

Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum Action and Decision Log

1st August 2019, G0.3, Ground Floor, City Hall

1) Welcome and apologies

Forum members present: Wendy Biddles (WB), Joe Carroll (JW), Gwen Clifford (GC), May Jones (MJ), Peter Hookway (PH)

Guest Speakers: Sarah Statham (Voids and Property Lettings Team Leader) and Jon Coulton (Voids Senior Technician), Peter Kandola (Housing Development Manager); Vipul Bechar (Smart Cities Team)

Facilitator(s): Gurjit Kaur Minhas (LCC) (GM); Justin Haywood (LCC) (JH), Russell Taylor (LCC) (RT).

2) Action Log feedback

GM provided the following updates:

- a) Contact details to key housing services – this document has been prepared and given to forum members at the meeting.
- b) Feedback was provided on foodbank usage in the city – national research conducted by the Trussell Trust suggests that the use of foodbanks across the country has increased since Universal Credit started, however, members may have different experiences with local foodbanks depending on the eligibility criteria.
- c) Information about council tax allowance rates was made available to forum members.
- d) It was confirmed that a website link to the conditions of tenancy was given to prospective tenants when they are sent their offer letter of a council property. Arrangements are also in place for prospective tenants to request a printed copy of these if they do not have access to the Internet.
- e) Ian Craig, Head of Service, has visited Phillip Allen, as requested, to investigate his areas of concern.
- f) In relation to the older home that MJ had identified as not having been modernised, it was fed back this property was programmed for capital works during 2020/21.

- g) MJ concerns that an operative had attended an appointment outside of the allocated slot has been investigated. It was found that this was a result of the incorrect process being followed in the Works Planning Section. The correct process has been clarified with the officer involved.

Action: MJ requested that Ian Craig phones her to clarify the outcome of this investigation.

- h) The forum had requested information about the % of repair jobs completed on first visit. The forum was advised that 89.4% of repairs are currently completed on first visit.
- i) Members present stated that they would like to take up Councillor Cutkelvin's offer to meet with them separately outside of the forum meeting.

Action: Forum member meetings with Councillor Cutkelvin to be arranged.

- j) Nick Griffiths (District Manager) has fed back on Jean Williams request to change a key safe code to a block on St Matthews. As the key safe numbers are centrally controlled and shared with the blue light services it was not practical to make these changes at present. The local housing office has discussed this with Jean.
- k) Phillip Allen had enquired when the revised leaseholder handbook would be published. It was fed back that although no date had been set, work was progressing on the revised version. Forum members will receive a copy of the handbook when it has been finalised.
- l) Previously, Forum members had raised concerns about the loss of the Ian Marlow Centre name when the site closes. Members were advised that officers were giving consideration to naming a Housing Division building or room at City Hall in memory of Ian Marlow.
- m) Phillip Allen's request to convert a laundry room into a bike storage has been investigated by the local housing office, however, there is currently no funding available through the environmental budget to carry out this work.
- n) In response to forum members requests to attend regional and national forums, officers are to investigate improved ways to keep forum members advised of good practice within the housing sector.

Action: Investigate improved methods of sharing good practice in the housing sector.

3. Presentation: The Council Voids Process

Sarah Statham (Voids and Property Lettings Team leader) and Jon Coulton (Senior Technician, Voids).

Key points:

- Termination and adverts – dealing with the exiting tenant, keys received following a 4 week termination period, property inspection and the progression to advert.
- Following the inspection, the property is brought up to the LCC letting standard.
- Allocations process – properties advertised, offers made, escorted viewings conducted, followed by sign-up for successful applicants.
- Overview of Leicester HomeChoice – applying / registering, looking for a home, making a bid and offer followed by checks.
- Applicant moves into new home

Action: Joe Carrol to provide examples of people living in houses who would like to move to a bungalow, but are experiencing difficulties with this process for the Property Lettings Team to investigate.

4) Presentation: building new homes to be let from the Housing Register

Peter Kandola, Housing Development Manager.

Peter Kondola (Housing Development Manager) attended the forum to give a presentation on key issues relating to new house building.

Key points:

- Peter talked through the two phases of the current housebuilding programme
- Phase 1 includes 6 sites - Brocklesby Way, Maplin Road, Selby Ave, Ambassador Road, Felstead Road, Rosshill Crescent
- Currently Phase 1 at the stage of appointing a contractor and start on site / setup. Phase 1 homes aim to be completed / phased handover by July 2020
- Phase 2 - more sites have been identified as part of the house building programme, including The Velodrome and Austin Rise, with more sites to follow.

- We are currently working with Planning to agree the property types and mix of housing that will best meet the needs of those who require social housing.

Action: The feasibility of Tenant & Leaseholder Forum members visiting to view the new build council homes prior to letting to be investigated.

5) Presentation: Vipul Bechar, Smart cities team, the roll out of fibre optics in the city.

Vipul presented on the roll out of new future proof connectivity for the city.

Key points:

- Vipul talked about the work being undertaken by the Council working with network providers to upgrade the Internet connectivity to homes owned by the city council
- Illustrated the significant improvement in download and upload speeds as a result of the new connectivity
- That this will create work opportunities for the local workforce.
- That the competitive rates provided by this new service will be an incentive to all providers to reduce their costs to compete.

No actions.

6) Any other business

ACTIONS:

- a) To contribute to reducing paper usage, Forum members are to bring relevant documents to the Forum meeting that they have received rather than officers bringing duplicate copies to the meeting.
- b) Officers to arrange for tenancy management officers to attend a future Forum meeting to clarify the roles and responsibilities of this service area.
- c) Arrange for the Gas and Heating Services manager to contact JC to discuss gas servicing appointments.
- d) Investigate the use of a hearing loop at future meetings.

7) Date of next meeting

Thursday 3rd October 2019 at City Hall, G.03 Meeting Room 3, City Hall
.The meeting with then run from 1.00pm – 4.00 pm (lunch provided at 12.30)