

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Date: Tuesday, 21 April 2015

Venue: Octagon Lounge, Ferneham Hall

PRESENT:

Councillor P J Davies (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs K Mandry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: T J Howard, Mrs K K Trott and C J Wood

Co-opted members: Mrs P Weaver, Mr B Lee, Mrs E Bailey and Miss E Bartlett

Also Present:



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology of absence was received from Graham Wood.

2. MINUTES

Councillor Mrs Trott referred to the bottom paragraph of page 4 of the previous minutes, and enquired as to when the next Tenants newsletter is going out. The Tenant Involvement Officer addressed the Panel and stated that the newsletter is in the process of being distributed to tenants. She also confirmed that as suggested by Councillor Mrs Trott at the previous meeting an article on pest control and dog nuisance has been included into the newsletter.

It was AGREED that the minutes of the Housing Tenancy Board meeting held on 26 January 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

4. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

5. NEW LEASE FOR LEASEHOLDERS

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources regarding the introduction of a new lease for leasehold properties sold after 1 April 2015.

The report was presented by the Corporate Accountant who informed the Board that the new lease would enable the Council to levy a leasehold management charge on any leasehold property purchased through the Right to Buy Scheme after 1 April 2015. The Corporate Accountant confirmed that existing leaseholders would not be affected by this change.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

6. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2014/15 - TENANCY SERVICES

The Board considered a report by the Director of Community on the Annual Performance for Tenancy Services.

The report was presented by the Tenancy Services Manager who took questions from members after each section of the report.

Rent Arrears:

The Board noted that rent arrears have decreased from the same period in the previous year, and noted how diligent the Area Housing Estate Officers have been in pursuing rent arrears.

Empty Homes:

The Board noted the slight reduction in figures in the re-letting of properties than that of the previous quarter, and the increase in the re-letting times compared to the previous year.

The Tenancy Services Manager explained to the Board that he is currently working on the issues with empty properties as part of his work with the Vanguard Systems Thinking Intervention.

Estate Management:

The Board noted the big improvement on the cleaning service and grounds maintenance service compared to the previous year.

Paula Weaver enquired as to whether there will be tenant consultation when the re-tendering for the Council's cleaning service and boiler service takes place in the next few years. The Tenancy Services Manager confirmed that tenants will be involved in the selection and appointment of a new cleaning contractor. The Planned Maintenance Manager also addressed the Board and informed the tenant reps that he would be happy to have tenant involvement in the selection process of the Building Services contractors.

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

7. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2014/15 - BUILDING SERVICES

The Board considered a report by the Director of Environmental Services on the annual performance of Building Services.

The report was presented by the Planned Maintenance Manager who explained to the Board that from the 1 April 2015 the new Vanguard Systems Thinking way of working was rolled out to incorporate the entire Borough. As a result of this change Building Services now employ its own direct labour work force to carry out the work previously undertaken by Comserv.

He drew the Board's attention to the appendix attached to the report, which gave a comparison on how the measures were performing against the previous reported quarter. He explained that there have been no major changes in the figures since the last report to the Board, and that they are continuing to show that a high standard of work is being maintained.

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

8. ESTATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

The Board considered a report by the Director of Community on the Estate Improvement Programme for 2015/16.

It was AGREED the Board:-

- (a) notes the content of the report; and
- (b) supports and endorses the schemes identified within the report.

9. CHANGES TO THE SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE

The Board considered a report by the Director of Community on the Changes to the Sheltered Housing Service that the Sheltered Tenants receive from the Council.

The Tenancy Services Manager outlined to the Board the changes to the funding provided by Hampshire County Council and how this has impacted upon Fareham's Sheltered Housing Service.

He drew members' attention to Appendix B of the report that was the proposed new staffing structure which has now been approved by management and the trade unions. This restructure involves the deletion of the home support service posts, and the reduction in the support and visits made by the Sheltered Housing Officers.

The Board noted that the majority of feedback received from the effected tenants was on the whole supportive of the changes.

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

10. GENERAL TENANTS FORUM - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Vice-Chairman of the General Tenants Forum addressed the Board on this item.

She informed the Board that the Forum has just appointed a new Chairman, but as they have no knowledge or experience of the Board and how it works it was felt that she was not required to attend this meeting.

The Board were also informed that the Tenants Forum has just had its AGM (Annual General Meeting) and therefore there were no issue arising that from that meeting that needed to be brought to the Board's attention.

It was AGREED that the Vice-Chairman of the general tenants forum be thanked for her verbal update.

11. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman addressed the Board and made the following announcement:

He explained that the Council is continuing to look at ways to streamline its services and as part of that streamlining is looking at Council meetings and assessing whether they are still providing the most effective service. He informed the Board that at a meeting of the Executive on 20 April 2015, a report was presented and agreed by the Executive that the Housing Tenancy Board be disbanded.

The Director of Community addressed the Board on this item and explained that the Executive agreed that all responsibilities currently dealt with by the Housing Tenancy Board will transfer to the Health and Housing Panel. The Tenants Forum will incorporate the Tenancy Services and Building Services

performance reports, and that tenant involvement will continue with the Council's contractors.

The tenant representatives enquired as to whether the tenant reps will become part of the Health and Housing Panel. The Director of Community explained the Chairman of the Tenants Forum will have a standing invitation to attend the Health and Housing Panel, but they will not become a co-opted member of the Panel. He also assured the Board that communication will continue with the tenant representatives and tenants will still have a voice, it is just the method in which this is happening that is changing.

The Chairman stated that these changes are in no way an attempt to reduce tenant involvement in the management of their homes.

12. REVIEW OF ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2014/15 AND FINAL CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

The Board considered a report by the Director of Community on a final review of the work programme for 2015/16 and the draft work programme for 2015/16.

The Board noted that in light the Chairman's announcement above there was no further need to finalise a work programme for 2015/16.

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

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.17 pm).