

**REPORT FOR: TENANTS' AND
LEASEHOLDERS'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

Date of Meeting: 5 January 2011

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT - Resident Services Manager's Report

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington, Divisional Director of Housing Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out a range of information items that the Resident Services Manager would like to bring to the attention of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

The forum is asked to note the contents of this report.

Rent online Testing

- 2.1 The Corporate Customer Services Team is extending online services to allow housing tenants to access their rent accounts via the authenticated customer portal on the website.
- 2.2 As an additional resident consultation and involvement activity we invited a group of tenants to test this new initiative on 8 December 2010, before going live. Tenants attended two sessions where they were able to navigate around the test system and their own secured rent accounts.
- 2.3 The testing was successful and most tenants were positive about the new initiative. One tenant said "I will definitely use this and it will urge me to pay my rent on time". Another tenant said, "It will make my life easier".
- 2.4 Although this initiative will be launched soon we would like to extend an offer to visit Tenant and Resident Association meetings in the near future to show any interested tenants how the system will work and receive feedback from potential users. If any TRA would like us to demonstrate the system at their meetings please contact Karen Connell on 020 8416 8660. Any feedback received from tenants will help us ensure we get the system "right first time".

Estate Services Steering Group

Estate Inspections

- 2.5 A meeting of the group was held on 30th November. Concerns were raised by residents that estate inspections are not being updated and outstanding issues are not being carried forward. It was agreed that the latest estate inspection report would be the definitive document and will show all items still outstanding and/or escalated as required. We also agreed that inspection reports will in future give updates on any outstanding actions after 6 weeks have gone by, whether progress has been on the action or not. This change will ensure that monitoring of outstanding actions is consistent and more effective.

Grounds Maintenance SLA

- 2.6 At the December TLCF a question was asked about the delay in providing costs for the Grounds Maintenance SLA. The delay is due to a GIS update project being undertaken with the Streets and Grounds Maintenance Teams and Business Transformation. This project will allow us to have precise measurements of grass, hard standing and bedding areas on each of our estates. This additional work is linked to the work on identifying individual service charges for each estate that is reported elsewhere on the agenda.

- 2.6.1 It is prudent to wait for the completion of this project in order to fully appreciate each of our estates' grounds maintenance requirements. This project is scheduled to go live in June 2011; however, the information currently gathered will be used to ascertain the charges. We will therefore be able to complete the SLA by the end of this financial year. However in the meantime the improvements that have been made are being carried out within the original budgeted cost for 2010/11

Estates In Bloom

- 2.6.2 A discussion had taken place to review next year's competition as it is proving very costly and less people were taking part. It was agreed that we would still need to consult with the wider group before a final decision is made but in view of recent poor shows it was difficult to continue it in its present format.
- 2.6.3 TLCF members views on whether we should continue, and/or ideas on how we might make the competition more attractive to more residents next year are invited.

Harrow Sheltered Resident Forum

- 2.7 At it's meeting on 7th December this group that has been led by staff and chaired by Paddy Lyne over the last 18 months became a fully constituted TRA. I am delighted that despite being slightly daunted by the task that lies ahead representatives elected by tenants in the sheltered scheme stood for nomination as officers and were appointed as Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer. Two of the sheltered housing tenants will share the role of secretary.
- 2.8 The appointment of officers follows a great deal of work by both officers in both Adults and Housing and the Chairman of HFTRA to establish the group and build their confidence to become a resident led group. This is excellent timing as progress with the modernisation of sheltered housing is being made and the new TRA will be fully involved in developing proposals. As they are now a constituted TRA the group will be entitled to send representatives to both HFTRA and TLCF meetings. This will of course ensure that the voices of sheltered housing tenants will be heard as part of the wider resident involvement structure. We look forward to welcoming the new representatives.

Section 3 – Further Information

- 3.1 This report contains a number of items of information which are important enough to bring to the attention of TLCF but do not warrant individual reports.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no new financial implications resulting from the content of this report.

Section 5 – Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 All of the above initiatives contribute to the corporate priorities, in particular united and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads.

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 13 December 2010		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Maggie Challoner, Resident Services Manager
Tel: 020 8424 2473
Email: Maggie.challoner@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None