

Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum

AGENDA

DATE: Tuesday 7 October 2014

TIME: 7.00 pm

VENUE: Northolt Communal Hall,
Northolt Road, Harrow HA2
OLS

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3 Council Members)

Chairman: Councillor Glen Hearnden

Councillors:

Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick

Mrs Camilla Bath (VC)
Manjibhai Kara

Representatives of Individual Housing Estate Tenants' and Residents' Associations

Reserve Members:

1. Niraj Dattani
2. Phillip O'Dell

1. Jean Lammiman
2. Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Contact: Maria Farrell, Democratic & Electoral Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1367 E-mail: maria.farrell@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 - 12)

That the minutes of the meetings held on 30 April 2014 and 2 July 2014 be taken as read and signed as correct records.

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, Thursday 2 October 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. JOINT REPORT - HEAD OF ASSET MANAGEMENT / HEAD OF RESIDENT SERVICES (Pages 13 - 18)

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

8. OPTIONS FOR RENT SETTING (Pages 19 - 24)

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

9. HOMES FOR HARROW UPDATE (Pages 25 - 32)

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

10. NEW LOOK HOMING IN MAGAZINE

Oral report of the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing.

11. SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 10 December 2014.

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

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

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

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
Denote category of Reserve Members
† Denotes apologies received

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 Citizen's 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 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 built 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

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

Date of Meeting:	7 th October 2014
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Head of Asset Management and Resident Services’ Report
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Lynne Pennington Divisional Director of Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Glen Hearnden Portfolio Holder Housing
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides an update on a range of activities and performance items that the Heads’ of Asset Management and Resident Services would like to bring to the attention of the Tenants’, Leaseholders’ and Residents’ Consultative Forum.

FOR INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

Section 2 – Report

1. Asset Management

- 1.1 Responsive Repairs Service - contractor performance across our main contracts is good and continuing to improve on a month by month basis.
- 1.2 Contract Appraisal Panels continue to take place bimonthly, with resident representatives taking a proactive role in monitoring performance.
- 1.3 Resident representatives completed an audit exercise during July and August – feedback from Residents
- 1.4 Capital Programme 2014/15 delivery is moving on. As at the end of August the forecast outturn has increased to £7.064 million or 83% of the available resources.
- 1.5 Consultation on the new Better Homes Standard work is almost complete.
- 1.6 Energy Efficiency - currently out to tender for a delivery partner to work with us on this grant funded project to deliver energy efficiency measures.

2. Resident Services

2.1 Tenancy and Income Management Team

- 2.1.1 Restructure now complete
- 2.1.2 New ERA for Housing Officers – looking at different ways of working
- 2.1.3 Rent arrears collection remains in the top quartile
- 2.1.4 Preparations are underway to ensure that the implications of the Anti – Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 are implemented effectively across the service

2.2 Estate Services Team

- 2.2.1 Challenges with covering staff sickness absence
- 2.2.2 Change in Operations Manager role

2.2.3 New apprentice appointed

2.3 Sheltered Housing Team

2.3.1 Focus group with residents continues to meet – discussions take place regarding service provision post restructure and any issues arising

2.3.2 Trips are planned for October, November and December for Christmas related activities

2.4 Resident Involvement Team

2.4.1 Estates in Bloom final judging and awards ceremony in August 2014

2.4.2 5 new Tenant and Resident Associations have met to discuss support needs

2.4.3 Team continue to support the Regeneration Project

2.5 Leasehold & RTB Team

2.5.1 Annual service charge invoices posted to leaseholders during the week commencing 8th September, 2014. The total amount invoiced was just over £455K.

2.5.2 Arrears on leasehold annual service charges reduced by £55K, during the period April – August, 2014

2.5.3 Staffing – challenges filling vacancies within the Leasehold Team. Two permanent positions now filled.

2.5.4 11 properties sold under the Right to Buy in Quarter 1 2014 (April – June)

2.5.5 Partnership working with the Council's Corporate Fraud Team and HMRC.

2.5.6 Leasehold Support Group's Annual General Meeting took place in June

3. Joint activities

3.1 Value for Money working group continue to meet bi monthly – most recent discussion items were insurance and Contracts Board

- 3.2 Estate Action Day, Honeybun Estate 3rd October 2014 – feedback from Residents
- 3.3 New look TLRCF - “out on the road”
- 3.4 Estate Action Plans proposed for each estate

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report as all contracts in place and initiatives being developed are expected to be delivered within existing budgets.

5.0 Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 There are no risk implications arising from this information report. The Housing Risk Register includes risks associated with non-delivery of the responsive repairs service and capital programme.

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this information report

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

- 7.2 The work of the Housing Department supports the administration's priorities as follows.

7.3 Making a difference for the vulnerable

A number of initiatives within the Asset Management and Resident Services service plans and capital programme are specifically targeted to assist the most vulnerable households living in the Council's housing stock to sustain their tenancies, reduce health and safety risks and live independently.

7.4 Making a difference for communities

The Asset Management and Resident Services service plans include a commitment to improve the external environment, providing communities with better places to live and improve the appearance of our estates. The green deal communities project is specifically targeted

to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel bills of those residents experiencing fuel poverty.

7.5 Making a difference for local businesses

Asset Management are committed to supporting local businesses through encouraging local contractors to bid for all contract opportunities and ensuring that a high percentage of spend on supplies is committed in Harrow.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dave Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 17 th September 2014		

Ward Councillors notified:	No
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

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

Or

Toni Burke
Head of Resident Services
Tel: 020 8424 9638
Email: toni.burke@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

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

Date of Meeting:	7 October 2014
Subject:	Options for rent setting
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Lynne Pennington, Divisional Director of Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Glen Hearnden, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out a range of possible options for rent setting for 2015-16 financial year.

Recommendations:

TLRCF is recommended to consider the options and express its opinion as to the preferred option for rent setting for 2015-16.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To consult on options for rent setting for 2015-16.

Section 2 – Report

2. Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 The Council's current rent-setting policy of continuing the Government's rent convergence process has been in place for some years. In the lead up to the 2014-15 budget, the government consulted on proposals to change national social housing rent policy, with proposals that would cease rent convergence before all properties have converged and change the basis on which future rent increases were to be calculated for years after 2014-15. The budget for 2014-15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2017-18 were constructed on the basis of the government's proposals. Following confirmation of the proposed changes, this report considers possible options for rent setting going forward.

Consultation

- 2.2 Under s.105 of the Housing Act 1985, the Council is required to maintain arrangements as it considers appropriate to enable secure tenants to be informed and consulted about housing management matters which substantially affect them. However, rent and other charges for facilities are specifically excluded from the definition of housing management, therefore there is no statutory requirement to consult secure tenants on proposed rent changes. The Council has however, always consulted through the Tenants Leaseholders and Residents Consultative Forum (TLRCF).
- 2.3 The Tenants' Leaseholders and Residents Consultative Forum (TLRCF) have the remit to consider and submit observations to Cabinet on the annual HRA budget and in particular on the consequent rent implications.

3. Options for rent setting

- 3.1 **National social rent policy** – the Government has recently confirmed that it will no longer be possible to include a rent convergence element for rent increases after 2014-15, although properties may still be moved to target rent levels on re-let, as is the Council's current policy. In addition, future rent increases will be based on the Consumer Prices Index plus 1%, rather than the Retail Prices Index plus 0.5%. The combined impact of this, as set out in the 2014 budget report, is to reduce income within the HRA over the longer term.
- 3.2 Due to the decision to increase property values for rent setting purposes in February 2013, and the use of prudent assumptions regarding long-term rent increases in the last version of the business plan, the impact on HRA finances is not as severe as it could have been, and it is understood that there is less of an impact (proportionally) on HRA income than is being experienced by some other authorities.
- 3.3 As part of the process of changing national rent policy, following representation from the sector the Government decided to increase limit rents to the level of the target rent to avoid any issues arising as rents gradually moved to target levels over time. Limit rents are used to calculate rent rebate subsidy limitation, which can arise if a council's average rent is higher than the average limit rent, and the initial impact of this change was to benefit the Council as we would

otherwise have had to fund in the region of £70k of rent rebate subsidy in 2014-15.

- 3.4 It is not clear whether the Government will implement some form of rent-setting mechanism to prevent councils from increasing rents by more than CPI plus 1% as there is currently no such mechanism in place. What this means then, is that under the present regulations, the Government's action in setting limit rents at the level of target rents theoretically presents us with some possible options for rent increases for 2015-16, although it should be noted that the Government may well take action to close off any course of action other than a CPI plus 1% increase.

Options include:

- a. Continue with the existing policy in line with national policy, i.e. assume rents will increase by CPI plus 1%;
 - b. Move all rents to target rent levels for 2015-16;
 - c. Continue to assume a "rent convergence" policy, in which case many of the Council's rents would expect to converge anyway in 2015-16, but with a "cap" on the increase of the equivalent of RPI plus 0.5% plus £2;
 - d. An alternative strategy still to be determined.
- 3.5 For the purposes of comparing these options, CPI is assumed to be 1.7% in 2015-16, in line with current assumptions, for all models. The actual inflation figure to be used in the calculation of the 2015-16 rent increase is the September 2014 CPI figure, which will not be announced until October of this year. The projections are therefore likely to change from those shown within this report.

Continue existing policy

- 3.6 Existing Council rent policy is in line with the national policy, and assumes that rents will increase by CPI plus 1%, with rents for properties re-let during the year being set at target rent. This is the basis on which the budget was set, and on which the recent 30-year business plan update was constructed. On this basis, the average rent for 2015-16 is projected to be £115.62 per week.

Move all rents to target rent levels for 2015-16

- 3.7 For this option, all rents are assumed to be set at the level of the target rent, which given the increase in limit rent to target level should not result in a penalty to the HRA arising from Rent rebate Subsidy Limitation. This is not in line with national rent policy.
- 3.8 On this basis, the average rent for 2015-16 is projected to be £117.55 per week, nearly £2 per week more than if national rent policy was followed. This would increase balances over the term of the business plan as set out in the table below.
- 3.9 This option needs to be caveated, in that there are a small number of properties (in the region of 75), typically larger houses, where the gap between actual rent and target rent is so large that, ordinarily, rents could never reach

target levels through a convergence process. Any decision to increase rents for these properties could potentially result in significant increases for the tenants.

Continue to assume a “rent convergence” policy

3.10 Under this scenario, all rents that have not already achieved convergence with target rents (the vast majority of existing rents) would continue on the convergence profile assumed prior to the change in national rent policy. This would see rents increased by the equivalent of a maximum RPI plus 0.5% plus £2 each year until such time as convergence is reached. This would see over 97% of properties achieving convergence by 2017-18, with a maximum 98.4% of all properties being able to ultimately achieve convergence. As above, a number of properties will never achieve rent convergence until they are re-let.

3.11 On this basis, the average rent for 2015-16 is projected to be £117.05 per week, and the resulting increased balances over the life of the business plan are set out below.

Alternative rent increase strategy

3.12 This would be some other form of rent increase strategy than those set out above and would need to be the subject of discussion and consultation. At present the suggestion would be to consider the above options, but always bearing in mind that the Government could close off any option other than following national rent policy.

Key business plan outputs

Table 1.

	Current Rent Policy	All rents set to Target	Continue convergence
Average rent in 2015-16	£115.63	£117.55	£117.05
HRA cumulative revenue balances			
Year 5	£7.664m	£10.038m	£9.835m
Year 10	£13.970m	£18.786m	£18.497m
Year 20	£58.650m	£68.530m	£68.071m
Year 30	£165.174m	£180.418m	£179.783m

3.13 The figures shown in Table 1 above illustrate the potential impact of differential rent increase strategies on the level of balances generated within the Housing Revenue Account. It can be seen that the difference between a continuation of the existing policy, which assumes that rents are set to target level when a property is re-let and the policy of setting all rents to target levels could be in worth in excess of £15m over the life of the business plan. It can also be seen that a policy of “rent convergence” would enable the majority of this additional income to be delivered. This is because under the previous policy, rent convergence was assumed to have been achieved for the majority of properties by 2015-16 anyway.

3.14 One notable area where additional resources could be used is in the delivery of new housing, where the lack of borrowing capacity as a result of the borrowing cap imposed by the government as part of the self-financing settlement is a restriction on the ability to deliver new housing as quickly as desired. This could be seen as a window of opportunity, in that the government has increased limit rents to the level of target rents, and in doing so seemingly presented to

councils the opportunity to generate additional income by setting actual rents to target levels without incurring financial penalty.

- 3.15 It must be stressed, however, that whilst the options set out above may be technically feasible at this point, the government may well decide to take action to close the door on anything other than a policy-compliant rent increase, making reliance on the ability to increase rents by more than CPI + 1% a risky strategy.
- 3.16 It is clear from the HRA budget approved in February and the Business Plan update approved in July 2014 that at this point that there is no overriding need to deviate from existing policy, which is in line with national rent policy; the HRA is in a healthy position and is able to meet its management, maintenance and investment obligations as they fall due. Whilst increased income could potentially assist in delivering more affordable housing within the HRA, the higher rents required to generate this income would place an additional burden on tenants at a time when the economy is still not entirely stable and welfare reform continues to impact on families, in many instances significantly.
- 3.17 This, associated with the potential risks of deviating from national rent policy, suggest that it would be appropriate to continue the Council's existing rent-setting policy and increase rents by CPI plus 1% for 2015-16, unless the recommendation of TLRCF is to consider an alternative strategy.

4.0 Financial Implications

Set out above

5.0 Risk Management Implications

Set out above

6.0 Equalities Implications

No equalities impact assessment has been carried out at this stage as it is not clear whether the council would be allowed to implement a rent increase above the level set out in national social rent policy, i.e. CPI + 1% for tenanted properties.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

7.2 This report relates to the availability of resources which enables the Housing Department to support the administration's priorities as follows.

- a. Making a difference for the vulnerable - a number of initiatives within the Asset Management and Resident Services service plans and capital programme are specifically targeted to assist the most

vulnerable households living in the Council's housing stock to sustain their tenancies, reduce health and safety risks and live independently.

- b. Making a difference for communities - the Asset Management and Resident Services service plans include a commitment to improve the external environment, providing communities with better places to live and improve the appearance of our estates. The green deal communities project is specifically targeted to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel bills of those residents experiencing fuel poverty.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: ...Dave Roberts.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:18 September 2014		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Dave Roberts, Housing Finance Business Partner
Direct 0208 420 9678
Ext 5678

Background Papers:

None

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

Date of Meeting:	7 th October 2014
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT: Homes for Harrow update
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Lynne Pennington Divisional Director of Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Glen Hearnden Portfolio Holder Housing
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides an update on the Homes for Harrow Programme. There will be a presentation on the current proposals at the meeting. Comments are requested, particularly on how to improve resident involvement in future consultation events on projects within the Homes for Harrow programme.

FOR INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

Section 2 – Report

2.1 The Homes for Harrow programme has two strands:

2.1.1 Infill programme - Building new council housing for rent as well as homes for sale on a shared ownership basis on vacant or under- utilised HRA land/assets such as garage sites. This is funded partly through the additional income being generated in the HRA as a result of self- financing and partly through other resources held by the Council specifically for the purpose of delivering additional affordable housing;

2.1.2 Estate Regeneration - Comprehensive or partial regeneration of housing estates where the cost of refurbishing/maintaining existing homes are high and/or where there is potential to build additional new homes.

Infill Programme

2.2 The sites proposed for the first 50 new homes are set out below:

Site/Scheme Address	Units	Tenure	Type	Progress
Binyon Crescent, Stanmore	2	Affordable Rent (AR)	2 bed bungalows	PRP architects appointed. Detailed designs being progressed
Chenduit Way, Stanmore	4	AR	4 bed houses	PRP architects appointed. Detailed designs being progressed
Grove Avenue, Pinner	7	AR	1,2,3 bed flats	Architects and other consultants in process of being appointed
Holsworth Close, North Harrow	4	AR	4 bed houses	As above

Alexandra Avenue	11	AR	1,2,3 bed flats	Initial designs completed. Architects and consultants in process of being appointed to draw up detailed designs and submit planning applications.
Stuart Avenue, South Harrow	4	AR	3 bed houses	As above
The Heights, Northolt	3	AR	1,2 bed flats	Architects and other consultants in process of being appointed
Amy Johnson Court	3	AR	1,2 bed flats	Initial designs completed. Architects and consultants in process of being appointed to draw up detailed designs and submit planning applications.
Moelyn Mews or Brookside Close	2	AR	3 bed flats or houses	Architects and other consultants in process of being appointed
Allerford Court, North Harrow	3	Shared Ownership (S/O)	3 bed houses	As above
Atherton Place, Harrow	2	S/O	3 bed houses	As above
Pinner Grove	2	S/O	3 bed flats	As above
Stuart Avenue, South Harrow	3	S/O	3 bed houses	As above
Total	50			

- 2.3 A consultation event for Chenduit Ave, Binyon Crescent and Masefield Ave was held on the 16th September 2014. Feedback from this event will be presented at the meeting.

Estate Regeneration

- 2.4 The following estates are included within this programme and the details are set out below:

Estate	Type of development (Subject to Planning, detailed legal, service information etc)	Potential additional new homes	Proposed future	Latest position
Grange Farm estate	Complete regeneration driven by need to replace existing homes in the long term	Replacement of existing 260 homes with c433 new homes and replacement community centre	Complete redevelopment ie demolition of most of the existing homes and replacement with new homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents meeting held 31 July 2014 • Steering Group being set up • Housing Needs surveys underway • Void properties being let on a temporary basis
Hazeldene Drive and Pinner Green flats	3 options considered: Complete regeneration, infill and major improvement of existing housing. Needs further	Proposals considered replacement of existing 123 homes with 177 new homes	Complete regeneration not financially feasible. Further feasibility work required to assess potential of partial redevelopment and comprehensive refurbishment	Planned capital works for 2014/15 to proceed. Further feasibility work to start in the Autumn considering investment needs over next 30 years compared to partial redevelopment.
Howards and Deacons Close	Complete regeneration or major improvement of existing homes	Proposals considered replacement of existing 84 homes with 147 new homes	Further feasibility required to decide whether complete regeneration would be a better solution than comprehensive refurbishment	Planned capital works for 2014/15 to proceed. Further feasibility work to start in the Autumn considering investment needs over next 30 years compared to partial redevelopment.

Resident involvement

- 2.5 Since January 2014, we have been holding consultation events to enable residents to be involved from the outset in developing our plans for new homes. However attendance at the events has been varied

and below the target set of 50% attendance (see below). There will be a discussion at the meeting on ways to improve resident involvement in our Homes for Harrow programme.

Attendance at consultation events

1. Alexandra Ave – 15 out of 133 properties = 11%
2. Amy Johnson – 7 out of 15 properties = 47%
3. Brookside – 24 out of 77 properties = 31%
4. Dickson – 8 out of 18 properties (at one event) = 31%
5. Grange Farm - 86 out of 282 properties = 30%
6. Howards & Deacons – 28 out of 84 = 33%
7. Hazeldene – 26 out of 106 = 26%

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report as it is a progress update. For information, at its meeting on the 17th July 2014 Cabinet approved expenditure from HRA reserves, HRA capital receipts and the Council's Affordable Housing Fund of up to £8.5m to fund the development of the first 50 new homes in the infill programme. The estimated costs of this programme have increased for several reasons but sufficient funding is available in the HRA. Additionally we also made a successful bid to the government for £1.7m to support this programme.
- 4.2 Cabinet also approved £2.1M to take forward the Grange Farm Regeneration project. This is additional funding to that already approved for the existing housing capital programme.

5.0 Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes
Separate risk register in place? Risk registers are being developed for each scheme

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out for the Housing Strategy approved by Cabinet in April 2013. The development of additional affordable housing has an overall positive impact on a number of protected characteristics. Specific EQIA's will be carried out for projects such as the Grange Farm regeneration.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

- 7.2 The Homes for Harrow programme will contribute positively to the Council's vision for Harrow and the Council's priorities in the following ways:
- a. Making a difference for the vulnerable – building a range of new affordable homes including homes for those who are most in need.
 - b. Making a difference for communities – This work provides an opportunity to involve and engage both residents on estates and from the wider community in the development of new homes, the replacement of poor housing and improvements to the external environment.
 - c. Making a difference for local businesses – The procurement of contractors for the infill development programme provides an opportunity to encourage and support local, small to medium sized contractors in tendering for the work. The work of the Housing Department supports the administration's priorities as follows.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dave Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 18 September 2014		

Ward Councillors notified:	No
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Alison Pegg
Housing Partnerships & Strategy Manager
Telephone: 020 8424 1933
Email: Alison.pegg@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Cabinet report 20 June 2013, Housing Business Plan 2013, consultation draft Asset Management Strategy, Proposals for a future Affordable Housing Programme, and Proposed Grants to Move scheme

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/documents/g61429/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2020-Jun-2013%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Cabinet report 10 April 2014 Affordable Housing Programme Update

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/documents/g61438/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2010-Apr-2014%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Cabinet report 17 July 2014 Homes for Harrow

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/documents/g62354/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2017-Jul-2014%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

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