

**TENANTS PANEL  
20 JUNE 2017  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEELEY**

**Attended by:** Dennis Smith (Chair), John Johnson (Vice Chair), Ron Weyda, Brenda Bragg, Carole Vann, Carol McDougall, Teresa Retter, Ashley Purvis, Linda Bradnum, Jackie Garner, Roy Payne and Judy Heath.

Also in attendance: Emma Norton (TDC), David Black (TDC), Tim Clarke (TDC), and Peter Russell (TDC).

**1. Welcome and introductions**

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

**2. Apologies for absence**

Emma Norton advised that apologies for absence had been received from Hazel Harris, Sid and Angie Payne, Patrick Gafney, Brian Jones, Iris Peacock, Muna Smith, Pauline Kent, Michael Wyatt, Jon Langfield, Christian James and Barbara Campbell.

**3. Minutes of meeting held on 25 April 2017 and any matters arising**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**4. Communal cleaning contract**

David Black advised that, as a result of current performance issues, the communal cleaning satisfaction survey has not yet been carried out. Once operational issues have been resolved, this survey will be carried out and the responses received presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

**5. Housing Allocation Procedure**

Peter Russell gave an overview of the housing allocation process, including an outline of legislative requirements, guidance and policies, qualification criteria, current banding arrangements as well as confirmation of the number of applicants in each band.

In response to a query from Linda Bradnum, Peter Russell advised that there are a number of reasons why properties can appear to be empty for some time, including completion of works where trades may need to be staggered and multiple refusals.

In response to a query from Dennis Smith, Peter Russell advised that the introduction of fixed term tenancies would bring a consistency across the rented accommodation sector but advised that further guidance about how these tenancies would operate for new tenants of council housing has yet to be published.

Ron Weyda asked about the requirement to provide affordable housing as part of new developments and Peter Russell advised that, in the draft local plan, this requirement was 30% on sites of 10 properties or more

In response to queries from Dennis Smith and Jackie Garner, Peter Russell outlined the provisions in the housing allocation process for those requiring full time or overnight carers.

Peter Russell also outlined the housing criteria for those with spent or pending criminal convictions.

It was agreed that Peter Russell would attend the next meeting of the Panel to outline how the mutual exchange procedure operates.

## **6. Private Sector Housing**

Tim Clarke provided an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the Private Sector Housing team relating to housing enforcement, empty homes, travellers and disabled adaptations.

In response to a query from Dennis Smith, Tim Clarke confirmed that there is a provision in the draft local plan for settled traveller sites but that those travellers that frequently arrive in the district are not looking for settled accommodation.

In response to a query from Carol McDougall, Tim Clarke confirmed that he Council is responsible for ensuring that all rented property is safe and that it also carried out a periodic survey of housing conditions and hold forums for private landlords.

In response to a query from Linda Bradnum, Tim Clarke advised that universal credit is still being rolled out and confirmed that this will have an impact on both council and privately rented housing in terms of rent arrears and could lead to some private sector landlords deciding to sell their properties if they find rent is not being paid by their tenants.

## **7. Minor restructuring**

Tim Clarke advised members of the Panel about forthcoming changes, which will see the rents team line management changing from John Cholmondeley to David Black from 1 July 2017. A presentation regarding rent collection and arrears will be given at a future meeting of the Panel.

## **8. Feedback from themed sub groups**

Dennis Smith provided feedback from the ARCH Tenants Group meeting held on 27 March 2017.

Emma Norton and Carol McDougall provided feedback from the meeting of the Anti Social Behaviour Sub Group held on 16 May 2017.

David Black provided feedback from the meeting of the Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group held on 23 May 2017.

## **9. Any other business**

In response to comments from Jackie Garner, Dennis Smith agreed to raise highways issues with Essex County Council. David Black also advised member of the Panel of the Council's new initiative re fly tipping

In response to a query from Judy Heath, Emma Norton advised that a future tour would be arranged following the completion of works at Grove Avenue and possibly Churchill Court.

No further issues were raised.

Next meeting of the Tenants Panel to be held on Tuesday 29 August 2017 commencing at 2pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Weeley.