

# HOUSING STANDARDS BOARD

## Minutes

3 November 2015

7.00pm – 7.30pm

### PRESENT:

#### Committee Members

Cllr Rod Truan (Chairman) (RT),  
Cllr Bob Davis (BD)  
Cllr Simon Carter (Shadow Portfolio Holder  
- Housing (SC)  
Cllr Bill Pryor (BP)

Hugh Hoad (HH)  
*Tenancy Standards Panel:*  
Jo West (JW)

#### Officers:

Cara Coxhead (CC)  
Wendy Makepeace (WM)  
Zulfi Kiani (ZK)  
Jenny Pearce (JP)

#### Tenant Representatives:

*Property Standards Panel:*  
Shaun Russell (SR)

		Action
1.	<b><u>Apologies</u></b>  Darrell Thomas (Leaseholders Standards Panel) (DT), Jerry Gleeson (Leaseholders Standards Panel) (JG), Jane Steer (Tenancy Standards Panel) (JS), Andrew Murray (AM).	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of last meeting and Matters arising</u></b>  Minutes of the last meeting were approved with an amendment to the Apologies for Cllr Simon Carter (SC).	Noted
3.	<b>Cabinet Work plan 2015/16</b>  The draft cabinet work plan was noted.  The contract award for Lift Maintenance has been allocated to the 2016/17 Council Forward Work Plan. No exact date known at present.	Noted  Noted
4.	<b>Briefing Notes</b>  There were no briefing notes.	Noted
5.	<b>Current Consultations:</b>  <i>Pay to Stay: Fairer Rents in Social Housing (Department for Communities and Local Government):</i> The consultation began on 9 October 2015 for a six week period	Noted

	<p>ending on 20 November 2015. The Consultation asks whether tenants with a household income of £40,000 and above in London, and £30,000 and above in the rest of England should be required to pay an increased rent for their property if their rent is currently below market rent levels.</p> <p>The consultation has been sent to the Tenancy and Leaseholder Standards panel for feedback which will be included in the Council's response. Any individual can also respond directly.</p> <p>No responses have yet been received.</p> <p>It is unknown how many tenants in Harlow could be affected. Until the completion of the Consultation no further information is available. As soon as more detail is known it will be reported to the HSB and the Panels.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Report</b></p> <p>The Council is collating all the information required for the Annual Report and further information will be available at the next HSB</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Engagement Strategy</b></p> <p>As part of phase two of the independent review of the Tenant and Leaseholder Participation Agreement, a new strategy is currently being drafted. Areas currently being included within the Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To widen engagement</li> <li>• To understand and improve service delivery that meets the needs of Tenants and Leaseholders.</li> <li>• Improve communication methods.</li> <li>• To reach out to less represented and vulnerable groups.</li> </ul> <p>An Impact Assessment Tool has also been developed for engagement going forward which will look at value for money for each route the Council uses to engage.</p> <p>This will also feed into the current engagement section of the Housing Service Plan, bringing it in line with new strategy.</p> <p>A Training Programme has been drafted, to include 10 half day sessions. This will consist of seven compulsory sessions as well as a choice of 3 optional sessions, chosen by representatives. This will equate to five days training in total. Any sessions not completed this year will run in to the next financial year.</p> <p>An implementation plan timetable for the Strategy has been</p>	<p>Noted</p>

	<p>produced, which includes consultation with all representatives. The document will be sent either by email or post for feedback. It is intended that the final draft will be brought to the HSB in January 2016 for sign off.</p>	ZK
8.	<p><b>Formal questions and answers</b></p> <p>None</p> <p>A set of questions has been received for inclusion in the December 2015 HSB. These will be responded to in the normal way, in writing as part of the December papers.</p>	Noted
9.	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p> <p>The Leasehold Standards Panel has asked if the Property Standards Panel can look at writing a policy which covers the guidelines for erecting satellite dishes. Including areas such as ensuring that the dishes do not cause a nuisance, restrict light, location, who is able to install them and what the size should be.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Property Standards Panel will look into this and report back.</p> <p>A question was raised as to the reasoning behind the re-opening of Passmores as a Free school and whether there would be any cost implications to Harlow Council?</p> <p>As this is a Government funded scheme, this would not be a Harlow issue.</p> <p>A question was raised asking with the requirement to reduce rents by 1% per year over the next 5 years, has the Administration looked at the impact that the loss of rental income from council tenants currently housed within Copshall Close/Aylets Field/The Briars will have on the HRA, and how does the Administration intend to deal with this loss?</p> <p>The decision to demolish had already been factored into the HRA Business Plan as the properties are defective and the cost to bring these up to Decent Homes Standards were balanced against the cost of replacing these homes.</p> <p>Whilst a statement had already been made by the Portfolio Holder for Housing on the implications to the HRA, a further statement will be made in response to this question.</p> <p>A question was raised as to the date of the renaming of Fosters Court?</p>	<p>WM/ZK</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>RT</p> <p>ZK</p>

	This will be reported at the next HSB.	
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The Date of the Next meeting is: 1 December 2015

Minutes of the Environmental SIT meeting were attached the papers but were for information only.

**Background Papers**

NB: These are papers referred to in the minutes of this meeting and are not attached as appendices but that are available for the public or Councillors to study.

Reports:  
None

DRAFT