

TENANTS' FORUM

MEETING : 26 September 2005

PRESENT : **Tenant Representatives**

G. Slatter - Podsmead Tenants' Association (Chair)
S. Cripps - Kingsholm Tenants' Consultative Committee
K. Kilby - Westgate Tenants' Consultative Committee

City Council

Cllr. McLellan

Also in Attendance

M. Horton - White City Community Project
A. Tavener - White City Representative
M. Groom - Coney Hill Representative
I. Hill - Matson Tenants' Representative
N. Gardiner - Matson Tenant
V. Murphy - Matson Tenant
P. Scannell - Chairman, Tredworth Tenants' and Residents' Association (TETRA)
A. Tocknell - TETRA
D. Phillips - TETRA
I. Hardwick - TETRA
K. Powell - TETRA
J. Bradley - Heart of England (Independent Tenant Adviser)
C. Webb - Heart of England (Independent Tenant Adviser)

Officers in Attendance

N. Thomas - Housing Services Manager
A. Green -
L. Beard - Neighbourhood Team Manager
P. Anders - Gloucester City Homes Limited
T. Connon - Client Services Manager

APOLOGIES: L. Barrett, J. Chilton, J. Deakins, T. Deakins, D. Fews, V. Fews

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

1. (a) The Kingsholm Tenants' Consultative Committee representative thought that paragraph 10 of the minutes of the meeting of 21 March 2005 did not reflect the passions aroused in the debate.

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- (b) The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2005 were taken as read and signed by the Chair.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

Following on from paragraph 14, the Tenant Participation Officer's report on the issues identified on the walkabouts had not been distributed to all Members of the Tenants' Forum. The Head of Housing Services undertook to distribute the report with minutes of the current meeting.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

4. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

There were no petitions or deputations.

5. WHAT'S COOKING

1. The Head of Housing Services reported that the new Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), to be called Gloucester City Homes, would be operational in December. It's remit would be to achieve an Audit Commission 2* rating for housing services and so qualify for £39 million from Government funding over the next few years. This would only be achieved by listening to and responding to tenants' needs and aspirations.
2. Morrisons Facilities Limited had been awarded the contract for response repairs and voids works.
3. Anti-social behaviour remained a major concern of tenants. Tenants were advised that evictions were a lengthy legal process and that those evicted became the responsibility of the Council's Homelessness Team. They could return to the social housing waiting list, but the Council operated a five year deferment policy in such cases.

6. DRAFT HOUSING REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME FOR 2006/2007 (RDF2534)

The Housing Services Manager explained that this was an initial report on how the £8 million budget for the coming year could be allocated. The proposals were therefore in outline only and details would be finalised after further consultation with an interim report in November and a final report in January 2006.

In response to questions, it was reported that contracts had been awarded for all outstanding properties, except in the Westgate area to have double glazing installed.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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7. THE FUTURE OF TENANTS' FORUM AND TENANT PARTICIPATION (RDF2533)

The Neighbourhood Team Manager presented a report which proposed the Tenants' Forum focus on Council policy, scrutiny, business planning approval and strategic issues. It proposed to establish Neighbourhood Panels which would focus on neighbourhood and community issues at an operational level.

Because the Tenants' Forum role would include scrutiny of the performance of Gloucester City Homes, it was agreed that the Forum should be led by the City Council.

The need for tenants' representatives training was recognised and plans were in place for this to begin shortly.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed tenant participation structure be noted.
2. That a sub group be created of the existing Tenants' Forum to review and agree amendments to the draft Constitution of the new Tenants' Forum prior to the proposed "go live" date for Gloucester City Homes.
3. That the new participation and Forum arrangements are implemented once Gloucester City Homes is operational.

8. CLEANING SERVICES ON THE ESTATE (RDF2531)

The Head of Housing Services presented a report on the development of cleaning services city-wide for all shared areas of blocks of flats, whether large or small.

It was recognised that some flats had never had any cleaning service, whereas some areas had made their own arrangements and had a high level of cleanliness. The proposal would establish a city-wide standard which would not prevent some areas from continuing to make their own arrangements for an even higher standard.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1 APRIL TO 30 JUNE 2005

The Head of Housing Services regretted the report did not make comparison with the best performing councils elsewhere. He thought this would be more helpful to the Forum and that future reports would include such comparison.

Going into greater detail in some areas, the Head of Housing Services said that the Audit Commission placed great priority on gas servicing and a failure to achieve a 99% service level would result in the loss of one star under their rating system. He also reported the target of void repairs taking no more than 20 days.

Complaints made through Councillors were logged and counted in the report.

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9. FUNDING FOR PARRY HALL (RDF2532)

The Chairman of Tredworth Tenants' and Residents' Association outlined the background to the report.

In discussion, the White City Community Project representative stated that the owners of the building, Gloucestershire County Council, would transfer it to the White City Project. The Tenant Participation Officer said that paragraph 7, financial implications, needed amendment and that no virement was necessary.

Several Members raised concern over the lack of a continuing business plan to meet ongoing costs of the use of the hall.

RESOLVED

That with one dissenting vote, approval be given to the £8,000 contribution from the Housing Revenue Account towards the re-opening of Parry Hall, subject to the presentation to Council officers of a credible business plan.

10. TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' SURVEY

This was a late addition to Forum business and was not included on the agenda.

The Heart of England representative outlined the results of the poll.

The Head of Housing Services welcomed the result as reinforcing his department's own findings.

The Head of Housing Services reminded the Forum that Heart of England was now half way through its budget as Independent Tenant Adviser and that tenants should agree how best Heart of England could help them for the remainder of the contract. Heart of England were requested to meet with residents and tenants and report on proposals to the next meeting of the Forum.

11. NEWS FROM TENANT GROUPS

1. Graham Williams of Westgate Tenants' Consultative Committee was unwell. The Forum sent its best wishes for his speedy recovery.
2. Podsmead Tenants' Association finally had an office to work from after 15 years.
3. Coney Hill reported on a successful training day for some tenants. The Forum agreed again on the need for tenant training and the Tenant Participation Officer was requested to provide details of training available for tenants at the next Forum meeting.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. The Westgate Tenants' Consultative Committee representative was concerned over the closure of the Westgate Surgery. Although it was planned that all neighbourhood

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offices would be closed, it was agreed that services would continue to be provided for tenants pending the start up of Gloucester City Homes.

2. The Head of Housing Services thanked the many well wishers who contacted him after his absence at the last Forum meeting.

Time of commencement: 18.00 hours

Time of conclusion: 20.10 hours

Chair