

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT HOUSING BOARD HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESENT:

**Babergh District Council**

Jan Osborne (Chair)

**Mid Suffolk Council**

Lesley Mayes

Sarah Mansel

**Tenants:**

Mr M Berry

Ms M Hilton

Mr J Taylor

Mr K Wykes

35 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Tony Bavington, Nick Gowrley and Jennie Jenkins and from Tenant Representatives Steve Philips.

It was noted that Tenant Representative Roger Chapman had resigned from the Joint Housing Board 10 August 2017.

36 **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There was no declaration of interests.

37 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JULY 2017**

The minutes of the meeting 17 July 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

38 **JHB/17/7 RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT REVIEW**

Gavin Fisk, Assistant Director – Housing, presented the report and said that earlier this year an external consultancy had conducted a review of the service provided to tenants and had highlighted issues in the service to be addressed. The review had also looked at compliance of standards and had suggested new ways of working. The review had generated a set of recommendations set out in the report JHB/17/7 for Joint Housing Board to consider before these recommendations went to both Councils. The recommendations had been discussed at the last Tenant Forum.

A period of consultation was now required to enable the housing team to review and implement any changes as a result of the review and the recommendations. To allow the team to conduct this work, it was necessary to reduce the work load and this could be achieved by reducing the frequency of Tenant Forums and Joint Housing Board meetings.

The Tenant Forum had continually challenged the housing team regarding the way of working and this had been useful for the team and a good way to engage with

tenants.

The Tenant Forum was to have active role in the review period and be involved with roadshows and meeting in the community. The work to improve the service was to commence in October and continue until April 2018. In the meantime, work would be centred round creating a broad structure for the service and more scrutiny of the Councils as landlords. It was important that there existed a relationship of trust between the Council and the tenants and the need for active involvement and engagement were important aspects of this relationship.

A review of the progress would be presented to the Joint Housing Board and the Tenant Forum in December and again in January or February to further discuss progress and to decide the recommendations before they were presented to full Councils in March 2018.

Members then discussed the best way to communicate information to tenants, as emails was not an option for all tenants. It was generally felt that it could be difficult to find the right person within the councils to get information and to find help. The officer replied that communication was one of the areas that the review would address, but that tenant involvement was still an important part of getting information to the tenant community. There had been no News Letters to residents recently but there would be News Letters to all tenants with information about the Councils move to Endeavour House.

Some Members asked if lease holders were invited to be involved in the review to ensure true representation of the Councils' responsibilities, and officers responded that they were being invited.

Members discussed the recommendations and it was agreed that a disbandment of the Joint Housing Board was not necessary and recommendation 2.1 and 2.2 were removed and the following new recommendations were added:

- 1.1 That a review of all existing engagement opportunities be agreed.
- 1.2 That a consultation exercise on developing an alternative model of engagement, which will commence immediately, be agreed.

By a unanimous vote

## **RESOLVED**

- 1.1 That a review of all existing engagement opportunities be agreed.
- 1.2 That a consultation exercise on developing an alternative model of engagement, which will commence immediately, be agreed.
- 1.3 That a phased consultation with tenants and leaseholders using a variety of methods to gain understanding of what information they want, which engagement methods they would prefer, and what would motivate them to or deter them from getting involved be agreed.

- 1.4 That a period of consultation (no more than two months) with councillors and officers to define the Council's objectives and preferred outcomes for resident involvement be undertaken.

39 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS RELATING TO JOINT HOUSING BOARD**

There was no other business.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 3.05 pm.

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The Chair