

Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum

AGENDA

DATE: Tuesday 28 April 2015

TIME: 7.00 pm

VENUE: Kenmore Park Community
Hall, Warneford Road,
Harrow, HA3 9HY

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 - 10)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2015 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 23 April 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. LOCAL ACTIVITIES AT KENMORE PARK ESTATE

Oral report of the Chair of Kenmore Park Tenants' and Residents' Association.

8. IMPROVING ESTATES THROUGH ESTATE ACTION DAYS

Oral report of the Interim Head of Resident Services.

9. DOMESTIC ABUSE AND WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Oral report of the Police Superintendent, Harrow Metropolitan Police.

10. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN HARROW

Oral report of the Head of Economic Development and Research.

11. HOMES FOR HARROW - LATEST NEWS ABOUT BUILDING NEW HOMES

Oral report of the Head of Regeneration, Asset Planning and New Supply.

12. HARROW ESTATES IN BLOOM 2015 COMPETITION

Oral report of the Head of Business Development and Transformation.

13. SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be 8 July 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.]

This page is intentionally left blank

TENANTS', LEASEHOLDERS' AND RESIDENTS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

10 FEBRUARY 2015

Chair: * Councillor Glen Hearnden

Councillors: * Mrs Camilla Bath * Jean Lammiman (1)
* Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

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

- Glebe Tenants' and Residents' Association
- Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
- Harrow Sheltered Residents' Association
- Harrow Weald Tenants' and Residents' Association
- Leaseholders' Support Group

33. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Manji Kara

Councillor Jean Lammiman

34. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Declarations of Interest from Members.

35. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of 8 October 2014 and 10 December 2014 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

36. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

37. Elderly or disabled? Help and Support to Keep You Warm at Home

The Chair proposed that Item 9 on the agenda be moved to precede item 7 at the request of the presenter for Item 9. This was agreed by the Forum.

Giles Read, from Thinking Works, gave a brief presentation relating to how vulnerable residents can get help to stay warm at home.

The presentation included the following:

- residents who were 65 or older, or who suffered from a long-term disability, were eligible for a home visit that would focus on four areas – building insulation and boiler function; personal use of energy and heating; free products detailed in the leaflet such as radiator reflectors and smoke alarms; and the health of the individual;
- the scheme was funded until 31 March 2015, and was administered on a first-come, first-served basis.

After taking questions from residents, the presenter advised that:

- there was usually approximately 2 days between the initial enquiry and a home visit, and Thinking First had a team of 4 people conducting the visits;
- the scheme would apply to some sheltered housing units, if they were individually heated;
- a partial grant was available for wall insulation as part of the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund;
- there were no plans to continue the scheme after 31 March 2015 unless demand was sufficient.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

38. Challenges of Homelessness and Our Action Around Fraud

An Officer presented a verbal report and presentation regarding Homelessness, which included the following:

- the Chair of the Forum had requested the item, as an unprecedented housing crisis was taking place across the UK, and particularly in London;
- there were multiple reasons why a family could become homeless, and this issue was affecting lots of families in Harrow;
- Harrow had one of the smallest housing stocks in London, and this was rapidly diminishing because of the Right To Buy scheme;
- it was harder to find alternative accommodation for families who were homeless,
- in 2010/11 there were 40 homeless families and in 2013/14 there were 180 homeless families, the figure for 2015/16 was expected to be about 300;
- there were 11 families in bed and breakfast accommodation in 2010/11, and 108 in 2013/14;
- before 2010, about half of homes were considered affordable for tenants receiving Housing Benefit, now about one in twenty homes were affordable;
- Housing Services prevented around 1300 cases of homelessness every year;
- the allocation scheme had been changed, and there was currently a wait of approximately fifteen years for council housing;
- a typical two-bedroom property in Harrow cost around £1200, and a three-bedroom property cost around £1500. This left a large shortfall between maximum Housing Benefit and the price of rents;
- if a tenant wishes to downsize or move out of the borough, they may be eligible for a grant to cover the cost of removals or redecorating their new property;
- there were also grants available for tenants who wished to move to private rental accommodation to assist with paying for a deposit;
- the Grants to Move had been revised to reflect house prices;
- Harrow Council intended to build 80 new homes across 15 sites over the next few years, and the first planning application had been made;

- Harrow Council had been working with private developers to ensure that a proportion of new homes built were affordable;
- Housing Services had performed tenancy audits to ensure that only the tenants named on the tenancy agreement were residing in the property;
- two Tenancy Fraud Officers had been appointed, and had retrieved 37 properties which had since been allocated to homeless families;
- BBC consumer rights programme “Fake Britain” had come to Harrow to feature the work carried out by Tenancy Fraud Officers;
- Housing Services wanted to encourage sustainable tenancies and provide debt management advice, and a Tenancy Welfare Housing Officer had been appointed to assist vulnerable residents.

After taking questions from residents, officers advised that:

- tenants who wanted to apply for a grant would be checked to see whether they were eligible;
- Housing Services were trying to reduce the number of families in bed and breakfast accommodation, as this was expensive for Harrow Council;
- some homes that had been vacated may have been used as temporary accommodation, and this was the reason they would not have appeared on Locata;
- if a resident wished to move to another borough, Grants to Move would be an option for them and there were also other schemes available;
- changes to tenancies would not affect the Right to Buy scheme.

After taking questions from residents, the Chair of the Forum advised that:

- population growth combined with a diminishing housing stock, cuts to benefits, and a 40% cut to Discretionary Housing Payments all contributed to the current shortage of housing;
- the biggest obstacles were a lack of funding and a shortage of land, and all council assets were being considered.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

39. Advice from your Fire Chief - Keeping your home safe

The Borough Commander, presented a verbal report and presentation, which included the following:

- the fire department would fit a smoke alarm in people's homes for free;
- there had been 340 fires and 2 fatalities in Harrow in the last calendar year;
- free fire-resistant bedclothes were available for individuals who were at risk;
- 4000 fires in the UK last year were caused by candles;
- unplugging and plugging in electronic devices could cause wear on the plug, but it was important to unplug devices that did not have a standby function;
- it was important not to exceed 13 amps per socket, and not to overload sockets as this can cause overheating;
- a fire engine was present at 90% of calls within 6 minutes, and a second fire engine was present within 8 minutes;
- electric blankets should be tested every year and changed every 5 years.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

40. Suggestions for agenda items for next meeting

RESOLVED: That agenda items be suggested on the feedback forms provided, and these be passed on to Democratic Services by Officers.

41. Any Other Urgent Business

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

42. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of Tenants' Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum is 28 April 2015.

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

(Signed) COUNCILLOR GLEN HEARNDEN
Chair

This page is intentionally left blank