

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

TENANTS' FORUM

Meeting held – 19th July 2018

Present: Councillor Mark Rowley (Chair)
Councillors Maggie Don and Mike Tebbutt

Tenant Representatives: Brian Kimpton (Counties)
Martyn Lund (Highfield Road)
Steven Soper (Sackville Street)
Lindsay Wooldridge (Sackville Street)
Hamid Saleri (Geddington)
Jim French (Desborough)
Peter Matsa (Burton Latimer)
Anne Swoboda (Rothwell)
Brent Woodford (Ashley)
Reg Carvell (Leaseholder–Highfield Cres)
Josephine Copson (Alfred Street)
Victor Woodcock (Burton Latimer)
Elizabeth Eveie (Highfield Crescent)
Moirra Brown (Highfield Road)
Gloria Moore (Grange)

Also Present: John Conway (Housing)
Leona Mantle (Housing)
Tracey Copeland (Housing)
Callum Galluzzo (Democratic Services)

18.TF.16 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr June Derbyshire.
Apologies were also received from Ken Burnage.

18.TF.17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

18.TF.18 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18.TF.19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

17.TF.132 – Reinventing Repairs

An update on the current position regarding void properties was provided, with the forum hearing that there were currently 79 such properties. An external contractor had been procured to assist in returning void numbers down to a manageable level of about 30. A comprehensive report would be brought to the forum in September on the current and historical position regarding voids.

18.TF.20 MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS' FORUM REPRESENTATIVES

None

18.TF.21 PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

A presentation was provided to the meeting which detailed the purpose of the ongoing public consultation in relation to Public Sector reform proposals within Northamptonshire.

The meeting heard that the consultation was due to finish on Sunday 22nd July 2018 and were encouraged to participate in the consultation to ensure that their views are captured.

Last autumn a 'Best Value Inspection' of Northants County Council was undertaken by the Local Government Association, following the inspection it was reported that the County Council significant overspends and that its current financial position at the time was not sustainable.

It was heard that the secretary of state had asked that all local authorities in Northamptonshire to submit proposals for a reformed local government structure. Councils in Northamptonshire were considering a proposal to abolish the County Council and the seven districts and boroughs and to introduce two new unitary authorities for North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire that would be brought forward in May 2020.

Members of the forum heard that the restructure of local authorities in the county could lead to a simpler, clearer structure allowing for greater accountability and a reduction in the cost of local government services. It was also heard that a more integrated range of services could be introduced.

It was heard by members of the forum that Councils will submit proposals to the Secretary of State at the end of August before the next steps are set out in autumn 2018. Shadow authorities are set to be established by spring 2019 before elections take place for the new councils by spring 2020.

Members of the forum were then split into two groups and participated in a group discussion exercise regarding the possible changes to local government in Northamptonshire.

Following discussions, feedback was sought from each group with regards to the questions asked below;

Question	Summary of response given
Do you agree that there is a need to change?	There is a need for change within the county because the situation cannot continue as the way it is. There is a need to change but at this point in time this is the only option. This does however provide an opportunity to help integrate and improve the services offered.
Agree with proposals for a Unitary Authority?	Unitary Authorities have been proven to work in other areas across the country and it seems like it is a pattern for the future. There are concerns that there would be a loss of identity within the Kettering Borough once a Unitary Authority is established. There was also a concern that the problems that existed at the County Council would not be addressed and would become apparent at any of the new Unitary Authorities.

Members of the Tenants Forum were then asked what they currently value about the housing service provided by Kettering Borough Council, following discussions it was stated that the main key areas that were valued the most were;

- Accessibility to Council Services, especially in the outer areas of the borough
- Individuality and identity of the services provided by Kettering Borough Council
- Sense of pride in the services offered
- Positive, caring Ethos of KBC Customer Service
- Personal attention of the services offered to tenants
- Tenant Engagement
- Development Portfolio

- Housing Stock
- Housing Standards

Members of the forum were then asked to provide feedback on what aspects of the housing service do they think could have been improved within the new Unitary Authority;

Tenant Forum members stated that within the new unitary authority they would like to see an improved void properties scheme, greater partnership working with other public sector agencies and local parish councils. It was also stated that members would like to see the new unitary authority have greater influence allowing for better value services to be provided.

18.TF.22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

18.TF.23 PRIZE DRAW

The winner of the prize draw was Martyn Lund.

17.TF.24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date for the next meeting of the forum would be 13th September 2018.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.12pm)

Signed

Chair

CJG