

## **BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

### **TENANTS' FORUM**

#### **Meeting held – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Present:** Councillors Maggie Don, Andrew Dutton, Mark Rowley and Mike Tebbutt

**Tenant Representatives:**

Brian Kimpton	(Counties) (Chair)
Moira Brown	(Highfield Road)
Ken Burnage	(Thorpe Malsor)
Reg Carvell	(Leaseholder)
Josephine Copson	(Alfred Street)
Peter Harvey	(Dahlia Road)
Peter Matsa	(Geddington)
Evelyn Odame	(Athelstan Road)
Victor Woodcock	(Burton Latimer)
Brent Woodford	(Ashley)

**Also Present:**

John Conway	(Housing)
Leona Mantle	(Housing)
Anne-Marie Loughran	(Housing)
Anna Dernie	(Housing)
Tracey Copeland	(Housing)
Pearl Nathaniel	(Finance)
David Pope	(Democratic Services)

#### **17.TF.01 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

It was proposed by Councillor Mike Tebbutt that Councillor Mark Rowley be elected as Chair.

It was also proposed by Councillor Andrew Dutton that Councillor Maggie Don be elected as Chair.

As no seconders could be found for either nomination, it was

**RESOLVED** that election of the Chair of the Forum for 2017/18 be carried over to the September meeting.

#### **17.TF.02 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

It was proposed by Brent Woodford and seconded by Peter Harvey, and accordingly was

**RESOLVED**

that Brian Kimpton be duly re-elected as Deputy Chair of the Tenants' Forum for the municipal year 2017/18.

Brian Kimpton requested that it be noted that he would not stand for the position of Deputy Chair following this municipal year.

**17.TF.03 TENANT ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

The forum welcomed Tracey Copeland to the meeting as the Council's new Tenant Engagement Officer.

**17.TF.04 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor June Derbyshire. Apologies were also received from Darren Ibell, Sandra Nash, Trevor Nash, Jim French and Lorraine Morland.

**17.TF.05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**17.TF.06 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**17.TF.06 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**16.TF.87 – Roughton Close**

The new cleaning programme was underway and achieving a good standard. A survey had been sent to tenants and leaseholders for feedback on the programme, with a closing date of the end of July. The results from the survey would form part of the pilot scheme review. In addition, a number of tenant inspectors had been recruited to undertake regular checks. It was requested that the results of this survey be fed back to the forum.

#### 16.TF.90 – New Website for Keyways

It was reported that the new site had gone live on 31<sup>st</sup> May, with initial feedback from users being positive.

#### 16.TF.92 – Connect

It was requested that fire safety be a priority item in the next edition of Connect

#### 16.TF.94 – Any Other Business

It was reported that the correct address outside which standing water was an issue was 71 The Oval. In addition, lighting issues on Dahlia Road had yet to be resolved.

### **17.TF.07 MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS' FORUM REPRESENTATIVES**

None

### **17.TF.08 FIRE SAFETY IN COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

A report was submitted which sought to provide an update on the position of KBC following the fire at Grenfell Tower in London.

The meeting heard that KBC did not have any block over three storeys high and therefore were not subject to issues relating to tower blocks. It was heard that although the council employed External Wall Insulation (EWI) on a number of its properties it was a very different system to that installed on high rise blocks. The day after the Grenfell Tower fire, written proof had been obtained from the manufacturer of the system used by KBC that the material used was totally in accordance with all current fire and building regulations. A fire at Naseby Road the previous week immediately abutting EWI on a council property had caused nothing more than smoke damage.

KBC officers had been in contact with the fire service and a co-ordination group had been set up to examine possible issues for landlords across Northamptonshire.

It was heard that the Housing Team was in the process of updating the Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) for sheltered schemes and blocks of flats with communal areas. Current "Stay-put" advice in the event of a fire had been reviewed and was being retained as the Council's policy. Following the initial round of FRAs in 2012/13, works had been undertaken to improve compartmentalisation and to ensure that fire doors met standards. The Council's newly introduced Sterile Communal Areas policy assisted with fire safety and the third phase of this scheme would be going live in August.

The Council was commended on its quick action in sending letters to

tenants to reassure them that their properties were fire safe.

It was noted that all the new-build properties at Laburnum Crescent met all fire and building regulations. Any future properties built by KBC would also meet all regulations as would all refurbished properties such as Homes for the Future and Hampden Crescent.

#### **17.TF.09 REVIEW OF FIXED TERM TENANCY MANAGEMENT**

The meeting was provided with an update on the work of the Neighbourhood Management team in terms of Fixed Term Tenancy (FTT) reviews.

The forum noted that post-April 2013; all tenants received a one-year FTT, which in the majority of cases transferred to five-year FTT upon expiry. In exceptional circumstances, two-year FTTs were offered at the end of the initial year where there was reason to believe the introductory tenant had struggled to manage their tenancy effectively. It was important to work intensively with the tenant to ensure tenancies were sustainable with support. In the majority of cases when a two-year FTT tenancy was offered, the tenant had ASB issues and/or low level rent arrears.

Since April 2013, a total of 1,262 new tenancies had been offered and of those 636 had converted to five-year FTTs. It was noted that there were only 25 two-year tenancies and it was clear that these were being used in the manner originally intended, to provide support to tenants that required it.

The tenancy review process commenced 12 months prior to the end of a FTT, providing Neighbourhood Managers with sufficient time to undertake a review, notify the tenant of a decision and for the creation of an action plan if required. Such a lengthy lead-in allowed a tenant to be notified of the outcome at least six months prior to the end of the tenancy, which enabled the tenant to seek alternative accommodation should the decision be to end the tenancy. In addition there was an appeals process which would be considered by a panel of KBC officers.

A total of eight reviews were currently in progress, with a further 11 two-year FTT reviews completed. Of those 11, four had been renewed as five-year FTTs, with one renewed for a further two years as tenant support was still required. One tenancy had not been renewed, three tenants had been evicted and a further two had left of their own accord prior to a review decision being reached.

Case studies were provided to the forum to allow for better understanding of how the review processes worked in real situations and the complex nature of each individual set of circumstances.

It was heard that the first of KBC's five-year fixed term tenancies was due to

be reviewed in April 2018 which would prove to be a very large piece of work for the Neighbourhood Manager team.

#### **17.TF.10 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) UPDATE**

A report was supplied which sought to provide a briefing on ASB complaints received during 2016/2017 as well as year to date information for 2017/2018.

It was heard that the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 had introduced new legislation that rationalised existing legislation to ensure victims were at the centre of any response. The new legislation also provided additional powers to allow professionals the flexibility needed to deal with any given situation and apply more appropriate and proportionate remedies.

As a result, Housing Services had been able to deal more assertively and proportionately with complaints of ASB and this had seen an increase in the number of enforcement actions taken.

The meeting were provided with details of a range of tools available to Housing Services including:-

- Civil injunctions
- Criminal Behaviour Orders
- Dispersal Orders
- Community Protection Warnings
- Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)
- Closure Powers

The forum heard that a number of these powers had been utilised to date and were provided with figures of the type of ASB complaints received for 2016/17. It was noted that the number of complaints received during the year were 70% higher than for the previous year, with projected complaints for 2017/18 predicted to be another 30% higher. It was considered that changes to legislation and proactive management of ASB could cause a spike in the number of complaints due to raised awareness around reporting mechanisms. The bulk of the ASB work dealt with by Housing Services centred on environmental issues and crime.

Enforcement actions were outlined to the meeting, with 12 to 13 possession orders sought in the year to date compared to less than 20 the previous year. Three closure orders had been served on properties this financial year. These had been obtained because of significant drug activity that had caused disruption to neighbouring properties. Housing Services had worked closely with police regarding intelligence sharing as there was the potential for vulnerable tenants to be targeted by drug dealers. In turn, police kept Housing Services updated with regard to enforcement actions in council

properties allowing necessary paperwork to be prepared. Local residents affected by ASB were strongly in support of such measures and closure orders provided them with some respite whilst work was undertaken to evict the problem tenant. Of the three closure orders granted, one possession order had later been granted, one tenancy had been relinquished and one case was awaiting an outcome.

#### **17.TF.11 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The forum noted that at the end of May, approximately 8% of the capital programme budget had been spent which was in line with expectations.

Two budgets that were cause for concern were disabled adaptations and major voids where spending was ahead of profile. These budgets were being scrutinised and other budgets were being examined to ascertain whether reallocation was possible.

It was reported that physical works at the Hampden Crescent redevelopment would commence on 31<sup>st</sup> July following detailed design work with the contractor.

Stock condition surveys were ongoing, although not at a rate that was anticipated. It was planned to start booking appointments for such surveys to try and increase the number undertaken over the next few months.

In relation to voids, the situation was not good, with an average void time of 63 days at the end of May. This situation was being investigated to establish a cause. In addition the rate of properties becoming void compared to the previous year had increased. Work would be undertaken alongside Environmental Care colleagues to work on void times and start dealing constructively with the major void backlog. The forum would be kept informed of progress.

#### **17.TF.12 CONNECT**

The meeting heard that the first editorial meeting for next edition would be taking place the following week, with the main articles focusing on fire safety, FTT review information and safeguarding. There would also be a feature trying to assist with signposting and confidence-building for reporting neighbourhood issues. An update on the annual garden competition and Credit Union information would also be provided.

**17.TF.13 TENANT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Brian Kimpton reported that the ongoing review was progressing and was approaching the final report stage and it was anticipated that this would be submitted to the forum before the close of 2017.

**17.TF.14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**17.TF.15 PRIZE DRAW**

The winner of the prize draw was Victor Woodcock

**17.TF.16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date for the next meeting of the forum would be 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017

*(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 7.31pm)*

Signed .....

Chair

DJP