

TENANTS' FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 13 January 2020 at 2pm

in the Law Library, Town Hall

PRESENT:

Vice-Chair (SV for Raglan & Corporation Terr)
Mandy Anderson

Street Voice for Grange & Cartmel Crescent
James Christie

Barrow Borough Council

Janice Sharp, Assistant Director - Housing
Caroline Wagstaff, Operations Manager
Caroline Kendall, Assistant Operations Manager
Cllr Bill McEwan
Cllr Kevin Hamilton

In the absence of the Chair, Mandy Anderson, Vice-Chair chaired the meeting.

		ACTION
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Allan McIntosh (Chair), Jackie Scott & Irene Asbury (Street Voices for Lord Street Dalton Area); Amanda Morris (Benefits Liaison Officer); and Mervyn Gray (observer).</p>	
2.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2019</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record.</p>	
3.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p>	
3.1	<p>Painting on Raglan Court (8.1)</p> <p>Following Mandy's query regarding painting at Raglan Court, Graham Harcourt had advised the external render was last painted in 2010 and will be assessed again in 2025. The general external paintwork (woodwork, rainwater goods etc) was last done in 2014 and will be painted again during the 2020/21 contract.</p>	
3.2	<p>Windows on Grange & Cartmel Crescent (8.2)</p> <p>Jim to meet with Nigel Clarke on site to look into the problems of draughty windows.</p>	
3.3	<p>Review Cumbria Choice Lettings Policy</p> <p>Caroline W advised the review of the Allocations Policy, will run hand-in-hand with the tender procurement process for the new IT system.</p> <p>Caroline W will be organising a drop-in event for stakeholders and people on the waiting list to get their feedback on the policy.</p>	CW
3.4	<p>Supporting People Funding (8.5)</p> <p>Kevin confirmed in his role as County Councillor, it has been agreed for another year to look at the way forward.</p>	
4.	<p>UNIVERSAL CREDIT</p> <p>Jan updated the group on the current figures provided by Amanda:</p>	

	Total Number of Claimants	Average Account Balance	Total Balance	APA Claimants
In arrears	420	£660.74	£277,510.77	52
In credit	28	(£169.14)	(£4,735.95)	4
Total	448	£608.87	£272,774.82	56

5. TENANTS' NEWSLETTER

Jan advised we currently publish three newsletters a year. Because of costs involved and the fact that a large number of tenants probably don't actually read the newsletter, and the fact that a fair proportion of our stock is leasehold and many young people are using social media, Jan is proposing we reduce issues to two a year – one in the summer (which will include the Annual Report) and a winter edition. Corporately, there is a big push to use social media which allows information and messages to be published immediately (and free of charge).

Mandy and Jim as the two tenant reps around the able, agreed that future newsletters will be published twice a year.

6. HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM REPORTS

Jan summarised reports which will be presented to next HMF on 16 January:

6.1 Five-Year Estate-Based Asset Management Plans 2020-2025

Members will be asked to: endorse the sustainability model scoring outcomes and where appropriate prevent unsustainable investment to properties classified as 'difficult to let'; agree the Plans and agree continued delivery of work via the Procure Plus framework.

6.2 Syrian Resettlement Programme

Members will be asked to note the report and agree Jan continue to make flat-type properties available from housing stock to assist in the resettlement of Syrian refugees and suspend the normal requirements of the CBL lettings system in such circumstances.

6.3 Women's Community Matters: Provision of Top-up Funding

Members will be asked to approve top-up funding of £8,258 from Homeless Prevention Grant allocated for 2019/20 and top-up funding of £8,144 for 2020/21 to Women's Community Matters to enable support to continue to be delivered to vulnerable families at risk of homelessness.

6.4 Housing Maintenance Investment Programme 2020/21

Members will be asked to note progress on achieving and maintaining the Decent Homes Standard; agree the annual investment profile; and agree continued delivery of investments through Procure Plus;

6.5 Hughes Brothers & Sure Group – Fourth Year Review

Members will be asked agree to continue the appointment of Hughes Brothers and Sure Group in line with clause 2.3 of the contract documentation.

6.6 Adelphi Court: Extension of Lease

Members will be asked to agree the extension of the lease for Adelphi Court with Richmond Fellowship to 31st July, 2020.

<p>6.7</p> <p>6.8</p> <p>6.9</p>	<p>Housing Revenue Account 2020/21</p> <p>Members will be asked to note/agree (in particular):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Expected Outturn Budget for 2019/20 and the balances on the Expected Outturn Budget for 2019/20 and agree the basis on which the 2020/21 draft Budget is proposed; agree dwelling rent increase of 2.7% agree garage rent increase of 2.7% <p>Part 2 (confidential reports): Homeless Advice Team and Income & Debt Recovery Team</p> <p>Members will be asked to note changes staffing changes in the two teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The group discussed the tour of estates which used to take place and agreed that one should be organised during the summer.</i> 	
<p>7.</p>	<p>TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT BUDGET <i>update</i></p> <p>The current budget was circulated; the travel spend and £100 donation to Abbostvale Tenants' & Residents' Association for Christmas party was noted.</p>	
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENT BUDGET <i>update</i></p> <p>Environmental Enhancement £5k Budget 2019/20</p> <p>There has been no spend from this budget so far this year.</p> <p>Area Improvement £10k Budget 2019/20 (officers' budget)</p> <p>There has been no spend since the last meeting.</p> <p>Proposed Schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caroline Kendall advised of proposed environmental improvements works on Middle White Close area to remove conifers/tidy up and create three areas of shrubbery to break up the grassed areas to prevent children playing ball games directly outside tenants' windows. The issue of fly-tipping on Doncaster Place was also discussed. Removal is not straightforward as it contains asbestos. Quotes from specialist asbestos clearing companies have been requested – which includes decontamination of the area – one quote has come back at £700. This is being progressed. <p>The group agreed both these schemes could be funded directly from the Area Improvement Budget.</p>	<p>Caz K</p> <p>Nigel/Bryan</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>STAFFING UPDATE</p> <p>Jan advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are currently recruiting for a Mobile Caretaker to fill Sam's post. Interviews will be held on 20th January. Gemma Doak started on 13 January in the temporary role in Homelessness as Temporary Accommodations Officer to cover the post due to long-term sickness of a staff member. Management Team have agreed we recruit a Housing Officer to assist with increased workload in Operations Team due to Welfare Reform. The post will be advertised within the next four to six weeks. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Huntingford started on 6th January in the Business Support Team as a part-time Business Support Officer to assist with business admin tasks. 	
10.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
10.1	<p>Large Trees on Raglan Court</p> <p>Mandy circulated photos of two large trees situated next to bin store areas and next to blocks. Problems occur when berries fall off and turn into mush which can be very slippery under foot. The trees also block light to adjacent flats. Agreed Marie Richards will be asked to have a look at the trees.</p>	Caz K
10.2	<p>Cars on Pavement</p> <p>Mandy reported at the back of Corporation Terrace, cars frequently drive up the back street coming from Briggs Street and, where the bollards stop, mount the pavement. Agreed Caroline Kendall will visit the area.</p>	Caz K
10.3	<p>Durham Street – under the arches</p> <p>Mandy advised the area underneath the arches is being used to sell drugs and recently a passerby had a knife pulled on him. The area needs either lighting or closed up. Caroline Wagstaff agreed to make some enquiries about this matter.</p>	Caroline W
10.4	<p>Footpath Lighting</p> <p>Bill advised Cumbria County Council are responsible for all street lighting, however Barrow Borough Council are responsible for footpath lighting in the Borough. Currently, any issues relating to footpath lighting are co-ordinated through via Brian Vickers. In order to streamline the process, it is suggested BBC footpath funding is passed over to CCC so they can manage and maintain footpath lighting alongside street lighting. Jan agreed to look into this.</p>	Jan
10.5	<p>Survey of Tenants & Residents (STAR)</p> <p>Caroline W advised letters are being sent to three companies inviting them to tender to carry out the STAR survey. The deadline for tenders back is 10 February. Following appointment of a company, the surveys will be posted out to tenants mid April – will include option to complete online. The survey will be publicised in advance on social media.</p>	
10.6	<p>Equalities & Diversity Strategy</p> <p>Caroline W advised there are a few amendments needed to our Equalities & Diversity Strategy which will also incorporate data obtained from the STAR survey.</p>	
10.7	<p>Scrutiny of Tenants/Residents Association Constitutions</p> <p>Caroline W advised audits of all available accounts had now taken place – some associations did not provide their accounts. Recommendations from Audit are awaited and once these are received the scrutiny process can recommence.</p>	
11.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Monday, 2 March 2020 at 2pm in the Law Library, Town Hall.</p>	