

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Tenancy Board (to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Monday, 21 January 2013

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor P J Davies (Chairman)

Mrs K Mandry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: T J Howard and Mrs K K Trott

Co-opted members: Alderman E Crouch, Mrs P Weaver, Mr S Lovelock and Mrs E Bailey

Also Present:



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Wood and Mr B Lee.

2. MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Tenancy Board held on 12 November 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF HOUSING TENANCY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13 AND PRELIMINARY DRAFT BOARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14

The board considered a report by the Director of Community which reviewed the Board's work programme for the current year and gave initial consideration to the programme for 2013/14.

It was AGREED that the Board:-

(a) confirmed the Work Programme for the remainder of the year 2012/13 and endorsed any revisions listed within the report;

(b) gave an early assessment of progress in 2012/13; and

(c) gave initial consideration of the Work Programme for 2013/14

7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT INCLUDING THE HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14

The Board considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources regarding the proposed spending plans for the Housing Revenues Account.

The Board received a verbal presentation from the Corporate Accountant, who circulated amended figures to the report, for page 2 paragraph 2 and page 5 Appendix A, and then took questions from the Board. The Board expressed concern over the impact of the proposed rent increases, especially with the forthcoming cuts to benefits with the introduction of Universal Credit, and the impact this will have on families who are already struggling to pay their rent. It

was explained to the Board that the Council has already been in contact with those households who are likely to be affected with the changes to benefits, and are providing assistance to these families to help them work out their options.

It was AGREED that the Board recommends to the Executive that:-

- (a) individual rent increases in line with the rent restricting model, be approved for Council dwellings with effect from 1 April 2013;
- (b) rents for Council garages to be increased by 5% with effect from 1 April 2013;
- (c) the revised budget for 2012/13 be approved;
- (d) the base budget for 2013/14 be approved;
- (e) the capital programme and financing for 2012/13 to 2016/17 as amended report be approved; and
- (f) annual budgets and assumptions are set with the aim of ensuring sufficient surpluses are held to repay debt set with the aim of ensuring sufficient surpluses are held to repay debt on the maturity of each loan.

8. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR TENANCY SERVICES (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2012)

The Board considered a report by the Director of Community which sets out Performance Monitoring information for tenant services covering rent arrears and repossessions, void property management including void rent loss, estate inspections and satisfaction levels for estate services, anti-social behaviour, tenant consultation and involvement between October to December.

At the request of the Chairman the report, which was presented by the Senior Housing Management Officer, was broken down in separate sections allowing the Board to be able to discuss each section in turn.

- Tenant Arrears – The Board noted the increase in rent arrears since the last quarter. It was explained to the Board that the arrears banding was broken down into areas of approx 600 properties, with each area being assigned an Area Housing Officer. This provided an opportunity to compare performance across areas.
- Empty Homes – The Board noted that the improvement in the time taken to relet homes, and that Collingwood House had now been removed from the figures following its closure pending demolition.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – The Board noted the positive improvement on Anti-Social behaviour, especially since the new system for monitoring and reporting was put in place.
- Estate Management – The Board noted the increase in the tenant satisfaction feedback. It was explained to the Board that the feedback cards would be stopped from February, with the exception of the cards used for period cleaning such as the window cleaning service, whilst a new system is trialled. The trial would involve the block captains liaising with the Housing Officer within 24 hours of cleaning taking place to provide feedback on the service. Concerns were raised that this may not be a successful way of gathering feedback as the block captains may not always be around when the cleaning takes place. Officers explained that as part of the trial, each of the clock captains would be consulted on their preferred method for providing feedback (by phone,

email or card). Several other concerns were raised during this part of the standard of the window cleaning and cleaning service, and grounds maintenance all of which will be looked into and reported back to the Board.

It was AGREED that the Board noted the content of the report.

9. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR BUILDING SERVICES (TO DECEMBER 2012)

The Board considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources which set out performance monitoring data for Building Services covering all aspects of the service delivered to the residents to December 2012.

The Board requested that the Head of Building Services provide a clear definition in the next report that defines the differences between Capital and Revenue expenditure types. The Board was pleased to note that the issue of car parking will be looked into during 2013/14.

The was AGREED that the Board noted the content of the report.

10. CHANGES TO THE SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE AT GARDEN COURT, PORTCHESTER

The Board considered a report by the Director of Community which advised members of proposed changes to the sheltered housing service provided to sheltered tenants at Garden Court.

The Board discussed this item at length and asked for confirmation that appropriate assessments had been carried out to all affected residents to ensure that a sufficient level of care was still going to be provided. It was explained to the Board that all residents completed a needs assessment and were fully consulted on the changes. It was explained to the Board that the savings gained from the changes to the Sheltered Housing scheme will be used by the County Council to provide services to those in private sector housing.

It was AGREED that the Board noted the content of the report and that it be submitted to the Executive for approval.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.52 pm).