

Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum

AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday 19 February 2014

TIME: 2.00 pm

VENUE: Committee Rooms 1 & 2,
Harrow Civic Centre

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3 Council Members)

Chairman: Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath

Councillors:

Joyce Nickolay

Bob Currie (VC)
Kairul Kareema Marikar

Representatives of Individual Housing Estate Tenants' and Residents' Associations

Reserve Members:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Susan Hall | 1. Victoria Silver |
| 2. Barry Macleod-Cullinane | 2. Ben Wealthy |

Contact: Vishal Seegoolam, Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1883 E-mail: vishal.seegoolam@harrow.gov.uk

AGENDA - PART I

1. ATTENDANCE BY RESERVE MEMBERS

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Forum;
- (b) all other Members present.

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS *

To receive any public questions received in accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 50 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received and there be a time limit of 15 minutes.

[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm, Friday 14th February 2014. Questions should be sent to publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk

No person may submit more than one question].

5. PETITIONS

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 48 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

6. DEPUTATIONS

To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 49 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

7. INFORMATION REPORT - GARAGE STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 9 - 20)

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing.

8. RESIDENT SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT AND FEEDBACK FROM OTHER COUNCIL LED RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES (Pages 21 - 30)

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing.

9. INFORMATION REPORT - HEAD OF ASSET MANAGEMENT'S REPORT (Pages 31 - 38)

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing.

10. SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 30th April 2014.

AGENDA - PART II - NIL

*** DATA PROTECTION ACT NOTICE**

The Council will audio record item 4 (Public Questions) and will place the audio recording on the Council's website, which will be accessible to all.

[**Note:** The questions and answers will not be reproduced in the minutes.]

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TENANTS', LEASEHOLDERS' AND RESIDENTS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

11 DECEMBER 2013

Chairman: * Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath

Councillors: * Bob Currie * Joyce Nickolay
* Kairul Kareema Marikar

In attendance: * Barry Macleod-Cullinane Minutes 214, 215, 216
(Councillors)

* Denotes Member present

Representatives from the following Associations were in Attendance

Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
Churchill Place Tenants' and Residents' Association
Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
Harrow Sheltered Residents' Association
Harrow Weald Tenants' and Residents' Association
Kenmore Park Tenants' and Residents' Association
Little Stanmore Tenants' and Residents' Association
Weald Village Tenants' and Residents' Association

209. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

210. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

All Agenda Items

Councillor Bob Currie declared a non pecuniary interest in all agenda items in that he attended monthly meetings of the Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association. He would remain in the room whilst these matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Kairul Marikar declared a non-pecuniary interest in all agenda items in that in that she was a Council tenant. She would remain in the room whilst these matters were considered and voted upon.

211. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

212. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at the meeting

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

213. Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2014-15 and Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-16 to 2017-18, Draft rent strategy for 2014-15

The Forum received the report of the Director of Finance and Assurance which set out the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2014-15 and the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS) to 2017-18.

An officer explained the methodology, assumptions and policies used in preparing the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2014-15, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2015-16 to 2017-18. He highlighted the key points, including:

- Retail Price Index (RPI) was 3.2% in September, which resulted in a proposed average rent increase of 5.1% for 2014-15;
- future rent increases assumed a change in national rent policy in line with current consultation proposals, and were based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%;
- service charges were assumed to increase by RPI + 0.5%;
- there would be no increase in garage rents or parking charges pending finalisation of the garage strategy review;

- utility charges would increase in line with corporate assumptions for utility costs.

He added that the budget included a HRA new-build programme for the first time in many years, which had been approved by Cabinet on 20 June 2013, and provided for up to 50 3-bed properties, including 10 for shared ownership with the remainder to be let on affordable rents.

In conclusion, he informed the Forum that the budget and MTFs projections demonstrated the HRA was forecast to remain in an extremely sound position over the next few years, and longer-term projections suggested this would continue to be the case.

In response to queries, officers clarified definitions on 'affordable' and 'target' rents, and explained the variations in figures quoted for arrears.

A TRA representative commented on the assumption that Community Hall charges would increase by 4% in line with corporate fees and charges, and outlined a proposal for estate residents and communities to pay a reduced rate for hire. A Member seconded the proposal, adding that the discount could be extended to voluntary sector groups, and suggested a pilot scheme to run from January to April to test the feasibility of the proposal.

An officer agreed to feedback the Forum's comments to Cabinet the following evening.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet)

That

- (1) the proposed strategy for setting rents for 2014-15 be agreed by Cabinet;
- (2) Cabinet note the proposal to introduce a pilot scheme in which estate residents and voluntary groups pay a reduced rate for hire of community halls.

Reasons for Recommendations: To consult on proposals to be considered by Cabinet in setting the HRA budget for 2014-15.

To encourage greater use of community resources, maximise occupancy of premises, and thereby generate income.

RESOLVED ITEMS

214. Affordable Housing Programme Update - Report by Housing Partnerships and Strategy Manager

The Forum received the report of the Divisional Director of Housing which provided an update on progress on the proposed Affordable Housing Programme.

The Housing Partnerships and Strategy Manager gave a presentation, including photographs and maps, providing details of those areas that had been identified as potential sites for 'infill' development. Cabinet had approved the first phase of the programme, and it was now intended to undertake detailed feasibility studies of these sites, and appoint architects to start the design process which would enable the submission of planning applications and the appointment of building contractors.

In response to comments and queries from residents' representatives, the Chair observed that resident density would be equal to that of private developments, and the Housing Partnerships and Strategy Manager explained that development, including parking provision, would comply with Planning guidelines. She stated that the size of housing units was not fixed and would be looked at during the consultation process, and that allocation of units would be managed in the usual way through the Locata system.

In response to comments by residents' representatives about unauthorised extensions, 'backyard' developments and illegal sub-lettings, the Chair and Portfolio Holder for Housing stressed that residents should report any such instances which would be investigated. In addition, the Portfolio Holder asked for residents to inform the Council about any potential sites for development.

The Chair concluded that the programme would see the construction of 50 new, affordable homes in the next 2 years and reassured residents that the appearance and functionality of estates would be considered within the design process.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and presentation be noted;
- (2) ward councillors and local TRAs are included in any consultation on development proposals.

215. Housing Project Updates: Communications Plan, Grants to Move, Mobile and Flexible Working

The Forum received the report of the Divisional Director of Housing which provided updates on the following project areas: Communications; Grants to Move Scheme; and Mobile and Flexible Working.

The Partnerships and Strategy Manager outlined the Communications Plan; communication activities taken thus far this year and activities currently planned for 2014-15. She described the tools and methods used to communicate with residents, and to evaluate the effectiveness of communications.

She then reminded the Forum of the options within the Grants to Move Scheme, its purpose, and its success to date. Further publicity was planned for early 2014, and the scheme would be reviewed at the 6 month point in March.

In response to a comment about the Mutual Exchange event, that some interested residents had not received a response to their initial enquiries, she explained that the volume of interest had been greater than anticipated. A further event was planned for 25 February 2014, which would take on board issues from the 2013 event. In addition recruitment was underway for a third officer to assist with Grants to Move enquiries.

The Forum discussed problems arising from tenancies, and Members and resident representatives were reassured that departing tenants would be charged for any necessary clearance or cleaning work done on their behalf. In respect of sub-letting, some resident representatives considered it unfair that illegal tenants should be granted an amnesty and not penalised. The Portfolio Holder explained that if an amnesty secured the voluntary return of keys and subsequent re-let of a property to a tenant in need, it could actually save on costs and achieve the desired result much more quickly. However, he re-iterated that all reported cases of sub-letting would be investigated. The Forum considered that it would be helpful to have a report on the activities to combat illegal sub-letting of council properties at the next meeting.

Finally, the Housing Partnerships and Strategy Manager informed the Forum about the department's move to Civic 1, and the use of improved IT systems to allow greater flexibility in methods and locations for work.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a report on 'Illegal Sub-Letting' be brought back to the next meeting of the Forum.

216. Resident Services Manager's Report and Feedback From Other Council Led Resident Involvement Activities

The Forum received the report of the Divisional Director of Housing which set out a range of information items raised by the Head of Resident Services, including the following:

- the Right to Buy scheme;
- leasehold service charge and major work arrears;
- income management and 'hierarchy of debt' agreement;
- home fire safety;
- free micro-chipping for dogs event;
- mutual exchange scheme;
- sheltered housing review;
- the Estates in Bloom competition.

In response to a query about the effect of the 'spare room' tax, the Divisional Director of Housing reported that the expected impact had not materialised. Staff were working to identify individuals likely to be affected, but thus far the hardship fund had not been needed.

A resident representative expressed concern about an instance where an unidentified caller had made enquiries of neighbours about new tenants, and asked if TRAs should be informed when vulnerable families or individuals had been allocated housing. The Divisional Director responded that the Safer Neighbourhood Teams would be aware of any such placements and would have liaised with Housing staff.

A Member stated that he had been informed of estate works being signed off and paid for despite the work being unfinished or unsatisfactory. He believed surveyors were inspecting and signing off their own work, which was unacceptable.

The Divisional Director explained that the industry standard was to check a 10% sample of works carried out, but that the Interim Head of Resident services wanted to broaden this and intended to carry out a review. The Interim Head of Asset Management added that customer satisfaction surveys and financial checks were also undertaken, and that complex or high value works were followed up.

The Forum agreed that this was a matter that should be looked into, and the Portfolio Holder asked that a report be brought back to the next meeting, to include details of disputed works and suggestions on how best to strengthen systems and tackle discrepancies.

The Chair asked if contractors were honouring their commitment to provide employment opportunities and engage apprentices; she asked that a report on this be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a report on estate inspections, particularly in respect of work signed off but not completed, be brought back to the next meeting of the Forum;
- (3) a report on the employment of apprentices by contractors be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

217. INFORMATION REPORT - Head of Asset Management's Report

The Forum received the report of the Divisional Director of Housing which set out a range of items raised by the Interim Head of Asset Management, including:

- new contract benefits, including a commitment by contractors to provide employment and work experience opportunities;
- Quality Heating;
- void properties;

- the Asset Management Strategy, and HFTRA's contribution to developing this;
- the Better Homes Standard;
- staffing update.

Resident representatives asked for clarification on what Quality Heating contractors were required to do when carrying out works, as there was a suggestion that tenants, and not contractors, would have to remove and replace flooring.

A Member enquired about the process for inspecting voids and re-charging tenants for any necessary remedial work. The Divisional Director informed the Forum that, of £20k of charges invoiced in the last round, little had been received, although this was recognised as a problem nationally. The Interim Head of Asset Management acknowledged that it was difficult to collect payment from tenants once they had moved on, and stated that to fully address the problem it would be necessary to educate tenants and challenge tenant behaviour. She agreed to bring a report to the next meeting.

In response to a resident representative's query about the value of chasing ex-tenants for outstanding payments, she explained that cases were passed to a debt collection agency, who only received payment if the debt was recovered. The service was about to recruit a part-time 'out-of-hours' officer to assist with collection.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a report on the collection of charges for work on voids be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

218. Suggestions for Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Members of the Forum agreed that there were sufficient reports coming back to the meeting already.

219. Any Other Urgent Business

Members of the Forum were informed that it had been intended to provide a verbal update on the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel under this item. Unfortunately the officer involved was unwell, and the Resident Representative was not in attendance, therefore it was not possible to provide the update.

The Divisional Director, Housing, agreed to circulate information on the Scrutiny review to Residents' Associations.

A Member queried the practice of contractors installing central heating, and whether it was acceptable to expect tenants to take up and replace flooring. It

was confirmed that tenants would be responsible for removing laminate flooring prior to installation.

220. Date of Next Meeting

TRA representatives queried the proposed move to a 4.00 pm start time for future meetings and discussed the practicalities of different start times. It was felt that a 4.00 pm start time would prove difficult for many representatives, given traffic issues and child care responsibilities. Those representatives present argued that the original arrangements of alternating start times between 2.00 pm and 7.30 pm allowed for a broader range of attendance across associations, thereby giving more residents an opportunity to be involved.

The Chair proposed that the next meeting on 19 February should revert to a 2.00 pm start time.

RESOLVED: That the start time of the next meeting will be 2.00 pm.

221. Extension of Meeting

In accordance with the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4B of the Constitution) it was

RESOLVED: At 9.55 pm to continue until 10.30 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.27 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MRS CAMILLA BATH
Chairman

**REPORT FOR: Tenants', Leaseholders
and Residents'
Consultative Forum**

Date of Meeting: 19 February 2014

**Subject: INFORMATION REPORT –
GARAGE STRATEGY PROGRESS
REPORT**

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington
Divisional Director of Housing

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary

This report gives an update on the progress of the Garage Strategy.

All garage sites in the borough have now been reviewed and categorised according to the proposed course of action, into broadly either those with development potential, those suitable for a pilot repair programme, those that are for consideration for future repair or those where alternative uses may be more appropriate. A programme of clearance of rubbish in void garages is being drawn up. There is still work to be done to define the final outcome, and individual sites may change category as work progresses.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

2. Introduction

2.1 The Garage Strategy is being taken forward by the Garage Strategy Steering Group which is attended by council officers and tenant/resident representatives.

2.2 The Strategy aims to identify options to make better use of the garage sites, with the main objective of developing affordable housing. Secondary objectives are to determine which sites to invest in to provide rental income and to review garage rent levels and rental strategy. Consideration will also be given to alternative uses for garage sites that have neither development potential nor demand to be let as garages. We also seek to maximise usage of any garages we decide to retain, whether as garages or not, with a view to maximising income.

3. Background

3.1 At the moment, 426 of a total of 957 garages are let, generating income in the region of £330,500 per annum. We have 531 void garages of which only around a third are currently in lettable condition. The remaining garages are in need of either clearance or some level of repair before they can be let. This has led to problems with anti-social behaviour on garage sites, including fires being lit at Augustine Road and The Middle Way, and to a significant number of void garages having rubbish dumped in them. In addition some are boarded up or have had their doors removed to prevent anti-social behaviour.

3.2 Currently, the tenancy agreement states that garages must only be used to park vehicles. Garages are not allowed to be used for storage or commercial enterprises, although it is evident from viewing void garages that some garages are or have been used for storage purposes. From a Planning point of view, there may be conditions attached to the original planning approval for each individual estate that limits the use to which specific garage sites can be put. Depending on the wording of any condition, planning approval may be required for a change of use.

3.3 At the moment we do not have significant demand for garages. In total, 48 people are currently on the waiting list for specific garage sites but outstanding repairs or other clearance issues prevent the letting of their requested garage to them.

3.4 Resident Services are currently working up a clearance programme, to be completed by the end of March 2014, to enable additional garages to be let. Inspections are now underway to determine the extent of a clearance programme in order to assess costs of clearance by caretakers. Following clearance, garages will be fitted with new padlocks where necessary to prevent further fly tipping. Garages that are in good condition can be rented out again, or can be considered for future repair programmes. Some tenants have been issued with a Notice to Quit some time ago and have not presented themselves to claim the contents of the garages. Other Notices to Quit may need to be issued.

4. Progress of the Garage Strategy

4.1 Affordable housing development

4.1.1 Site visits to all garage sites, coupled with pre application advice from Planning, have identified garage blocks that could potentially be suitable for the development of affordable housing. Of these sites, the ones with the best potential (i.e. capable of delivering more than one unit and where no constraints to development have been visually identified) have been grouped into phase 1 of the development programme to deliver 50 units. (Note: some sites on vacant non garage sites on council estates are also included in the first development phase).

4.1.2 PRP Architects have now been engaged to carry out further feasibility studies on these infill garage sites to confirm which sites to take forward for financial feasibility appraisal and design options. To this end, site visits are currently being undertaken by the Architect and Project Manager (New Homes). Estate residents will then be consulted on the options for development.

Infill garage development sites – Phase 1 first 50 units

Garage Nos.	Address	Estate name	Ward	Development stage
12 - 17	Allerford Court	Kingsfield	Headstone South	Feasibility
1 - 22	Buckingham Road	Berridge	Edgware	Feasibility
1 - 11	Grove Avenue	Grove	Pinner South	Feasibility
1 - 10	Binyon Crescent	Woodlands	Stanmore Park	Feasibility
5 - 52	Stuart Avenue	Eastcote Lane	Roxbourne	Feasibility
1 - 4	Stuart Avenue	Eastcote Lane	Roxbourne	Feasibility
20 - 23	The Heights	Northolt Park	Roxeth	Feasibility
1 - 16	Atherton Place garages	Harrow View	Headstone South	Feasibility
1 - 23	Chichester Court	Chichester Court	Queensbury	Feasibility
1 - 14 DEMOLISHED	Chenduit Way	Cottesmore	Stanmore Park	Feasibility
15 - 35	Masefield Avenue Woodlands estate – possible replacement for Chenduit play area	Woodlands	Stanmore Park	Feasibility
116 - 214	Augustine Road	Headstone GLC	Hatch End	Feasibility

The Mayor's Housing Covenant

4.1.3 Housing successfully secured £250,000 funding from the GLA under the Mayor's Housing Covenant – Homes for Working Londoners to contribute towards developing 10 x 3 bed low cost home ownership properties to be ring fenced for purchase by existing council tenants. The aim of this project is to enable existing tenants to move to home ownership, free up existing social properties for reallocation and to offer opportunities for the participating tenants to develop savings plans and contribute to the design and build process. These properties will be developed on the most appropriate sites in phase 1 of the programme.

4.1.4 In addition to the phase 1 garage infill sites, there are some council estates that have been identified as worthy of consideration for partial or full redevelopment to provide more or better quality homes. Initial resident consultation was carried out at the end of January 2014 to gather residents' views on their estate and what changes they would like to be made. The garage sites on these estates are listed below.

Garages sites included in potential estate regeneration

Garage Nos.	Address	Estate name	Ward	Development Stage
114 - 123	Howards Close	Pinner Hill	Pinner	Initial resident consultation carried out on a fact finding basis to gather residents' views about their estate and what changes they would like to see being made.
102 - 113	Deacons Close	Pinner Hill	Pinner	
1 - 21	Hazeldene Drive	Pinner Green	Pinner	
16 - 26	Brookside Close	Brookside Close	Roxbourne	Further consultation planned for March 2014 to feedback results of initial consultation and present options for the estates.
1 - 6	Grange Farm Close	Grange Farm	Harrow on the Hill	
1 - 15	Amy Johnson Court	Former Brent Houses	Edgware	

4.1.5 Should estate redevelopment not be viable or necessary, all the above sites, with the exception of Grange Farm Close, are suitable for investigation as standalone infill sites

4.1.6 The list below details remaining garage sites that have been initially identified as having development potential, and which will be further investigated for phase 2 onwards of the infill site programme.

Remaining garage sites with development potential (to be taken forward in future development phases)

Garage Nos.	Address	Estate name	Development stage
6 - 10	Antoneys Close	Antoneys Close	Sites identified No current action pending implementation of phase 1
11 - 16	Antoneys Close	Antoneys Close	
1 - 11	Apsley Close	Kingsfield	
1 - 14	Bernays Close	Manor House	
62 - 75	Charles Crescent	Honeybun	
53 - 61	Charles Crescent	Honeybun	
1 - 19	Downing Close	Harrow View	
1 - 4	339A/B/C Eastcote Lane	Eastcote Lane	
2 - 17	Eaton Close	Dennis Lane	
11 - 1 2	Ellement Close	Cannon Croft	
1 - 10	Ellement Close	Cannon Croft	
30 - 83	Hutton Lane	Headstone (ex GLC)	
1 - 27	Kenton Lane	Kenton Lane	
1 - 6	Latimer Close	Miscellaneous properties HRA	
1 - 8	Milman Close	Chigwellhurst	
tbc	Nelson Road	Glebe	
1 - 16	Pinewood Close	Oxhey Lane	
1 - 13	Sandymount Avenue	Canons Park	
1 - 10	Silverdale Close	Northolt Park	
1 - 8	Stonegrove Gardens	Stonegrove	
9 - 27	Westbere Drive	Edgware Golf Course	
1 - 63	Churchill Place (undercroft)	Churchill Place	
1 - 32	Northolt Road (garages under flats)	Northolt Road	
1 - 7	Marsh Road	Marsh Road	

4.1.7 We will seek to provide suitable alternative garages where possible to decant those tenants of garages on sites we are intending to redevelop so as to maintain existing income levels,

4.2 Repairs

4.2.1 The Garage Strategy Steering Group identified a number of garage sites that are possible candidates for repair and letting, based on the following criteria:

- Sites with no development potential;
- Sites with voids which could attract additional income if repairs were to be carried out (i.e. repairs are not currently being considered for sites that are fully let already);
- Sites with a waiting list for letting, particularly where repairs issues are preventing letting;
- Sites where repair costs are likely to be reasonable and represent value for money.

- Any repairs to garages should pay back from additional income in years 1 – 5.

4.2.2 Waiting lists are normally only composed of 1 or 2 names per garage site but there are multiple void garages on some of the sites. The sites for potential repair have therefore been cross referenced against the following criteria to maximise letting potential following repair:

- Sites known to have been historically popular for letting;
- Sites where there is potential for demand for letting e.g. in areas where the streets are heavily parked, near stations, behind shops.

4.2.3 Of the identified garages, the Steering Group has chosen 4 sites to take forward for repair on a pilot basis in 2013/14:

Harrow View - behind shops

Overbrook Walk – residential area

Cowan Avenue – residential area but near to shops/businesses and South Harrow Station

Wood Close – residential area but heavily parked on estate roads

4.2.4. The companies carrying out the works are Slades and Wates. Costing reports have been received and the works total approximately £54,000 for the essential works required to bring these 42 garages up to lettable condition again. This is an average cost of £1,286 per garage. Assuming the 24 void garages on these sites were all let, this would bring in a further £18,720 income per annum, enabling payback of repair costs within 3 years. (Note: this does not include for the cost of clearance, which has yet to be established).

Once these garages have been cleared by Resident Services, the works should begin on 17th February and be completed by the end of March. Once tenanted, any further repairs would be dealt with under the responsive repairs budget.

4.2.5 These 4 pilot garage sites all have different locational characteristics and will serve as a pilot for assessing demand for garages in differing circumstances. They also differ in terms of Planning conditions attached to the original estate approval. Cowan Avenue will require Planning permission for any use other than parking. Harrow View, Wood Close and Overbrook Walk can be used for parking and domestic storage without needing Planning permission, but will need Planning permission for any form of commercial activity such as commercial storage (this is the case for all garages). Planning would not support a change of use to commercial activities for garages in residential areas, due to the impact on surrounding residents. (This may not be such a sensitive issue for use by the shop owners at Harrow View as this is in a commercial and residential area already).

4.2.6 Storage of flammable material in garages will always be contrary to the garage tenancy agreement. The liability of the council for storage of unauthorised flammable materials in garages remains a concern and is being investigated by Resident Services. No decision has yet been made as to storage use.

4.2.7 A number of factors affecting the repair and subsequent letting of garages have been identified and addressed:

- Size of garages (average 2.5m wide internally). Some garages are too small to accommodate large executive type cars, but can be used for smaller cars such as a Skodia Fabia, Toyota Yaris, Toyota Prius, Ford KA hatchback and so on. The ability use a garage to park a car will depend on the model and year of the car, the driving skill and the mobility of the driver. This confirms anecdotal evidence from residents of garages being used to park cars that are in regular use.
- A significant number of void garages have rubbish in them which would need to be cleared prior to repairs. A clearance programme is now being undertaken by Resident Services.
- Repaired garages would need to be properly marketed at an appropriate rent level and managed effectively. Resident Services are in dialogue with Communications to establish a marketing strategy for repaired and available garages and are in the process of reviewing rent levels and management arrangements, with the possibility of a differential rent policy being considered going forward, e.g. different rent levels for garages in particular locations or based on demand levels.
- Access to some garages is obstructed by cars being parked on the garage forecourt and in front of garage doors, effectively preventing letting. This is being investigated by Asset Management within the repairs programme as it is an issue at Harrow View garages, which are located behind shops.

4.2.8 Asset Management are preparing draft criteria for future repair programme decisions which will be discussed by the Steering Group in the light of the results of the pilot repair programme 2013/14.

4.3 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) – Augustine Way

4.3.1 Whilst a handful of garages have had incidents of anti-social behaviour in the past, the garages at Augustine Way and The Middle Way have suffered repeated ASB issues. Garages at The Middle Way have been gated and boarded off to prevent access to the garage site and are currently secure. However, there are 3 individual blocks of garages at Augustine Road which have suffered severe ASB in the past, leading to a number of garage doors being removed to prevent the garages being used as 'dens'. In addition the site backs immediately onto a railway line and so poses a health and safety risk. The condition of many of the garages does not merit repair and this will not resolve the ASB issue due to the location and characteristics of the site.

4.3.2 The first option for the Augustine Road garage sites is for the development of affordable housing and this is currently being investigated by the Architect and Project Manager (New Homes).

4.3.3. In order to address the ASB issues and the health and safety risk, Asset Management have confirmed that they are able to demolish some or all of the garages at Augustine Road. It is likely that up to 88 of the 97 garages

will require demolition as they are in the worst condition. The contract for demolition is currently out to tender on a provisional basis so that we can choose whether to implement it or not. The final cost will depend on the final decision as to which garages to demolish. However, the back wall of the garages forms a barrier to the railway line and there is no fencing behind the garages. Legal have advised against carrying out any demolition until Network Rail have fenced the boundary. If the council puts up a temporary fence, then it could assume a liability towards persons who penetrate the fence and are injured or killed on the railway (even though they would be trespassers). The risk would be reasonably foreseeable and therefore within the Council's duty of care. Network Rail has been contacted and has accepted responsibility for the fencing. They are currently surveying the site. Asset Management will co-ordinate with Network Rail to install the fence at the same time as potential demolition in early March.

4.3.4 Asset Management arranged a consultation event with residents at Augustine Road on 27 January 2014 to identify residents' views on the future use of the garage sites, should affordable housing not be a viable option. The majority of residents do want to see the garages removed. However they have multiple concerns about the site and how it will be used afterwards, including concerns over the lack of security and lighting in recent years, which has led to the garage areas and the alleyways behind gardens being used as rat runs and for drug dealing. The nearby garage site at Juxon Close has also been a target for ASB and suffers from fly-tipping. This site at Juxon Close has been identified as a decant site for tenants of the Augustine Road garages which will prevent loss of income if Augustine Road garages are demolished. It would be possible to add Juxon Close to a repairs scheme for early 2014/15, including the improvement of the local lighting and a barrier to prevent future fly tipping in the area.

4.3.5 Augustine Road residents have recently complained that the road is being used as free parking for commuters to Headstone Lane Station as the stairway at the end of the road leads directly to the station. This might tie in with potential parking provision on demolished garage sites. Use for resident parking would not require Planning permission but Planning permission would need to be obtained if the sites were to be used for commercial parking (Pay & Display) rather than just for residents. Resident Services are investigating the Pay & Display option.

4.4 Remaining garage sites

4.4.1 There are 20 individual garage blocks that have no development potential and are not included in the pilot repair programme. Some may be appropriate for inclusion in future repairs programmes, whilst others could be considered for alternative uses such as community facilities or resident parking. Alternative uses will be considered in April – June 2014 to enable decision making to take account of the results of the pilot repair programme, particularly in relation to demand for repaired garages. The tables below list these remaining garages sites.

Garage numbers	Address	Comments
1 - 4	Arundel Court	Merit further investigation for repair once results of repairs pilot is known. Some low level demand on waiting list or historically relatively popular for letting. Juxon Close has potential for repair early 2014 - 15 to decant existing tenants if Augustine Road garages are demolished. Long Elmes garages are behind shops which may be a source of demand.
1 - 8	Pool Road	
1 - 8	Tintagel Drive	
100 - 115	Juxon Close	
1 - 5	Tregenna Court	
1 -29	Long Elmes	
1 - 4	Claire Gardens	
1 - 5	Antoneys Close	
1 -15	Lloyd Court	

Garage numbers	Address	Comments
1 - 6	Beatty Road	Consider for repair (NB no current demand on waiting list) Potential for alternative uses. Options to be considered April – June 2014 once pilot repair results are known. Feasible options to be taken forward June 2014 onwards
84 - 97	Boniface Gardens	
1 - 4	Greenford Road	
1 -8	Honister Place	
1 - 8	Kenilworth House	
tbc	Nelson Road	
1 - 8	Park Gates	
1 - 8	Paulhan Road	
1 - 4	Rainsford Close	
1 - 4	Westfield Lane	
1 - 10	The Middle Way (closed due to ASB)	

4.4.2 There are several factors to consider regarding alternative uses for garage sites:

- Planning permission may be required for a change of use and there may be issues to overcome relating to the loss of the garages / parking provision if an alternative use was proposed;
- External funding (e.g. lottery funding) may be available to provide community facilities;
- Any alternative use, such as community gardens, should not attract or encourage ASB;

- Management and maintenance costs will need to be considered for alternative uses;
- In some heavily parked areas, garage sites could be demolished to provide extra parking areas, although the cost of demolition can be increased if there is asbestos on the site. Use for resident parking would not require Planning permission, but use for commercial parking (pay & display) would.
- Full consultation would be undertaken on proposed future use of garage sites so that estate tenants, leaseholders and residents are fully informed and can assist in the decision making process.

Section 3 – Further Information

A further report will be submitted for information in the first meeting of the next municipal year, once the result of the pilot repair programme has been established (estimated to be June 2014).

Section 4 – Financial Implications

A £60,000 capital budget is set aside in 2013/14 for investment in garages, of which £54,000 is estimated to be spent on getting the 4 pilot garage sites up to a lettable standard by March 2014. It is estimated that the cost of repairs will pay back from additional rental income within 3 years, assuming all 24 void garages are let following repair. Capital funding is also available from within existing resources for the demolition of garages at Augustine Road. The cost of garage clearance has yet to be confirmed but will be revenue funded.

The review of rent levels is not yet concluded, and further work is being undertaken to determine whether it may be appropriate to introduce a policy of differential rents, depending on location/demand to maximise income from lettable garages. It is intended, as far as possible, to decant existing tenants from garages which are due for demolition or redevelopment to avoid loss of rental income.

Section 5 - Equalities implications

The Garage Strategy is concerned with making the best use of Council assets and we have not identified a need to do an Equalities Impact Assessment at this stage, as we are not changing the service to garage tenants. However, this will be reviewed as the project progresses.

Section 6 –Priorities

The Garage Strategy incorporates the administration’s priority to deliver a cleaner, safer and fairer Harrow in that it seeks to make better use of garage sites that are currently in disrepair and subject to fly tipping and anti-social behavior.

Name: Dave Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 5 February 2014		

Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Elaine Slowe, Enabling Manager, Partnership and Strategy Team
020 8420 9229

Background Papers: None

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**REPORT FOR: Tenants', Leaseholders'
and Residents'
Consultative Forum**

Date of Meeting:	19 th February 2014
Subject:	Resident Services Manager's Report and feedback from other Council led Resident Involvement Activities
Responsible Officer:	Lynne Pennington Divisional Director of Housing
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary

This joint report sets out a range of information items that the Head of Resident Services would like to bring to the attention of the Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum and provides feedback to TLRCF on a wide range of Council led service specific and service wide resident involvement activities.

Recommendation

That the content of this report be noted

Section 2 – Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Key service priorities continue to be progressing with an emphasis on:

- Welfare reform implications for Resident Services
- Development of HAP 5 commitments and service plans

2. Updates from previous discussions and new items for information

2.1 Leasehold Services

2.2 Performance

2.2.1. The pace of Right to Buy applications and sales continues to increase. There are currently 34 Right to Buy applications in progress and 12 properties have been sold this quarter.

2.2.2. Leasehold Services has successfully collected £190,000 of the annual service charges billed in September 2013 this quarter and, an additional £42,000 collected for major work carried out this financial year.

2.2.3. This has been achieved by actively chasing leaseholders and where agreements either cannot be reached or leaseholders have failed to maintain the payment plans which have been put in place, using the Land Registry to identify mortgage lenders to negotiate payment. The Team continues to encourage leaseholders who are experiencing difficulty, to make contact so that affordable payment plans can be set up and agreed.

2.3 Information

2.3.1. The 2014/15 Ground Rent charges will be notified and invoiced to leaseholders this quarter.

2.4 Housing Management

2.5 Performance Income Management

2.5.1. There has been a steady increase in the balance outstanding of £523k compared with £433k at the same time last year. An analysis suggests that approximately £49k is considered to be attributable to spare room subsidy impact although this figure has reduced over the last month.

- 2.5.2. Many of our tenants are under occupying (see below Mutual Exchange Event) our stock and are not taking up the option to downsize to assist with their financial income gap (reduced Housing Benefit) following spare room subsidy. Reluctantly we have to initiate legal proceedings to highlight the severity of their arrears. We are finding that at this stage of the recovery process tenants will engage to prevent being taken to court. In the meantime our actual rent collection rates continue to remain in the top quartile at 99.41%.
- 2.5.3. Mitigation is being sought using the government funding of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). If a tenant receives Housing Benefit and still cannot afford to pay their rent they may be entitled to DHP. Harrow has some funding left in this pot which is being targeted towards applications that were initially declined and applications being made up to the end of March 2014. In some cases where applications were initially declined, this was due to the tenant not providing the relevant information to fit the criteria for payment. Officers are now providing extra help to these tenants to ensure this funding is used effectively. Approximately £100k has been identified that would fall into this category.
- 2.5.4. For some time our garage take up has been poor which affects our income. We are benchmarking against other local authorities with a view to charging a competitive rate in the future. Further detail can be found in the garage strategy progress report on this agenda.

2.6 Performance Tenancy Management

2.6.1. Mutual Exchange Event

2.6.1.1. We are preparing to hold our next Mutual Exchange event on the 25th of February. The lessons learnt from our event last year have been incorporated into our plan this year. We hope that our bid for government funding via the Social Housing Mobility Group for West London will assist in making this event another success.

2.6.1.2. We have invited all the Housing Associations with a large number of stock in Harrow to join us at this event and have invited all of their tenants too. This will help to widen the options of stock available for tenants to move.

2.6.2. Free Micro chipping Dog Event

2.6.2.1. The Dogs Trust joined us again to hold another event in the Buckingham Road area.

- 2.6.2.2. A few residents attended but many of the dog owners approached in that area reported that their dogs were already micro chipped.
- 2.6.2.3. In the spring we will continue our campaign to help Harrow resident's microchip their dogs in preparation for the introduction of the new legislation in April 2016.

2.6.3. Photographs of Tenants

- 2.6.3.1. All Housing Officers have been issued cameras to increase the number of photographs we have of tenants on file. This evidence will help with unauthorised occupancy and the tackling of Housing Tenancy Fraud.
- 2.6.3.2. Every opportunity officers have to take photos (calls to reception, interviews, tenancy sign ups) will be taken on a day to day basis.
- 2.6.3.3. A review of photographs taken during January 2014 will be taken and then individual targets set for Housing Officers.

2.6.4. Tenancy Fraud

- 2.6.4.1. At the beginning of December 2013 we successfully recruited a Housing Investigation Fraud Officer. He is based in our Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) and predominantly manages housing cases. Since his appointment and increased working with the CAFT we successfully recovered 4 properties as a result of housing tenancy fraud. These homes will be offered to families on the homelessness list which will assist our bed & breakfast and temporary accommodation costs.
- 2.6.4.2. In total we have recovered 29 properties due to housing tenancy fraud in Harrow. This includes 2 properties we assisted Housing Associations to recover which is a criteria for the government funding. The funding is for tackling housing tenancy fraud for all social housing tenants in Harrow.
- 2.6.4.3. In November, the Housing Lead Officer for tenancy fraud was asked by the Chartered Institute of Housing to present at a seminar they were holding. The organisers were impressed with the case studies used in the presentation and have sought our permission to upload our case studies on their national website.
- 2.6.4.4. By April the following tools will be in operation to assist us with tackling tenancy fraud further:

A) Membership to the West London Fraud Hub. We will securely provide data for input into this hub with all the other West London Local Authorities. This will help us to track individuals who have tenancy interests in more than one area

B) ID Scanner. This tool will assist us to verify documents handed to us by potential applicants/tenants and throughout their tenancy if they are already a tenant.

C) Monday, 3rd February sees the start of Harrow's first anti-fraud week, part of the Council's commitment to reducing fraud and creating a fairer borough. We are focusing our resources on four key areas of local government that are impacted by fraud:

- disabled parking badges
- housing benefits and Council tax support
- housing fraud
- social care personal budgets

2.6.4.5. A full day has been devoted to housing fraud.

2.7 Gas Servicing

2.7.1. We are very pleased with the effective customer contact work of our contractors, Quality Heating. Their persistent efforts to contact tenants have resulted with the lowest number of outstanding inspections for a very long time. (99.74% Q 2)

2.7.2. Their work at the start of the process is minimising the need for Housing Officers to attend court to obtain warrants for entry.

2.8 **Information for New Tenants**

2.8.1. We are reviewing the information we supply to our new tenants and will be writing to all new tenants signed up in the last year to ask them what additional information they would like to receive in their new tenants pack.

2.9 **Recruitment**

2.9.1. We have successfully recruited permanently to the following posts in the last few weeks.

2.9.2. Housing Officer (Tenancy Audit)

2.9.3. Resident Services Project Manager

2.9.4. Tenancy Welfare Housing Officer.

2.9.5. Although all posts are much needed resources to Resident Services we are particularly pleased to fill the new post of Tenancy Welfare Housing Officer. The post will assist with the growing demand of dedicated time needed to support our vulnerable tenants. Housing Officers were finding it difficult to apportion time to these cases with other day to day priorities.

2.10 Sheltered Housing

2.10.1. The revised service is currently 7 months into implementation and is being bedded in. There is a 12 month service review period that runs to the end of June 2014 during which time opportunities for improvements can be identified – largely through monthly meetings of tenant / staff Focus Groups and HSRA meetings.

2.10.2. All staff roles have now been appointed to. External recruitment to the support team provided an excellent choice of appointable candidates. Once in post, frontline support staff made an immediate impact in achieving positive outcomes for tenants through a number of high value benefit claims.

2.10.3. The Handyman service for sheltered housing tenants is in place providing a free service for odd jobs in tenants' homes. Preventative tasks to achieve additional benefits through the Handyman role were agreed with Asset Management (including a rolling programme of checks on kitchen and bathroom fittings to prevent costly repairs).

2.10.4. We have a high number of so called unwanted fire signals which need to be reduced. We are working with H&S compliance manager & Asset Management to analyse the data received from the LFB. Also analysing Helpline call out data and drills to obtain reliable information that will enable us to put in appropriate measures to reduce unwanted fire signals and to also enable our support team to work with tenants at risk.

2.11 Estate Services

2.11.1. Estate Inspections

2.11.1.1. It was agreed that following the completion of the Resident Services restructure the estate inspection process would be reviewed and responsibility passed to each individual patch housing officer. Unfortunately it has not been possible to appoint to the permanent housing officer posts internally and the posts will now have to be advertised externally. It is proposed that once in place a workshop will be held with all relevant staff and other stakeholders to develop the estate inspection programme. We are keen to consider alternative approaches towards this process and

would welcome input from TLRCF members on their ideas improve the service.

2.11.1.2. The introduction of a wet cleaning service in communal areas of flats has commenced. The first major clean was carried out in October 2013 and will be carried out again in Spring 2014.

2.11.1.3. All Minor Estate Improvements projects have been completed ahead of schedule.

2.12 Community Halls

2.12.1. Hall let income has increased due to successful refurbishment of halls & by providing a more personal service to potential clients and also by offering discounts to regular/block bookings.

2.13 Churchill Place Car Park

2.13.1. We had been approached by a commercial Estate Agent who was interested in leasing the underground car park. No further agreement was reached as there were a number of lease issues which needed further clarification. We have since been advised by the Corporate Estates Team that the council is obliged to seek best consideration and to openly market the property. We have now received further interest which we are looking into.

2.14 Resident Involvement and Activities

2.15 Resident Involvement TRA Rep's get together

2.15.1. The Resident Involvement Team held a social event to say "Thank You" to all tenants & leaseholders that voluntarily give up their free time for the benefit of their community. All tenant representatives were invited to the function held in the members lounge. Representatives from the Scrutiny Panel, HFTRA, The Harrow Sheltered Schemes Residents Association, focus groups and estate TRA's, were thanked by the Mayor. Raffle prizes were donated by The Morrison's "in the community team". Very positive feedback was received by the Resident Involvement Team.

2.16 Scrutiny Panel update

2.16.1. The Harrow Tenants' & Leaseholders' Scrutiny Panel are currently reviewing the Estate Inspection process; unfortunately, following the recent resignation of two members of the panel, the completion of the review will now be delayed. The Resident Involvement Team is actively recruiting for new members for the panel.

2.17 Sheltered Schemes Bake-Off

2.17.1. The Resident Involvement and Sheltered Housing Teams organised a baking competition for the residents of the 18 sheltered schemes. Scheme residents were asked to have a bake off within the individual schemes then nominate their own baker to the final.

2.17.2. The 6 finalists then presented their cakes to a panel of judges made up from councillors and council staff including a semi-professional caterer.

2.17.3. The winning entry was from Alma Court.

2.18 Getting closer to our customers

2.18.1. The Resident Involvement Team are actively working to increase the involvement and awareness of council tenants and leaseholders, to what is happening in their community by encouraging residents to "Get Involved"

2.18.2. The team are making monthly scheduled meetings to all TRA chairs and also carrying out at least 25 cold call visits per month to residents, to complete a short questionnaire, to gauge awareness of residents, ask what they would like to see happen in their area and inform them of how they can be empowered to make changes to service delivery from the council.

2.19 Leasehold Support Group

2.19.1. The next meeting of the LSG is due to take place on 3rd February 2014.

Section 3 –Report Back from Resident Involvement Activities

3. Estates Services Steering Group (ESSG)

3.1 The next meeting of the ESSG will take place in February 2014.

3.2 Value for Money Group

3.2 The last meeting of the group took place on the 21st January 2014 when the group received presentations on the impact of welfare reform on rent collection and the Housemark benchmarking services report. It was agreed that from April 2014 the group would start to meet every 2 months.

Section 4 - Financial Implications

4. Any financial issues are contained within the body of the report and any service improvement issues that arise as a result of residents' ideas and suggestions will be considered within the relevant service area budget.

Section 5 - Equalities Implications

5. There are no equalities implications associated with this report. No Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out.

Name: Dave Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 6 February 2014		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Toni Burke
Interim Head of Resident Services
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Email: Toni.burke@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

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**REPORT FOR: Tenants', Leaseholders
and Residents'
Consultative Forum**

Date of Meeting: 19th February 2014

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT – Head of
Asset Management's Report

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington
Divisional Director of Housing

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix 1

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out a range of information and discussion items that the Head of Asset Management would like to bring to the attention of the Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum (TLRCF)

FOR INFORMATION and DISCUSSION

Section 2 – Report

Updates from previous discussions and new items for information

1. Apprentices and Work Placements through Asset Management Contracts

1.1 At the December TLRCF meeting officers were asked to provide further information about the work placement opportunities and appointment of apprentices by contractors working with us in delivering both responsive repairs and planned investment programmes. A short presentation on the current position will be given at the meeting.

2. Recharges

2.1 At the December TLRCF meeting officers were asked to bring forward an update on the implementation of the recharge policy in housing, and the progress made to date in collecting monies due.

2.2 The rechargeable element of void works has been recorded since October 2012. Up until 17th December 2013 75 voids have had an element of rechargeable cost, with a total debt raised of £44,301. Individual recharges vary from £53.00 to £2750-but the majority are between £200 and £800, with the average charge being £590.68. Whilst this may seem high, to put charges into context the cost of a mini skip is £95 and in some voids the rubbish and possessions left behind in the property, garden and outbuildings can need 5 or more large skips to clear completely.

2.3 All former tenants where a recharge has been raised have now been written to twice but to date no money has been received for payment of these debts.

2.4 The only exception to this is where the outgoing tenant has moved under the cash incentive or Grants to Move scheme. In these cases and recharges payable are deducted from any grant payment at source. £5,500 in rechargeable costs has been collected through this mechanism for the period April-September 2013 - which is a little over 12% of the recharges raised.

3. Repair MOTs

- 3.1 MOTs were initiated during 2011/2012 with the objective of managing those demanding tenants who had cause to contact the repairs service and manage their expectations. The lead Contracts Surveyor managed tenants' repairs on a planned basis for the duration of the pilot for 3 years from 2011 to 2014. The table of expenditure indicates the average cost of repairs identified per property for 10 tenants and further reporting is required on a bi-annual basis.
- 3.2 The following numbers are the total costs followed by the value, and the average amongst the sample:

Date range	Total spend (£)	Average (£)
04/02/2011 - 03/02/2012	24,582.88	2,458.29
04/02/2012 – 03/02/2013	24,505.10	2,450.51
04/02/2013 – 03/02/2014	24,439.75	2,443.98

4. Consultation on the Better Homes Standard

- 4.1 Following discussions at the December TLRCF plans are progressing with the consultation event to be held on Saturday 15th March. These plans have been developed in consultation with HFTRA and the event will focus on the priorities for the capital programme from 2015 onwards and developing new ways for tenants to be engaged in the planning process.
- 4.2 The Better Homes Standard will replace the old “Decent Homes standard” and determine how we deliver the programme of improvements in future. We have a number of commitments already to do more than we have done previously arising from both the Asset Management Strategy and other pieces of work such as the garage strategy. However there are other areas to explore such as developing a programme to address both tenancy management issues (such as should we install sound insulation to reduce noise complaints) and ongoing repair issues (such as whether we should take more radical action to resolve ongoing problems with damp through the capital programme) There are some hard choices to be made and it is really important that we capture tenant and leaseholder views in designing the standard.
- 4.3 The consultation event is a first step in designing future programmes of works.

5. Joint working with the London Fire Brigade

- 5.1 Procurement has been successful for the installation of a standalone sprinkler system at a flat within Watkins House, where the resident is a known hoarder and smoker. The successful company were Elite Fire Services Ltd who submitted a proposal to install a Plumis Automist sprinkler system. The Plumis system was demonstrated to staff of Harrow Council and members of the London Fire Brigade including the Borough Commander in November of 2013 at Harrow Weald Park Sheltered Scheme. The demonstration was successful in showing how the mist created by the system offers quick and complete coverage of an area whilst using a lot less water than a conventional sprinkler system. The system uses the existing water supply in a property, with no additional tanks required. The fairly quick and easy installation means it is possible to remove the sprinkler system, and relocate it to a new property if the resident moves on or is no longer considered to be a substantial fire risk.
- 5.2 Working with the London Fire Brigade we aim to continue to identify vulnerable tenants who present a substantial risk of starting a fire, via the Fire Brigades Home Fire Safety Visits, and Harrow Council's staff who are to be trained by the Borough Commander at the next HAP event to identify people at risk. We have already identified the next resident we would like to receive a standalone sprinkler system, a known hoarder located within a general needs block. If the first installation of Plumis is successful we will also consider installing the system in other residents flats in Watkins House, as this scheme has a lot of vulnerable people in it and is considered the highest risk by the London Fire Brigade.

Update on work to reduce false alarm calls in sheltered housing

- 5.3 We had a meeting with the LFB in January where we discussed the amount of false alarms being generated by sheltered schemes which is considered too high. This is in part due to having a full fire alarm system throughout the schemes, which gives us the best possible response if there is a fire but can trigger more false alarms. We are now analysing all fire alarm data for 2013. Where a alarm has been triggered on more than one occasion we are looking at the reason for this and then carrying out a modification to the alarm sensor. This may include changing the threshold of a sensor so it is not as sensitive, or changing a sensor from a smoke detector to a heat detector as a lot of false signals are caused by smoke generated from cooking. All modification will be approved by the London Fire Brigade. We will also assess the resident at the same time, because setting off false alarms may be an indication that the resident is at risk of starting a real fire. This could lead to measures including educating the resident, visits from the Fire Brigade to offer advice, fire retardant bedding, and ultimately a standalone sprinkler system.

6. Capital Programme 2014/15

- 6.1 We are currently preparing the 14/15 programme for procurement.
- 6.2 Freedom of a 4 year programme gives us opportunity to procure those elements of the programme that will be required every year (i.e. heating, windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms) on a longer term contract giving us both better value for money and more consistency in delivery. This new way of working should also help us to spend less time on tendering and procuring contracts and more time on managing the contracts to ensure tenants and leaseholders receive even better services from the Asset Management service. We will also try to package the works in a way that would attract more local contractors to express an interest in bidding for contracts.

7. Staffing Updates

- 7.1 Rukshan Kariy been appointed to Project Manager post following Tony Graham's retirement.
- 7.2 Adverts for senior Planned Investment officer and Cyclical survey for external recruitment now.
- 7.3 Aids and Adaptations team transferred to Housing Asset Management on 6th January. Now exploring synergies between the teams, opportunity to develop promote handyperson service for tenants and leaseholders and look at new opportunities to further improve adaptations service and design bathroom upgrades that meet homes for life standards. Also opportunities for better assessment of needs of people with disabilities where major works being undertaken.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Any financial issues are contained within the body of the report.

9. Equalities Implications

- 9.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report. No Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dave Roberts



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 6 February 2014

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Maggie Challoner
Interim Head of Asset Management
Tel: 020 8424 2473
Email: Maggie.challoner@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1.

Budget Description	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	No. dwellings	£	No. dwellings	£	No. dwellings	£	No. dwellings	£	No. dwellings	£
Capitalised Salaries		£317,000		£317,000		£317,000		£317,000		£317,000
Major Voids		£76,870		£76,870		£76,870		£76,870		£76,870
Kitchens / Bathrooms / Rewires	384	£1,542,000	578	£2,400,000	626	£2,600,000	675	£2,800,000	600	£2,649,380
Health and Safety	3	£200,000	3	£200,000	3	£200,000	3	£200,000	3	£200,000
Boiler / Heating	275	£871,230	347	£1,100,000	379	£1,200,000	473	£1,500,000	500	£1,600,000
Enveloping		£1,523,660		£1,330,200		£1,589,470		£1,673,990		£2,408,130
Enveloping Francis Road	78	£1,000,000	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0
Door Entry	52	£512,500	52	£512,500	52	£512,500	52	£512,500	52	£512,500
Lifts	1	£207,500	1	£207,500	1	£0	1	£0	1	£0
Sheltered Warden Voids		£51,250		£51,250		£0		£0		£0
Structural Issues		£256,250		£256,250		£256,250		£256,250		£300,000
Garages		£61,500		£61,500		£61,500		£61,500		£61,500
Aids and Adaptations		£615,000		£615,000		£615,000		£615,000		£615,000
Capitalisaiton Responsive Repairs		£142,500		£142,500		£142,500		£142,500		£142,500
Develop Wider Housing Initiatives Pot		£256,240		£256,240		£256,240		£256,240		£256,240
Council Funded Expenditure		£7,633,500		£7,526,810		£7,827,330		£8,411,850		£9,139,120
Grant Funded Extentions										
Total HRA Capital Programme		£7,633,500		£7,526,810		£7,827,330		£8,411,850		£9,139,120

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