

NOTES OF A SHELTERED HOUSING CONSULTATION GROUP MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13 JUNE 2005

Present: -

Tony Bodgin	ECC	Mrs T Burrow	Toronto House
Steve Deakin	ECC	Mrs J Smith	Rennes House
Mrs V Parr	Southlands	Mrs B Clench	Faraday House
Mrs Chisholm	Southlands	Mrs V Phelps	Teazle Court
Mrs S Banwell		Miss J Martins	Nelson Close
Southlands		Mrs G Tyrrell	Globefield
Mrs J Doyle	Southlands	Mr P Tait	Grandisson Ct
Mrs JE Welham	Aldens Road	Mrs S Bath	Nelson Close
Mrs Kirby	Aldens Road		
Mrs M Zelent	Aldens Road		

Apologies: -

Mr W Bell, Yvonne Trude Senior Warden, Mrs P Stoneman Grandisson Ct., Mr K Murray Grandisson Ct, Mrs S Lancaster Magdalen Gdns, Mr F Griffiths Abbeville Close, Mrs Winham York House, Mrs S McCleod York House.

Introduction

Tony Bodgin opened the meeting with a general introduction.

Choice Based Lettings – Exeter Home Choice

An Exeter Home Choice Open Day is to be held to launch Exeter's new Choice Based lettings scheme. The open day will be held on 15 July at St Georges Hall and will be open to the public from 1.30pm.

The first adverts for the new scheme will appear in the Express and Echo on 14 July. If you want to move and have already filled in an application form, your details will automatically be transferred to the new scheme, otherwise you will need to fill in a new application form which can be obtained from the Civic Centre, online or by ringing 265889. The new application form is 18 pages long, but it is simple to complete. There will also be a link to the form from the new tenants website when that comes online.

Project Cosmic

The group were given an update of the tenants website. Project Cosmic have come up with two designs and these were shown to the group on the overhead projector. The group were unanimous in the choice of the blue design due to the fact that it was easier to find their way around and the listings were all situated down one side.

Older Peoples Strategy

The Older Peoples Housing Action Plan has now been developed.

It will be going before Committee on 7 June and then to the Executive on 17 June.

A copy of the Action Plan was distributed to the group for discussion (a copy of the Action Plan is included with these notes). The Older Peoples Action Plan covers the whole city and not just council sheltered tenants.

The first objective in the plan is to ensure that all existing stock meets the standards suggested by Supporting People. Sheltered tenants were asked to complete a questionnaire to prioritise the facilities in sheltered accommodation. A copy of the results was circulated to the group for discussion. Walk in showers featured prominently in the results received.

Overall, a budget of over £4 million will be required to tackle the identified works.

Bedsits will be a problem. A recent consultation with residents in Aldens Road bedsits found that 7 would like to move to larger accommodation, 5 would like to stay where they are, 1 had no preference and 1 did not respond. The two remaining properties were vacant at the time of the consultation. Peter Taunton the Interim Head of Housing and Andy Carr the Senior Architectural Surveyor will visit the bedsits at Toronto House on the 24 June. A representative of the Sheltered Forum will attend.

Meanwhile Phil Mills the Tenancy Services Manager and Ed MacMullen of the Supporting People team will be visiting various sheltered schemes to interview tenants as part of the Supporting People review that the service is currently undergoing.

Tony asked for representatives who would be prepared to be involved with the Action Plan Focus Group. Joan Smith, Gladys Tyrrell and Viv Phelps were elected.

The first meeting of the Focus Group will involve Peter Taunton, the Interim Head of Housing, Phil Mills and Neil Shire, Repairs & Maintenance Manager. The date for the first meeting will be in the second or third week of July.

Repairs Performance

A copy of the repairs 'Satisfaction Survey Responses for January to March' was circulated to the group for discussion (a copy of which is included with these notes).

The overall number of people happy with the repair work they have had carried out is up from 94% to 99% for Signpost and from 96% to 99% for Direct Services. More importantly, the number of responses is up from 6% to 19% for Signpost and 16% for Direct Services. Part of the increased response is due to the introduction of a telephone survey service. This will be piloted for one year and then reviewed. The percentage of orders completed on time must be 95% or above in order to meet our targets. The actual figures achieved are Direct Services 87% and Signpost 90%. The poor performance of our contractors is a key priority. With new contracts due next April the contractors must be able to demonstrate their commitment to providing a quality service.

Two sheltered tenants along with three from the Tenant & Leaseholder Group are on the kitchen modernisation group. It was suggested that this group is also tasked with sitting on a Repairs Contract Working Group.

Business Plan

Those who have been involved in drawing up the business plan were thanked for their time and input into the plan. The Business Plan must be presented to the Government Office South West before the July deadline.

Head of Housing

Joan Smith was one of the tenants who took part in the interview for the new Head of Housing. Four people were interviewed for the post and were asked questions by a panel of tenants as part of the interview process. Joan said that she found the experience very interesting. Steve Warren has been appointed to the post and will be starting work with Exeter City Council at the end of August. He will be invited to the next meeting in September.

Tenant Training

The next tenant Training event will take place on the morning of 22 June at the Grosvenor Church, Barnstable. The training is entitled 'Things are warming up in Devon' and will include a presentation on Global Warming by Ian Bateman of Devon and Cornwall Housing. The afternoon will be taken up with the Annual General Meeting of the Devon Tenants Forum. Your representatives are Viv Phelps, Chris Symes, Joan Smith and Gladys Tyrell.

The group were advised that a coach will pick up tenants from Exeter City Council, Devon and Cornwall Housing and East Devon District Council at Apple Lane opposite the Sowton Park and Ride, leaving at 8.30am prompt. We should arrive back in Exeter at around 4.30pm.

Best Value in Housing

Best Value has been reintroduced but in a slightly different format. The Government have said that councils make efficiency saving of around 3% per year. These efficiency savings can be in the form of money saved or service improvements.

There is no fixed timescale for the savings. They will be ongoing and will be year on year savings or improvements in efficiency. Best Value will link in with the Tenant Participation Compact, which is being revised.

Survey

A survey was circulated to the members of the group. The survey 'Do you enjoy getting outdoors or is that too much trouble?' will form part of research being carried out by Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot-Watt University. The participants will have the opportunity to win a prize of £300. The survey is split into two parts and covers indoor and outdoor activity.

Next Meeting: Monday 12 September Buckerell Lodge Hotel 2.00 pm start.

Anyone requiring a taxi should, as usual, phone ZCARS on Exeter 422888.

On the agenda next time: -

- New Head of Housing & Social Inclusion
- The Older Persons Strategy
- Repairs Performance
- If anyone has any issues they want raised at the next meeting please contact Steve Deakin on 265698, but make sure you allow enough time to organise a response.