



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council



Minutes of TPG meeting held at Denson Close on 1st October 2018

Attendees (Members)	Address
Wendy Head (WH) (Chair)	Balsham
Patti Hall (PH) (Vice-Chair)	Cottenham
Les Rolfe (LR) (Temp Sec)	Bourn
Adrian Prentis (AP)	Cottenham
Bob Petch (BP)	Gamlingay
Glynis Goff (GG)	Waterbeach
Helen Ballantyne (HB)	Dry Drayton
Jim Watson (JW)	Willingham
Nancy Chisholm (NC)	Gamlingay
Paul Bowman (PB)	Willingham
Val Hickey (VH)	Waterbeach

Initials are used in the minutes to indicate those who were involved in discussions

Attendees (SCDC Representatives and guest speakers)	
Peter Moston (PM)	Resident Involvement Team Leader
Geoff Clark (GC)	Neighbourhood Services Manager
Martyn Hilliam (MH)	Housing Policy Officer
Helen Pagram (HP)	Resident Involvement Officer
Mark Gibbs	Mears

Agenda item	Topic	Action by -
1	<p>Apologies received from (TPG members) Angela Lewell, Carol Akrbj, Dave Hammond, Joan Ball, Kathy Rice and (SCDC representative) Charlotte Lowe. Edna Ingrey was unable to attend due to administrative error at the taxi company.</p> <p>Please advise Wendy by phone on 01223 894394 or email wendymhead@yahoo.co.uk if you are unable to attend the next meeting.</p>	All
2	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>There was one error pointed out on last month's minutes. Section 5, paragraph 3, should read 'Affordable homes £275,000 plus'</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were otherwise taken as read, agreed as a true record, and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.</p>	

<p>4</p>	<p>Mark Gibbs – Mears MG explained that some of his team, Helen Leftley, Maisie Jones and Lee Clements had attended previous meetings and that, from next year, he and the others would attend alternate months.</p> <p>Cyclical work is expected to be completed by the end of October but kitchen and/or bathroom replacement work was due to be completed by the end of the current financial year. LR, on behalf of disabled neighbours, queried how long from initial measurement and design it took before completion as they appeared to under the impression that it would be happening almost immediately and they were worried about moving items from their kitchen. MG said he would look into it and contact the tenants direct.</p> <p>The number of complaints had come down compared to previous years and that Key Performance Indicator (KPI) figures continued to look good as targets were being met.</p> <p>The company were introducing more in-house training for those staff used to dealing with wood but now working with uPVC doors and windows.</p> <p>It was admitted that some voids were being handed back late and that some of their sub-contractors were struggling to keep up with demand.</p> <p>VH asked how much was charged for each property under the 'Price per Property' charging system. It is £223 per property with additional charges for items described as 'exclusions'. MG said that SCDC's pricing was the lowest that Mears dealt with nationally. GC asked how it compared to other areas of the country and it was pointed out that in parts of Birmingham, by a different provider, it was currently £415.</p> <p>PB said it was obviously difficult to compare like-for-like as housing stock and condition was so varied across the country. PM said that, when the contract had been drawn up, the previous four year's costs had been considered by both sides.</p> <p>PB, commenting on some of the refurbishment on Wilford Furlong by a different contractor had resulted in some replacements being made, different to the original design and was this to do with cost involved. There was currently a problem with a wall that appeared to be about to fall. Was it likely that something else would be used to replace it dependent on the cost involved? MG said that ultimately such decisions would be made by SCDC, not Mears.</p> <p>BP queried about the time taken to deal with a door repair/replacement for which he had been waiting longer than seemed reasonable. MG said he would investigate and advise accordingly.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Charlotte Lowe – SCDC Charlotte sent her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Geoff Clerk – SCDC Anita Goddard had previously explained staffing changes and GC went on to explain that, having originally split the Housing Officers between general housing and voids responsibilities, it had been accepted that this had not worked out as well as had been expected and that the patches were being rearranged. There were now six areas, each with approximately 850 properties, and each Housing Officer was responsible for everything on their patch.</p>	

The tenancy audits were still continuing with about one third of properties now visited. The most important desire was for more face-to-face interaction with SCDC staff. With the introduction of Universal Credit it is expected that more backing and help for affected tenants will be required.

The review of Communal Rooms continues steadily. To date those in Fulbourn, Bassingbourn, Papworth Everard and Histon and Impington have been done. Next to be done are those in Sawston. The results prove that every one is used differently. Plans are in hand to revert the Communal Room at St Vigors, Fulbourn to a bungalow. There are also plans to try to organise more use of those that are under-used and it was suggested that a job-specific officer could be employed to facilitate this.

There had been feedback with regard to Sheltered Estate Officers and what they are responsible for, and what they actually do.

SCDC need to identify what 'Sheltered Housing' actually means. A welcome brochure is being considered as it is not always explained to new tenants. A draft production of the brochure is due to be available at both Sheltered Housing and Leaseholder Forums later this month.

BP said he had tried to get a definition of sheltered housing online using Google or Wikipedia without success. Those moving in should be told what happens and what's available before agreeing their tenancy. **PB** said that people need to know what can't be done. **Chair** asked whether it should still be called 'Sheltered Housing'. Nationally, every organisation is trying to find a new, acceptable title.

GC said that SCDC were trying to restructure resources bearing costs in mind.

AP asked whether the Communal Room Review could be added to the tenancy audit when talking to sheltered housing residents to get a response from those who didn't or wouldn't attend the meetings at the Communal Rooms. **GC** said that every resident who didn't attend such meetings were contacted individually. Unfortunately there would always be some who show no interest. **AP** said that 'no answer' should not mean 'not wanted' as this could skew the results.

PH brought up the problem of pets. A resident had been taken into hospital leaving a dog alone in the bungalow for which no-one seemed to take responsibility. Ultimately the Sheltered Estate Officer had to get access to feed the animal until a relative could be found to look after it. **MH** said that a pet policy exists for all tenanted properties; more than one pet needs specific permission from SCDC although this was very difficult to regulate. All agreed that there should be stricter rules applied and that secondary care should be a prerequisite. A recommendation on a standard injection policy should also be considered as, in the case brought up by **PH**, the local pet rescue services would not look after the dog because there was no injection certificate to be found.

LR asked whether there was a general change of Sheltered Estate Officer happening but was assured that just one change was being made at present. **GC** said that it helped if staff saw what happened in other areas but it was pointed out that, whilst change might be good for staff, it was not so good for residents who preferred consistency. On **LR**'s scheme this was now the fifth SEO in eight years. Shirley Stephen would be asked to explain the changes at the forthcoming Sheltered Housing and Leaseholder Forums.

<p>7</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Chair reminded those present that meeting for November and December would both be on the <u>second</u> Monday. For November because the first Monday would be Guy Fawke's Night and for December to allow a full month between two meetings.</p> <p>PB spoke about the increase in anti-social behaviour in Willingham. Two police officers tried to explain somewhat unsuccessfully to around 180 residents at a recent local meeting. In particular the sheltered estate was particularly disturbed by recent events. GC pointed out that their staff and police do share information on anti-social behaviour and that all instances should be reported.</p> <p>PM forwarded thanks from Anita Goddard to Wendy, Patti and Les for attending the discussion and their input on the latest green paper on social housing issued by central government.</p> <p>He also reported that the Annual Report for 2017-18 by SCDC was being finalised and that a summary of it would appear in the next issue of Tenant & Leaseholders New.</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Monday 12th November, 6.30pm-8.30pm, Denson Close, Waterbeach</p>	