

TENANTS', LEASEHOLDERS' AND RESIDENTS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

30 APRIL 2014

Chairman: * Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath

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

In attendance: Barry Macleod-Cullinane
(Councillors)

* Denotes Member present

Representatives from the following Associations were in Attendance

Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
Churchill Place Tenants' and Residents' Association
Harrow Weald Tenants' and Residents' Association
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
Harrow Sheltered Residents' Association
Little Stanmore Tenants' and Residents' Association
Milman Close Tenants' and Residents' Association

231. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

232. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

All Agenda Items

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

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

233. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2014 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

- That the list of tenants, residents and leaseholders present at the meeting be added to the minutes.

234. Public Questions

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

235. Grants to Move Scheme: Update and Six Month Review

The Forum received the report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services which comprised an update on the progress of the Grants to Move Scheme, including the following:

- the existing under-occupation scheme had been enhanced by the addition of a decoration grant so tenants could decorate their new homes, and so far 12 decoration grants of £1,500 had been paid, which had freed up 15 bedrooms;
- the home ownership scheme had been undermined by the increase in the Right to Buy discount, which made Right to Buy a more attractive option to some tenants;
- all Officers had been briefed and publicity surrounding the scheme had been highly circulated.

Following questions and comments from Members of the Forum, an Officer commented that:

- officers were trying to ensure that tenants' aspirations were met in finding suitable properties for them to move in to;
- no cost was generated through repairs and fittings as this sort of work was not being carried out under this scheme;
- tenants who were moving into private rental accommodation would not be eligible to receive the decoration grant.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

236. INFORMATION REPORT: Head of Resident Services Report

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

- there had been an increase in Right to Buy sales, with 69 applications resulting in 36 sales, and 14 of these sales had taken place in quarter 4 of the 2013/14 year;
- a gross income of £7,602,750 had been generated from the sales, with a net income of £4,066,275 after the application of the discount;
- the rental arrears figure for the end of March 2014 was £459,000 against a target of £450,000, however, 293 accounts which were currently under-occupying and affected by the welfare reforms were contributing towards £40,000 of the rental arrears;
- over 200 tenants and landlords had attended the Mutual Exchange Event, and over the last year 33 successful mutual exchanges had taken place;
- anti-social behaviour had increased, and a Tenancy Welfare Officer was now in post;
- domestic violence had also sharply increased, especially among young people, and the protocol was currently being investigated;
- photographs of 45% of tenants were now being held on file, which is a significant increase on last year's figure of 24%;
- repairs to 3 out of 4 garage sites are almost complete, the garages on Augustine Road had now been demolished and Network Rail were taking responsibility for the fencing;
- the next meeting of the Leasehold Support Group was due to take place on 7 April 2014.

After taking questions from Members of the Forum, an Officer commented that:

- the garages on Augustine Road had just recently been demolished, and Network Rail would not have been able to access the site to repair the fencing while demolition was ongoing, so there was no set finish date for the fencing yet;
- the outcome of the Augustine Road site was still subject to consultation;
- the idea of a Tenancy Welfare Officer is to support all tenants, not just ones who are ill, and that Officers would take on board comments made regarding the inadequate support for the neighbours and people living in the vicinity of those with mental health issues;
- Housing Officers were working with other colleagues and the Metropolitan Police to properly deal with property that had been left in garages.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

237. INFORMATION REPORT: Head of Asset Management's Report

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

- a Consultation Event on Future Capital Programmes held on 15 March 2014 had been an overall success, 17 residents attended and gave feedback to the team;
- audits of the works orders that had been raised through property inspections had been carried out in three locations, with reassuring results;
- a Performance Report for the Asset Management Service stated that for the year 2013/14, the anticipated spend would equate to 83% of the 2013/14 capital programme;
- figures relating to Responsive Repairs showed that the percentage of jobs completed on the first visit had risen from 88% in 2011/12 to 97% in December 2013.

Members of the Forum commented that:

- people felt listened to at the consultation event, and solar panels had been mentioned;

- customer satisfaction had been higher on roofing jobs that had been monitored (3.10);
- regarding the consultations due to take place with residents mentioned in 7.12, residents may prefer for the contract to be extended or renewed rather than re-tendered if they are happy with the supplier, and that this would save the Council's and residents' money;
- the new Responsive Repairs teams were focussed and punctual;
- invitations were extended to all representatives of Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Associations under the umbrella of the Federation;
- the Augustine Road Garages project had been delayed in the past due to high costs, but thanks to the co-operation of past and present Portfolio Holders savings had been made.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

238. INFORMATION REPORT: Housing Ambition Plan (HAP) 2014 onwards

An Officer presented a report and presentation outlining the performance in the delivery of the Housing Ambition Plan for 2014 onwards, including the following:

- highlights and successes of the Housing Needs and Partnerships & Strategy teams during the 2013/14 year;
- the next Housing Ambition Plan was being finalised;
- plans going forward would make use of the new Housing Revenue Account system.

After hearing comments from Members of the Forum, an Officer commented:

- that the commitment to reach out to and engage with more Tenants' and Residents' Associations was overarching throughout Housing Services and did not just apply to Asset Management, and was also detailed in the Resident Services Service Plan.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

239. Brainstorming Day

This item was withdrawn, as the accompanying report was fully included in the report for item 9.

240. Homes for Harrow Programme

The Forum agreed to defer this item at the request of Officers.

241. Suggestions for agenda items for next meeting

The following agenda items were suggested for the next meeting:

- Homes for Harrow
- Report from Scrutiny Panel - Estate Inspections.

242. Any Other Urgent Business

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following item was included late on the agenda due to the safety risk posed by the issue.

A Resident commented that:

- flytipping on the Honeybun Estate was becoming a recurring problem, as the Council were being called out to the same two areas repeatedly, and twenty separate incidents of flytipping had been reported since 18 March 2014;

Officers and Members of the Forum commented that:

- the Enviro-Crime unit specifically look for identifying information when investigating flytipping, and have been able to prosecute in the past;
- people are unwilling to come forward and state that they have witnessed flytipping;
- the Divisional Director of Housing Services would be requested by an Officer to contact the resident directly.

243. Termination of Meeting

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 48.2 (Part 4D) of the Constitution:

RESOLVED: At 9.59 pm to continue until 10.10 pm.

244. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 2 July 2014 at 2.30 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.15 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MRS CAMILLA BATH
Chairman