

**TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM****24 JULY 2007**

Chairman: * Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath

Councillors: * Don Billson * David Gawn (1)
* Bob Currie* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Member**Tenants' and Leaseholders' Representatives**

Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance:

Antoney's Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
 Berridge Estate Tenants' and Residents' Association
 Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
 Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association
 Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association
 Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations (HFTRA)
 Weald Village Community Association
 Woodlands Community Association

In total 16 Tenants/Representatives attended.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES****72. Attendance by Reserve Members:****RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Phillip O'Dell	Councillor David Gawn

73. Declarations of Interest:**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interest was declared:

- (i) Councillor Bob Currie declared a personal interest in that he regularly attended meetings of Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association and Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association. Accordingly, he would remain in the room during the discussion and decision-making for all items.

74. Arrangement of Agenda:**RESOLVED:** That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following item be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances / Grounds for Urgency</u>
16. Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan	This verbal report of the Head of Housing gave the Forum an update on the Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, which was submitted to Cabinet on 19 July 2007. The verbal report was accepted as it was considered a matter arising from the Special Meeting of the Forum held on the 31 May 2007. The Forum agreed by a majority vote to consider the verbal report.

(2) all items be considered with the press and public present;

(3) the late item Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan be considered before agenda item 8 – Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn 2006-07;

(4) agenda item 12 – Tenants' Satisfaction Survey be considered before agenda item 11 – Housing Performance 2006/07 and Plans for 2007/08.

75. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the minutes of the meetings held on 24 January 2007 and 26 March 2007 be taken as read and signed as correct records;

(2) the minutes of the Special meeting held on the 31 May 2007 be deferred until printed in the Council Bound Minute Volume.

76. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

77. **Petitions:**

In accordance with Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution), the Forum received a petition from Eastcote Lane and Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association relating to alleged anti-social behaviour on Eastcote Lane. The petition contained 16 signatures.

RESOLVED: That the petition be noted and referred to the Head of Housing.

78. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

79. **Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan:**

The Head of Housing provided a verbal update on the Housing Strategy, which was submitted to Cabinet on 19 July 2007. The Head of Housing explained that the Government Office for London (GOL) had been sent draft versions of the Strategy and had given positive feedback. Residents were thanked for their input into the Strategy.

An officer gave a presentation on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and distributed copies of the HRA Business Plan Action Plan at the meeting. The officer asked residents for their feedback on the action plan before it was submitted to the GOL.

One Member commented that he was concerned that the deadline for achieving Value for Money in Environmental Services was April 2009.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

80. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn 2006-07:**

An officer presented a report of the Corporate Director (Finance), which set out the provisional 2006-2007 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn. It was advised that the cost to maintain estates had been just over £16 million and that this was close to what had been allocated in the original budget for 2006-07. It was also advised that by the end of the financial year 2006/07, the HRA had been left with a total balance of over £5.7 million. This money would be prioritised to maintain housing estates in Harrow to a high standard.

The Forum was informed that the report was intended to give residents an insight into how their rent was spent. A member of the Forum thanked the officer for the clarity of the presentation of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

81. **Kier:**

The Forum received a presentation from the Interim Head of Property about Kier, the company responsible for the repairs and maintenance of Harrow Council properties. The Forum was also introduced to representatives from Kier who were present at the meeting.

A representative from Kier explained that:

- there were 26 directly employed craft operatives qualified in trades such as plumbing;
- all operatives were required to carry ID cards;
- residents could book repairs via a freephone number and emergency visits were available;
- Health and Safety was an important aspect when delivering their services as robust procedures were in place;
- there were two resident liaison officers: one officer for the Decent Homes Programme and one officer for repairs and maintenance;
- details of the resident liaison officers would be sent to secretaries of all Tenants' and Residents' Associations;
- customer satisfaction with Kier services would be monitored closely.

One Member queried whether he could be assured that work would continue to be done through the summer months, at the time when schools were usually maintained. An officer confirmed that an external painting programme would be procured with other contracts in order to ensure this. Another Member of the Forum asked officers to ensure that Kier literature was accessible to those with learning disabilities.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

82. **Garages:**

An officer presented an information report of the Corporate Director (Adults and Housing), which set out the position on garages following changes to the repairs service and rent increases as at June 2007.

A resident queried whether the Housing Service planned to build housing in areas where garages were to be knocked down. One resident commented that she had had to give up her garage as she could not afford the cost and she had had to pay VAT. The Head of Housing explained that this was due to the fact that legislatively, the Housing Service were required to charge VAT to those who were not Council tenants.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

83. **Tenants' Satisfaction Survey:**

An officer introduced a report of the Corporate Director (Adults and Housing) which provided information on the findings from the Tenants' Satisfaction Survey conducted by Ipsos MORI in 2006.

The officer explained that the survey provided useful information on tenants' priorities. It had been discovered through the survey that the main priorities were the repairs service and the overall quality of the home. The quality of the caretaking service had also been assessed by the survey.

In response to a question from a resident, it was confirmed that the Government required the Housing Service to send the survey out to 1,500 tenants, and that the Housing Service had in fact sent it to 2,100 tenants.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

84. **Housing Performance 2006-07 and Plans for 2007-08:**

The Forum received a report of the Corporate Director (Adults and Housing), which provided information on how key housing services were delivered in 2006/07 in the form of a newsletter. The report also highlighted initiatives and targets which the Housing Service proposed to deliver in 2007/08.

The Head of Housing explained that during 2006/07, the Housing Service had collected 97% of rent due to it, making Harrow one of the highest performing councils in London for rent collection. Residents were encouraged to talk to the Housing Service to resolve any problems they had regarding the payment of rent. During the year 2006/07, the Housing Service had received a positive response from residents regarding the Housing Service's publication 'Homing in'.

In response to a question by a resident, an officer confirmed that no more alterations to the tenancy agreement were planned.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

85. **Housing Capital Programme 2007-2010:**

The Forum considered a report of the Corporate Director (Adults and Housing), which provided an update on the Housing Capital Programme 2007-2010 in response to comments made at the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum on 26 March 2007.

In response to concerns raised by a Member, it was agreed that officers meet Members outside of the Forum to discuss further amendments to the Housing Capital Programme 2007-2010.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

86. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on 29 October 2007.

87. **Extension and Termination of the Meeting:**

In accordance with the Advisory and Consultative Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution) it was:

RESOLVED: At (1) 10:00 pm to continue until 10.20 pm

(2) 10:18 pm to continue until 10.33 pm.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 10.28 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CAMILLA BATH
Chairman