

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

TENANTS' FORUM

Meeting held – 9th February 2017

Present: Councillor James Burton (Chair)
Councillors Maggie Don, June Derbyshire, Lesley Thurland and Mike Tebbutt

Tenant Representatives: Brian Kimpton (Counties)
Peter Harvey (Dahlia Road)
Josephine Copson (Alfred Street)
Brent Woodford (Ashley)
Reg Carvell (Leaseholder)
Roland Shipham (Highfields)
Evelyn Odame (Athelstan Road)
Victor Woodcock (Burton Latimer)

Also Present: John Conway (Housing)
Leona Mantle (Housing)
Darren Ibell (Housing)
Max Salisbury (Housing)
Dean Mitchell (Finance)
Pearl Nathaniel (Finance)
Mark Dickenson (Finance)
Callum Galluzzo (Democratic Services)

16.TF.72 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Clark Mitchell and Cllr David Howes.

Apologies were also received from Jim French, Sue Shipham, Moira Brown, Lorraine Morland, Martyn Lund and Sandra Nash.

16.TF.73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

16.TF.74 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2017 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 Two of the Sterile Block Policy had now completed and Phase Three would be going live soon. Although Phase One had gone smoothly, Phase Two had seen a few problems and resistance from tenants and leaseholders. This highlighted the importance of communication to provide tenants with an understanding of the rationale behind the policy and allowing any concerns to be addressed.

16.TF.51 – Homelessness Presentation

An update was given on the recent implementation of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol which was activated in recent weeks,

16.TF.52 – Tenancy Policy Review

The consultation in relation to the Tenancy Policy Review would officially go live at the end of the month due to ongoing issues relating to the update of the website..

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

The following issue was raised by a representative:-

- Footpath between Weston by Welland and Sutton Basset had become impassable due to overgrown foliage.

It was noted that this was a matter for the rights of way officer at Northants County Council. Correspondence regarding this matter was to be forwarded to Councillor David Howes – Portfolio Holder for Rural

16.TF.77 RENT REVIEW

Dean Mitchell and Pearl Nathaniel attended the meeting and gave a presentation regarding the Council's budget and details regarding the Council's income and expenditure

It was noted that the Council's budget of £92.4m for 2017/18 was out in draft form and had been sent for consultation. The budget consisted

of:-

- General Fund Account - £51.0m
- Housing Revenue Account - £15.6m
- Capital Programme - £25.8m

The forum noted that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was ring-fenced and had no other council services with which to compete. It was further noted that the HRA account for 2017/18 was balanced.

A brief outline was provided to the meeting regarding HRA expenditure in relation to Repairs and Maintenance, General Management, Special Services and Capital Resources.

The forum was informed of the structure regarding the Council's loans. £72.9m had been borrowed as of 2012 which included fixed rate maturity loans.

The meeting was advised that the process used to calculate rent increases in previous years had altered last financial year.. The formula used to calculate rent increases had moved from the Retail Price Index (+ 0.5% + £2 p/w) to the Consumer Price Index (+1%) for 2015/16. Central government had subsequently amended this policy again, requesting housing authorities introduce a -1.0% rent reduction for the next four years.

The meeting heard that the Council had little option but to implement levels proposed by central government and that a freeze or an increase in rents would cause significant difficulties. Therefore, officers were proposing to go with government policy and accept a -1% rent reduction.

Officers then proposed the recommendation for the Rent Review 2017/18 as follows:-

- Average rent decrease - - **1.0%**
- Average weekly rent per property - **£80.96**
- Average weekly reduction - - **£0.72**

(The officers and councillors left the Chamber at 7.35pm to allow tenants time to discuss the decrease and vote. They were recalled to the Chamber at 7.40pm)

RESOLVED that the members of the Tenants' Forum agreed

to the -1.0% decrease for 2017/18;

These comments were duly noted by officers and would be forwarded to the Executive Committee alongside the recommendation.

16.TF.79 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Darren Ibell attended the meeting and presented the monthly HRA Capital Programme report.

It was noted that current projects and programmes were drawing to a close and that next year's programme were currently being put together.

Cllr Thurland asked for information on the use of contractors in undertaking works to void properties.

The forum heard that the council was seeking new contractors for a number of long-term arrangements ready for next year. As well as this the council was exploring a number of external funding opportunities including working with Efficiency East Midlands to ensure the very best delivery of service for the Council

16.TF.80 CONNECT

The forum heard that the first draft of the next edition of Connect was currently being finalised and that this was to include items on periodic tenancy visits that were undertaken by KBC staff and specific items regarding tenant support.

The forum also heard that the next edition of Connect was due to be delivered in the middle of March.

Members enquired about the possibility of including recent reports from Monitoring & Audit featuring the Pollinator Strategy.

16.TF.81 TENANT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Leona Mantle attended the meeting and gave positive feedback on the recent Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) Forum which was held in Kettering. It was heard that a member of the Tenants Forum also attended the Participation forum and gave a presentation regarding the scrutiny panel and its benefits.

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

16.TF.82 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Don requested that a breakdown be given in future meetings with regards to the newly published white paper document relating to housing. It was heard that a presentation would be given next month to forum members informing them of the impact the contents of the document could have on Kettering.

16.TF.83 PRIZE DRAW

The winner of the prize draw was Evelyn Odame.

16.TF.84 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.25pm)

Signed

Chair

CG