

Committee: COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: November 9 2006

7

Title: TENANT FORUM MINUTES

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Item for decision

Summary

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

Recommendations

2. That the Committee notes the Minutes of the Tenant Forum 15 May 2006 and draft minutes for September 18 2006.

Background Papers

3. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - Tenant Forum Minutes file 2005/06

Impact

4.

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

5. This report has been presented to members following the request made by the former Health and Housing Committee in March 2005.
6. It needs to be considered now because the Tenant Forum met on September 18 2006. Due to officer involvement relating to the rehousing of Evacuees in July the Tenant Forum agreed not to proceed with their Meeting at that time.
7. It should be noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2006 are in draft only and are subject to approval of the Tenant Forum at it's next meeting in November 2006.

Targets

8. 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

9. There are no specific options.

Pay-Offs/Penalties

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

Risk Analysis

11. There are no specific risk analysis regarding this report

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TENANT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY
15 MAY 2006 AT SAFFRON WALDEN COUNCIL OFFICES**

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

Officers in attendance: Helen Joy (Tenant Participation Officer) Liz Petrie (Housing Management Manager) Suzanna Clarke (Housing Strategy Manager)

1. Apologies: Paul Simpson, Richard Livings.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Agreed and signed

3. Matters Arising

Homelessness: Jill Bolvig Hansen reported that the Homelessness task group had completed its initial work and a report will be put forward to the Community Committee in June.

Rent increase: Jill Bolvig Hansen reported that she hadn't had a reply from Yvette Cooper Minister for Housing and Planning on the rent policy issue. Sir Alan Haslehurst has been informed and is perusing this matter. Hopefully we will have a reply by our next meeting.

Access to Services for the elderly meeting: Jill Bolvig Hansen reported that the meeting was very interesting and the County Council are keen to involve as many elderly groups as possible. Jill Bolvig Hansen asked for volunteers to go to the next meeting and John Maddams agreed to attend. It was also agreed that the Management Committee for the Day Centres in the District would be informed of these meetings and Daphne Cornell will also pass on information to the Uttlesford elderly focus group.

4. Choice Based Lettings

Liz Petrie outlined the allocations policy currently in place and then went on to explain how choice based lettings, if agreed by the Council would work in the District. It operates on the assumption that tenants would be given greater choice when applying for a property.

Suzanna Clarke went on to explain that Uttlesford DC (as part of a multi Council bid) had been successful in a bid to the ODPM with 5 other Local Authorities to appoint a consultant and look at the possible implementation of choice based lettings in the District. The consultant would, if agreed by Committee, be in post from July and the Tenants

Forum asked if he/she could attend a future meeting to discuss the detail of the project.

The Tenant Forum was given a copy of the Community Committee report going before Committee Members on June 8. The report outlines that Officers still have some concerns about the proposal.

The Tenant Forum noted the Committee report and felt that it was innovative for Uttlesford.

5. Co-option of New Tenants

It was agreed that Helen Joy or Rebecca Procter will write to Mr Colin Gilbey and invite him to sit on the Tenant Forum as a representative for leaseholders.

It also was it was agreed that we should do an article in the next newsletter explaining what is involved in being on the Tenant Forum to try and attract more representatives.

6. Timings of Meetings.

It was agreed that next years meetings will be 3 meeting in the day commencing at 2.00pm and 3 evening meetings commencing at 7.00pm. Hopefully this will encourage a wider range of people

7. Tenant Participation Update

Stoneyfield Drive, Stansted - Helen Joy reported that Rebecca Procter had a very successful residents meeting regarding the Green with the Community Police, Youth Service, local Cllrs, Parish Council and Officers from the Council.

Residents seemed happy with the all weather sports pitch but unsure about the teen shelter, Helen Joy reported that Rebecca Procter will be at the Stansted Youth 2000 meeting to help advise on funding.

Sheltered Housing Schemes- Planned residents meeting- Tenant Participation Officers have visited Mead Court, Reynolds Court, and Alexia House to follow, report to follow at the end of all consultation.

Wagon Mead- Work has started on the refurbishment of the Parking and path ways to Wagon Mead and all is going well.

A residents meeting set for 31 May 2006 on site with the Community Police, Cllr Lemon, Officers of the Council also North British Housing.

It was reported that the Communal Gardens are looking much better but the stairwells are still proving to be a problem.

Vicarage Mead Thaxted- all is going well the first phase of Vicarage Mead.

Stortford Road – The parking situation is still being monitored and a report will go to the area panel meeting on 23 May 2006.

8. Performance Indicators

Homelessness – During 1-30 April 2006: 4 Presented as homeless, 2 rejected, 1 accepted and 1 pending.

Repairs: January 2006 99% satisfaction, February 2006 97% satisfaction, March 2006 98% satisfaction.

9. Local Issues.

Mr Dick Brown reported on the Area Panel meeting also he attended Vision of Uttlesford was very good, More affordable housing was discussed. Mr Brown reported that a caravan has been parked in the car park at Birchwood - Helen Joy will report this to the Housing Officer.

Mrs Annis Cove reported that she will be moving house and will have to resign from the Tenant Forum as from June. Jill Bolvig Hansen said that she was sorry that she would be leaving the Tenant Forum but wished her well.

Mr John Maddams- reported he was concerned about the new wheelie bins, he report that Four Acres had a meeting with Environmental services, but Mr Maddams felt that it was not very satisfactory. Helen Joy agreed to arrange another meeting for residents with Ron Pridham (Environmental Services) to help reach a conclusion.

Also Mr Maddams reported that the gardens where looking very good and the contractors had done a lovely job.

Mr Maddams reported that Four Acres had a visit from the Community police officer for tea and to help reassure people. This proved very helpful

Mrs Cornell: asked if Catons Lane and Rowntree way by the Bus stop could be looked at for additional parking, Helen Joy will ask if a feasibility study can be done on this area.

Mrs Bolvig Hansen- Jill has arranged for a visit to the House of Commons with Sir Alan Hazlehurst on Tuesday 6 June 2006. The coach will leave Saffron Walden Council Offices at 8.00am and then pick up from Swan Meadow at 8.10am returning home at approx 3.30pm

10. Date of next meeting

Dates of Future meetings: Monday 24 July 2006 7.00pm
Monday 18 September 2006 2.00pm
Monday 13 November 2006 2.00pm

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TENANT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY
18TH SEPTEMBER 2006 AT SAFFRON WALDEN COUNCIL OFFICES**

Present: George Chesham, Daphne Cornell (chairing the meeting), John Maddams, Paul Simpson, Dick Brown, Colin Gilbey, Joan Hoadley

Officers in attendance: Helen Joy, Rebecca Procter (Tenant Participation Officers); Russell Goodey (Building Services Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

Jill Bolvig-Hansen, Richard Livings, Liz Petrie.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Mrs Cornell reported on the issues discussed at Community Committee. Mr Maddams reported that Ron Pridham had now visited Four Acres. Mrs Joy advised that Environmental Services are now looking at Sheltered Housing sites regarding their specific recycling requirements. Some members of the Tenant Forum have now received their wheelie bins and are starting to get used to having them.

4. CO – OPTION OF TENANT REPRESENTATIVES

Mr Colin Gilbey was welcomed to the Forum as the new Leaseholder Representative. Mrs Cornell introduced Mrs Hoadley, and proposed that she be co-opted as a member of the Tenant Forum, seconded by Mr Chesham. Mrs Cornell asked that Representatives continue to ask for interested Tenants to consider joining the Forum.

5. SOCIAL RENTS

It was agreed that the draft letter to Sir Alan Haselhurst should be sent. The TPOs would forward to Mrs Bolvig-Hansen for her signature.

6. TENANT PARTICIPATION

Vicarage Mead – Mrs Joy reported that the transition to the finished flats went well, the work having finished in July. The development should be completed in February 2007.

Lebanese evacuees – the Special Meeting held last week included an update on this situation.

The Green, Stoneyfield Drive, Stansted – Mrs Procter reported on the outcome of the collated surveys, which indicated opposition to the idea of a “teen shelter”, but qualified support for a games court. The next step is to take the proposals before the Area Panel, although new play equipment ideas are now being considered by the youngsters. This may require a further workshop between residents and young people to be arranged.

Broomfields – the lights have now been connected by EDF, although the installation work was finished in April 2006.

Building Services – Mr Goodey gave an update on recent developments in this section. Direct services and external contractors will be working with a new operating system in October. This will enable all repairs officers to schedule appointments with residents via a “hand held” device, and should improve efficiency. Mr Goodey also reported on further efficiency measure, a re-structuring of Housing Repairs and Planned Services to create a streamlined service collectively known as Building Services. New posts were created as follows:

Building Services Manager	- Mr Russell Goodey
Senior Architectural Surveyor	- Mr David Osborn
Property Surveyor	- Mr Bill Golbourn
Electrical Surveyor	- Mr Martin Stocks
Estates Surveyor	- Mr Andrew Hurrell
Senior Repairs Officer	- Derrick Morris
Asbestos Officer	- Mr Peter Jones
Repairs Officer	- Mr Peter Bastendorff

Sustainability is an important part of new planned works, including a heating replacement programme. The Decent Homes programme is on target for completion next year, when Mr Goodey will give the Tenant Forum a further update.

Mrs Cornell thanked Mr Goodey, and noted that the new operating system should be an improvement in situations where residents may in the past have been let down by failed appointments. Mr Chesham commented that failure to return telephone calls to residents had been a general problem across different departments in the Council, from his experience.

7. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Homelessness figures – during the period 1/4/06 to 30/06/06 11 cases presented as homeless, of which 3 cases were accepted, 5 were rejected or withdrawn and 3 were awaiting a decision.

Repairs – in the last customer satisfaction survey, 257 responses were positive, 58 positive in part, and 7 negative.

8. LOCAL ISSUES

Mr Simpson – the stones which had been put in around the flats were being thrown around by children and had broken windows. Mrs Joy advised that she has been back with the contractors, and will raise this problem.

Mr Simpson also expressed concern that elderly residents are very concerned about fines if they make mistakes with their recycling; also that the men who collect the bins from the flats (where UDC has assessed them as not suitable for wheelie bins) have been heard commenting loudly that residents should get wheelie bins, and have been throwing down the recycling boxes very roughly. Mrs Cornell advised that residents should be reassured about any recycling worries via the newsletter.

Mr Chesham – the plastic code numbers on the base of plastic bottles are difficult to see, perhaps Mr Pridham could provide feedback to commercial organisations about this.

Mr Gilbey – the seat at the end of Birdbush is rotten – Mrs Joy advised that he contact the Town Council as this is not UDC responsibility.

Mr Brown – noise nuisance is being caused by a resident (not a Tenant) who is often working on car repairs on his drive late at night. The Tenant Participation Officers advised this is a matter for the police if it continues, although Environmental Health may also be able to assist.

Mr Maddams – the pine trees at Four Acres are now being dealt with. Residents from numbers 36 – 43 are complaining about trees from the RA Butler School overhanging their property. Residents are also concerned about the proposal that Essex County Council will be turning off street lights at midnight. Mrs Cornell advised that residents write to ECC and copy their letter to the Town Council.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

As Mrs Cove is no longer on the Tenant Forum, it was agreed that another Tenant Representative willing to attend meetings of the North East Area Panel should be identified. Mr Gilbey agreed to take on the role.

The newsletter currently being produced was discussed. Regarding smoke detectors, Mr Simpson wished to clarify whether in flats the stairwells are fitted with smoke detectors. Mr Gilbey wished to report

that the land adjoining his property and owned by a Mr Brian Newman has a load of brushwood on it, which is a fire hazard.

Christmas meal – to be held on 8th December, venue to be arranged. It was agreed that the Heads of Sections, as well as Tenant Participation Officers and Mr Rod Chamberlain be invited.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th November at 2.00 pm – Council Chamber