

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2008 AT 1PM

Present:

Terry Anderson	Rod Simons
Liz Belchamber	Joan Smith
Stephen Collier	Marion Watkins
Bob Halpin	Steve Warran (ECC)
George Hood	Tony Bodgin, (ECC)
Lin Kaczanow	Neil Shire (ECC)
Alison Moore	Steve Deakin
	Jenny Berry (ECC)

1. **Apologies** were received from Gina Goodfellow, David Payce, Viv Phelps
Resignation of Pat Brosnan (ill health) reported. New rep to be elected at the next Sheltered Housing Forum.
2. **Accuracy of the minutes of the Special General meeting and ordinary meeting held on 8 April 2008**
Agreed.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes**
None.
4. **Update from RAT Team on leaseholder consultation**

At ECC's request RAT members have been telephoning leaseholders regarding whether they understand their Service Charge bills and phoning tenants and leaseholders living in flats, regarding the quality of life and improvement of services. They have carried out 110 surveys of 62 questions and another 40 surveys are planned. Information is now being fed into the computer. Mike Hopton, the Income Recovery Manager, will be arranging a Leaseholder Forum in the next few months for issues to be raised and addressed. It is important to get views of flat dwellers prior to proposed changes re. allocating service charges to all residents.

The RAT team have so far found that:

- most leaseholders understand the Service Charge bills
- most leaseholders are fairly happy with the standard of communal areas
- communal cleaning is an issue, with mix of old and young tenants causing problems
- Some access problems exist re. people sleeping in hallways and re. drug users

5. Assisting Tenants with Repairs

Neil Shire presented his report 'Undertaking repairs that are tenants responsibility' which proposes a scheme whereby repairs which are the responsibility of tenants are arranged by the Council and carried out by Council contractors. Payment would be made by tenants before the start of work.

Agreed: That a pilot scheme open to all tenants should run for a period of 6 months and for Neil Shire to report back to TALC at the end of this period. The scheme would be publicised in 'Insight' and Technical Officers / visiting officers on site would also promote it.

6. Recharging tenants for abortive calls

Currently tenants are entitled to a small amount of compensation if contractors miss a pre-arranged appointment, and tenants are recharged for pre-arranged emergency call outs if they are not available. Tenants are warned about the charge when the appointment is made. It is proposed to operate a similar system with tenants being recharged £30 if they are not available for any pre-arranged normal repair appointment.

Agreed: For a tenant recharge system to go ahead with consideration of the following suggestions:

- Publicise the scheme in 'Insight'
- Target persistent offenders initially
- Include a contingency for emergencies (to ensure that tenants have a reasonable opportunity to rearrange the appointment if necessary, without penalty)
- Levels of compensation should be the same as the compensation available to tenants for contractor's abortive calls.

7. Housing restructure plans

As a result of last year's Housing Inspection, Steve Warran has drafted a report recommending restructure of the Housing section to change the balance of work and allow for improved monitoring of tasks. This will be considered by the Housing Scrutiny Committee. The recommendations are:

- Creation of an Income Recovery Team to ensure that as much income as possible is collected from rents, service charges and rechargeable repairs. The rent team would move from Tenancy Services, headed up by Phil Mills, and be included with the Leasehold section (under Mike Hopton), freeing Phil up for his involvement in large scale reviews on Estate Management and Sheltered Housing.
- Introduction of a second Estate Officers Assistant post, formalising the present structure.
- Creation of a post reporting to Neil Shire to carry out daily supervision of the 8-9 Housing Assistants in the call centre dealing with arrears, estate management

- and repairs.
- Movement of a clerical assistant post from Mike Hopton's team to the Tenancy Services Team

Another result of the Inspection is the appointment of a Housing Solicitor, Terry Oldham. Terry has already begun dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour cases enabling increased capacity for Estate and Tenancy Management.

8. Housing Strategy Working Group

Meetings have increased from being 6 monthly to monthly (day time) and will link in with the Business Plan. Rod Simons volunteered to join Terry Anderson as the replacement for Sally Lancaster.

Action: TB to supply relevant papers to Rod.

9. Preparation for Annual General Meeting on 25th June 2008

The AGM will meet for the election of officers, currently Chair and Vice-Chair. The position of Secretary was discussed and it was agreed for this to remain with an ECC officer. ECC will allocate a budget from April 2009 so a TALC Treasurer will be required. ECC will still manage the account so no banking will be needed, but TALC will have total control of the budget spending. The meeting on 18th June will give further insight of what will be involved in this position.

Agreed: Elections to take place for positions of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer.
Position of Secretary to remain with ECC.

10. Tenant Conference

Tony Bodgin requested ideas for the programme and volunteers for a Working Group to help with planning the Tenant Conference taking place in September (Wednesday 24th). Ideas included a workshop from the RAT team and information about the new repairs assistance scheme (item 5). TALC requested better publicity and Tony Bodgin agreed to organise a personal mailing to tenants this year.

Volunteers for Working Group: Lin Kaczanow, Alison Moore, Terry Anderson.
It was suggested that Chris Symes should be invited to join.

Action: Invitation to Chris Symes to join group
Publicity letter to be sent to all tenants

11. Any Other Business

Representation - Concern was expressed about the level of representation because tenants in the areas do not know who represents them on TALC.

Agreed: TB to point out TALC Committee members at local forum meetings.
TB to prepare profile, together with photo, of each representative with contact information for publicity in 'Insight'.

Meeting on 18th June – Brenda Steer will be presenting information about the Housing Revenue Account to prepare TALC for involvement in the Business Plan Review. Information will be supplied about the resources currently available for Housing and projections of resources available in the near future.

The meeting will be for just this item and consideration of previous minutes will be deferred for consideration following the **AGM at 7pm on Wednesday 25th June at the Buckerell Lodge Hotel.**

Signed
Chairperson

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 18th June 2008 at 7pm at the Buckerell Lodge Hotel.