

**TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM****13 OCTOBER 2004**

Chair: * Councillor Currie

Councillors: * Billson * Knowles
* Margaret Davine

* Denotes Member present

Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives

Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance:-

Antoneys Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
Woodlands Community Association
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
Miscellaneous Properties Residents' Association
Alexandra Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association
Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association
Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association

(In total, 17 Tenants/Representatives attended).

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES****163. Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

164. Declarations of Interest:

RESOLVED: To note the following declaration of interest by a Member present relating to the business to be transacted at this meeting: -

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
Councillor Knowles	Councillor Knowles declared a personal interest in the ALMO shadow board in his capacity as Council Representative, but in accordance with Paragraph 12.2 of the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors he remained and took part in discussions on the agenda item in question.

165. Arrangement of Agenda:

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

166. Minutes:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

167. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting:

The Forum received a report of the Interim Tenant Services Manager which updated the meeting on issues raised at the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum on 1 July 2004.

In relation to the installation of windows in Brookside Close, officers advised that the work was due to be completed before Christmas.

Residents queried the delay in the installation of windows and the Chair asked that an update report on the reasons for the delay be brought to the Forum's next meeting and that an officer from Building and Design Services attend to present the report.

It was noted that officers had visited Eastcote Lane Estate to inspect the works and that the site had been further vandalised. A more sustainable solution was needed to deal with the situation.

In response to a comment from a resident that not all outstanding jobs had been listed in the officer report on Eastcote Lane Estate, officers agreed to a joint inspection of the estate.

A resident commented that the fire officer's report on the door replacement in Brookside Close did not fully correspond with the information given to him on site and queried why the tenants had not been given the chance to select doors as leaseholders had. The Forum agreed that the opportunity for all residents to choose doors should be a point of reference for future installations.

The Chair noted that, despite several requests, it had taken six months for the fire officer's report to be submitted to the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

168. **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 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

169. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

170. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

171. **Reference from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 September 2004: Various Housing Matters:**

The Forum received a reference from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 September 2004, asking the Forum to consider a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on the overspend within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the proposals on how to balance the housing repairs budget.

Officers reported that a close examination into the nearly £2 million overspend in the housing repairs budget had shown that £996K of this sum should have been charged to the capital funding programme. There was also a surplus in the housing budget. Subsequently, the resultant shortfall in the HRA was estimated at £194K.

It was advised that Cabinet had agreed to re-tender the maintenance contracts and to fund the overspend by reducing the Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO) budget by £194K to minimise the effect on tenants.

In response to residents' concern that housing repairs were left outstanding despite having been paid for by the Council, officers reassured the meeting that the Housing Department conducted inspections into the works which were carried out and that there would be an internal audit on jobs from next year.

In response to a query from a tenant regarding whether the contractors responsible for the overspend in repairs could work for the Council again, officers replied that the Council collaborated with three contractors who could use sub-contractors. It was advised that the contractors were supervised and that a low performance could result in a contract being closed. It was noted that the contractors were currently performing above or at the same level as previous years. All contractors had been asked to supply evidence of their staff's qualifications and officers encouraged the Forum to report any irregularities.

RESOLVED: That the comments and report be noted.

172. **Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) Update:**
The Forum received a verbal update on the progress of the implementation of the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).
- It was reported that the Secretary of State had approved Harrow's ALMO agreement and that the ALMO was expected to be launched in November or no later than 31 December. It was explained that part of the ALMO was a management agreement and that staff who would be transferred to the ALMO were yet to be identified as the Council was awaiting the Chief Executive's review of housing before embarking on this aspect of establishing the ALMO.
- It was reported that there were currently two vacancies on the ALMO Shadow Board, one tenant and one Council Member, however, the Forum was advised that there was a quorum on the Board.
- The Chair expressed serious concern that the Forum had not been informed of the membership of the ALMO Shadow Board.
- A tenant raised concern that the Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations had not been consulted on the appointment of tenants onto the ALMO Shadow Board.
- It was noted that none of the representatives of the tenants' associations who attended the meeting was in favour of the ALMO.
- In response to this, officers informed the meeting that there had been a consultation for tenants on the ALMO and that the majority of respondents had been in favour of launching the ALMO. The success of the ALMO would depend on the commitment from tenants and officers. There were certain critical stages in the roll-out of the ALMO, and the Council would have to decide whether to fund the ALMO after five years. It was advised that the decision as to whether to have an ALMO would then be revisited.
- RESOLVED:** That the verbal report be noted.
173. **Matters Raised by Alexandra Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association:**
The Forum received a report of the Interim Tenant Services Manager which responded to issues raised by the Alexandra Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association.
- Residents stated that they were satisfied with the officers' response.
- RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.
174. **Matters Raised by Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association:**
The Forum received a report of the Interim Tenant Services Manager which responded to issues raised by the Cottesmore Tenants' and Residents' Association.
- It was reported that the Housing Department's action would be restricted by the Tree Preservation Orders which were issued on some of the trees on the estate. It was advised that there was a plan in place to deal with the trimming and removing of trees. The plan had already started, although the process of removing the trees would be lengthy.
- The Chair stated that the Forum would monitor the process closely.
- The Forum discussed policies on trees in Harrow, including the issuing of Tree Preservation Orders, and how this could be dealt with, as tree management was a recurrent problem on many estates.
- RESOLVED:** That (1) the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee be asked to consider the strategies and management of trees on estates in Harrow; and
- (2) the report be noted.
175. **Matters Raised by Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association:**
The Forum received a report of the Interim Tenant Services Manager which responded to issues raised by the Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association (ELTRA).
- It was noted that a report on the issues raised in a survey carried out by ELTRA on a window and door replacement programme would be submitted to the Forum's next meeting. Officers would also undertake to investigate why parts of the work on the estate were still outstanding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

176. **Matters Raised by Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Association:**
The Forum received a report of the Interim Tenant Services Manager which responded to issues raised by the Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations.

In response to concerns from residents regarding the quality of grounds maintenance work, officers replied that the service had slightly declined and that the contract for grounds maintenance would shortly be renegotiated. There was a need for additional funding of grounds maintenance and a separate bid had been made to improve the service.

The Chair asked that residents be consulted prior to a new grounds maintenance contract being drafted and that Council Members be involved in the meetings to discuss the drafting of the contract.

RESOLVED: That (1) Councillor Currie and Councillor Knowles be invited to attend meetings to discuss the drafting of the grounds maintenance contract; and

(2) the report be noted.

177. **Questions from Tenants/Leaseholders:**
In response to a question regarding the cutting of grass outside an estate, the Chair undertook to investigate the issue.

In response to a question from a resident regarding correspondence with Council staff, officers replied that officers were required to submit a written reply within ten days of receiving the letter.

A Member of the Forum raised concern that some residents were leaving waste on the estates to avoid paying the collection fees.

In response to this comment, officers reassured the meeting that all waste which was viewed as a risk to public health would be collected.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

178. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on 6 January 2005.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.34 pm, closed at 9.50 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BOB CURRIE
Chair