

## TENANTS ADVISORY GROUP

**Tuesday 15 October 2002**

### PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs POOLEY (Chairman); Councillor LEGGETT (Deputy Chairman); and Councillor SLATER.

### TENANT REPRESENTATIVES:

Old Town Tenants Association - S Norwood, Miss C Geoghegan

Hampden Park Tenants Association - Mrs J Mullen

Langney Central Tenants Association – M Bryan, B Elphick

Archery Court - D Lewis

New Derby House - Mrs K Kenward, Mr B Shreeves

### ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms J CANNY (Head of Housing Management), Ms G MORGAN (Tenant Participation Officer) and Mr P Marsden (Cleansing Contracts Manager).

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Elkin and Mrs Murray and K Kenward).

**11. MINUTES.** The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2002 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

**12. CLEANSING CONTRACT.** Mr P Marsden, Cleansing Contract Manager gave a brief explanation of the contract and tender process, the contents and the improvements for the Cleansing contract, and also a survey to all households, concerning options for refuse disposal.

Members were also advised about the Government legislation, which had led to changes to the contracts, proposed recycling initiatives, provision of wheelie bins and assisted collections for the elderly and infirm.

Tenants and Members discussed various aspects of the forthcoming contract including street sweeping, assistance for disabled persons, garden waste and waste incineration.

Mrs J Mullen stated that the cost of the green garden refuse sacks was too high and that it was difficult for her to collect them as it meant a trip in a taxi to the nearest centre that sells them. Mr Marsden responded advising Tenants that Officers would be able to deliver sacks to Tenants that had mobility problems.

### NOTED.

**13. DISCUSSION ON TENANT PARTICIPATION.** The Group considered the report of the Head of Housing Management regarding new ways in which Tenants could be involved in service delivery and the work of the Advisory Group. Members were reminded that the Tenants Advisory Group was primarily a forum for tenants to discuss issues, which were important to them and to the future direction of the service. As part of the Part II Best Value Review of Housing Management, the Review team had discussed a range of ways to improve the opportunities for tenants to actively participate in how services were provided.

As a result the views of the Tenants Advisory Group were being sought on how to improve on existing arrangements. The following ideas had been raised as potential ways forward:

- Informal time at Tenants Advisory Group to have “questions and answer” sessions for all tenants to come to if required
- The invitation of Officers from other parts of the Council to discuss the services they provide i.e. Parks and Gardens; Housing Benefits
- The re-launch of a pre-agenda style meeting where tenants can raise issues they would like to see discussed at Tenants Advisory Group, or perhaps a ‘slot’ for this at the All Tenants Association meetings
- Possible affiliation of one tenants group with another to allow tenants a greater voice
- Tenants suggestion scheme – perhaps launched through the newsletter
- Improved links with other community groups
  - Improved feedback on repairs and improvements services

The Tenants Advisory Group was asked to discuss any other improvements they would like to see. Members agreed that a “Tenants Away Day” should be held in November, for all tenants representatives from formal or informal Associations to be invited with the aim of finalising the details of how issues would be introduced.

**RESOLVED:** That a “Tenants Away Day” be held in November, for all tenants representatives from formal or informal Associations invited, with the aim of finalising the details of how issues for improving the Tenant participation.

**14. STAFFING ISSUES.** The Group considered the report of the Tenant Services Manager, detailing the current staffing structure for Housing Needs and Strategy Divisions. An updated set of structure charts was attached to the report together with a list of telephone numbers.

Starters were as follows:

Caroline Frayne, Senior Customer Services Officer

Jan Howlett, Court Manager Avon Court

Leanne Saxby, Court Manager Archery Court

Anne Cairns (not started yet), Lettings and Advice Manager

Phillip Brackley, Area Housing Officer (Temp)

Pauline Delaney, Area Housing Officer

**NOTED.**

**15. PROGRAMMED WORKS/MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS.** The Group considered the report of the Property Services Manager updating Members on the progress of the works comprising Capital Improvements and Planned Maintenance

## Programmes.

The Head of Housing Management reiterated the importance of returning the Tenants Satisfaction surveys once contractors had completed works, and expressed concern regarding the low return on these surveys.

Members were also advised that The Tenants at Archery Court had now met with Officers, with the aim of resolving the problems that had arisen with the contract and the communications between tenants and the Council.

The Chairman took the opportunity to praise the efforts of the Street Wardens and the progress achieved by them so far.

Members noted that the report set out to highlight the major areas of work undertaken within the Housing Investment Capital programme together with the work planned for 2002.

### **NOTED.**

**16. RESULTS OF COMMENTS FROM ANNUAL TENANTS SURVEY - DECEMBER 2001.** The Group considered the report of the Senior Participation Officer informing and updating Members and Tenants on the comments received from the Annual Survey in December 2001.

Members were advised that a postal survey was sent out in December 2001, using the STATUS format (questions that must be asked) to all 4,020 tenants. 1,021 replies were received. A document attached to the report summarised the comments made by tenants and details actions already in place to meet requirements.

Members noted that an area breakdown of the results and a summary of initiatives undertaken so far to address some of the issues arising from the report, were attached at appendix 1 and 2.

Members noted that the consultation feedback was being used to develop service improvements as part of the Best Value Review Housing Management Part II.

The issue regarding the provision of local offices would require more detailed work, the feasibility of such a move would be solely reliant on the availability of resources, and therefore Officers would be reviewing the possibility of more 'surgeries'.

The survey scheduled for December 2002, was much more detailed and should enable tenants to have improved ways to comment on the service.

Members were advised that the results of the survey would be reported back to the Group in April 2003.

### **NOTED.**

### **17. SUMMARY OF CONFIDENTIAL PROCEEDINGS FOR INFORMATION.**

**RESOLVED:** That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as otherwise there was a likelihood of disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972. The relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A are shown beneath the item.

a) **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JULY 2002.** The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2002 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

(Exempt information reasons – Para 9, Terms of a Proposed Contract & 12, Information on Legal Proceedings).

The meeting closed at 7.29 p.m.

**Mrs M Pooley**

Chairman