

**BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

**TENANTS' FORUM**

**Meeting held – 9th January 2020**

**Present:** Councillors Mark Rowley (Chair), Maggie Don, Andrew Dutton, Jim French, David Howes and Mike Tebbutt

**Tenant Representatives:**

Lynne Lund	(Highfield Road)
Steven Soper	(Sackville Street)
Peter Harvey	(Dahlia Road)
Brian Kimpton	(Counties)
Lindsay Wooldridge	(Sackville Street)
Steven Panther	(Sackville Street)
Simon Sheldrick	(Weston by Welland)
Victor Woodcock	(Burton Latimer)
Hamid Saleri	(Geddington)
Anne Swoboda	(Rothwell)

**Also Present:**

Leona Mantle	(Housing)
Tracey Copeland	(Housing)
Dan Hannam	(Housing)
Jo Perry	(Housing)
Dean Mitchell	(Finance)
Callum Galluzzo	(Democratic Services)

**19.TF.43 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Josephine Copson, Trevor Nash, Sandra Nash, Gloria Moore, Martyn Lund. Karol Hall and Peter Matsa. Apologies for absence were also received from John Conway

**19.TF.44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**19.TF.45 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup>

November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**19.TF.46 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**19.TF.21 Homelessness Update**

An update was provided to members in relation to the number of households currently living in temporary accommodation. It was reported that there was currently 161 households living in temporary accommodation. A 31% decrease from the peak total in August 2019. 8 of the recorded households in temporary accommodation were outside of Kettering Borough.

A small update was also provided regarding the councils acquisition of Wellington House. Communication with Home Group are currently ongoing, positive steps have been taken to ensure that the facility is brought back into use.

**19.TF.47 MATTERS RAISED BY TENANTS' FORUM REPRESENTATIVES**

Concerns were raised by a tenant representative regarding the cutting down of trees in the Grafton Street Park.

Concerns were also raised regarding flooding in Hall Close, Weston by Welland and whether work can be done by the council to ensure that drains are adequately cleaned to prevent further flooding.

**19.TF.48 REPAIRS TO GLAZING AND LOCKS**

Members received a presentation and report which provided a briefing on the current position on Repairs to locks and lock changes as well as replacement of broken glazing in windows or doors.

The Forum heard that the Council's current position as set out in the current tenants handbook was that minor repairs were the tenants responsibility, which included lock changes and re-glazing of broken or cracked glazing in doors and windows.

However recent case law, legislation changes and requests for greater clarity from Customer Service Teams has led Kettering Borough Council to review current practices.

It was heard that from 20<sup>th</sup> March 202, provisions within the Homes Act 2018 (Fitness for Human Habitation) will apply to periodic tenancies of

social landlords. The requirement of the council with this is to remedy 'unfitness' as defined in The Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations 2005 (HHSRS). It was noted that the regulations provided criteria for Fitness for Habitation which also included entry by intruders and ensuring the social landlord actions any property where the tenant has difficulties in keeping the dwelling secure against unauthorised entry

Members of the forum then discussed different scenarios relating to repair requests which examined whether Kettering Borough Council was responsible for the repair, what advice should be given, should the tenant be recharged and if there were any circumstances where a recharge could be waived. Feedback was then provided to the forum which will be used to clarify Kettering Borough Council's response to repair requests to locks and glazing in the future.

A progress update was to be provided to members at a future meeting of the Tenants Forum.

#### **19.TF.48 VOIDS UPDATE**

Members of the forum were provided with a presentation from the Voids manager with regards to the ongoing projects being undertaken to reduce void numbers, rental loss and to improve the customer experience of void properties.

Members noted that there had been a weekly reduction in void rent loss from £10k to £2500 where the overall void rate has been reduced from over 3% to 1% of the overall Kettering Borough Council housing stock.

It was also heard that the number of major voids had been reduced from 40 to an average of approximately 6-8 at any one time. Capital void expenditure had been reduced by £300k per annum.

The Council's current position regarding voids was that January represented the busiest time of the year in terms of voids, it was noted that January 2019 saw 95 voids where the current number (January 2020) was 60 live voids. 42 of the live voids were currently having work done to them, 19 were ready to let where they had all been matched to a nominee and 8 were classified as capital voids due to fire damage or structural work.

Members then heard that the current priority was to monitor and reduce the void turnaround time over the next 6 months.

**19.TF.49 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The forum was provided with the latest asset management report.

It was noted that the current project focus was the Fire Risk Assessments taking place across sheltered schemes and housing stock. Following on from the recent fire risk assessments, a remedial works programme had been drawn up to action the requirements which was to be completed late January 2020 in sheltered schemes and to start imminently in all general need blocks.

Members raised questions regarding the homes for the future project in Rothwell and Desborough before it was confirmed that subject to the approval of the draft budget, work would continue to complete the project.

**19.TF.50 CONNECT**

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

It was heard that the editorial panel were currently inviting members for suggestions regarding the upcoming edition before meeting to discuss.

**19.TF.51 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.

It was heard that the first meeting of the new year was to take place in January 2020 and that the panel were meeting to discuss ideas and suggestions regarding the capital programme.

**19.TF.52 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members of the forum were presented with the timetable for the forthcoming budget consultation process including the tenants forum on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February which would meet to consider the draft budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account and make any comments to the February meeting of the Executive.

**19.TF.53 PRIZE DRAW**

The winner of the prize draw was Steven Soper

**19.TF.54 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the provisional date for the next meeting of the forum was set as Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

*(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.22pm)*

Signed .....

Chair

CJG