

TENANTS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19 October 2022 at 10:30am
in Committee Room 4, Town Hall

TENANT REPS PRESENT:

Chair & SV for Raglan & Corporation Terrace
Mandy Anderson

Vice-chair & SV for Grange & Cartmel Cresc
Jim Christie

Barrow Borough Council:

Cllr Kevin Hamilton (Chair HMF)

Cllr Bill McEwan

Caroline Wagstaff, Head of People & Communities

Caroline Kendall, Safe & Strong Communities Manager

Cathy Kirk (minute taker)

Before the meeting started, the group held a minute's silence to remember street voice, Jackie Scott, who very sadly recently passed away.

		ACTION
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received Janice Sharp, Deputy Director People & Place, Irene Asbury (SV Lord St Dalton), Nicola Bull (SV Roosegate), Danny Green (SV Broughton Road Dalton); and David Pearson (SV Newton Rd Dalton).</p>	
2.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2022</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record.</p>	
3.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>3.1 Fly-Tipping (Item 3.3)</p> <p>A number of skip days took place in Roosegate and Caroline requested the street cleaner does their rounds the day after bins are emptied rather than the day before.</p> <p>3.2 Choice Based Lettings – New System (Item 3.4)</p> <p>The new system went live in April and has been working well with no problems.</p> <p>3.3 New Rent Figure</p> <p>Caroline advised the Government is currently consulting on taking action to protect households from large rent increase in 2023/24.</p> <p>3.4 Grounds Maintenance & Grass Cutting Contract (Item 9.1)</p> <p>Following a procurement process, Continental Landscapes have been awarded the new contract. They have carried out a one-off end-of-season grass cut on all estates and are currently focusing on the cutting back of hedges/trees.</p>	
4.	<p>TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT BUDGET <i>update</i></p> <p>Since April, the Forum has approved funding from the Compact Budget:</p>	

Community Involvement – Foster Community Events:

- Ormsgill Stronger Together:
Community Queen’s Jubilee Party: £100
- Street Voice for Raglan Court/Sacred Heart Community Hub:
Queen’s Jubilee Party: £99.71
- Street Voice for Raglan Court/Sacred Heart Community Hub:
Fun in the Sun event: £28.50
- Ormsgill Stronger Together:
Halloween & Christmas Parties (four events): £300
- Sacred Heart Community Hub:
Halloween & Christmas Parties (four events): £300

Grants/Donations:

- Purchase of toiletries for Barrow Foodbank - £46.13

The group discussed the Compact budget and the massive underspend. The overall Compact Budget of £10,000 is currently split into eight budget headings – some of which are very rarely spent. In view of the cost of living crisis, with rising food prices and energy bills and the affect this will have on our tenants, the group decided the structure of the budget needs to change.

POST MEETING: It was agreed that the budget should now consist of just four headings, with the remaining 2021/2022 budget and next year’s budget split as follows:

BUDGET HEADING	Current Balance	(2023/24 Budget)
	£9,083	£10,000
• Cost of Living Assistance :	£8,283	£8,700
• Community Events :	£500	£1,000
• Hospitality :	£200	£200
• Travel :	£100	£100

It was also acknowledged that as this budget is HRA funded, the Cost of Living Assistance budget should be primarily aimed at assisting our tenants.

It was agreed a £50 donation be given from the Tenants’ Forum in memory of Jackie Scott to her chosen charity, the RSPCA.

5. ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENT BUDGET *update*

5.1 Environmental Enhancement £5k Budget 2022/2023

Since April, the Forum has approved the following schemes:

- Provision of new fencing/painted at Ormsgill Community Garden: £2,000
- Membership of Keep Britain Tidy Network (sharing expertise through learning events, legal updates, online resources and training) to assist the Safe & Strong Community Team in tackling littering/dog fouling and fly-tipping in the Borough: £1,995

Current balance = £1,005

<p>5.2</p>	<p>Probation Fencing Works Budget</p> <p>With regard to the unspent £9,408 Probation Fencing Works Budget, Caroline W advised post Covid, the Probation team has been concentrating on cutting back overgrown hedges.</p> <p>Caroline W mentioned the corporate grant register which includes service legal agreement money which is ring-fenced – includes the SLA with ASB Action Ltd and Chris Root (Equalities Consultant). She will look to include the arrangement with Probation on this register.</p>	<p>Caz W</p>
<p>5.3</p>	<p>Area Improvement £10k Budget 2022/23 (officers' budget)</p> <p>Various skip days have been organised – total cost c.£1,688</p> <p>Currently progressing the purchase of CCTV cameras which will be located in the Town Centre to help tackle anti-social behaviour. Total cost (including batteries) £4,000</p> <p>Current balance = £4,312</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE</p> <p>Figures provided by Amanda Morris:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of claimants: 816 • Total with managed payment to landlord: 439 • Current average account balance: £467.29 arrears <p>Unable to provide current water figures.</p> <p>Caroline W said the figures are looking good with arrears coming down.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>ASB STRATEGY ACROSS TENURE</p> <p>In May of this year, Caroline took a report to Executive Committee to approve a new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures which replaced the policy for tackling ASB in the Council's housing stock. The new Policy covers ASB enforcement across tenure – both Council and private property - throughout the borough.</p> <p>The Housing Revenue Account will be used to fund ASB costs on Council estates and the Council's General Fund will fund ASB costs in the private sector.</p> <p>Caroline Kendall advised the PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) has been extended for three years. Up until now, it had not been possible to issue tickets but the problem of how to pay tickets has now been resolved which will mean tickets will now begin to be issued.</p> <p>Bill and Kevin congratulated the team on the work they've done in getting to this stage.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE</p> <p>Caroline advised in her new role of Head of People & Communities, she has overseen the integration of the Revenues & Benefits, CRM and Housing Service customer services team into one Customer Services Team which will act as a 'one-stop' shop for customers. Staff are currently being trained and are shadowing colleagues to learn the full range of Council services.</p>	

<p>9.</p>	<p>SAFE & STRONG COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE</p> <p>An organisational chart showing the new Safe & Strong Communities Team was circulated to the group. Debbie Cubiss and Cheryl Waite are responsible for dealing with ASB involving Council tenants; and a new team consisting of Gordon Robson, Peter Buckley and Dan Crowe are responsible Enviro Crime, fly-tipping, littering, abandoned vehicles within the Borough. Simone Singleton and Lisa Lindley will offer support to sustain tenancies – both tenants and non-tenants.</p> <p>Working closely with the Safe & Strong Community Team to prevent and stop ASB are officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Team.</p> <p>Caroline Kendall advised ‘uniforms’ will be supplied for officers but this is on hold until the New Year and in view of LGR.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE</p> <p>Caroline W advised Sam Plum has been appointed as the Chief Executive for Westmorland and Furness Council.</p> <p>Caroline, Les and Bex are very busy attending meetings, looking at the legalities involved in the transferring of services. They are working together to ensure Housing functions – anything HRA funded - is kept separate from other Council services.</p> <p>From tenants point of view, come 1st April, they will see no difference. All legal documentation and systems will be in place from day one.</p>	
<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Equality & Diversity</p> <p>Caroline advised in March this year, Executive Committee approved an updated Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024. This also included an Action Framework and a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Pledge by the Leader of the Council which is displayed in the public areas of Council buildings.</p> <p>Training is to be organised for staff and Members in the New Year.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.</p>	