



Minutes of TPG meeting at Denson Close Waterbeach on 5th February 2018

Attendees (Tenants/Leaseholders)

Name	Address	
Wendy Head (Chair)	Balsham	TPG
Angela Lewell (Secretary)	Impington	TPG
Edna Ingrey	Gt Wilbraham	TPG
Glynis Goff	Waterbeach	TPG
Betty Murphy	Melbourn	TPG
Kathy Rice	Elsworth	TPG
Dave Hammond	Gt Abington	TPG
Carol Akribi	Impington	TPG
Joan Ball	Histon	TPG
Les Rolfe	Bourn	TPG
Val Hickey	Waterbeach	TPG
Paul Bowman	Willingham	TPG
Adrian Prentice	Cottenham	Observer

Attendees (South Cambridgeshire District Council Representatives)

Name	Position in Council
Helen Pagram	Resident Involvement Officer
Martyn Hilliam	Housing policy Officer
Chelsea Hilliam	Resident Involvement Project Support Officer
Peter Moston	Resident Involvement Team Leader
Gill Anderton	Head of Development (New Build)

Guest

Mark Gibbs	General Manager Mears
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No.	Topic	Actions
1.	Apologies -- Patti Hall - Helen Ballantyne - Lynda Harford Please ring Wendy on 01223 894394 or E-mail:- wendymhead@yahoo.co.uk if you are unable to attend the next meeting.	All
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, agreed as a true record, and signed by the Chair.	
3.	Matters arising Peter said at the last meeting it was asked about broken windows (Glazing). He gave out a handout from the tenants handbook (page 23) which says what the tenant is responsible for. Yes tenants are responsible for window breakage unless they have a crime reference number. Carol asked if she was responsible for a crack in her sink which happened when she fell. SCDC say it is up to her and her insurance say it is the council. Peter will talk to housing officer and get back to Carol.	PM

4.	<p>Gill Anderton - Head of Development (New Build)</p> <p>Gill gave everyone present a handout about New Council House building Programme (attached).</p> <p>Gill said the council need to build houses again. South Cambs got themselves extra money when they opted out of the old system and got a loan with fixed repayments over 30 years. We fixed the repayments at a low interest rate and the difference between our fixed repayments over 30 years, against what we previously paid back to Government – gave SCDC some additional funds; some of which could be used to support a modest new build programme.</p> <p>We started small with just 4 new homes in 2013/14. We have built our programme up in and aim to build 35-40 new homes a year on average –more if possible. The budget is around £5-6.5m per year. We look at who's on the register and see what they want, which is mainly 2/3 bedroom homes. We have to pay back the money we use to build a house. The rent covers cost of building, administration, repairs, maintenance and the loan over 30 years. We keep the house for 60 years and rent it.</p> <p>Finding land is an issue. We can develop on our own land e.g. scheme at Gamlingay where we demolished 20+ studio flats and built 14 new energy efficient homes. This sort of development is limited because SCDC only owns the land upon which our council homes sit. Secondly there is Section 106 opportunities where all planning permissions of 11 homes or over require a 40% affordable housing contribution from developers. Where a developer builds out the affordable housing it must provide free serviced land to the council or housing association – this helps to subsidise the housing being built and paid for. The advantages are that the developer finds the land, achieves planning and we buy into this product. There are Exception Sites, these are sites/parcels of land that sit outside a village development boundary. The boundary serves to restrict village development creeping outwards too much. Exception sites are by their very nature slow to find, slow to bring forward, and often have planning and local challenges because they are in green belt or a price cannot be agreed with the owner. On average it takes around 5 years from start to finish to bring an exception site forwards from site finding, site identification, working with Parish Council and Members, planning, funding, tendering for contractor and building it out.</p> <p>The council fund these schemes by using existing development new build budget and the Right to Buy Receipts from the sale of our council housing. Another income source is via the sale of council owned small pockets of land as self build plots. Sold our 1st plot in a village for £246,000. Further 7 out to market and 10 more coming in. Under the Self build and Custom House building Act 2015 and the Housing & Planning Act 2016 all councils now have a duty to hold a register and provide sufficient planning permissions to meet demand as evidenced</p>	
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	<p>by the register.</p> <p>There is a local plan which is a 2 year consultation (for land/building), where there is a planning inspector who stamps it and it is work from for the next 10 years. (Ours has not been stamped yet). Will not build on green belt land unless it's an exception.</p> <p>Paul said the local plan is 10 years in reality (2017/2031). Nobody seems to doing anything to hurry plan. Gill said local inspection, forensic, final queries, consultation again and then planning make decision again (18months).</p> <p>Gill said she has been in job since 2015 and will have completed on about 100 homes by April/May, plus another 100 in the pipeline.</p> <p>Paul said thought Wilford Furlong at Willingham was going to be developed. Gill said it proved to be unaffordable, but is not completely off the agenda. Need availability of land to make it affordable. It's cheaper to do what we are doing, may run out of land opportunities, need to look ahead 4 years but do this every year. Thinks it unlikely but not impossible.</p> <p>A module home as a pilot is going to be built outside the office subject to planning, then a small scheme if possible. This is a long term agenda.</p> <p>The Council do a yearly 'stock take' of all the affordable homes in our district, including taking the housing need information from Home Link and building up a detailed picture of the affordable housing need in each village. Overall the greatest need is for 1 and 2 bed homes.</p> <p>We must have enough income coming in to payback our funding over 30 years, which is because our business plan runs over 30 years.</p> <p>Adrian asked about new builds, just new builds. Gill said done from the empty property fund and Ermine Street who got one and a half million this year.</p> <p>On average a plot of land with planning permission in SCDC is between £150,000 and £250,000 to buy, which means we cannot just buy land on the open market if we want to build as many council homes as we can.</p> <p>Our rents are fixed at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap to ensure Housing Benefit will cover the rent. These LHA cap rents tend to be around 60-65% of open market rents, so immediately we have a funding shortfall. We use our Right to Buy receipts to help fund. Also our recent schemes include shared ownership homes (part rent/part buy) which we sell 40% of at first sale.</p> <p>Val said there used to be social housing compensation (right by social mobility). Doesn't run now. Gill said there is a social housing green paper in April but there seems to be no one to see things through. We have to wait and see.</p> <p>Dave asked about additional 18 house in Gt Abington. Advised to look at</p>	
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	planning on the web-site.	
5.	<p>Mark Gibbs - General Manager Mears</p> <p>Mark said Mears are very busy, they have had a few redone which is disappointing. This first time fixes not done and failure to keep appointments. Sub-contractors making excuses, portal training which has been capped and ended at the end of March. Now they understand it's very easy to put the onus on sub-contractors but money is paid after post operative.</p> <p>Joan said a glazier came out when their door wasn't locking properly and all he had was an electric screwdriver. Said it was the locking mechanism and he did not have one on him. 2 weeks later and the whole panel was changed. All together it took 6 weeks. Joan was told this was a 35 day priority and if the lock had gone it needed to be called in again and would be done as an emergency. Mark will look into this.</p> <p>Carol said people should be aware of this time scale and Mark agreed with flexibility. For example a blocked toilet, is there another one in the house, yes - then it is not a priority. Top filled, vile (health hazard), would need to speak to South Cambs and treat as an exclusion. Peter said if it is a security risk it will be an emergency.</p> <p>Val said 5 star came and did her drains, they were very efficient and did a great job.</p> <p>Paul said wasn't told 7 weeks for a job to be done. Mark said it is all on the web-site and Peter said there will be a reminder in the next newsletter.</p> <p>Mark said "I pride myself on what I do, my own reputation is in question as well as the council and Mears. A daughter of a lady rang about an external light out. It only needed the bulb changing but no one to do it. After 3 days I felt forced to go out and do it. This is an exclusion to our contract but I'll be as flexible as I possibly can. You can asked for me if you have concerns".</p> <p>Carol asked about a loose internal door handle. when you shut the door you can't get out. Told it's the tenants responsibility.</p> <p>Mark said they have started plan works which is split between kitchen and bathrooms, 70/30 in South Cambs favour. 2 sub-contractors but we do self delivery. Mears going a little faster. As going well will finish 26th March. Then plan schedule for 18/19 will be 20 to 18 kitchens and bathrooms.</p> <p>Edna said one of her windows steams up inside and the vent is open. Advised it could be a seal and should ring it through.</p> <p>Les asked if staff trained to use equipment as they had been to his to stain blocker and left white dust everywhere. Failed to cover up. Mark said they are not allowed to use aerosols. Les said well left white splash</p>	MG

	<p>on the back of his sofa. SSE damaged loft and eventually coming to put it right. Mark said this wrong and he will check it out.</p> <p>Mark said they have cut sub-contractors and sending 6 of their own people to Brentwood in the next few weeks. Have 4 apprentices, want to get men working in areas so can increase jobs per day and also build relationships. Val said appointments with operatives, should let you know they are coming.</p>	MG
6.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Wendy said Edna was 21 on Saturday (89 really) and wished her Happy Birthday.</p> <p>Wendy said scrutiny will begin again in a different format as Task and Finish. Training for this in the near future. Also we need to co-op Paul and Val onto the TPG. Joan proposed Paul and Carol seconded it, while Dave proposed Val and Carol seconded this.</p> <p>Helen P showed a new logo for the TPG which all present agreed to. Helen will get it changed and also get some mugs and pens. Mark said he would contribute to this. Wendy will let him know the cost.</p> <p>Les said it was nice to be back. Wendy said it was good to have him back and also Adrian.</p> <p>There was a discussion regarding a Fish/n/chip supper. Mark said he would pay for this.</p>	<p>WH</p> <p>MG</p>
7.	<p>Date, time and venue of the next meeting</p> <p>Monday 5th March 2018, 18:30 to 20:30 at Denson Close Waterbeach</p>	