

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

TENANTS' FORUM

Meeting held – 7th February 2019

Present: Councillors Maggie Don, Andrew Dutton, David Howes and Mark Rowley

Tenant Representatives:

Brent Woodford	(Ashley) (Chair)
Steven Soper	(Sackville Street)
Lindsay Wooldridge	(Sackville Street)
Gloria Moore	(Grange)
Peter Matsa	(Burton Latimer)
Anne Swoboda	(Rothwell)
Stephen Panther	(Sackville Street)
Josephine Copson	(Alfred Street)
Simon Sheldrick	(Weston by Welland)
Victor Woodcock	(Burton Latimer)
Reg Carvell	(Highfield Crescent)

Also Present:

John Conway	(Housing)
Darren Ibell	(Housing)
Tracey Copeland	(Housing)
Nick Woods	(Housing)
Glyn Dowdell	(Housing)
Dean Mitchell	(Finance)
Pearl Nathaniel	(Finance)
Callum Galluzzo	(Democratic Services)

18.TF.93 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs June Derbyshire and Mike Tebbutt. Apologies were also received from Ken Burnage, Brian Kimpton, Sandra Nash, Trevor Nash, Martyn Lund and Simon Haile.

18.TF.94 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

18.TF.95 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18.TF.96 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

18.TF.71 – Homelessness Solutions

It was reported that there was currently 185 households living in temporary accommodation across the borough. A breakdown was provided which stated that 8 were being housed in local hotels, 77 within KBC properties, 9 in private rented accommodation, 15 in council acquisitions, 58 in nightly paid accommodation and 18 within Wellington House.

18.TF.86 Private Rented Sector Access Bid

Positive feedback had been received encouraging a final bid but to date no outcome had been received. A further bid had been submitted which if received would enable the 'Safe Until Daylight' scheme to run a day centre.

18.TF.90 Void Properties

Figures were supplied for the total number of void properties within the borough (56)

18.TF.97 MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS' FORUM REPRESENTATIVES

None

18.TF.98 RENT REVIEW

Dean Mitchell and Pearl Nathaniel attended the meeting and gave a presentation regarding the Council's draft budget and details regarding the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) income and expenditure.

It was noted that the Council's draft budget of £103.2m for 2019/20 was under review during the formal consultation period. The budget consisted of:-

- General Fund Account - £58.6m
- Housing Revenue Account - £15.3m
- Capital Programme - £29.3m

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 Council's proposed budget for 2019/20 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 was borrowed in 2012 made up of fixed rate maturity loans. A repayment of £3.5 Million will be made during 2019/20 which will mean that £23.5 Million or 32% will have been paid off since 2012.

The meeting was advised that the process used to calculate rent increases in previous years had altered in the financial year 2016/17. The formula used to calculate rent increases had moved from the Retail Price Index (RPI+ 0.5% + £2 p/w) to the Consumer Price Index (CPI+1%) for 2015/16. Then Central government subsequently amended this policy again, requesting housing authorities introduce a - 1.0% rent reduction for the next four years from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

The meeting heard that the Council had no 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 2019/20 as follows:-

- Average rent decrease - - **1.0%**
- Average weekly rent per property - **£78.78**
- Average weekly reduction - - **£0.65**

(The officers and councillors left the Chamber at 7.02pm to allow tenants time to discuss the decrease and vote. They were recalled to the Chamber at 7.08pm)

RESOLVED that the members of the Tenants' Forum agreed to the -1.0% decrease for 2019/20;

18.TF.99 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UPDATE

A presentation was provided which detailed the work being undertaken by the neighbourhood management team in relation to dealing with and supporting tenants.

It was heard that the neighbourhood management team works closely to help sustain tenancies as well as conducting periodic tenancy visits. The team also helps to improve neighbourhoods and works to support vulnerable customers.

Figures were supplied for the number of new introductory tenancies year to date (112) along with the number of reviews for fixed term tenancies (91) YTD. It was also heard that 16 households had moved through the council's Homemove initiative, 21 through Mutual Exchanges and a further 61 households had transferred to different homes within the Borough's stock.

Members of the forum heard that the team's targets were to visit all tenancies every 5 years and these visits commenced in April 2017 with 258 periodic visits having taken place YTD.

The forum was provided with a case study in relation to the work undertaken by a neighbourhood manager to support a vulnerable customer who was being defrauded and the multi-agency assistance that took place to ensure her safety and wellbeing.

It was also heard that neighbourhood management teams take part in regular estate walkabouts and inspections as well as initiating tenancy enforcement and action plans to improve neighbourhoods, this included environmental improvements and garden competitions for residents.

18.TF.100 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The forum was provided with the latest asset management report.

It was noted that the capital programme was reaching its end and work was underway with the Finance Department regarding budgetary provisions for the forthcoming financial year.

It was heard that the project to completely upgrade the door entry systems to council housing blocks had been completed on time and within budget. A 25 year warranty had been provided with each door to ensure residents feel safe.

The report provided the meeting with a project focus in relation to central heating and boiler repairs/replacements. It was heard that to date 223 boilers/central heating systems had been repaired or

replaced.

It was heard that the demand for replacement boilers had increased due to common failures with a certain type of boiler system, more cost effective systems were being installed moving forward.

18.TF.101 CONNECT

It was noted that the editorial panel would shortly convene to begin production of the Spring/Summer edition of Connect.

18.TF.102 TENANT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

The meeting noted that the panel was currently finalising action plans for the forthcoming year and that details would be brought to a future meeting of the forum.

18.TF.103 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

18.TF.104 PRIZE DRAW

The winner of the prize draw was Simon Sheldrick

17.TF.105 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date for the next meeting of the forum would be 14th March 2019

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.06pm)

Signed
Chair

CG