

TENANTS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 8 July 2024 at 2pm
in Committee Room 4, Town Hall

TENANT REPS PRESENT:

Chair & SV for Raglan & Corporation Terr.
Mandy Anderson

Street Voice for Roosegate
Nicola Bull

**Street Voice for Newton Road Area,
Dalton**
David Pearson

Westmorland and Furness Council:

Rebecca (Bex) Halton, Interim Senior Manager – Housing
Landlord & Homelessness Services
Caroline Kendall, Safe & Strong Communities Manager
Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for Housing &
Homelessness
Cllr Anne Burns
Cllr Anita Husband
Cathy Kirk, Projects Officer (minute taker)

Everyone around the table introduced themselves to councillors Anne Burns and Anita Husband who have been appointed members of the group via the Furness Locality Board.

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| 1. | <p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Caroline Wagstaff, Assistant Director of Housing and Danny Green (SV for Broughton Road, Dalton).</p> <p>Sadly, due to ill health, Jim Christie was unable to attend the meeting.. He has since advised because of health issues, he will be stepping down as Street Voice for Grange & Cartmel Crescent.</p> <p>Post meeting: Agreed flowers will be sent to Jim to mark our appreciation and thanks for everything he has done in his role as Street Voice and Vice-Chair of the Tenants' Forum over the past six years.</p> | |
| 2. | <p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2023</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record.</p> | |
| 3. | <p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>None.</p> | |
| 4. | <p>TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT BUDGET <i>update</i></p> <p>The current Tenants' Compact budget was circulated.</p> <p>Spend since 1 April:</p> <p>Community Events: £50 to Ormsgill Stronger Together towards a community clean up event on 12 July.</p> <p>Hospitality: £140 for flowers for three ladies who ran the Griffin Community Centre for many years and Council tenants who had recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.</p> | |

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| <p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> | <p>ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENT BUDGET <i>update</i></p> <p>Environmental Enhancement £5k Budget 2024/2025</p> <p>No spend so far this year.</p> <p>Balance: £5,000</p> <p>Area Improvement £10k Budget 2024/25 (officers' budget)</p> <p>Caroline Kendall ran through spend since April – mostly involving provision of skips for estate clean ups and the provision of fencing to secure property following violent incident.</p> <p>Balance: £7,110</p> | |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES</p> <p>Bex advised from April this year, the Regulator of Social Housing has changed the way they monitor local authority landlords. They have introduced a new inspection regime – where all landlords with more than 1,000 properties will be inspected at least once every four years. For programmed inspections, landlords will be given six weeks' notice of the inspection taking place.</p> <p>The Regulator of Social Housing has set new regulatory standards to ensure that landlords provide an expected level of service to their tenants. The four main standards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Quality: Stock quality, decent homes, health and safety, repairs, adaptations • Transparency, Influence, and Accountability (including Tenant Satisfaction Measures): Fairness and respect, considering diverse needs, engagement with tenants, information and communications about landlord services, performance information, complaints handling, self-referral • Neighbourhood and Community Standard: Safety of shared spaces, local cooperation, anti-social behaviour and hate incidents, domestic abuse • Tenancy Standard: Allocations and lettings, tenancy sustainment and evictions, tenure, support and supply of mutual exchange <p>Under the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard, we will be required to collect and report annually on our performance using a core set of defined measures – called Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). There are 22 TSMs – which are separated into 12 Tenant Perception Measures – which are questions we have put to tenants via a satisfaction survey. The survey was sent to every council household across Westmorland and Furness, including council stock in Penrith. The remaining 10 measures we gather from management information we hold about our services.</p> <p>Bex advised she had just submitted the TSM data (covering the financial year 2023/24) to the regulator. The regulator will produce a report on the results in the autumn – they don't issues target which must be met.</p> <p>From a health and safety perspective, the Council is fully meeting the standard required.</p> <p>The results of the TSMs have allowed us to develop an Action Plan to tackle those perception measures that came out less than 70%, although in reality, the actual percentage of tenants who were dissatisfied - after excluding those who had answered 'don't know' or 'not applicable' - was less than 10%.</p> | |

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| | <p>The survey has identified that we must improve the way we communicate with tenants. Part of the Town Hall remodelling will involve the creation of two separate reception areas – one for Housing and the other for Revenues & Benefits and general customer service enquiries. The group agreed splitting the two reception teams in this way was a really good idea. Bex added this is the best option for customers and staff alike. Cllr Burns said she was pleased to see there will be more private interview rooms and they will be consulted before the final plans are approved. Judith was pleased with the separation which will help alleviate any unnecessary queuing.</p> <p>The results of the Perception Survey will be published in the next edition of the tenants' newsletter – which will be published in the next couple of weeks – at the same time all the TSMs will be published on our website together with some national figures to see how we compare and also a comparison with local housing providers. This information will also be fed back to the next meeting.</p> <p>The group went on to voice their concerns in relation to the Town Hall remodelling, that there is still a heavy emphasis on moving to a more digitally provided service - not everyone necessarily has internet access or it tech savvy to use it. Judith said this is something that's also been highlighted through the work she does with the Poverty Truth Commission – there is a need to tackle how information is passed on to residents in the community.</p> | <p>CK to add to agenda for next mtg</p> |
| <p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> | <p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Eamont Close Communal Area</p> <p>Anita raised the issue of the weeds surrounding the Eamont Close Community Centre. Caroline advised she is aware this area needs weeding/clearing and is actually meeting with the HM Prison Service tomorrow to enquire if they could do this work.</p> <p>With regard to community groups in the town carrying out litter picks and tidying communal areas, Bex suggested we may be need to look at introducing an incentive scheme around communal areas.</p> <p>Community Centres</p> <p>Nicola voiced her frustration at being unable to use the Roosegate Community Centre to meet with local residents. Bex advised this centre is not owned by the Housing Service but we will make enquiries to establish who does own it and will get back to Nicola. It was also agreed Nicola's contact details would be passed on to Community Development Officer, Simonetta Tiribocchi, with a view to enquiring as to whether Nicola could use Springmount on Roose Road as a meeting place.</p> <p>Circular Economy</p> <p>The group discussed the challenges of re-using certain items. Judith had concerns about carpets being removed from Council properties. Bex advised where carpets are in a reasonable condition they are left in – they are only removed if there are health and safety concerns. Caroline added if pets have been in a property, the carpets would be removed due to risk of fleas.</p> <p>The group also discussed community launderettes where users can not only use washers/dryers but also access a range of support and guidance.</p> | <p>Cathy Kirk</p> |

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| 8. | DATE OF NEXT MEETING The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed. | |
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