was encouraging to see such strong and engaged participation from Forum members, whose insight continues to shape our decision making and priorities.

A central theme of our discussion was repairs performance. Residents spoke openly about their recent experiences – both positive and negative – and the repairs leadership team provided a detailed update on the actions underway to address delays, backlogs and communication issues with contractors. Although performance has improved in some areas, particularly with Gilmartins, Newlon recognise there is more to do. Newlon has put in place new oversight arrangements and additional staffing to strengthen communication with residents waiting for repairs, and we will return to this topic in greater depth at our May meeting to ensure full accountability and progress.

We also heard about the upcoming procurement of the gas safety and heating contract. Residents contributed valuable views on what is most important to them, from appointment flexibility to better integration of modern systems. Alongside this, we received a comprehensive update on the third year of the Resident Engagement Strategy, which has been rated 5/5 for delivery by the resident oversight group. The examples shared – ranging from improved involvement in procurement to strengthened consultation practices – demonstrated the real impact residents are having on shaping how Newlon works.

The Forum also considered the findings from the recent scrutiny review on communal repairs, which explored how these services affect residents' sense of safety. Newlon has accepted all recommendations and has already committed to improvements, including internal decorations across more than twenty buildings. It was clear from the discussion that residents value transparency on how decisions are made and want clearer, more consistent feedback on the impact of their involvement. This was one of the two key messages we agreed to take to the Board.

As Chair, I would like to thank all Forum members for their constructive challenge, thoughtful contributions, and continued commitment to strengthening our services. Your involvement is not only welcomed – it is essential. If you would like to be involved in any way, you can contact getinvolved@newlon.org.uk. After all, these are our homes.