

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

TENANTS' FORUM

Meeting held – 13th June 2019

Present: Councillors Mark Rowley (Chair), Maggie Don, Andrew Dutton, David Howes, Mike Tebbutt, and Lesley Thurland

Tenant Representatives:

Peter Matsa	(Burton Latimer)
Anne Swoboda	(Rothwell)
Hamid Saleri	(Geddington)
Martyn Lund	(Highfield Road)
Steven Soper	(Sackville Street)
Peter Harvey	(Dahlia Road)
Ken Burnage	(Thorpe Malsor)
Gloria Moore	(Grange)
Brian Kimpton	(Counties)
Josephine Copson	(Alfred Street)
Reg Carvell	(Highfield Cres.) - Leaseholder
Lindsay Wooldridge	(Sackville Street)
Steven Panther	(Sackville Street)
Nicola Robinson	(Sackville Street)
Selina Radford	(Sackville Street)
Everlyn Odame	(Athelstan Road)

Also Present:

John Conway	(Housing)
Simon Haile	(Housing)
Darren Ibell	(Housing)
Tracey Copeland	(Housing)
Leona Mantle	(Housing)
Nick Woods	(Housing)
Pearl Nathaniel	(Finance)
Callum Galluzzo	(Democratic Services)

19.TF.01 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor David Howes and seconded by Councillor Lesley Thurland that Councillor Mark Rowley be elected as Chair.

RESOLVED that Councillor Mark Rowley be re-elected Chair of the Tenants' Forum for the municipal year 2019/20.

19.TF.02 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

It was proposed by Gloria Moore and seconded by Martyn Lund, and accordingly was

RESOLVED that Brian Kimpton be duly elected as Deputy Chair of the Tenants' Forum for the municipal year 2018/19.

19.TF.01 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor June Derbyshire, Apologies were also received from Trevor and Sandra Nash as well as Moira Brown.

It was noted that Councillor Lesley Thurland was acting as a substitute for Councillor June Derbyshire.

19.TF.03 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

19.TF.04 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19.TF.05 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

18.TF.71 Homelessness Solutions

It was noted that the number of residents living in temporary accommodation had risen from 192 as reported at the last Tenants Forum to 209, members heard that this figure was not inclusive of the residents affected by the Regent Street Fire and that the number of households in temporary accommodation is likely to fall in the coming weeks.

18.TF.126 Reinventing Repairs & Voids Update

At the previous Tenants Forum it was reported to members that there were 74 void properties under maintenance and repair work, this number as of Monday 10th June had been reduced to 29.

19.TF.05 MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS' FORUM REPRESENTATIVES

None

19.TF.06 FIXED TERM TENANCIES – REVIEW OF TENANCY POLICY

The forum was presented with proposals regarding the Council's policy on fixed term tenancies were asked to consider and comment on the different proposals.

It was heard that Kettering Borough Council had adopted its current Fixed Term Tenancies (FTTs) policy in 2013 where tenants are instigated onto a 1 introductory tenancy before they are granted a 2 or 5 year tenancy.

Members heard that there was currently 575 fixed term tenancy households where 120 introductory tenancies had been granted in the last financial year (2018/19). It was estimated that approximately 108 introductory tenancies would be granted to households per annum.

It was then heard that following a report undertaken by Herriot Watt in 2018 where 19 social landlords were interviewed regarding their thoughts on FTTs. The results presented a contrast between the positives and negatives of the policy

Since 2013 it was reported that 2 fixed term tenancies had been ended and that on average 3.5 hours were undertaken per tenancy review resulting in 400-500 hours work annually.

Kettering Borough Council's aims were to ensure that tenancies were sustained through a robust housing management system and periodic tenancy reviews.

Members of the forum were then asked to discuss and make comment on 3 options in relation to the Council's fixed term tenancy policy, the options were;

- To keep the current policy
- To scrap fixed term tenancies
- To keep 2 year fixed tenancies and to also consider retaining FTTs for 4 bedroom properties.

Following debate members indicated unanimously that they would prefer option 3 to keep 2 year fixed term tenancies and to also consider retaining them for 4 bedroom properties.

Members were then informed that their feedback would be presented to members of the executive committee where a formal decision would be made.

19.TF.07 DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Members were presented with the draft policy on responding to domestic abuse within Kettering Borough Council Tenanted properties

It was heard that following a crime survey for England and Wales, 7% of women and 4.4 of men had experienced domestic abuse in one way or another equal to 1.2 million women and 651,000 men. It was also reported to members that Northamptonshire Police had recorded 10,754 incidents of domestic abuse in 2015/16.

The chartered institute of housing had created an initiative which consisted of commitments which housing organisations can make to support people who live and work in housing who are experiencing domestic abuse. The initiative was to put in place and embed a policy to support residents who experience domestic abuse and to make information about national/local domestic abuse support services available through the council's website and other places which are easily accessible by residents and staff.

Members heard that the key elements of the policy involved taking a zero-tolerance approach and that all reports of domestic abuse would be taken with utmost sensitivity and that a victim-centred approach would be taken in all cases with the aim of reducing the risk to the victims. Close work with partner agencies in both the public and voluntary sector would also be undertaken to respond appropriately.

It was then heard that the consultation period for the draft policy would take place from Monday 17th June and would last 29 days, during this time partner agencies would also be asked to comment. The reviewed policy will then be taken to the Executive Committee for approval.

19.TF.08 POLICY ON PETS IN COUNCIL PROPERTIES

Members received a presentation seeking views of the tenant's forum on Kettering Borough Council's draft policy on pets in council properties.

Views were sought with regards to the policy which indicated that all tenants wishing to keep a pet in council property would need to request permission and that there would be specific reasons why

permission may be refused. At the letting stage properties would be identified as suitable for letting, suitable for letting with additional conditions or not suitable for pets.

Members were asked to provide their preferences to a number of different policy conditions including what lettable properties would be suitable for housing pets.

19.TF.09 HOUSING TOUR 2019 PROPOSALS

The forum was provided with the proposed timetable and itinerary for this year's Housing Tour.

It was heard that the housing tour would take place on Thursday 11th July 2019 and would incorporate a number of ongoing and future projects being undertaken by Kettering Borough Council.

Alternative locations for the tour were then proposed and debated by members of the forum

19.TF.10 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The forum was provided with the latest asset management report.

It was noted that there had been a return rate of 43% with regards to the customer satisfaction surveys where the target had previously been set at 45%. Of the surveys that were returned it was noted by members that the results had been overly positive in terms of overall satisfaction, service and quality.

19.TF.11 CONNECT

An update was provided regarding the forthcoming edition of the Connect magazine.

19.TF.12 TENANT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

An update was provided to members of the tenants forum regarding the ongoing work being undertaken by the Tenant Overview and Scrutiny Panel

19.TF.13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

An issue was raised regarding damage to a concrete path at Creighton Crescent, Barton Seagrave.

Members heard details regarding an upcoming deadline for the Tenant's Gardening Competition and that further details would be provided in the connect magazine.

19.TF.14 PRIZE DRAW

The winner of the prize draw was Steven Panther

19.TF.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the provisional date for the next meeting of the forum was set as 11th July 2019.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.07pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP