



# The Tenants' Forum

17<sup>th</sup> October 2024

The Guildhall

Training Session - 10.30am to 12noon

Forum Session – 1pm to 3pm

	DISCUSSION	Action by
17	<p><b><u>Securing the Future of Council Housing and Update on Regulator of Social Housing in the first six months of the new regime – Head of Service (Business Development and Change)</u></b></p>	
17.1	<p>Training session was delivered by the Head of Service for Business Development and Change. Copies of the presentation are available on request. The key points of this training were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing the future of Council Housing</li> <li>• What are the problems?</li> <li>• Background – capital and revenue</li> <li>• What do we spend the revenue on?</li> <li>• Where does our revenue come from?</li> <li>• Where does our capital come from?</li> <li>• What do we need to spend capital on now?</li> <li>• Rent models</li> <li>• Why is Right to Buy relevant?</li> <li>• The Consumer Standards (Safety &amp; Quality, Transparency, Influence &amp; Accountability, Neighbourhoods &amp; Community, Tenancy)</li> <li>• Regulator grading definitions</li> <li>• RSH judgements since April 2024</li> <li>• RSH general activity since April 2024</li> <li>• Hull City Council interaction with the RSH</li> </ul> <p>The following questions were raised by the Forum and answers provided by the officer:</p>	
17.2	<p>MS asked as Hull City Council are a housing landlord, firstly how do they make the decision to build new properties and secondly how do they monitor the private sector in relation to their provision of properties and their standards?</p>	



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	<p>Officers responded that decision making on new builds is a complex one, looking at existing stock and whether it is sustainable long term or do the Council demolish to build new ones. All relevant partners are involved in the process from start to finish. On the second point, the Private Housing section of the Council monitors closely the standards and provision of private landlords and acts accordingly.</p>	
<b>17.3</b>	<p>BP asked why were benefits for rents still being paid direct to the tenants when the Council know full well that the rent will not be paid, also why were tenants on full benefits able to buy their council property and sell it on to private landlords?</p>	
	<p>Officers responded that on the first point the majority of tenants do pay their rent out of their benefits received, and some have the direct arrangement because they have asked to do so. Rents of £97 million a year are paid to the Council, however £3 million is outstanding with Officers working to secure arrears.</p> <p>On the second point, people may get help from friends and family.</p>	
<b>17.4</b>	<p>BP further asked why was the Council “writing off” former rent arrears?</p> <p>Officers responded that only in circumstances where the arrears were not being able to be recovered then the Council would write off, for example, such as deceased tenants, bankruptcy.</p>	
<b>17.5</b>	<p>MK said she found it strange that “Right to Buy” tenants were able to sell their properties on soon after they had been purchased. She further asked what were the specific standards and regulations for selling a property, in this case when they were being sold from Council to tenant at below the market value and selling on at a higher price?</p> <p>Officers responded the usual standard was the tenant who bought their property had to wait 5 years to sell, it was 3 years, but changed, and that in this time period the tenant would have to pay back some of the value to the Council.</p>	



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	<p>On a further note, the Government, under the changes proposed, may be looking at raising the threshold to 10 years.</p> <p>The Council were in 2024 buying some council houses back from residents to add to the stock.</p> <p>EW was thanked for her session and the presentation.</p>	
<p><b>18</b> <b>18.9</b></p>	<p><b><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></b></p> <p>The Vice Chair chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chair. The relevant housekeeping rules and fire evacuation procedures were explained by the Chair, and he also informed the members that the code of conduct was in place and reminded people not to talk over others that were talking during the meeting and to put hands up if a question needed to be asked.</p>	
<p><b>19</b> <b>19.1</b></p> <p><b>19.2</b></p>	<p><b><u>Policy and Partnership Manager – Streetscene</u></b></p> <p>The Policy and Partnerships Manager (Streetscene) gave a presentation to the Tenants' Forum; the key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key policies and team</li> <li>• Key waste facts</li> <li>• Customer Services</li> <li>• Education and Projects</li> <li>• Love Your Street</li> <li>• Key current projects</li> <li>• How do we increase recycling?</li> <li>• Summary</li> </ul> <p>The following questions were taken from the Forum and answers given by the guest speaker:</p> <p>LG asked about the arrangements for this year's bonfire night, and what was happening to deter wheelie bin thefts and fires?</p> <p>The Officer responded that there was a coordinated response from Waste Management, Police, Fire Brigade and Housing to alleviate fires in bins and the building of high bonfires running up to the night.</p>	



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<p><b>19.3</b></p>	<p>JL asked what the figure was for recycling in Hull as the Council were 46.5%, and would that change in the future?</p> <p>The Officer responded that the national average was 45%, the Council as rightly said was 46.5%, but the new changes indicated that the national average would change to 65%, so a lot of work still needed to be done.</p>	
<p><b>19.4</b></p>	<p>LG further asked if the changes to wheelie bin coverage in other parts of the country would be implemented in Hull?</p> <p>The Officer responded that as Hull is one of the top recycling Authorities in the Country, then no changes were foreseen.</p>	
<p><b>19.5</b></p>	<p>JL asked why polystyrene was not able to be put in blue bins for recycling?</p> <p>The Officer replied that polystyrene was not recyclable so needed to be put in the black bin, and was to be phased out as a material, hence fast-food establishments bringing in cardboard cartons for use.</p>	
<p><b>19.6</b></p>	<p>A member asked what happened to all the waste from flats, was this recycled?</p> <p>The Officer responded that yes this was the case.</p>	
<p><b>19.7</b></p>	<p>Further to this there was a general discussion on chutes in flats and the possibility of closing them altogether. The Chair of the MSL group was not in favour of this suggestion. Where there are two chutes in blocks, one could be for general waste and the other for recycling. MSL group to continue to discuss.</p>	
<p><b>19.8</b></p>	<p>MK asked why “Bring out your Rubbish” days did not happen in all parts of the city?</p> <p>The Officer responded that the Councillors for the areas paid for these events out of their local budgets, but this was not a preferred option for Streetscene and Waste Management.</p> <p>The Chair interjected at this point to state that the rubbish days were a balancing act and may deter fly tipping.</p>	



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<p><b>19.9</b></p> <p><b>19.10</b></p> <p><b>19.11</b></p>	<p>DM referred to a previous point on wheelie bin fires and said that on Grasby Road estate, this issue was happening all the time. He further said that operatives from Streetscene were refusing to clear rubbish from gullies and kerbs.</p> <p>The Officer said she would investigate this issue.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the perimeter fencing and hedging around Winifred Holtby Academy was full of rubbish, but no one claimed responsibility for it.</p> <p>The Officer responded that in these cases, the Community Payback Team would step in to remove litter and rubbish from the site stated.</p> <p>The Officer was thanked for her presentation.</p>	
<p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>20.1</b></p> <p><b>20.2</b></p> <p><b>20.3</b></p>	<p><b><u>Minutes and Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Tenants' Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024 were checked, proposed and agreed.</p> <p>Proposed by CP Seconded by SL</p> <p>Page 2 – JL stated that the data showing 14.5% of decent homes not up to standard was appalling, that equated to 3000 homes in the city.</p> <p>Officers responded that this data did include people who had refused the decent homes work, Housing Investment were working on this issue to bring all the council properties up to decent home standards.</p> <p>Following a query by MS from the Annual General Meeting, the following statement was read out:</p> <p>“A member asked if the Council were providing “Warm Zones” and help to residents following the scrapping by the Government of the “Winter Fuel Payments”?</p> <p>Response from Head of Service - Business Development and Change: - In previous years it was funded by Household</p>	



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<p><b>20.4</b></p>	<p>Support Fund (HSF). The government put out an announcement in early September that there would be some HSF money, as yet there has been no indication of how much, nor what it is allowed to be used for. Therefore, we cannot at this stage promise to fund any other schemes.</p> <p>JL asked why the Tenants' Forum Committee had been elected in the way it had from 2023 to now.</p> <p>Officers responded that all nominations were sent out well within the 21-day period and that the AGM was run in the correct and proper way allowing everyone attending to vote for the Committee. The process has not changed.</p>	
<p><b>21</b> <b>21.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Vice Chair of the Tenants' Forum update</u></b></p> <p>The Committee had met to discuss the forthcoming meeting of the Tenants' Forum, and agreed the agenda for the meeting, they also discussed issues on the Action List and received updates from Officers.</p>	
<p><b>22</b> <b>22.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Feedback from Groups</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Customer Access Focus Group</u></b></p> <p>The Customer Access Focus Group met last week to receive presentations and updates from the Customer Operations Manager, Customer Journey manager, and the Business Change Manager.</p> <p>Key points taken from the presentations were: The total number of inbound calls continue to decrease. There also appears to be a downward trend in calls.</p> <p>Average handle times are gradually decreasing, and this is consistent with changes to how advisors log the work they've carried out after a call (called an advice note).</p> <p>A campaign is due to go live any day to advise tenants that it may be a good idea to start turning boilers on to avoid a sudden influx of calls when the colder weather starts.</p>	



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<p>22.2</p>	<p>Overall customer satisfaction and experience continue to be rated as good. Footfall at The Wilson Centre has experienced a slight decline across the last 12 months, however overall, the transaction length with an advisor in a Customer Service Centre is increasing.</p> <p>Members of the group will be visiting the Contact Centre next month to see what goes on behind the scenes. Dates and times have been communicated to members of the group.</p> <p><b><u>Multi Storey Living Project Group</u></b></p> <p>At the monthly meeting an Officer from the Highrise Team provided updates on their projects for the blocks that were currently taking place including care taking and cleaning.</p> <p>At the next meeting Officers would be giving a presentation on “Cuckooing” in flats and dwellings.</p>	
<p>22.3</p>	<p><b><u>Publicity Project Group</u></b></p> <p>The Publicity Project Group continue to work on producing the Hull Housing News newsletter. The Autumn Edition should be landing on doorsteps any day now, and it is also available on the web.</p> <p>At the last meeting, the group met and discussed ideas for future editions of Hull Housing News. In addition to this, the group also discussed the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and what work the Housing Service are doing to meet this standard.</p>	
<p>23</p> <p>23.1</p>	<p><b><u>Feedback from TARA's</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Dorchester Road and Midmere Avenue TARA</u></b></p> <p>PR gave a verbal update on what had been discussed at the recent meeting. He said that all the group had spoken about roads in the catchment area, ASB and general issues.</p>	





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<p><b>23.2</b></p>	<p><b><u>Women's Voice of the Great Thornton Estate TARA</u></b></p> <p>A group of ladies from Thornton Estate approached the Tenant Participation Team in May 2024 regarding establishing a tenant and resident group for women. The Tenant Participation Officer met with the ladies who expressed interest in joining and establishing the TARA.</p> <p>All the ladies who attended the meetings have unanimously decided that the TARA will be called "Women's Voice of Thornton Estate Tenant and Resident Association" (WV TARA)</p> <p>Following are the objectives of the TARA: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The TARA will represent all the women living on the Thornton Estate.</li> <li>- Make the Neighbourhood safer.</li> <li>- Improve the local environment.</li> <li>- Promote community spirit.</li> <li>- Improve the services that they receive.</li> <li>- Arrange community activities by working in partnership with Hull City Council Housing, Tenants Participation Team, Area Team, and any other organisation that supports the group to meet its aims and objectives.</li> </ul> <p>The WV TARA have finalised their constitution and have elected their committee. Their next meeting will be on 8th November, and they will provide an update at next the Forum.</p>	
<p><b>24</b> <b>24.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>JL stated present Tenants' Forum Committee do not challenge debit management figures.</p> <p>Response: The Tenants' Forum Committee have already booked a session with relevant officers to discuss Housing Finance, Rents and Rents Arrears as requested by JL, the session is due to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> November.</p>	
<p><b>24.2</b></p>	<p>JF asked about setting up a TARA in the Spring Bank Area of the City as she and other residents were concerned about "cuckooing", ASB and fly tipping in streets.</p>	





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<p><b>24.3</b></p> <p><b>24.4</b></p>	<p>Officers responded that the TP Team would help in any way possible to start a group with them.</p> <p>SL also stated that as she lived in the area, she would assist also.</p> <p>The Chair gave a brief update on the Committee's visit to the ARCH Conference in Rotherham.</p> <p>RB informed the Forum that the Hopewell Road and District TARA may be resurrected in the future.</p>	
<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b><u>Close of Meeting</u></b> The meeting closed at 2.40pm</p>	

<p><b>Estimated cost of meeting.</b></p> <p>Postage, paper, photocopying: £73</p> <p>Refreshments: £323.70</p> <p>Expenses: £26.77</p> <p>Taxis: £0</p> <p>Room Hire: £0</p> <p>Miscellaneous: £0</p> <p>No of invite letters sent: 120</p> <p><b><u>TOTAL COSTS £323.77</u></b></p> <p><u>Savings: by emailing, not using headed paper and no cost of room booking £115</u></p>	<p><b>Details of Meeting.</b></p> <p>No of Staff at meeting: 8</p> <p>No of guest speakers: 1</p> <p>Councillors at meeting: 0</p> <p>Forum Quorum: 12</p> <p>Tenant members: 20</p> <p>Resident members: 3</p> <p>None members: 2</p> <p><b>TOTAL No of Volunteers at Meeting: 25</b></p> <p>Duration of Meeting: 2hrs</p> <p>Pre meeting: 12hrs</p> <p>During meeting: 50hrs</p> <p><b><u>TOTAL: 62hrs</u></b></p>
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