

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

TENANT & LEASEHOLDER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 7PM MONDAY 12 JANUARY

RENNES MEETING ROOM, CIVIC CENTRE

Present:	Terry Anderson	Kim Barnstable (Observer S area)
	Liz Belchamber	Jayne Bennellick
	Sarah Blay	
	(Observer S area)	Stephen Collier
	Barbara Haizelden	George Hood
	Lyn Kaczanow	Jackie Laskey
	Gemma Lissaman	Alison Moore
	Viv Phelps	Tony Powell
	Rod Simons	Joan Smith
	Steve Warran (ECC)	Lawrence Blake (ECC)
	Tony Bodgin (ECC)	Jenny Berry (ECC)
	Chris Winter (ECC Observer)	

- 1. Apologies:** Moira Barker, Stephan Bouloux, David Payce, Marion Watkins
The observers and Committee members introduced themselves.
- 2. Accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2008** was agreed apart from apologies for Liz Belchamber to be added.
- 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes** – None.
- 4. TALC Election Process**

Application packs were distributed to all tenants and leaseholders in attendance. The pack has been changed slightly since 2006 and includes updated Constitution and the agreed Code of Conduct and a provisional indication of the Election Process time scale, with the results being announced at the AGM on Monday 22nd June 2009.

Action: Individual letter to tenants and leaseholders and necessary revision of dates occurring prior to the AGM.

The suggestion to revise areas/number of candidates will be postponed until the new Committee takes up office because it is too complex to be considered prior to the elections.

- 6. Status Survey**

Lawrence Blake presented the brief results from BMG Consultants (Copy of slides attached). Of those surveyed, 76% had contacted ECC during the previous 12 months and of these 82% had telephoned (emphasising need to keep telephones well manned). Key observations in view of the survey results are the need to review the Anti-social Behaviour policy and procedure and to take tenants' and leaseholders' views into account. ECC has to find a balance between maintaining

confidentiality and keeping tenants and leaseholders informed that action is being taken. Sending a letter to tenants/leaseholders following the reporting of a complaint re. ASB was suggested. High levels of tenant satisfaction with regard to repairs were reported. Leaseholders appear to have higher expectations and do not receive a repairs service, but apart from these aspects tenant and leaseholder response figures show similarity. People with young families tend to be the least satisfied and are the least engaged in consultation, so ways of gaining their input need to be found. ECC is also considering areas of high and low satisfaction in different parts of the city. Results of comparisons with other housing providers should be available for the next TALC meeting.

7. **Scottish and Southern and Insurance Commission**

Housing Repairs and Maintenance have been receiving £15 per property by using Scottish and Southern as their preferred supplier for gas and the accrued savings amount to nearly £1,700. Similarly, commission is paid with respect to the Contents Insurance premiums paid through ECC and this amount is now just under £1,800. Ideas were requested from the Committee of what this money could be spent on, to benefit tenants and leaseholders throughout the city. Suggestions:

- Children's play/leisure areas
- Provision of cycle racks at Countess Wear outside One Stop shop
- Trees and bushes to replace ones removed at Countess Wear
- Community garden projects (eg Whipton and Beacon Heath) Noted that Rennes House has a border planted by residents, but other borders there are unkempt
- Seats for the disabled in Customer Services (ECC will supply these during the next refurbishment)
- Tenant led community involvement (see item 11 AOB Testway Housing)

Action: Any further ideas to be forwarded to Tony Bodgin (TB) for consideration.

8. **My Space**

ECC Community Outreach has been working on projects involving youth in four areas of the city: Kings Heath, Belmont, St Thomas and Summerway with the support of a community artist, Stuart Dawson and the ECC Scrapstore. TB suggested future possibilities could be a youth column in Insight, showing of a video diary at the Tenant & Leaseholder Conference in 2010 and partnerships with Housing Associations.

9. **Tenant Services Authority (TSA) National Conversation**

TSA is the new regulator for social landlords and is holding regional events for tenants to consider standards for landlords. Local events are as follows:

Wednesday 4th March, Plymouth, 11am – 1pm

Thursday 5th March, Bristol, 11am – 1pm

Officers are not allowed to attend but will arrange transport for those wanting to go and ECC will pay the expenses (not from TALC budget). Steve Warran stressed that it is imperative that some of our tenants attend as identical standards for Housing Associations and local authorities will be established and effective from April 2010. The TSA will replace the Housing Corporation as regulator for Housing Associations and currently there are no equivalent standards for local authorities. The Chair also encouraged members to attend. A TSA representative will be invited to attend the Tenant & Leaseholder Conference on Saturday 19th September (still during the TSA Consultation period). The TSA will work closely with the National Tenants' Voice (NTV) and a Member Briefing on NTV was distributed, showing tenant involvement and elected representation.

10 CVS Training (Emma Hall)

TB circulated a list of possible workshops and asked members of the Committee to tick against those they wished to attend. Training is to be held at Wat Tyler House.
Action: TB will make arrangements regarding times and dates with CVS.

11, Any Other Business

Torquay Conference

Viv Phelps reported on a session she attended at the Torquay Conference re. Testway Housing, a Housing Association that has rapidly improved from poor standards. Their tenants are actively involved in the following:

- Organising wants and needs among tenants, eg swapping paints (avoiding need for loans)
- Health and well-being
- Anti-social Behaviour groups with perpetrators meeting with the complainants
- Resident inspections of their own areas noting the good points and bad points
- Active learning – Sharing of skills between the old and young, eg Pampering sessions, computer skills, tea dances and modern dances
- Boxing – sports cage kept by children with equivalent sponsorship from business

Events are held in a community hall or house and are cheap as all help with catering. They are effective in getting residents to meet together. Testway facilitate CRB checks for volunteers working with children or vulnerable people.

Action: Allie Moore to find out about arrangements for insurance.

Meeting with Communities & Local Government (C & LG) re. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Review

Allie supplied handouts from the meeting with other tenants and C & LG that she attended on 19th December in London when she presented the case for Exeter of why we should subsidise other authorities who are not managing their budgets, with the result of ECC being forced into debt and it was suggested that the Government itself should pay off historical debts (£17bn). Discussion was very harsh and some tenants were disruptive. She was the only tenant from the South West and from an authority not in debt. There was no feedback from the C&LG to indicate any outcome of their discussions. Information about the Review can be found on the Communities and Local Government website. The Review ends in April when options will be reported back to ministers. TALC will be up-dated re. progress. SW advised that the national HRA currently stands at £194m (more money received than issued to councils) and therefore the £1.152m we subsidise is not currently being redistributed. See slide 11, page 2 of Housing Finance Handout. SW offered thanks to Allie (echoed by the Committee) for fighting on behalf of ECC tenants.

Boundary Committee Review

The Boundary Committee should report back to Government (delayed by judicial reviews) prior to the next TALC meeting and representatives were urged to submit their views to the Boundary Committee if they have not already done so.

Pinhoe Road Surgery

Mosquito has been fitted and seems successful as deterrent against vandalism.

Signed
Chair

Next Meeting: 7pm on Monday 23rd February, 2009 at the Buckerell Lodge Hotel