

TENANTS', LEASEHOLDERS' AND RESIDENTS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

2 JULY 2014

Chairman: * Councillor Glen Hearnden

Councillors: * Mrs Camilla Bath * Manjibhai Kara
* Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick

In attendance: * Barry Macleod-Cullinane Minute 1-7
(Councillors)

* Denotes Member present

Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance:

Churchill Place Tenants' and Residents' Association
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
Harrow Sheltered Residents' Association
Honeybun Tenants' and Residents' Association
Kenmore Park Tenants' and Residents' Association
Little Stanmore Tenants' and Residents' Association

1. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

2. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

- Miss Paddy Lyne declared that she is the Chair of Harrow Citizens' Advice Bureau.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the 30 April 2014 be deferred to the next meeting of the Tenants' Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum.

4. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

5. Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair proposed and Members of the Forum agreed that the Appointment of a Vice-Chair item was omitted from the agenda in error, and a Vice-Chair would be appointed as the first item.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath was appointed Vice-Chair of the Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum.

6. Head of Resident Services Report

An Officer presented the report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services, which included the following:

- there were 42 Right-To-Buy applications pending, and 40 sales were projected for the year 2014/15;
- rental arrears currently stood at £487,764;
- Housing Fraud Officers had been appointed, and tenancy audits had been exhausted as a means of finding fraudulent tenants;
- two thirds of inspections had been completed, and all repair works would be subject to post-inspection;
- the Annual General Meeting of the Leaseholders' Support Group would take place on 23 June 2014;

- Members of the Forum were requested to comment on different ways in which the Forum could operate in the future, and consider the proposal to host the Forum at various different locations to engage with the local residents.

After taking questions from Members of the Forum, an Officer commented that staffing problems had caused delays in the review of Sheltered Accommodation, and this review was now likely to take place in August 2014.

Members of the Forum commented that:

- in other areas, the location of tenants' and leaseholders' forums would change, to encourage more engagement and interaction;
- it may be beneficial to move the Forum to areas where more engagement was needed, and ensure the agenda for that particular Forum was relevant to the area it was being held in;
- although the Civic Centre was a recognisable and relatively accessible meeting place, it would still be beneficial to explore the possibility of moving the Forum to other areas in order to engage with people and increase attendance at future meetings of the Forum;
- in theory, moving the location of the Forum seemed to be a good idea, however many administrative and logistical issues would need to be taken into account, such as parking;
- Tenants and Residents are very keen to have a conversation with Harrow Council, but may be intimidated by a large Consultative Forum. As such, it may be appropriate to slightly alter the format of the Forum if it was to be held at different locations;
- user-friendly notes used to be distributed alongside the minutes, this was a good idea and should be reinstated as soon as possible;
- a separate structure may be suitable, with smaller, more tailored meetings taking place on estates with a view to encouraging tenants, leaseholders and residents to attend the Consultative Forum, which would be dealing with Borough-wide issues;
- the Chair of the Leaseholder Support Group had been reinstated and the treasurer had changed;
- there had been a high rate of rent income collection, and Housing Services had tried to minimise and mitigate the effects of welfare reform. Many families had been helped through targeted work, a Rent Arrears Officer had been appointed to work evenings and weekends and steps were being taken to ensure that tenants and leaseholders knew what benefits they would be eligible for;

- the Pocket Park had been successful and had been granted Mayor's Funding;
- the Value for Money group had met on 17 June 2014, items on the agenda included contract procurement and the cost of temporary accommodation, and the forward plan would appear in the next report.

Officers also agreed to draw up a proposal document that would be circulated with the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7. Head of Asset Management Report

An Officer presented the report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services, which included the following:

- Contract Appraisal Panels had been taking place, which had helped to improve performance from contractors. Resident representatives would be visiting contractor offices for an auditing exercise during July – August;
- delivery of the capital programme had been slower than expected, but steps had been taken towards procurement for internal improvements;
- the priority was to keep tenants, residents and leaseholders engaged and updated about progress, savings made and procurement;
- gas safety inspections were a high priority, with a target of 100% against the current rate of 99.5%.

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

- the plans discussed at the Brainstorming Day with Asset Management were being implemented.

Members of the Forum also commented that:

- it would be beneficial if the number of apprenticeships were increased;
- the current administration would push to increase the number of apprenticeships offered, as per their pre-election manifesto.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. Homes for Harrow Update

An Officer provided an update on the Homes for Harrow programme, via the report circulated with the agenda and a presentation. The update included the following:

- 50 new homes were proposed to be built on 18 different sites;
- a breakdown of what sort of homes were to be built on the different sites;
- attendance statistics for consultations events regarding the homes;
- outcomes for the feasibility studies that had been undertaken for each site.

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

- there would be consultations on all aspects of the development, including whether or not the bungalows to be built on Binyon Crescent would be gated;
- resident engagement was a key priority, and Housing Services would aim for a balance between providing as many homes as possible and ensuring that homes were spacious and energy efficient, to ensure the longevity of the builds;
- residents would prefer a play area on Hazeldene Drive rather than garages that could attract anti-social behaviour;
- Housing and their consultant architects would work closely with Planning Services to ensure that any new buildings were in an appropriate style for the area;
- different options for improving energy efficiency to meet sustainability requirements were being considered which might include solar panels and ground source heat pumps, subject to value for money to achieve a solution which could minimise fuel costs for residents;
- Harrow Council would build homes in accordance with the Mayor's London Housing Design Standards, which would ensure minimum space standards were met.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. Suggestions for agenda items for next meeting

RESOLVED: To note that there were no additional agenda items suggested, but updates would be provided at the next meeting via the usual items.

10. Any Other Urgent Business

RESOLVED: To note that there was no other urgent business.

11. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: To note that the date of the next meeting would be 5 November 2014.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 2.30 pm, closed at 4.20 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR GLEN HEARNDEN
Chairman