

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

TENANTS' FORUM

Meeting held – 8th November 2018

- Present:** Councillor Mark Rowley (Chair)
- Councillors June Derbyshire, Maggie Don, Andrew Dutton, David Howes and Mike Tebbutt
- Tenant Representatives:**
- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Brian Kimpton | (Counties) |
| Martyn Lund | (Highfield Road) |
| Steven Soper | (Sackville Street) |
| Lindsay Wooldridge | (Sackville Street) |
| Hamid Saleri | (Geddington) |
| Gloria Moore | (Grange) |
| Peter Harvey | (Dahlia Road) |
| Peter Matsa | (Geddington) |
| Anne Swoboda | (Rothwell) |
| Stephen Panther | (Sackville Street) |
| Reg Carvell | (Leaseholder – Highfield Cr) |
| Josephine Copson | (Alfred Street) |
| Sandra Nash | (Counties) |
| Trevor Nash | (Counties) |
| Victor Woodcock | (Burton Latimer) |
- Also Present:**
- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Leona Mantle | (Housing) |
| Simon Haile | (Housing) |
| Tracey Copeland | (Housing) |
| Dean Mitchell | (Finance) |
| Pearl Nathaniel | (Finance) |
| David Pope | (Democratic Services) |

18.TF.53 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from John Conway and Darren Ibell. Apologies were also received from Moira Brown and Ken Burnage.

18.TF.54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

18.TF.55 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18.TF.56 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

18.TF.28 – Reinventing Repairs

It was reported that there were currently 84 void properties with 70 of those undergoing work.

18.TF.45 – Pet Policy

Following on from the partnership presentation with Wood Green Animal Centre at the previous meeting, it was noted that outreach sessions had been arranged for North Park and Holyoake Court.

18.TF.46 – HomeMove Relaunch

It was heard the previous recipients of HomeMove were being contacted to discuss their experiences of the scheme. Tenants with larger properties would be contacted to better understand the level of incentive needed to convince them to take part in the scheme. Results of this contacts would be brought to a future meeting of the forum

18.TF.47 – HRA Capital Programme

It was reported that only the final fully accessible units remained to let, but this would take place in the very near future due to the resolution of issues affecting these units.

18.TF.57 MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS' FORUM REPRESENTATIVES

Concerns were raised regarding waiting times for Keyways applications. It was heard that now the Keyways team was fully staffed, the current four month delay would start to reduce.

An issue was raised with regard to inconsiderate parking on Highfield Crescent that was resulting in blocked dropped kerbs that was impacting on disabled wheelchair users.

An issue was raised with non-functioning tumble dryers at Holyoake Court that would be picked up with the Neighbourhood Manager.

18.TF.58 HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

The forum was received a report supplemented by a presentation that provided an update in relation to the issue of homelessness across the Borough and detailed works being undertaken by the council to assist those presenting as homeless.

It was reported that the council had, alongside partner agencies undertaken a rough sleeper count on 1st November that formed a statutory duty for the authority. The information had been verified and a total of 17 rough sleepers had been identified in the Borough, a rise of three from the count the previous year. Details would be supplied to members regarding the partner agencies involved and also historical rough sleeper figures.

A number of factors were outlined to the meeting as to the reasons for soaring demand for social housing including changing demographics as well as home ownership and private rents being increasingly unaffordable.

Approximately 50% of households registered on the Keyways housing register were in Band B representing urgent need. However, there was a lack of available properties for larger households, with 26 households in need of a four-bed property and only five having been let in the last year.

Members linked this demand back to the HomeMove scheme and noted that it would pay to incentivise the scheme to a higher degree given the amount being spent by the council on temporary accommodation (TA).

The forum heard that the number of homeless applications rose significantly year on year, with an average of 20 approaches a month and 5 placements into temporary accommodation. Details of the types of accommodation provided to those presenting as homeless were supplied and it was heard that the vast majority of those housed in TA were within Kettering borough (87%) with 11% housed in Wellingborough.

A list of priorities relating to homelessness were outlined to the meeting, alongside a number of projects and services aimed at mitigating the impact of homelessness including working alongside health partners to reduce “bed blocking”, sustaining existing tenancies and supporting the Safe Until Daylight Night Shelter that was anticipated to re-open early in December.

In response to a question from the forum it was noted that the impact of Universal Credit had yet to be felt in the Borough, but as applications had commenced the situation would be monitored and feedback provided to future meetings of the forum.

18.TF.59 DOMESTIC ABUSE CHARTER

The forum heard of the intention of the Council to sign up to a pledge suggested by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CloH) to raise awareness amongst residents, tenants and staff of domestic abuse in all its forms.

A definition of Domestic Abuse was supplied to the meeting who noted that aside from the direct impact to the victim, there was a resulting increase in the number of hospital admissions and safeguarding referrals.

Studies indicated that 7% of women and 4.4% of men were affected by domestic abuse in 2015/16, with 26% of women being a victim within their adult lifetime. A total of 10,754 domestic abuse incident reports had been received countywide during 2015/16.

The CloH was calling on all housing organisations to commit to the pledge alongside that Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and Women's Aid. There were four commitments (outlined below) that would see policies and processes in place by September 2019 to assist those who might need support and advice.

- To put in place an embed a policy to support residents who are experiencing domestic abuse
- To make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on the council website and in other places which are easily accessible to residents and staff
- To put in place an HR policy and procedure on domestic abuse or to incorporate this into an existing policy, to support members of staff who are experiencing domestic abuse
- Appoint a champion in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse

18.TF.60 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The forum was provided with the latest asset management report.

It was reported that the project to replace door entry systems had commenced with a six week programme covering nine blocks of flats. It was anticipated that this would be completed by mid-December with work on the first block already complete.

The project focus for November was fire risk assessments, made all the more prescient in the light of the Grenfell tragedy. Assessments

were being made inside flats in addition to communal areas. All sheltered housing schemes were anticipated to have been assessed by December, with general needs commencing in April 2019. Any works identified would be undertaken through the capital programme.

Stock condition surveys were currently under target as a result of prioritisation of other works. It was heard that the responsibility for completing satisfaction surveys would be handed to a new apprentice who was due to start shortly.

The forum asked questions in relation to the possibility of annual fire drills in Council-owned blocks of flats, possibly commencing at Hampden Crescent. It was noted that this suggestion would be considered by both housing officers and the fire consultants employed by KBC.

It was noted the KBC properties had carbon monoxide detectors fitted where required in addition to fire alarms.

18.TF.61 CONNECT

It was noted that the articles for the Christmas edition had been prepared, with a final editorial panel meeting set for 14th November to sign off the final layout prior to print.

18.TF.62 TENANT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

The meeting noted that there was an intention to bring findings on performance indicators to the forum on a monthly basis going forward. The implementation of recommendations stemming from the previous TOSP review were still being upon in consultation with Housing officers.

18.TF.63 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that there was insufficient levels of cleaning being undertaken at Holyoake Court. An assessment of the work carried out by the contractor would be undertaken.

The issue of verge of verge hardening on Council estates was raised. A list of streets affected would be supplied and passed to the Head of Environmental Care Services to investigate.

The forum requested an update on the activities undertaken during the year by Neighbourhood Managers. It was agreed that this would be brought to a future meeting of the forum.

An update was supplied regarding the Tenant Gardening Competition awards held the previous evening. Officers were thanked for organising the event and entrants praised for the excellent gardens.

18.TF.64 PRIZE DRAW

The winner of the prize draw was Steven Soper.

17.TF.65 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 7.45pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP