

Minutes



Tenant Rent Panel meeting held on 28 November 2011 at Boardroom, Hounds Gate

Present:

Kath Biddle	KBi (Chair)	Frank Griffiths	FG
Robert Morrell	RMo	Ennis Peck	EP
Rodney Mitchell	RMi	Kevin Butt	KBu

Nottingham City Homes:

Lorraine Watson	LW	Kay Gott	KG
Tim Millns	TM	Andrew Filer	AF
Angela Kuhn	AK		

Apologies:

John Riley.

The meeting was opened at time by the Chair Kath Biddle.

Item	Commentary	Action
1	KBi Welcome, introductions and apologies	
1.1	KBi welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	KBi Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.	
2.2	2.4: FG had not received the briefing note prepared by Richard Holland and AF will send it to him.	AF
2.3	5.4: AF said that there are no more updates than what is already mentioned in the previous minutes. The development of the remaining site has gone out to tender.	
3	LW Rent Convergence Policy – Presentation	
3.1	LW circulated a copy of her presentation. She summarised what the Policy is and gave some background information. The key objectives are that this is a long term plan (over 15	

[TENANT RENT PANEL]

Item	Commentary	Action
	years), which should close the gap between council rents and housing association rents.	
3.2	She explained how next year's rise had been calculated and showed a table with prospected rent increases for the next few years.	
3.3	LW told the group about the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and what changes will be implemented in April 2012. The main change is that housing organisations will use rents and other charges to cover all of their costs rather than receive a subsidy from the Government.	
3.4	She pointed out that negative and positive subsidies can continue to be passed to and from the Government if NCH either receives more than the average amount of rent for its properties, or not enough rent.	
3.5	She went on to explain the self-financing settlement, and forthcoming key dates.	
3.6	LW informed the group of a special event on 12 December wherefore everyone was invited to attend and voice their opinions and concerns about the forthcoming changes, and also an opportunity to discuss the types of services and investment in properties that tenants would like to see.	
3.7	AF added that letters had been sent out to everyone with the above information and that the Involvement Team needed to be contacted to book attendance.	
3.8	EP had strong concerns about the policy changes and added that utility and other costs were already going up whilst wages have gone down.	
3.9	KBi agreed with EP and was happy to meet with him to discuss that in more detail, and present at the next meeting.	EP / KBi
3.10	Other concerns included difficulty of coping with the high rent increase by tenants and whether NCH's cashflow was sufficient to cope with a temporary shortfall in rent payments during the changeover.	
4	KG Welfare Reform update	
4.1	KG recently attended a meeting on the forthcoming changes, which she said was very good.	
4.2	She said that MP Graham Allen is coming for a meeting with the Tenant and Leaseholder Congress on 16 December 2011. If you would like to come along, please contact the Involvement Team.	
4.3	During w/c 10 October 2011, the Rents Team visited homes and tenants who have non-dependent deductions (NDD), and KG circulated a report on this.	
4.4	The week had been successful with more homes visited	

[TENANT RENT PANEL]

Item	Commentary	Action
	than last year, and tenants who had complained, will be followed up within six weeks.	
4.5	KG suggested that contact with all tenants should be maintained and support provided with opening bank accounts and budgeting.	
5	BREAK	
6	TM Performance	
6.1	TM circulated a report with statistics on rent payments and pointed out the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High level debt has substantially decreased.• Evictions.• Call centre statistics.	
6.2	KBi found the report very interesting and asked whether it could be prepared with a monthly breakdown to monitor any trends.	
6.3	KBu added that these details were more information than are submitted to board meetings.	
6.4	TM will prepare a report for the January meeting, which is back-dated from April 2011.	TM
7	TM CSC and team update	
7.1	It has been proposed to merge the CSC and repairs call centres in January 2012 with overall management by Kate Watret. However, TM is still awaiting sign-off for this project.	
7.2	There will be only one telephone number for either service with options 1 and 2 for repairs or rents queries, and new software will be installed.	
7.3	TM explained that recent high turnover of staff was due to several agency staff but more permanent staff are currently being recruited.	
7.4	TM said that reports can be run with the new software to identify repeated callers and tenants who are in arrears.	
8	AF Forward planning	
8.1	AF reported on the recently carried out Tenant Involvement Team Review. In view of repetition on NCH updates at several meetings, the report suggests to merge some of the meetings and decrease frequency.	
8.2	AF added that restructuring within the team is currently taking place and will move back to Gill Moy's directorate.	
8.3	He explained that 'working groups' can be organised to streamline bigger meetings and to retain key issues of the current groups. Meetings could be held every three months.	
8.4	Suggested items for the agenda of future meetings included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welfare Reform and benefit changes	

[TENANT RENT PANEL]

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCH finances• Communications• Reports on whether tenants get value for money• Report on the repairs service	
8.5	EP said that group members should get more out of meetings and topics needed to be taken forward more actively than previously. Presenters should be challenged.	
8.6	AF said that the above is something that can be discussed at the event on 12 December 2011.	AF
9	AF Prize draw	
9.1	AF handed out papers with numbers on. Everyone was asked to circle any three numbers, prioritise them and sign at the back.	
10	KBi Any other business	
10.1	The Bulwell Housing Office is going to move into the new LIFT Centre during January / February 2012. However, there were concerns about lack of places of where to put information on NCH and whether rent payments would be accepted at the counter.	
10.2	It was suggested to get a floorplan for this, which KG will look into and report at the next meeting.	KG

The meeting was closed at 19.30

Next meeting

Monday 30 January 2012
5.30pm
Boardroom, Hounds Gate



Homes and places where people want to live

Tenant Rent Panel

Meeting date 28 November 2011

Agenda Item	Page	Action	Responsible	By when?
2.2	1	2.4: FG had not received the briefing note prepared by Richard Holland and AF will send it to him.	AF	30 Jan 2012
3.10	2	KBi agreed with EP and was happy to meet with him to discuss that in more detail, and present at the next meeting.	KBi / EP	30 Jan 2012
6.4	3	TM will prepare a report for the January meeting, which is back-dated from April 2011.	TM	30 Jan 2012
8.6	4	AF said that the above is something that can be discussed at the event on 12 December 2011.	AF	12 Dec 2012
10.2	4	It was suggested to get a floorplan for this, which KG will look into and report at the next meeting.	KG	30 Jan 2012