

RECOMMENDATION

**TENANTS', LEASEHOLDERS'
AND RESIDENTS'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM
(SPECIAL)
MINUTES**

31 JANUARY 2013

Chairman: * Councillor Bob Currie

Councillors: * Mrs Camilla Bath * Susan Hall (1)
Mano Dharmarajah

In attendance: Stephen Wright Minute 169 and 171
(Councillors)

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

Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance

Churchill Place Tenants' and Residents' Association
Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
Harrow Sheltered Residents' Association
Kenmore Park Tenants' and Residents' Association
Little Stanmore Tenants' and Residents' Association
Milman Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
Weald Village Tenants' and Residents' Association

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

170. Consultation on the 2013/14 Housing Capital Programme

The Forum agreed to consider the report as a matter of urgency to enable the Forum's views to be considered by Cabinet.

An officer introduced the report which updated the Forum on the further consultation with the Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations (HFTRA) on the 2013/14 Capital programme since the December meeting of the Forum. The report sought approval for the recommendations to be made to Cabinet on building flexibility into the programme and a process to determine how to re-invest any current and future savings. The officer made comments including the following;

- an amendment was required for the table on page 19 of the supplemental agenda to reflect that the works on the lifts were for 2 lifts at one sheltered housing scheme;
- Cabinet was being requested to approve a contingency fund for the Capital programme to help provide flexibility and to complete urgent works. The suggested figure for the contingency fund was £250,000;
- a process had been developed to indicate how procurement savings and other savings would be re-invested. The process was shown in an illustrative diagram;
- it was possible that if more savings were achieved than required for the contingency fund, investment could be made in homes by improving facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and heating systems. Items from the draft 2014/15 programme would be brought forward to 2013/14 to spend the money;
- it was proposed that Cabinet delegate authority to the Housing Portfolio Holder to make decisions on the re-investment of savings;
- consideration could be given to some of the savings being used for projects which were not in the Capital programme, such as storage areas for mobility scooters in sheltered housing accommodation;

Members of the Forum made the following comments;

- the relevant ward Councillors should be included in the consultation process;
- as the £207,500 allocated for the lift works in the 2013/14 draft programme was for two lifts at one site there should be savings compared to the cost for works on one lift at two sites;
- if there was an underspend, consideration should be given making early repayments for the HRA debt;

- investment should be made in making void properties habitable as soon as practicable.

In response to the comments from Forum Members, an officer raised the following points;

- the concerns about void properties were understandable. The issue regarding voids was not that sufficient funds were available but about the process. The majority of funding for void properties was from the revenue budget and not the capital budget;
- there had been consultation with HFTRA regarding using any uncommitted resources to pay back the HRA debt earlier. The general view was that this was a sensible consideration but not for the first year as it was unclear if the procurement savings were a one off incident or if they would be sustained in future years.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet)

That the comments of the Forum be noted when Cabinet consider the recommendations on building flexibility into the capital programme and a process to determine how to re-invest any current and future savings.

Reason for Recommendation: To enable the feedback of the Forum to be considered by Cabinet to assist with the decision making process.