

Extract from Minutes of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum, 5 & 18 January 2006.

**TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

**5 JANUARY & 18
JANUARY 2006**

Chair: * Councillor Currie

Councillors: * Billson * Knowles
* Margaret Davine (Present on
5 January 2006 only)

* Denotes Member present

Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance:-

Alexandra Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association*
Antoney's Close Tenant's and Resident's Association*
Brookside Close Tenant's and Residents' Association*
Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
Honeybun Residents' Association
Miscellaneous Properties Residents' Association
Pinner Hill Tenants' and Residents' Association
Woodlands Community Association

(In total 14 Tenants/Representatives attended on 5 January 2006, and 17 Tenants/Representatives attended on 18 January 2006).

[* Note: Representatives of Alexandra Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association were present on 5 January only; Brookside Close and Antoney's Close Tenant's and Resident's Associations were present on 18 January only]

PART II – MINUTES

255.

References from Other Committees:

The Forum received a reference from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 December 2005, asking the Forum to consider the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was set out in the report of the Executive Director (Business Connections) entitled "2006-07 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Budget Strategy 2006-07 to 2008-09". A revised Appendix B to the report, setting out the Budget Summary, was also tabled at that meeting.

An officer explained that the draft HRA was consistent with Harrow Council's aim to achieve the Decent Homes standard by 2010 and was consistent with Options Appraisal. It was reported that the plan for the HRA assumed capital expenditure of £7m per year and revenue repairs expenditure of £5m in 2006-07, reducing to £4m by 2008-09. Funding would come from a number of sources with the balance being financed through prudential borrowing of £2.3m in 2006/07, £1.6m in 2007/08 and £1m in 2008/09.

The officer explained that 2006/07 was the second year there would be a rent increase of nil and that the rent increase would be 4.73% in 2007/08. Harrow Council would also be working towards Rent Convergence with Registered Social Landlord (RSL) level rents by 2012 and was within the parameters set by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to achieving this convergence. It was reported that there would be a certain level of right to buy transactions, which would reduce rental income over three years. The officer explained that there would be a detailed report on changes to leaseholder charges for 2006/07 to the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum at its meeting on 2 March 2006.

In response to a question from a Member regarding standing invoices, an officer confirmed that invoices relating to the year ended 31 March 2004 were sent out in September 2005. Payments to the value of over £250,000 had been received and the Council was allowing large amounts to be paid in instalments. An officer confirmed that he would inform the Member concerned, of the up to date figure of payments received. Invoices relating to the year ended 31 March 2005 should have been sent out in September 2005 but implementation of the necessary programme had taken longer than expected and therefore these invoices would be sent out in March 2006.

A resident explained that he was aware of leaseholders who had had windows replaced but not been sent bills. An officer replied that this was being investigated.

A Member raised concern about employee costs being cut between 2006/07 and 2008/09 and officers informed the Panel that costs would be reduced by bringing consultants in-house, and that there was currently a 15% vacancy. Staff had been assimilated in December 2005 and UNISON had been consulted.

In response to a Member's concern about Harrow Council having a negative subsidy, an officer explained that the Council had no power to change the subsidy, but that the Council attempted wherever possible, to negate the affects of this. The Member expressed grave disquiet at the escalating negative subsidy.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the comments made by the Forum be noted.