

Member Briefing

Number: 1159

Title: New housing management provider - ForHousing

Summary: ForHousing take over the management of the Council's housing stock from 1 July

New housing management provider

ForHousing will take over the management of the Council's existing housing stock, in Ellesmere Port and Neston, with effect from 1 July. They will also take on management responsibility for the 230 new affordable homes that the Council is delivering in both Ellesmere Port and Winsford.

The 10 year contract was awarded following a rigorous procurement exercise. Council tenants were involved throughout the process of selecting the new housing management provider, helping to shape how the service will be run.

Staff working for Plus Dane, the current provider, will transfer across to ForHousing on 1 July. Customers will see no change to the services they access. The service will operate out of the existing premises in Ellesmere Port and Neston.

About ForHousing

The contract was awarded to the ForViva Group and the service will be delivered under the brand name ForHousing. ForViva has a track record of working with communities and already owns and manages more than 18,000 homes across the North West.

Henry Terefenko, Director of Operations at ForHousing, said: "ForHousing is ready to work with the people of Ellesmere Port, Neston and Winsford to create thriving communities, thriving residents and a thriving local economy.

"The team has worked incredibly hard over the past five months to ensure a seamless transfer for customers and staff. Now we will work in partnership with customers, the local council, and other partners to deliver a great service."

ForHousing has committed to investing in new technology to improve services for customers and staff.

It will work with local partners and customers to develop a community impact strategy that will identify ways to create more access to education, training and employment, improve health and wellbeing and contribute to making neighbourhoods safer places to live.

ForHousing will also work with the Council, as a strategic partner, to help inform and deliver the Council's housing strategy and to make the best use of resources in order to meet the housing needs of residents.

Fire safety

The Council has been working closely with ForHousing, in the light of the Grenfell Tower fire, to seek additional assurances about health and safety compliance and to share with them the actions that the Council has taken to reassure tenants about fire safety measures.

The ForViva group own and manage 12 high rise blocks in Salford which have undergone external refurbishment, including the fitting of exterior cladding, over the last seven years. Following the Grenfell fire DCLG requested that ForViva, and other housing providers, submit samples of one type of the cladding for testing.

ForViva have now been notified of the results of this testing for some of the high rise blocks in Eccles. Whilst the material met all current building regulations it has not met the latest DCLG test criteria.

ForViva also own and manage a number of high rise blocks in Knowsley, no testing has been required for any of these properties.

ForViva are confident that their fire safety arrangements are very robust, but customer safety is of paramount importance and consequently they have taken immediate action to remove the cladding. They are awaiting the test results for the remaining high rise blocks and are working closely with the Fire Service.

ForViva have provided reassurance to their customers and no one is being moved out of the buildings whilst the work is happening. Additional inspections and checks have been undertaken with regard to fire safety, inside and outside the blocks. ForViva are also continuing with the provision of a 24 hour presence in the central Eccles blocks, to provide additional assurance and to assist in the unlikely event of a fire.

Contact details

The service will operate a one number call facility: 0300 123 55 22.

ForHousing's office at 7-9 Civic Way in Ellesmere Port will be open 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am-4.30pm on Fridays.

The attached communication has been sent out to all existing customers, informing them of the new contact details:



ForHousing Tenant
Mailer.pdf

The key highlights of ForViva's offer are set out on the attached:



ForViva Bid
Highlights.pdf

Further information about ForHousing can be found by visiting: www.ForHousing.co.uk or on Facebook or Twitter.

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Responsible Committee, Cabinet Member: Councillor Angela Claydon

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