

ENGLISH RURAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

RESIDENTS PANEL MEETING

Notes of meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2010

Present: Jane Jennings (JJ), Pauline Rose (PR), Christine Knight (CK),
Tony MacArthur (TM), Tom Wratten (TW), Martyn Clements (MCL)
Martin Collett (MC), Kathryn Watson (KW)

| | | ACTION |
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| 1 | <p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies received from Lesley Childs and Lisa Swan</p> | |
| 2 | <p>SERVICE BRIEFING</p> <p>CYCLICAL DECORATION PROGRAMME</p> <p>English Rural aim to undertake external decorations on a 5 yearly cycle which includes painting/wash down of windows and doors, clearing of gutters and minor repairs to any external elements.</p> <p>Until 2 years ago when Housing Management was brought back in house the cyclical decoration programme was managed by an external agency and residents weren't satisfied with the service they were receiving. However, things seem to have improved now English Rural are directly overseeing the work.</p> <p>The 5 year programme and example tender documents were distributed for information.</p> <p>Following previous discussions and requests there is a proposal currently under discussion to establish the inclusion of an option for shared owners to buy into the programme as appropriate, with a proposal that shared owners would be offered a per unit cost for carrying out the works from the contractor.</p> <p>The possibility of a "mystery shopper" to monitor ongoing works was discussed with the idea of appointing a resident on each development to quality check the work along the way. Although both the Repairs Administrator and Clerk of Works managing the project will undertake checks, someone on-site could also be useful.</p> <p>NEW SHARED-OWNERSHIP MODEL</p> <p>Under the current model, shared owners buy a</p> | |

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| | <p>percentage share of the property and pay an annual ground rent, building insurance contributions and service charges. They are not required to pay any rent on the unowned share.</p> <p>Due to the downturn in the housing market and the reduction in housing grants the existing model is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. As a result a new model has been proposed which would allow shared owners to buy a percentage of the property and pay rent as a percentage of the unowned share. The rent would be set at 4% of the unowned share up to 70% of the total market value and beyond this no rent would be charged. The proposal is currently to charge a peppercorn ground rent of probably £1.00, instead of the current £500.00 per year. Rents would be reviewed annually in line with RPI.</p> <p>The new model will continue to remain affordable and is unlikely to cause any concerns with lenders. It will however involve more intensive management in terms of rent collection and will also increase the risk of non-payment of rents.</p> | |
| 3 | <p>OPEN MIC FOR RESIDENTS</p> <p>MCL suggested that a copy of the Section 106 be provided to residents when they move into their property so they are aware of the local connection criteria which applies to that particular development. This will make it clear as to who qualifies for a mutual exchange into the property. Suggestions on how to achieve this included incorporating in the sign-up pack and adding to the development profile on the website.</p> <p>TW enquired as to whether planning permission would be required to fit solar powered low level lighting in the rear car park at Fortescue Place. CK will contact planners informally to discuss.</p> <p>PR discussed the possibility of setting up a residents association in High Halden, with the possibility of expanding this to surrounding villages. MC to provide PR with further information on setting up residents associations. This information will also be available on the new website for any other residents who may be interested.</p> <p>Design issues were discussed – Housing Management staff will in future have the opportunity to comment on scheme plans before an application for planning is</p> | <p>MC</p> <p>CK</p> <p>MC</p> |

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| | submitted. This will hopefully resolve any future design problems as they can feed back comments or concerns raised by residents. | |
| 4 | <p>NOTES OF LAST MEETING</p> <p>These were agreed.</p> <p>Following comments at the last meeting, shared owner account statements will now show charges on a monthly basis rather than quarterly. Hopefully this will make the statements easier to read and prevent any confusion over arrears.</p> <p>No update as yet on additional payment methods to be made available to residents.</p> | |
| 5 | <p>RECRUITMENT OF TVRHA PANEL MEMBERS</p> <p>All Test Valley residents had been written to but no response or interest had been received. Individual residents will now be contacted.</p> <p>It was suggested that a housing management tour covering the Test Valley area be scheduled in future which may encourage further involvement.</p> | MC |
| 6 | <p>HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p> <p>During the quarter a complaint had been received over the interview and allocation process. As a result the internal allocations procedure is now being reviewed.</p> <p>The complaints register will be made available at future meetings subject to their being no conflict with interests.</p> | MC |
| 7 | <p>NEW WEBSITE</p> <p>The new website should be going live in the next few weeks. It will now be easier to maintain as we have access to update the site ourselves.</p> <p>Notes from future resident panel meetings will be published on the site and a repair feedback form will be built in.</p> | MC/SB |
| 8 | <p>ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>Priorities for major works were discussed. Stock condition surveys should be undertaken every 5 years</p> | |

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| | <p>and the data collected from the survey will feed into the strategy to help set lifespans of major elements such as windows, heating systems, kitchens and bathrooms and will allow more accurate major works programmes and financial provision.</p> <p>Residents felt that the main priority would be replacement of either windows and heating systems over kitchens and bathrooms.</p> <p>It was recommended that a survey be carried out to gain feedback after the completion of any major works contract.</p> | MC/BC |
| 9 | <p>SURREY TOUR/FORUM</p> <p>The Surrey tour and residents forum will take place on 17 June and further details will be distributed in due course.</p> <p>Ideas for increasing attendance were discussed. A more informal approach for the evening forum will be adopted in future where residents can come along and discuss their queries with staff and board members on a more one to one, informal basis. Information stands will be displayed and refreshments provided.</p> | |
| 10 | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any policies and procedures to be reviewed will be brought to future panel meetings for consideration. - Next briefing session will cover the Allocations Policy and Procedure - AGM to be held in September in probably in Aylesbury area (TBC). These meetings are held annually and the location is rotated each year. Residents in the local area are invited to attend and Panel Members expressed a particular interest. | |
| 11. | <p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Next meeting to be held at 9 Graphite Square on 21 July 2010.</p> | |