

**TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS'  
CONSULTATIVE FORUM****6 JANUARY 2005**

Chair: \* Councillor Currie

Councillors: \* Billson \* Knowles  
\* Margaret Davine

\* Denotes Member present

[Note: Councillors Mrs Bath and Burchell also attended this meeting in a speaking role].

**Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives**

Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance:-

Antoneys Close Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations  
Miscellaneous Properties Residents' Association  
Alexandra Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association

(In total, 15 Tenants/Representatives attended).

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS****RECOMMENDATION 1 - 2005-06 Budget and Medium Term Budget Strategy 2005-06 to 2007-08**

The Forum received a reference from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 December 2004, asking the Forum to consider the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was set out in the report of the Executive Director (Business Connections) entitled "2005-06 Budget and Medium Term Budget Strategy 2005-06 to 2007-08". A revised Appendix G3 to the report, setting out the Rent Model, was also tabled at the meeting.

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy explained that the proposal outlined a nil rent increase during the first two years and a subsequent 4.73% annual increase until 2012. It was advised that the proposal reflected the need to achieve convergence with RSL rents, the need to avoid a rent increase that would exceed the rent limit as this would lead to a subsidy loss, and various other factors. It was further explained that there would be a slight increase in Leaseholder charges phased over a three-year period.

In response to a question from a resident regarding the setting out of the proposed rent, officers explained that the nil rent increase was subject to final approval, and reiterated the factors affecting the model.

A Forum member having made a comment regarding the allocation of the costs of setting up the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), officers confirmed that it was legitimate to charge these costs to the Housing Revenue Account.

In response to a query regarding the costs for cleaning communal areas, the Director of Financial and Business Strategy advised that the proposed budget made provisions for an additional £19k for cleaning, and that she would look into claims that a prior sum of £130k, which had been set out for a similar purpose on a previous occasion, had been lost.

In response to a further query regarding the increase in the gas servicing programme, officers undertook to provide the Forum with more details on this issue at a future meeting.

A Member suggested that a steady increase in the rent by 3.36% a year would be a more appropriate solution.

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy agreed to provide the Member with alternative rent models.

The tenants expressed differing views on whether the suggestion made by a Member of a fixed annual increase until 2012 was a preferable option to a nil increase during the first two years.

A formal vote was taken by the Council Members of the Forum on the proposal of a steady annual rent increase and with an equality of votes cast, the Chair exercised his casting vote and the proposal was lost.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (for decision by Cabinet)

That the comments made by Forum members on the proposed Housing Revenue Account for 2005/2006 be considered.

## **PART II - MINUTES**

179. **Minute's Silence:**  
The Forum observed a one-minute silence in memory of the victims of the tsunami in Asia.
180. **Appointment of Chair:**  
**RESOLVED:** That the appointment at the meeting of the Cabinet on 11 November 2004, of Councillor Bob Currie as Chair of this Forum for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05, be noted.
181. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.
182. **Declarations of Interest:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:
- | <u>Member</u>         | <u>Nature of Interest</u>                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillor Bob Currie | Councillor Bob Currie declared a personal interest by virtue of his role as a Ward Councillor, as Eastcote Lane, Alexandra Avenue and Brookside Close were all in his ward. |
183. **Arrangement of Agenda:**  
**RESOLVED:** That all items be considered with the press and public present.
184. **Appointment of Vice Chair:**  
**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Knowles be appointed Vice Chair of the Forum for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05.
185. **Minutes:**  
**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
186. **Matters Arising from the Last Meeting:**  
The Forum considered a report of the Acting Head of Housing Services which updated the meeting on issues raised at the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum on 13 October 2004. Several issues were discussed as follows.
- Brookside Close – Residents raised concerns regarding the newly installed windows and the fire blocks on the estate. It was agreed that a meeting be arranged with officers and resident representatives to discuss the issues, and that the Planning, Development and Housing Portfolio Holder would also be in attendance.
- Eastcote Lane Estate – Residents queried the delay of the door replacement programme. It was agreed that officers circulate a letter outlining the reasons for the delay to residents and the Chair.

The Chair noted that the Forum had not received a report on the issues raised in ELTRA's survey and asked that officers from the Building and Design Service be present at the next meeting to answer questions.

Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association – The Forum noted the action taken by the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee and awaited further updates at a future meeting.

HFTRA – Officers assured the meeting that residents would be involved in future consultations regarding ground maintenance arrangements.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

187. **Public Questions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

188. **Petitions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

189. **Deputations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

190. **Reference from the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 December 2004: 2005-06 Budget and Medium Term Budget Strategy 2005-06 to 2007-08:**

Further to Recommendation 1 it was

**RESOLVED:** That an update on the reasons for the increase in the gas servicing programme be provided to the Forum.

191. **Revisions to Tenancy Agreement/ Revisions to the Garage Licence/ Timetable for Introductory Tenancies:**

The Forum received a report of the Acting Head of Housing Services which provided an update on the revisions to the Tenancy Agreement and the Garage Licence, including the draft implementation timetable for these amendments, as well as the start-up of the Introductory Tenancies scheme.

It was noted that the Project Team, which was set up to oversee the revisions of the agreements and the implementation of Introductory Tenancies, included housing officers, legal staff, Councillors and residents' representatives.

It was advised that all tenants would be consulted on the proposed amendments and that there would be a variety of methods of responding. The outcome of the consultations would be brought back to the Forum's March meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

192. **Options Appraisal:**

The Forum considered a report of the Acting Head of Housing Services which outlined the Options Appraisal process and the re-evaluation of stock which the Council would undertake as a result of opting for the prudential borrowing scheme instead of the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).

The following issues were highlighted:

- Letters regarding the consultation had been sent out to all Tenants' and Residents' Associations.
- The Independent Tenant Advisor would be appointed by the Tenants' and Residents' Associations.
- A Tenant Working Group was to be set up.
- The cost of improvement to properties was £60m, which included improvement to the environment around the estates.
- The process was led by the Housing Strategy and Research Manager.

Officers also noted residents' concerns that daytime meetings were inconvenient and could deter residents from participating in the process.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

193. **Matters Raised by the Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association:**

The Forum received the response of the Acting Head of Housing Services to the issues raised by Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association.

Residents raised particular concerns regarding anti-social behaviour on the estate arising from individuals gathering in a particular alleyway. It was reported that the police were investigating recent acts of vandalism and harassment. It was further claimed that the path was never intended to serve as an alleyway and it was requested that the alleyway be closed.

In response to the comments, officers advised that there were legal implications which had to be taken into account prior to a closure. Clear evidence of anti-social behaviour attributable to the alleyway was required. Officers had asked the police to provide them with crime data and, once this information was received and if the criteria were met, a consultation could take place on the estate regarding a closure of the alleyway.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) a reference be made to the Licensing and General Purposes Committee to consider the viability of enforcing a closure of the alleyway as soon as possible.

(2) the report be noted.

194. **Matters Raised by the Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association:**

The Forum considered the report of the Acting Head of Housing Services regarding the issues raised by the Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association, and issues were discussed as follows:

- Concerns were raised regarding the lack of parking space around the estate.
- It was confirmed that a meeting with Highways and the New Harrow Project team had been held to look at options to improve parking in Hamilton Crescent.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

195. **Questions from Tenants/Leaseholders:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no questions were raised.

196. **Any Other Business:**

It was noted that a meeting regarding the Options Appraisal process would be held on 12 January 2005.

197. **Date of Next Meeting:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the next meeting of the Forum is due to be held on 3 March 2005.

[Note: The meeting continued after 10.00 pm in accordance with Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Rule 12.1 (Part 4E of the Constitution)].

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 10.40 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BOB CURRIE  
Chair