

MINUTES OF THE RENT SETTING MEETING OF THE TENANT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY 7 JANUARY 2008 AT SAFFRON WALDEN COUNCIL OFFICES

Present:- Joan Hoadley, George Chesham, Daphne Cornell,
John Maddams, Paul Simpson, Sam Sproul,
Barbara Armstrong, Lorna Plant, Effie Rogers, John Cole,
Colin Gilbey, David Parish, Bryan Smythers.

Officers in attendance:- Helen Joy (Tenant Participation Officers),
Adrian Webb (Finance), Peter Clanchy (PFC Consultant),
Roz Millership (Head of Division – Housing), Robert Patterson-
Smith (Senior Housing Officer – Rents).

1 APOLOGIES

None.

2 RENT SETTING PRESENTATION

Peter Clanchy explained the background to the rent setting report, copies of which were circulated. Peter explained that the HRA account is starting to show a decrease in reserves which will have an impact over the next couple of years on how long UDC can sustain the Decent Homes Standard as assessed during the Stock Options Appraisal.

The report was considered in detail. The recommended average rent increase of 6.6% was agreed, but the Forum was aware that the higher end increases of 8%+ could cause hardship for some tenants and wondered how many tenants would be pushed on to benefits because of the increase. Tenants still feel UDC is a good landlord. Tenant representatives noted that they do not vote on the proposed increase, but that their views are passed on to the Community Committee via a verbal report.

3 ACTION POINTS

Roz Millership suggested the Tenant Forum take part in a workshop later in the year to explain the way HRA account is managed and how central costs have an effect on the HRA.

The subsidy distribution between rural and urban councils shows that UDC is one of the highest subsidy givers (£29 of an average weeks rent is given to central government). The Tenant Forum agreed that they still petition government on the issue of negative subsidy.

The Forum would like a copy of the Business Plan and also the criteria for Decent Homes.

Daphne thanked Peter Clanchy for his report.

4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 4 February 2008 at 7.00 pm in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Saffron Walden.