

**TENANTS PANEL
25 OCTOBER 2016
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEELEY**

Attended by: Dennis Smith (Chair), John Johnson, Garry Champion, Dorothy Clark, Carol McDougall, Ashley Purvis, Linda Bradnum, Angie Payne, Sid Payne, Roy Payne, Tony Williams, Patrick Gafney, Barbara Campbell, Judy Heath, Muna Smith, Michael Wyatt, Brian Jones and Hazel Bruce.

Also in attendance: Emma Norton (TDC) Steve Pearce (TDC), David Black (TDC), Barry Eldridge (TDC), Alan Potter (Roalco Ltd – items 1-5 only), Kevin Bull (Blue Flame – items 1-4 only) and Chris Hehir (Gasway – items 1-4 only).

1. Welcome and introductions

Dennis Smith welcomed everyone and thanked Panel members and other representatives for attending the meeting.

Emma Norton also invited the new members of the Panel – Brian Jones, Garry Champion and Hazel Bruce to introduce themselves.

2. Apologies for absence

Emma Norton advised that apologies for absence had been received from Hazel Harris, Iris Peacock, Pauline Kent, Ron Weyda, Brenda Bragg, Teresa Retter and Jon Langfield.

Emma Norton also advised that John Read and Gill Williams had resigned from the Panel.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 30 August 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record

4. Domestic Gas and Large Scale Boiler Contracts

Barry Eldridge advised that, with effect from 31 October, the domestic gas servicing and repairs contract and the large scale boiler contracts (for sheltered housing) will be merged into one and works will be carried out in the North area by Gasway and South area by Blue Flame.

Kevin Bull (Blue Flame) and Chris Hehir (Gasway) then each gave a brief overview of their organisations and an outline as to how this servicing and repairs contract will be operated.

In response to a comment from Dennis Smith, Kevin Bull advised that their engineers should always leave a boiler as they find it and advised tenants against refixing any covers themselves. In the event of any dissatisfaction with the job carried out, this should be reported to the Council who will arrange for the engineer to be recalled.

5. Responsive Term Maintenance Contract

As agreed at the last meeting of the Panel, Alan Potter gave an update on the two main issues raised regarding Roalco namely satisfaction surveys not being left with tenants and the standard of jobs undertaken.

Alan Potter advised that all operatives have been reminded about the need to leave satisfaction surveys with tenants and confirmed that, since the last meeting, there have been a significant number of slips signed confirming that these surveys have been left. Emma Norton also confirmed that there had been a significant increase in the number of completed survey forms being received by the Council since the last meeting.

Alan Potter also confirm that 10% of repairs and 100% of void works are being post inspected and this has led to a significant decrease in the number of recalls being issued.

6. Sheltered Housing

David Black gave an update on the viability study being undertaken as to the future options for Spendells House and Honeycroft and outlined the responses received from residents to the options identified. David Black also advised that those residents who had not been able to attend the consultation events would be given an opportunity to make their views known about each of the proposed options.

In response to a query from Dorothy Clark, David Black advised that there are various options for accommodating existing residents whilst any preferred option is implemented but, until that option has been agreed, practical arrangements would not be agreed in detail.

In response to a query from Brian Jones, David Black advised that all members of the Service Development and Delivery Committee had been invited to attend the consultation events held at both Spendells House and Honeycroft and that some were making their own arrangements to visit.

In response to comments from both Angie Payne and Brian Jones, David Black advised that there are other schemes within the Council's stock that have the same facilities as Spendells House and Honeycroft which are fully occupied which suggests that location may be an issue. Additionally, there are examples nationally where works have been undertaken to create accommodation with shower facilities where occupancy levels are still low. In view of this, David Black advised that there is a need to ensure that the option implemented is fit for purpose and is able to provide a return on the investment.

Linda Bradnum suggested looking at and extending the eligibility criteria for this type of accommodation, for example so that students, ex service personnel or homeless applicants could be considered. David Black advised that increasing the range of occupancy is one of the options being considered but that the impact of this on existing residents would have to be carefully considered.

In response to a comment from Garry Champion, David Black advised that a financial analysis would be carried out as part of this study.

Further updates will be provided at future meetings of the Tenants Panel.

7. Pay to Stay

John Cholmondeley gave an outline of the pay to stay provisions included in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the likely impact on tenants and the Council.

John Cholmondeley explained that the detailed guidance relating to the implementation of pay to stay has not yet been published but when it is, it will be publicised. In the meantime, work is being carried out to identify which tenants may be liable and a letter has been drafted to these tenants in readiness.

Further updates about this and the other provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 will be provided to the Panel as and when available.

8. Feedback from themed sub groups

Dennis Smith and Patrick Gafney provided feedback on the ARCH Tenants Conference held in September 2016. The issues raised regarding property MOTs, repairs for those in rent arrears and encouraging tenants to carry out their own repairs would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Tenants Performance and Scrutiny Panel.

In response to a comment from Tony Williams, Dennis Smith explained that the Council is eligible for 5 free places at the Tenants Conference as part of their annual ARCH membership.

In the absence of Iris Peacock and Ron Weyda, Barry Eldridge gave an update on the progress of current planned maintenance and improvement schemes.

Feedback from the meeting of the Anti Social Behaviour Sub Group held on 27 September 2016 was deferred until the December meeting of the Panel.

9. Any other business

Dennis Smith promoted the Winter Warmers project base in Harwich. If any Panel members have any donations, please contact Linda Bradnum or Dennis Smith.

Dennis Smith asked if any members of the Panel are interested in attending a Christmas get together and, if so, names to be given to Linda Bradnum.

Next meeting of the Tenants Panel to be held on Tuesday 20 December 2016 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Weeley – time to be confirmed.