**MINUTES OF THE TENANTS’ AND LEASEHOLDERS’**

**CONSULTATION FORUM**

Date: 8 April 2024 Time: 18:00

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| **Directorate** | **Housing** |
| **Present:** |  |
| Dave Larkin (DL) | Resident Hugglescote, Hugglescote TA and T&LCF Chair |
| Nigel Hill (NH)  | Resident Hugglescote, Hugglescote TA |
| Lorraine Nicholls (LN) | Resident Coalville and Friends of Greenhill TA |
| Elaine Hill (EH) | Resident Hugglescote and Tenant Scrutiny Panel member |
| Merle Moran (MM) | Resident Whitwick and Whitwick & Thringstone TA |
| Val Moss (VM) | Resident Ashby and Willesley TA |
| Sue Richards (SR) | Resident Whitwick and Whitwick & Thringstone TA |
| June Cave (JCA) | Resident Whitwick and Whitwick & Thringstone TA |
| Diane Knott (DK) | Resident Hugglescote and Hugglescote TA |
| Isobel Harris (IH) | Resident Hugglescote and Hugglescote TA |
| William Forrest (WF) | Resident Whitwick and Park View TA |
| Leah Quinton (LQU) | Resident Ashby |
| Laura Quinton (LQ) | Resident Ashby and Tenant Scrutiny Panel member |
| Cllr Andrew Woodman (AW) | NWLDC Portfolio Holder for Housing |
| Cllr Alison Morley (AL) | NWLDC Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing |
| Amanda Harper (AH) | NWLDC Housing Management Team Manager |
| David Scruton (DS) | NWLDC Housing Strategy & Systems Team Manager |
| Sharon Cole (SCO) | NWLDC Resident Involvement Team Leader |
| Laura Smythe (LS) | NWLDC Resident Involvement Officer |
| Peter Warren (PW) | NWLDC Resident Involvement Administration Assistant |
| **Apologies:** |   |
| Kathleen Alderman (KA) | Resident Ashby and Central Ashby TA |
| Gillian Dyson (GD) | Resident Ashby and Central Ashby TA |
| Lisa Sherratt (LSH) | Resident Ashby and Willesley TA |
| Barry Barlow (BB) | Resident Castle Donington and Castle Donington TA |
| Margaret Barlow (MB) | Resident Castle Donington and Castle Donington TA |
| Antoinette Fallon (AF) | Resident Coalville and Friends of Greenhill TA |
| Joyce Gee (GJ) | Resident Whitwick and Whitwick & Thringstone TA |
| John Lakin (JL) | Resident Whitwick and Park View TA |

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|  | **ITEM** | **ACTION** |
| **1**. | **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**DL welcomed everyone. Apologies as above. |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising** The minutes were accepted as a true copy. Matters Arising: *TLCF is constituted, therefore policy reviews come under the TA group. SCO ran through the Constitution document and advised she would send a copy out.* * Update 08/04/2024: SCO advised that we are in process of organising an event to include all involved tenants and residents to review the structure and look at what each group does and its priorities including tenant associations, invites should be sent out in the next 7 to 10 days. SCO added, if you would like to influence, please do come along to the Leisure Centre on 30 April.

*KA mentioned that the downstairs toilet at Hood Court had no sink. LS said she would investigate.** Update 08/04/2024: LS stated that there had been some confusion and there was a sink next door to the toilet.
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| **3.** | **AGM**DL stepped down as ChairSCO asked for nominations for the position of ChairThere were no other nominations other than DL, EH And WF seconded DLs nomination to carry on as chair.As the elected Chair, DL continued the meeting  |  |
| **4.** | **Service Update from David Scruton, Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager**DS gave the following update:The new CBL portal was launched today (9th April) for more information you can log onto [Find a Home - North West Leicestershire District Council (nwleics.gov.uk)](https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/find_a_home)And that will give the links needed to registerThe new system will mean we will start introducing the new allocations policy which was approved by Cabinet at the end of the last year.In the short term whilst people are switching over to the new system we will continue to advertise on the current website so those with live application can continue to go on and bidThe register has been shut for a couple of months but we have continued to register emergency cases in the back office so that people that might have qualified for an offer don’t miss out.Everyone will need to fill in a new application to ensure that the information we have is up to date although if you have submitted proofs previously for an application we will be able to copy these overDavid Moxon our Housing Income and Systems Team Leader is retiring at the end of the month. He will be familiar to many members of this group as well as members of the  Performance and Finance working group in which he has had a key role for many years. Any queries or questions that you would have directed to him can be sent to david.scruton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk in the short termThe systems team are working hard behind the scenes so that the service can run as efficiently as possible and a lot of work is being done around repairsAs we have just passed the end of the financial year the team are now preparing our annual returns that we have to provide to various parts of government to show how well we are working as a department.Alongside the switch to the new CBL system we have also moved to a new system for managing homelessness. Changes will be less visible to customer although some letters and standard documents may look a bit different but the new system should improve the way we are able to support homeless customers and is much more helpful for officers in the background.Finally we have been co-ordinating the four revised policies which are currently going through the council approval process* Anti-social behaviour
* Repairs
* Decants
* Compensation

These are all scheduled to be considered by cabinet at the end of the month and the purpose is to improve our service to customersLQ asked if the new CBL system was working yet because as of 16:50 today there was a message stating register closed.DS replied it was definitely working as he had seen names going on and would take LQs details at the end.DL asked how tenants could be sure that performance figures given to them at meetings were truthful. DS replied that lots of data was captured electronically such as scheduling, the registration of an operative when they arrive at a job, how they did the repair and solve the problem, we just need to triangulate that with the tenant perception. DL commented, when tenants report a fault, do don’t hear anything and you call back two weeks later and there’s no record of it, can’t you give out job numbers.DS replied that repairs wasn’t his area of expertise, but job numbers should be given out when a call was raised.AH added, we do recognise there is a backlog of repairs, and we are finalising a deal with an external provider to help clear the backlog of repairs. AH added, when you do call a repair through over the phone, ask for the job number, if you report via email, then ask for an email back confirming the number, that was you’ll know it’s been raised.AH added, these meeting are for you to challenge us if you don’t think the performance figures we’re sharing with you are correct.LQ stated that it was difficult being given statistical information without a written report to refer to.AH agreed, ideally if you had sight of the report prior to the meeting, you could come prepared with list of questions. |  |
| **5.** | **Service Update from Amanda Harper, Housing Management Team Manager**AH gave the following update: The team has been quite stable in terms of staffing.  We currently have one temporary Housing Officer, Pragna Patel, until July 2024.  Pragna is currently assisting the other Housing Officers with visits, such as tenancy audits.  This is the most efficient way to use the resource in the short term rather than train her on more complex areas of the role that require further training on the system.* Last year introduced the focus on Tenancy Audits – tenancy audits are ensuring we have the correct details of who is living at the property, capturing any vulnerabilities, assessing the overall condition of the property.  We have scheduled 1180 audits and completed 1009 (85.5%).  627 repairs were identified and reported.
* Performance – We’re still finalising the year end performance information but those areas already calculated show an improvement compared to last year.
* Rent Arrears: 2.61%, compared with 2.73% last year.  We have recently been contacted by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council regarding our performance as they have been struggling to see significant improvements since the covid pandemic.  They are reviewing their structure and possibly moving towards a generic Housing Officer role similar to the way we operate.
* Anti-Social Behaviour:  The total number of new cases reported is down compared to last year and the policy has been updated and will be going to Cabinet later this month.  We will be holding some workshops for tenants and members to focus on the procedure and communication.
* Allocations: The total number of allocations reduced in 2023/24, down to 186. This is due to the increased demand on the Housing Register resulting in fewer tenants transferring – further analysis is planned on empty homes.  We also have an increase in the number of properties being prepared for letting at the end of the financial year due to a new support contractor being appointed.
* Tenancy Sustainment – Our Tenancy Sustainment Officers support tenants to access benefits and funding from charitable organisations.  In 2023/24 - £177,337.93 was accessed.  Of this, £51,556.66 was money paid direct to NWLDC in either Council Tax or Housing Benefit payments.  £125,781.27 is made up of applications and sometimes appeals for Personal Independence Payments, Attendance Allowance or Severn Trent Water fund.
* Resident Involvement – We’ve supported some great work undertaken by our Tenants Associations and obtained feedback from lots of tenants, such as almost 180 people seen at the Pop up events to 380 responses to the Repairs survey recently sent out.

Looking ahead at some of the challenges:* The cost of living challenge continues.  We’re working with the Food Poverty Officer to look at ways we can make changes in referrals to food banks to try to break the cycle for those who are regular users, specifically ways to encourage people to maximise income and reduce expenditure.

LQ suggested that the work and availability of the food poverty officer role be advertised and circulated more.VM suggested putting something in Intouch and include information and work of the Tenancy Sustainment Officers.AH pointed out that there had been a spotlight on the work of the Tenant Sustainment Officers in the last edition.LQ suggested that if someone wasn’t a tenant they needed to have access to the information. AH stated she would feed that back to the Food Poverty Officer. * Review of other public services.  Changes have been made within organisations such as EMAS, Police, Social Care, and the NHS which puts greater pressures on our officers.
* Resident Involvement – we will be reviewing the resident involvement strategy this year and are starting with an event for existing tenants and an event open to all tenants show casing the opportunities to get involved.
* Tenancy Support – we will be reviewing the support service available, with a specific focus on Mental Health.  We are working with NHS and Leicestershire County Council (LCC) to recruit a Reablement Worker, funded by LCC, until the end of March 2025.
* Review of Policies – next priority will be to review the Tenancy Policy and incorporate changes to the Successions, Assignments and Mutual Exchanges too.
* Consumer Standards – these new standards introduced by the Regulator for Social Housing will see us reviewing the way we do things in response to new data collected, such as information on Hate Incidents, increasing the opportunities for tenants to influence services and having a greater focus on environmental matters too.
* Systems – we will be moving to a new system for advertising and allocating properties next month.
* Procurement – We need to undertake procurement for Valuations, such as Right to Buy and Rent Valuations and Communal Cleaning.
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| **6.** | **Forward Plan**May agenda items to stay as published. The forward plan may change following feedback from the two involvement days booked for 30 April and 14 May. |  |
| **7.** | **Any other business**LQ asked why it’s called Resident Involvement when it’s mainly tenants.AH replied, there are people in the room and generally involved who aren’t tenantsSR commented that many of the TAs have committee members and attendees that aren’t tenants.JC asked about the end of year financial audit for the TAs.LS advising that we are waiting to hear from Kerry Beavis, Internal Audit Manager and we will let you know. |  |
|  | **MEETING CLOSED**Date of the next meeting: 13 May 2024 at 18:00Venue: Forest Meeting Room (Council Chamber) or virtually via Microsoft Teams. |  |