

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

TENANTS' FORUM

Meeting held – 12th January 2017

Present: Councillor James Burton (Chair)
Councillors Maggie Don, David Howes, Clark Mitchell
and Mike Tebbutt

Tenant Representatives: Brian Kimpton (Counties) (Chair)
Martyn Lund (Highfield Road)
Peter Harvey (Dahlia Road)
Maira Brown (Highfield Road)
Peter Matsa (Geddington)
Josephine Copson (Alfred Street)
Brent Woodford (Ashley)
Lorraine Morland (Ashley)
Sid Bellamy (Hazeland House)
Reg Carvell (Leaseholder)

Also Present: John Conway (Housing)
Leona Mantle (Housing)
Darren Ibell (Housing)
Max Salisbury (Housing)
Dean Mitchell (Finance)
Pearl Nathaniel (Finance)
David Pope (Democratic Services)
Rebecca Dermody (Efficiency East Midlands)
Insp Julie Mead (Northants Police)

16.TF.72 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr June Derbyshire.

Apologies were also received from Jim French, Roland Shipham, Sue Shipham, Trevor Nash, Sandra Nash and Ken Burnage.

16.TF.73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

16.TF.74 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16.TF.75 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

16.TF.24 – Sterile Block Policy

Phase One of the Sterile Block Policy had completed and Phase Two, mainly located in Rothwell, would be going live on 1st February. Phase One had been positive and highlighted the importance of communication to provide tenants with understanding of the rationale behind the policy and allowing any concerns to be addressed.

16.TF.51 – Homelessness Presentation

It was reported that a bid submitted for a share of government funding to enhance KBC's existing homelessness service had been unsuccessful. It was hoped that feedback as to the strengths and weaknesses of the bid could be obtained. It was heard that the bid would be examined to see if any elements of it could be implemented without additional resources, working alongside partner agencies. Further information would be brought to a future meeting of the forum.

16.TF.52 – Tenancy Policy Review

The consultation in relation to the Tenancy Policy Review would officially go live the following week.

16.TF.66 – HRA Capital Programme

Window replacement on the Highfield Estate would commence on the 23rd January, with an anticipated completion date in early May. Communal door entry system installation would be undertaken at a number of locations throughout the year.

16.TF.76 MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS' FORUM REPRESENTATIVES

None.

16.TF.77 EFFICIENCY EAST MIDLANDS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

John Conway provided the meeting with an introduction to the presentation by Rebecca Dermody, Head of Operations for Efficiency East Midlands (EEM), a not for profit procurement consortium set up to

generate efficiencies for its membership through collaboration, aggregated volumes, quality products and high level service delivery.

The forum heard that KBC spent significant sums procuring works, supplies and services and had to follow strict, procedural processes in acquiring these. The council had a duty to act legally, ethically and to comply with its own financial and contractual regulations. In addition there was a need to achieve a good value product and value for money.

The work of EEM although retaining the same principles and objectives, utilised the purchasing power of many councils, Housing Associations and other public sector organisations to obtain the best possible prices. KBC had worked with EEM for two years and had seen quite substantial savings as a result. It was noted that EEM was not the only procurement framework the council was a member of.

Rebecca Dermody provided the meeting with background to EEM, which had been founded in 2010, becoming a limited company a year later. The organisation had grown from 22 members in April 2014 to a current figure of 78 member organisations and had expanded operations outside the East Midlands area, although this remained its key focus.

EEM comprised a team of nine individuals providing a comprehensive service to its members that included the following:-

Access to EEM Frameworks

- Unlimited access to all EEM frameworks for Services and Material supply
- Opportunities to be involved in writing tender specifications to ensure the members requirements were met

Support from the EEM team

- Support and advice from the experienced procurement team
- The support of a Projects Officer who could supply and write call off contracts, as well as attend kickstart and review meetings to support members

Benchmarking and Pricing

- Aggregated buying power of 78 members which meant that low prices could be obtained on behalf of members.
- A Data Officer who could undertake extensive benchmarking exercises to demonstrate where savings could be made
- Access to the EEM Pricebook which is an online database of a wide selection of EEM rates
- Suggested product alternatives of the same or higher quality to demonstrate where further savings can be made
- EEM would regularly check member's spend files to ensure the member has been charged at the correct EEM rates

- EEM would work with manufacturers to try to mitigate price increases and negotiate the best prices for products not already listed on the agreed EEM price files

Details of case studies involving a variety of projects undertaken by local authorities were provided to the meeting including details of savings achieved by utilising EEM.

The meeting heard that the organisation also supported local communities and charities. Any surplus profits made were returned to members in the form of a community donation. Last year a total of £144,000 had been returned to members, with the same amount as a minimum allocated for 2017. In addition, an annual awards evening was held to celebrate community construction projects, with monies made from the evening being donated to charity.

The meeting asked questions regarding using local tradespeople and suppliers as part of EEM, whether KBC used any similar procurement frameworks and the cost of using the service.

16.TF.78 2017/18 RENT SETTING

Dean Marshall provided the meeting with a brief overview of the Budget Timetable which would include Tenants' Forum formally recommending the proposed rent levels for 2017/18 to the council's Executive Committee at its next meeting.

The meeting heard that the formal budget setting process would commence on 18th January and would be taken to a number of committees and forums for consultation prior to the budget being ratified by Council on 1st March.

A summary of the draft budget was provided and the forum noted a balanced position, with the general fund set at £51m for 2017/18, the Capital Programme at £25.8m and the Housing Revenue Account set at £15.6m. The significant increase in the Capital Programme compared to the current year was noted.

The forum heard that the proposed rent levels to consult on would be a 1% decrease in line with government policy. If approved, this would see the average weekly rent set at £80.24, with an average weekly decrease of £0.81.

16.TF.79 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Darren Ibell attended the meeting and presented the monthly HRA

Capital Programme report.

It was noted that the papers had not been despatched with the agenda due to an issue with budgetary figures, but were instead circulated to the forum at the meeting.

It was reported that the Christmas period and associated slowdown in works had resulted in minimal updates in regard to the progress of works, although the programme was anticipated to come in under budget by the end of the financial year.

The level of tenant feedback relating to the Capital Programme had increased, although further increases were sought to ensure tenants were happy with the service provided. It was heard that a summary would be presented to the forum later in 2017.

Questions were asked in relation to the possibility of mobility scooter pods within the general housing stock and moss on property roofs.

16.TF.80 CONNECT

The forum heard that the editorial panel had met to discuss the next edition of Connect which would feature key items on the HomeMove initiative, LifePlan and the Silver Service awards. A special article would also be included in regard to payment of rent, alongside an article regarding Tenant Representatives and their activities throughout the year.

16.TF.81 TENANT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Martyn Lund reported that the new communication review remained in progress, with further details to be supplied to a future meeting of the forum.

A “Meet and Greet” event had been held during the day in Desborough, with a number of tenants in attendance, one of whom had attended the forum. A welcome was extended to Sid Bellamy who was in attendance at the meeting.

16.TF.82 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

An issue regarding communal door access at Highfield Crescent was raised for investigation.

Cllr Don requested the latest homelessness figures and enquired as to whether the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) had come into force to date. It was heard that SWEP would be active that evening and over the weekend. Local partner organisations had been notified and KBC officers had conducted a sweep of the town identifying two individuals who would be accommodated. A further three individuals had been identified during the day as requiring accommodation as part of the SWEP. Broadly homelessness figures had not changed and this would remain a key area for the Housing Team going forward.

16.TF.83 PRIZE DRAW

The winner of the prize draw was Peter Matsa.

16.TF.84 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date for the next meeting of the forum would be 9th February 2017.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.00pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP