

Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum

AGENDA

DATE: Tuesday 10 February 2015

TIME: 7.00 pm

VENUE: Pinner Village Hall, Chapel Lane, Pinner HA5 1AA

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3 Council Members)

Chair: 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 5 - 18)

That the minutes of the meetings held on 7 October 2014 and 10 December 2014 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, Thursday 5 February 2015. 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. CHALLENGES OF HOMELESSNESS AND OUR ACTION AROUND FRAUD

Verbal report of the Service Manager for Housing Needs, Head of Resident Services and Housing Partnerships and Strategy Manager.

8. ADVICE FROM YOUR FIRE CHIEF - KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE

Verbal presentation from the Borough Commander, Richard Claydon.

9. ELDERLY OR DISABLED? HELP AND SUPPORT TO KEEP YOU WARM AT HOME

Verbal presentation by Giles Read, Thinking Works.

10. SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Tenants', Residents' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum will be held on 28 April 2015.

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

7 OCTOBER 2014

Chairman: * Councillor Glen Hearnden

Councillors: * Mrs Camilla Bath * Manjibhai Kara
† Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick * Niraj Dattani (1)

* Denotes Member present

(1) Denote category of Reserve Members

† Denotes apologies received

Representatives from the following Tenants' and Residents' Associations were in attendance:

- **Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association**
- **Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association**
- **Harrow Sheltered Residents' Association**
- **Harrow Weald Tenants' and Residents' Association**
- **Honeybun Tenants' and Residents' Association**
- **Little Stanmore Tenants' and Residents' Association**
- **Millman Close (Estate Representative)**
- **Northolt Road Tenants' and Residents' Association**
- **Pinner Hill Community Tenants' and Residents' Association**
- **Weald Village Tenants' and Residents' Association**

12. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick

Councillor Niraj Dattani

13. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that no interests were declared.

14. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 2 July 2014 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

15. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

16. Joint Report - Head of Asset Management / Head of Resident Services

Officers presented the Joint Report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services. The report included the following:

- The Responsive Repairs Service was fully compliant with requirements and performance had been good;
- Asset Management had been taking a proactive role, and following up with randomly selected jobs to ensure work had been carried out;
- There had been a review of how customer satisfaction data was collected, and residents had visited the offices of the contractors used by Harrow Council;
- There had been a large annual audit, then a smaller audit at the end of August;
- Improvement works at Burnt Oak Broadway had started;
- The possibility of using garages for storage had been explored, and a further report would be given at the Garage Strategy Steering Group;
- The next Better Homes Standard meeting would be held on 15 November 2014, and the launch of the new standards would take place in April 2015;
- The Value for Money Group would continue to meet, and at the last meeting it had been reported that Housing Liability Claims had decreased in August 2014;

- The restructure of the Tenancy Management Team was now complete, and Housing Officers had attended a workshop to look at different ways of working;
- Rent arrears collection had been sustained well;
- A new Anti-Social Behaviour Act would be launched in October, and Housing Services were working with the Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour team;
- There had been problems with covering absences among the Caretakers, but 2 new apprentices had also been appointed;
- The Estates in Bloom judging and awards ceremony had taken place in August 2014;
- The total amount invoiced to leaseholders was just over £455,000 and repayment plans were being arranged;
- There had been a Honeybun Estate Action event on 3 – 4 October 2014, and this had been a huge success;

A Honeybun Estate Representative gave a presentation about what the Estate Action event had entailed:

- The Honeybun Tenants' and Residents' Association had worked hard to tackle flytipping on and around the estate;
- A Project Manager was in attendance to liaise with residents about their concerns;
- A gate had been erected, which had helped to curb anti-social behaviour around a playground, new rose bushes had been planted, bins had been painted and broken items in a play area had been cleared;
- This event had instilled a sense of partnership and community around the estate, and the volunteers and council staff had worked incredibly hard.

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

- Residents could contact the Resident Involvement Team to be put in touch with Tenants' and Residents' Associations who had successfully run events like the one on Honeybun Estate;
- Meetings of Tenants' and Residents' Associations should generally be open to residents, although residents may have to leave for individual items discussed at the meetings if the items were confidential.

The Chair expressed his wish to have a Tenants' and Residents' Association in every area, so residents would feel like it was straightforward to organise such an event to address concerns in their area.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

17. Options for Rent Setting

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

- The government had exercised control over Rent Setting, and had confirmed that rent convergence would no longer be possible;
- Rents increases were now capped based on the Consumer Prices Index plus 1%, rather than the Retail Prices Index plus 0.5%;
- Additional resources in the Housing Revenue Account could be used in the development of new housing;
- It may be beneficial to carry on with the existing plan to minimise turmoil to residents, as drastic changes to welfare benefits had been imposed by the government.

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

- Local authorities could set rents up to 80% of the market rates, but could not move existing properties on to affordable rents as only housing associations had the power to do that;
- A glossary of Rent Setting terms would be circulated by Housing Services;
- It was suggested that it may be beneficial to carry on with the existing plan, to minimize turmoil to residents as drastic changes to welfare benefits had been imposed by the government, unless the views of the Forum members did not support this approach;
- Basing rents on the Consumer Prices Index plus 1% was a national policy, and local authorities had the power not to increase rents.

Members of the Forum did not express any desire to move from the existing policy on Rent Setting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

18. Homes for Harrow Update

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

- There were two strands to the Homes for Harrow project: building new homes in available space, and regenerating estates;
- Architects were being appointed, in order to apply for planning permission;
- Concerns about traffic and anti-social behaviour were unlikely to be affected by the developments;
- Existing blocks of flats on Grange Farm Estate were not well insulated, residents had asked for improvements, and it would be more cost-effective to rebuild on this site than to renovate the existing properties;
- A steering group had been set up for the Grange Farm Regeneration Project.

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

- The buildings that were to be demolished were built in the 60s and 70s, and were no longer fit for purpose due to the quality of the build materials rather than the age;
- Cost efficiency was hard to achieve, and the need for residents to have a garage to park their cars in would need to be weighed up against the wider need for housing;
- Housing needs to be built in the right places, and the temporary placement of vulnerable people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation was costing more and more;
- Harrow Council was exploring the option of buying properties to use as temporary accommodation, and was looking at the model adopted by Ealing Council;
- Plans for developments were available on Harrow Council's website, and a newsletter would be sent to residents with the latest information;
- The people living in the units that would be built would not impact significantly on the provision of local services, as the numbers were low in proportion to the total number of people using a GP surgery or the local police station;
- Existing floor plans had been shown to residents, and similar plans for a recent redevelopment elsewhere which had been drawn up in accordance with London Space Standards;

- The new two-bedroom properties would be as large as existing properties on the estate;
- The new units would be of varying heights, depending on the slope of the land, so they would not be too intrusive to the overall landscape;
- There was a housing crisis that affected large parts of the UK, and was particularly profound in London;
- Harrow Council had not ruled out the idea of prefabricated builds, however these often cost more than traditional builds, unless sufficient scale can be achieved to reduce costs;
- The focus on building new properties would not affect maintenance services like potholes and pavement repairs.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

19. New Look Homing In Magazine

The Chair presented an oral report about the new look Homing In Magazine. Prizes were awarded to young artists who had submitted drawings, paintings and photography to an art competition. The Chair commended the talent and hard work of the young artists, and they were presented with certificates and gift vouchers.

The oral report included the following:

- The new look Homing In magazine would include features that were personal to residents, such as a photo corner, and a future feature that would detail journeys made and activities participated in by residents around Harrow;
- There would be serious messages and important information about issues such as domestic abuse, as well as information about jobs and apprenticeships.

A resident presented an oral report about her contribution to the New Look Homing In magazine, and her role on the editorial board for Homing In, which included the following:

- Residents were informally consulted about the Homing In magazine, and some residents asked reported that they did not read it;
- Residents wanted to see the stories that were important to them, not sensationalist items;
- Homing In magazine would feature smart ways to save money, bite-size news items, health features, and information on upcoming events.

RESOLVED: That the oral report be noted.

20. Suggestions for Agenda Items for Next Meeting

21. Any Other Urgent Business

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.05 pm, closed at 8.55 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR GLEN HEARN DEN
Chairman

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TENANTS', LEASEHOLDERS' AND RESIDENTS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

10 DECEMBER 2014

Chair: * Councillor Glen Hearnden

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

* Denotes Member present
Denote category of Reserve Members
† Denotes apologies received

21. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Manjibhai Kara

Councillor Jean Lammiman

22. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that no interests were declared.

23. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 7 October 2014 be deferred to the next meeting of TLRCF to allow them to be cleared by Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations.

24. Public Questions

25. Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions or deputations were received at this meeting.

RESOLVED ITEMS

26. Fire Safety

The Chair of the Forum advised that the guest speaker, Borough Commander Richard Claydon, was unable to attend as he was needed to attend to a large fire in Burnt Oak Broadway. The Chair also advised that the Fire Service dispensed a lot of free advice, and would be happy to conduct home visits to advise tenants, residents and leaseholders about the best ways to keep their homes at a minimum risk of fire.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be deferred to a future meeting of Tenants', Residents' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum.

27. Moving From Decent Homes to Better Homes Standard

An Officer introduced a Tenants' and Residents' Association representative to begin the report of the move from the Decent Homes to Better Homes Standard.

The report included the following:

- There had been two consultations led by the Asset, Data and Planning Team, and they had taken into account suggestions from tenants, including making properties more secure, warmer and to install higher quality bathroom and kitchen refurbishments. Storage and accessibility issues were also raised.
- The Better Homes Standard would launch in April 2015, and would focus on family wellbeing and energy efficiency;
- The current quality of homes in Harrow provided scope for an ambitious programme, the crux of which would be refurbishment and regeneration as well as improving the external environment of Harrow homes;

- Examples of innovative improvements included a stopcock mains water button to turn off the water to the property, this would save water and was low maintenance;
- External wall insulation and rain-screen cladding would significantly improve the thermal efficiency of properties;
- Passive ventilation systems, which would require virtually no maintenance, could reduce condensation in a property by up to 97%;
- Motion sensor lighting in communal areas would be a low-maintenance and low-cost way to light communal areas;
- A live interface would be developed for tenants, residents and leaseholders to communicate directly and efficiently with the Asset, Data and Planning Team on improvements to, or surrounding their homes and this would be developed in the following year;
- The thresholds for modernisation were being reduced, from 40 years to 30 years for bathrooms and from 30 years to 20 years for kitchens.

After taking questions from tenants and residents, an Officer advised that:

- All bathroom suites were fitted with layouts that complied with the law;
- All upgrades of television aerials had already taken place;
- Renovation and repair work would be carried out with long-term sustainability in mind, and structural issues would also be taken into account;
- The energy efficiency of homes in Harrow was above the national average;
- The £15000 cap on repair bills for leaseholders would not apply to homes being repaired under the Better Homes Standard, as the cap is only applied when general funding is used but the Better Homes improvement works would be funded from the Housing Revenue Account;
- Tenants' and Residents Associations and the tenants and residents themselves would be encouraged to communicate with Resident Involvement about specific aspects of their environment that needed to be improved.

28. Resident Scrutiny Panel Update

The Interim Chair of the Tenants' and Residents' Scrutiny Panel presented a report, which included the following:

- The Scrutiny Panel decided what aspects of housing and delivery they wanted to scrutinise, and could take suggestions from residents;
- A door-knocking survey undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel regarding estate inspections had revealed that many of the tenants and residents surveyed had not heard of estate inspections;
- Safety, parking, cleanliness and maintenance were topics that had been highlighted by residents as areas that ought to be scrutinised;
- The findings of the Panel were presented to Officers of the Council, who were obligated to consider the findings and report back on whether or not recommendations had been accepted, with the reasons for those decisions;
- Tenants and residents were encouraged to join the Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

29. Awards and Recognition

A representative from Honeybun Tenants' and Residents' Association gave a recap of the presentation given at the October meeting of TLRCF. The team of volunteers involved in the Day of Action had since been nominated for a Harrow's Heroes Award.

Certificates were presented to the team of volunteers to recognise their hard work in organising the Day of Action on Honeybun Estate and to congratulate them on their nomination for a Harrow's Heroes Award.

RESOLVED: That the awards and recognition be noted.

30. Suggestions for agenda items for next meeting

Suggestions were made for the agenda of the next meeting of Tenants' Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum:

- Plans for a derelict site on Kenmore Park Estate;
- A report on the rat problem experienced in some areas and whether this affected the whole borough.

RESOLVED: That these items be included on the Agenda of a future meeting of Tenants' Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum.

31. Any Other Urgent Business

RESOLVED: To note there was no other urgent business to be discussed.

32. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 10 February 2015.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.10 pm, closed at 9.00 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR GLEN HEARNDEN
Chair

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