

**TENANTS PANEL
26 FEBRUARY 2019
WIX VILLAGE HALL**

Attended by: Michael Wyatt (Chair), John Johnson (Vice Chair), David Bird, Carol McDougall, Sid Payne, Angie Payne, Roy Payne, Dennis Smith, Judy Heath, Barbara Campbell, Patrick Gafney, Robert Martin, Brenda Bragg, Brain Jones and Jackie Garner.

Also in attendance: Emma Norton (TDC), Matthew Wicks (TDC), Steve Pearce (TDC), Peter Russell (TDC) and Rachaelle Litwin (Colchester Borough Council).

1. Welcome and introductions

Michael Wyatt welcomed everyone and thanked Panel members, TDC representatives and other guests for attending the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Emma Norton advised that apologies for absence had been received from Hazel Harris, Iris Peacock, Linda Bradnum, Ron Weyda, Teresa Retter and Garry Champion.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 18 December 2018

The minutes of this meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Housing Investment Programme 2019/20

Damian Williams, Head of Building and Engineering Services, presented to the Panel the draft Housing Investment Programme for 2019/20 that is proposed to be recommended to the Portfolio Holder and explained the reasons behind the removal of the budget for new build and acquisitions. However, the Council is committed to building and acquiring new properties and, during this year, work will start on the 10 starter homes being constructed in Jaywick Sands.

Steve Pearce also outlined the current position regarding the repair and refurbishment of lifts in both general needs and sheltered accommodation.

In response to a comment from Dave Bird, Steve Pearce invited the input of Panel members in identifying locations for inclusion in future programmes of work and this should be directed via Panel meetings or through the Panel's planned maintenance and improvement programme representatives.

In response to a query from Brian Jones, Damian Williams confirmed that funding is available for the demolition of Honeycroft and that this will be part of a larger contract of demolition works. Options for the future usage of the site will then be considered and will be subject to further approval.

In response to a query from Robert Martin, Damian Williams advised that there is not a requirement to retrofit lifts in properties that were built without them. However, new build properties would be subject to current building regulation requirements.

Matthew Wicks agreed to investigate specific issue raised by Dave Bird and also informed the Panel regarding the newly established Tree Register and associated inspection regime.

Members of the Panel noted the contents of Damian Williams' report and agreed that the proposed budget allocation and outline programme are put forward for consideration by the Portfolio Holder.

5. Digital Access Collaboration Project

Rachaelle Litwin outlined the background to and objectives of the digital access project involving Colchester Borough Council, Tendring District Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Rachaelle Litwin also explained the services offered by members of the team and referred to the Community and Digital Fayre events being held in May 2019.

In response to a query from Michael Wyatt, Rachaelle Litwin confirmed that information is held securely on the fixed ipads and that these are locked down to only enable access to certain sites. Rachaelle Litwin also confirmed that, where libraries are used to provide their services this was designed to improve the footfall but, where any libraries are closing, the digital access will relocate to the same venue as the library service.

Following a query from Dennis Smith, Rachaelle Litwin explained how members of the team could assist someone with accessing Microsoft suite of applications.

An opportunity was then provided for members of the Panel to use the sample ipads currently in use in NHS surgeries and community locations in the district.

6. Housing Strategy

Peter Russell outlined the following four priorities of the new draft Housing Strategy:

- Delivering homes to meet the needs of local people
- Reducing and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
- Making the best use of and improving existing housing
- Supporting people in their homes and communities

In response to a query from Michael Wyatt, Peter Russell explained the funding arrangements for the acquisition and building of new homes.

Peter Russell also advised that the properties being constructed in Jaywick Sands as well as three properties being gifted to the Council will be custom built.

In response to a query from Robert Martin, Peter Russell advised that, in 2017/18, 80 families with children were in hotel accommodation which was partly attributable to the decline in the availability of private rented housing.

7. Centenary of Council housing

Emma Norton and Matthew Wicks explained that 2019 marks the centenary of council housing and they outlined some of the ideas for events that are currently being considered to mark this.

Members of the Panel were asked to help spread the appeal for memories and photographs of council housing over the years and also to suggest any other means of marking this centenary.

8. Tenants Panel Constitution and Code of Conduct

Michael Wyatt requested that all members of the Panel review the existing constitution and code of conduct and to feedback to him or Emma Norton any suggestions for amendments. All comments to be submitted by end of March 2019.

9. Involvement in recruitment

Dennis Smith outlined the background to this issue and explained that a number of housing providers already have these arrangements in place.

Following a general discussion, it was agreed that Emma Norton and Michael Wyatt would produce some draft guidelines for involving tenants in the recruitment process and that these would be presented to Panel members for further consideration and, if applicable, approval at a future meeting.

10. Feedback from themed sub groups

Matthew Wicks provided feedback on the meeting of the Tenancy Management Sub Group held on 8 January 2019.

Matthew Wicks also provided feedback on the meeting of the Communal Cleaning Sub Group held on 22 January 2019.

Michael Wyatt provided feedback on the meeting of the Tenant Performance and Scrutiny Group meeting held on 19 February 2019.

11. Any other business

Matthew Wicks to investigate individual issue raised by Judy Heath

Michael Wyatt confirmed his email contact details for Panel members.

No further issues were raised.

12. Date and time of next meeting

To be held on Tuesday 30 April 2019, commencing at 2pm in Wix Village Hall.