

Committee: COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: June 8 2006

Title: TENANT FORUM MINUTES

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Item for decision

Summary

This report provides the Committee with the Minutes of the last meeting of the Tenant Forum, which covers the district. There are no specific financial or risk assessments relating to this report.

Recommendations

That the Committee notes the Minutes of the Tenant Forum of 13 March 2006.

Background Papers

The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author.

- Tenant Forum Minutes file 2005/06

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Tenant Forum promotes consultation relating to a wide variety of issues that affect tenants and the wider community.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Finance	Tenant Forum is operated via existing Tenant Participation budget.
Human Rights	N/A
Legal Implications	Fulfils the Council's statutory duty.
Ward-specific impacts	Covers the whole district.
Workforce/Workplace	Non specific

Situation

1. This report has been presented to members following the request made by the former Health and Housing Committee in March 2005.
2. It needs to be considered now because the Tenant Forum met on the 13 March 2006 and these minutes were approved at the May meeting of the Forum.

Targets

3. What I am trying to achieve is to keep Members of the Committee informed of the concerns and views of the Tenant Forum representatives.

Options

4. There are no specific options.

Pay-Offs/Penalties

5. If the Committee do not note the business of the Forum it could give the impression that the Tenant Forum meetings and the and the work they do are not being taken seriously.

Risk Analysis

6. There is no specific risk analysis regarding this report.

**Minutes of a meeting of the Tenant Forum
held on Monday 13th March 2006 at
Saffron Walden Council Offices**

Present: Jill Bolvig Hansen, George Chesham, Daphne Cornell, Richard Livings, John Maddams, Paul Simpson, Annis Cove, Dick Brown

Officers in attendance: Helen Joy, Rebecca Procter (Tenant Participation Officers); Mike Brean (Executive Manager, Customer Services); Claire Croft, (Principal Support Services Officer); Martin Jimmick (Principal E-Gov Access to Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies received.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Agreed, subject to updates (see point 3 below).

3. MATTERS ARISING

Homelessness - Mrs Bolvig-Hansen reported that the Homeless Task Group were shortly to go on two visits to observe how this issue is tackled in other authorities. Area Panels - Mrs Bolvig-Hansen requested that information regarding dates of meetings of the Area Panels be supplied to the Tenant Forum.

Rent increase – Mrs Bolvig-Hansen reported that she has received quite a number of comments and she would therefore wish to write to the Housing Minister to object to the policy as it affects UDC.

4. GUEST SPEAKER – MR MIKE BREAN – NEW CUSTOMER SERVICES CENTRE

Mr Brean gave a presentation on the forthcoming implementation of an Integrated Customer Management (ICM) Centre at UDC offices (see attached). The Council is to implement Integrated Customer Management by means of a face-to-face and telephone customer service centre in November 2006, and by introducing new ways to pay for Council services. Mr Brean explained that this will mean closer working with the Citizens Advice Bureau, providing new and improved access to the Council, and carrying out a structured programme of organisational re-engineering across all Council services. Following the presentation, Tenants were given the opportunity to put questions. Questions asked by Tenant representatives were as follows:

Mrs Cornell: How much will the Post Office charge for processing UDC payments?

Reply: Rent can already be paid via the Post Office; handling costs will be one-third the cost of using cashiers, who will continue to be employed in the ICM centre.

Mrs Cornell: People may be confused and are likely to object to having to take payment cards to the Post Office.

Reply: Letters have been sent to 4,000 + people who pay Council Tax and rent, and the responses are being monitored. So far, 141 people are in favour, and only 14 against.

Mr Chesham: Generally this is a good idea, however what about those with disabilities?

Reply: There is no PIN number, so those who need to can give their payment card to a friend to transact their business at the Post Office for them.

Mrs Bolvig-Hansen noted that the new services arrangements would be a significant change for tenants, who have also just had a rent increase

Mrs Bolvig-Hansen thanked Mr Brean for his presentation.

5. CO – OPTION OF TENANT REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs Cornell reported that she had spoken to Colin Gilbey, who is considering becoming a leaseholder representative. It was noted that Mr Molinaro had been invited but had not come along yet. Mr Chesham requested that the issue of co-option should remain on the agenda until the full quota of tenants had been met. Mrs Bolvig-Hansen noted that meetings during the day might preclude those who work from joining the forum.

6. TENANT PARTICIPATION UPDATE

Stoneyfield Drive, Stansted – Mrs Procter reported that a meeting with the residents and young people who use The Green is to be held from the Information Bus on 26th April. A meeting with SY2000 to start applying for funding for equipment has been arranged to which Mrs Procter has invited Ms Jane Elsom, Strategic Funding Officer. Mr Livings reported that the hedging looks good.

Sheltered Housing Schemes – planned residents' meetings – the Tenant Participation Officers have visited John Dane Player/Broomfield, Walden Place/Parkside and Alan Hasler Court. Forthcoming visits include Four Acres/Newcroft/Fairycroft, and Reynolds Court.

Wagon Mead – tenders are going out for the agreed work. A residents' meeting has been arranged using the UDC information bus, with police support. Mr Simpson reported that the communal areas were much better, but that this situation needs careful monitoring.

Stortford Road – a consultation exercise regarding a proposal to close off the strip of land has been undertaken and officers are reviewing the comments. The parking situation is to be monitored before reverting to the Area Panel.

7. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Homelessness - during the financial year ending 31st March 2006: 71 presented as homeless, 23 were rejected, 37 accepted, 10 were pending; 11 were single parents, 7 were a family, 14 were single, there were no couples. There were 7 in bed and breakfast accommodation. **Repairs** – no P.I.s were available.

8. LOCAL ISSUES

Mr Brown went to the Area Panel and commented that the meeting was already underway and did not appear to be very “user friendly”.

Mr Livings requested that more be done to improve the condition of the path alongside 55 Hunters Way. Mrs Procter reported that the street cleaner had been up the path and that the Housing Officer Neil Weeding had been asked to write to the tenants who are discarding rubbish outside the back of their garden.

Mrs Cove reported that there is still cardboard and rubbish being left outside number 12 Four Acres although Environmental Services have been out in response to a request by the TPOs.

Mr Maddams had previously raised the issue of parking problems at Four Acres. Mrs Procter has written to Highways to request a feasibility study into the area, with the support of the Town Council. The school has also been contacted and the head teacher is asking parents to park more considerately.

Mrs Cornell reported that there is a great deal of rubbish along Rowntree Way.

Mrs Bolvig-Hansen noted that a non-tenant resident in White Roding wishes to have the Green re-organised and that she may be writing to UDC. However, Mrs Bolvig-Hansen advised that those residents with children who use The Green are all happy with it as it is.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of future meetings: Monday 15th May at 2.00 pm
Monday 24th July at 7.00 pm
Monday 18th September at 2.00 pm
Monday 13th November at 2.00 pm