

TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER CONSULTATION GROUP MEETING

Tuesday 16 March 2005

MEETING NOTES

Present

Tony Bodgin	Exeter City Council
Steve Deakin	Exeter City Council
Mrs Amoroso	Toronto House
Mrs Burrows	Toronto House
Gladys Tyrrell	Globefield
Chris Symes	Beacon Heath
Joan Smith	Rennes House
Francis Smith	Rennes House
Jim Swain	Shilhay
Margaret Swain	Shilhay
Mrs V Thompson	Hamlin Gardens
Miss J Martins	Hamlin Gardens
Terry Anderson	Widgery Road
Linda Kaczanow	Widgery Road
Richard Ingram	Beacon Heath

Apologies

Viv Phelps, Roger Greenaway

Introduction

Tony Bodgin opened the meeting with a general introduction.

Choice Based Lettings

There are two open days scheduled in order for tenants and anyone with an interest to gain first hand information, ask questions and have any concerns they may have addressed.

The open days are to be held at the Phoenix Centre, Wonford and the Beacon Project, Beacon Heath, both will take place between 10.00am and 3.00pm.

Details of the new scheme have been discussed at these meetings for some months now. The points system is to be replaced by a 'banding' system.

The scheme is due to start in June but the system should be 'live' from mid April in order to test the system.

The scheme will be reviewed after it has been in operation for 6 months.

Options Appraisal

On 22 February the council agreed with the decision made by tenants to keep the council as their landlord, at least for the time being.

This will mean that, although the funding is in place to meet the Decent Homes Standard, there will be no scope for improvements.

The latest initiative to come from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is called Social Housing Efficiency. Councils will now have to make efficiency savings of 2.5% per year. The industry as a whole will need to make savings of £385m in the first year alone. The efficiency savings can be in the form of a reduction in cost or improved/better service. The revenue account is ring fenced so any savings would stay in the council coffers but the amount of grant we receive could be reduced.

The way we carry out consultation with tenants and leaseholders may need to be reviewed, with small groups looking at different housing topics such as repairs, anti social behaviour etc. If the group is too big it can be unwieldy so groups of maybe 5 people could be trained to deal with each issue in isolation.

Louis Barnden, the Independent Tenants Advisor (ITA), is working on a Tenant Participation structure for the future.

Central Heating/New Kitchen Programmes

2500 properties have now had new central heating systems fitted.

This year will see the start of the programme to replace kitchens that fall below the Decent Homes Standard.

There will also be a major change to the replacement process, the focus will now be on individual choice.

The process will begin with a visit from a contracts surveyor. They will design the kitchen layout to the tenants specification bearing in mind the location of washing machine, dishwasher, refrigerator, cooker etc.

The tenant will then receive a visit from the Liaison Officer who will offer a choice of: -

Kitchen Unit Door –

Higrove (oak)
Chelsea Matt (white)

Worktop –

Beach
Brown Marble
Granite
Quartz
Royale

Floor Tiles –

Arran Beige
Cornish Cream
Jersey Tan
Lomond Grey

Wall Tiles –

Cornflower Blue
Diamond White
Dolphin Cream

Wallpaper – Sand
37-075 – Cream/Beige Marble
37-078 - Light Sand/Cream Marble
99620 – White/Grey Marble

Paint -
Emulsion paint to your choice from a small range

Ceiling –
White

The Kitchen replacement programme starts in June 2005 and it is hoped to complete 200 kitchens this year.

3 contractors will be appointed and each contractor will be allocated an area. A group of 5 tenants will be elected to look at the tenders and help appoint the contractors. Nominations were requested from the group to be on the Contractor Selection Panel. Terry Anderson, Gladys Tyrrell, Chris Symes and Richard Ingram were nominated for election.

The four nominees left the room and an election was then held.

The group duly elected Terry Anderson, Chris Symes and Gladys Tyrrell as their representatives.

An election was also held at the Sheltered Housing Consultation Group meeting on Monday 14 March. The SHCG elected Sally Lancaster and Viv Phelps to represent them on the Contractor Selection Panel.

The 3 representatives elected from the Tenant and Leaseholder Consultation Group will join them.

New Complaints Procedure Leaflet

A copy of the Council's new Complaints Procedure leaflet was circulated to the group. This is a follow on from the training day 'So You Want To Complain – Put It In Writing' which some of the group attended last year at the ISCA Centre. The information, which they received at the training, has now been updated.

Project Cosmic

The preparations for the tenants based website are now well underway.

The site will have individual areas (domains) for all the Exeter City Council Tenant and Residents Associations (T&RA).

Training will be provided for the members of each T&RA who will be responsible for updating the information contained on their own site. This will include sections for minutes, news, newsletters, events, fundraising, projects, successes, failures and hopefully a forum area.

The website will be hosted by Project Cosmic, a community based computer training and technology facility in Ottery St Mary.

New Head of Housing

Chris Pegg, the interim Head of Housing, has now left Exeter City Council to continue his retirement. Chris, who took over after the departure of Rod Lock, has been replaced by another Interim Head of Housing Peter Taunton. Peter will hold the

post until a permanent Head of Housing is appointed. It is hoped to invite Peter along to the next meeting to meet the group.

April 4 has been set for the interviews for the permanent post. A tenants interview panel will take part in the interview process. The panel will be made up of 1 Sheltered tenant and 2 from the Tenant and Leaseholders Consultation Group.

3 representatives put their names forward for consideration, Terry Anderson, Richard Ingram and Chris Symes. The three candidates left the room and a vote was held by show of hands.

Terry Anderson and Chris Symes were duly elected by the group to represent them on the interview panel.

Joan Smith, who was elected as the SHCG representative, will join them on the panel.

Please Note

The Head of Housing Interviews have been cancelled for 4&5 April and will now take place on 10 & 11 May.

Right to Buy

A handout was distributed 'Right to Buy – New Regulations' for discussion.

A copy of the regulations is included with these minutes.

The changes will not effect anyone whose tenancy started before 18 January 2005 but will effect anyone whose tenancy started on or after that date. An article will be put in the next edition of Tenants News.

Training

The attendants were asked to fill in a Training Needs Survey. A copy of the survey has been included with these minutes. Could I ask everyone to fill in the survey and return it to me using the post paid label.

The completed survey will give us some idea of what training is needed and what has been done.

Meetings for 2005

Wednesday 15 June

Wednesday 14 September

Wednesday 7 December

Any items for the agenda to Steve (265698) or Tony (265738).

IMPORTANT!

Anyone requiring a taxi to attend the meeting should ring Z CARS directly and not the council.

This arrangement is **only with Z CARS** and will of course continue to be paid for by the council. The telephone number for **Z CARS is 422888**