

Tenant Rents Panel Minutes



**Minutes of meeting held on
Monday 27th of July 2009 18:00 – 19:30
@ 14 Houndsgate (Boardroom)**

Present (NCH Employees)

Richard Holland (Interim Head of Rents – **RH**)
Julie Crook (Director of Finance – **JC**)
Benjamin Chilvers (Rent Operations Manager Central – **BC**) – NOTES
Kay Gott (Rent Operations Manager North – **KG**)

Present (NCH Tenants & Leaseholders)

John Riley (Chair – **JR**)
Kevin Butt (**KB**)
Elizabeth Tiso (**ET**)
Peter Gibson (**PG**)
Ina McCallum (**IM**)

(Minutes Item)	Actions Summary	Action
(4)	Invites to tenants to be sent for rent setting event in September by Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement Team.	AF
(8)	Return issue of potential discontinuation of rent surgeries to TRP in January 2010 (with updated monitoring data for remaining Bulwell & St Anns Surgeries).	KG & WA
(9)	Vulnerable Persons Protocol to be returned to TRP for scrutiny following completion of pilot scheme (January 2010).	RH
(10)	Future rent & HB annual increase letters to be clearer and easier to understand.	BC

	Minutes	Action
1.0	Apologies	
	Frank Griffiths, Kath Biddle, Dave Bennett-Bull, Robert Morrell, Clive Thorpe, Alison Thorpe, Andrew Filer (NCH).	X

2.0	Minutes Of Last Meeting	
	Agreed by all to be an accurate record of the meeting.	X
3.0	Matters Arising	
	There were no matters arising.	X
4.0	Julie Crook – Rent Setting	
	<p>Julie guided the meeting through a recent Government guidance note on Housing Finance, but pointed out that Rent was ultimately to be dealt with separately. The Tenant Services Authority will be involved in a forthcoming consultation exercise on this matter.</p> <p>Therefore, the formula to be used for next year's rent setting will theoretically be the same as was used for this year's increase. The final decision on any future rent increases will be made (as in previous years) by NCC Councillors at a meeting of full council.</p> <p>Normally the yearly rent increase is calculated using the Retail Price Index (RPI – an inflation measuring tool) plus 0.5%. However, current inflation rates would render this unworkable at present.</p> <p>There is a desire from local authorities to better differentiate rents for differing property types (such as one bed flats and four bed houses) – but this may take time to agree to ensure fairness.</p> <p>A forthcoming event in September this year will give NCH tenants their chance to get involved in rent setting – details and invites to follow from Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement Team.</p>	AF
5.0	Current Tenant Arrears Policies & Procedures	
	Kay Gott explained how NCH deals with tenants in rent arrears, from the first missed payment to eviction. TRP delegates agreed that the escalation policy should remain as it is for the foreseeable future, and that it was appropriate.	X
6.0	Former Tenant Arrears Policies & Procedures	
	<p>Kay Gott explained how NCH deals with former tenant arrears, and how our collection rates have improved since we started to collect more 'in house' (since January 2009). This year we've collected £200,481 already, and our end of year target is £240,000.</p> <p>KB asked why the percentage of debt we'd accept to settle in full reduced as the debt aged. RH replied that this was based on a realistic assessment of our prospects of recovery. BC pointed out that the statute of limitations (six year collection cut-off point) also restricted what we could collect.</p>	X

	(TEN MINUTE BREAK 18:38 – 18:48)	
7.0	Performance	
	RH detailed current performance highlights, and stated that current performance was good overall. In terms of current tenant arrears, in-year collection, cases owing over 7 weeks rent, number of legal notices served and evictions we're in a better position than we were at the same time last year.	X
8.0	Rent Surgeries	
	BC explained to the Panel that of our three weekly rent surgeries, NCH felt that one of them (Bestwood) should be discontinued and the Bulwell and St Anns surgeries should be retained. Panel agreed that the Bestwood surgery should be discontinued, but also expressed concern about the usefulness of the other two. Therefore in six month's time this item will be returned to TRP to decide on the future of the other two.	KG & WA
9.0	Vulnerable Persons Protocol	
	RH Detailed his proposal for a vulnerable persons protocol. The aim of the initiative is to reduce the amount of repeat homelessness cases caused by debt. TRP agreed that the proposed pilot scheme should go ahead. RH to report back to TRP after pilot scheme has been allowed time to begin to operate properly.	RH
10.0	Housing Benefit Increase / Decrease Letters	
	JR stated that some confusion had been caused by the recent rent and benefit increase/decrease letters. NCH undertook to ensure that future letters were clearer.	BC
11.0	Prize Draw	
	Drawn by Kevin Butt.	X
12.0	Any Other Business	
	None.	X
	Date Of Next Meeting: Monday 28th September 2009 6pm – 8pm Boardroom, 14 Houndsgate	X