



Minutes of the meeting of the BRADVILLE/GREENLEYS AREA HOUSING BOARD held on 9 DECEMBER 1999 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Pendry

Tenant

Representatives: H Taylor (Greenleys Residents' Association)
S Kennedy (Stantonbury Residents' Association)
M Simm (Fullers Slade Residents' Association)
F Smith (Greenleys Residents' Association)

Officers: S Aslett (District Housing Manager), M Harvey (Development and Maintenance Manager) S Hoppie (Senior Surveyor) C James (Tenants' Participation Officer) and S Parker (Committee Administrator)

Apologies: A Richardson and I Flatt (Mears Building Services Ltd)

Also Present: J Blake (Central Area Housing Board) and R Reid (Mears Building Services Ltd)

20.0 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RECOMMENDED -

That M Simm be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Bradville/Greenleys Area Housing Board for the remainder of the Council year 1999/2000.

21.0 MINUTES

That the Minutes of the last meeting be approved as a correct record.

22.0 DISTRICT HOUSING MANAGER'S REPORT - INCLUDING MINOR ESTATE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

S Aslett, District Housing Manager circulated information of empty properties for November 1999 for the Greenleys and Bradville areas as well as information on rent arrears.

The District Housing Manager reported the progress of contractors.

F Smith commented on the empty properties in Greenleys which had been empty for over three months which were not included in the empty properties information.

It was agreed that S Aslett would look into the properties identified by F Smith as follows:

8 Bounds Croft

27 Calverts

29 Calverts

52 Drovers Croft (It was noted that contractors were now carrying out work at 52 Drovers Croft.)

S Hoppie provided information on the administrative process which had to be carried out before an empty property could be let which could account for the length of time which the properties had remained empty. S Aslett pointed out that steps had to be taken to ensure that the tenancy was ended and that the property was empty before the letting procedure could be commenced.

Councillor Pendry requested information on the average time that other Councils were able to let empty properties.

S Aslett reported that the procedures had been tightened up for turning around empty properties and Council officers were working closely with contractors to ensure improvements as well as good quality work.

S Aslett informed M Simm that details of Homeless Department houses in Fullers Slade had been provided at the last meeting, but he could go through the details with him, if required.

The Chair requested a full list of outstanding voids information by Estates for the next meeting of the Board.

The Board noted details of rent arrears for the period from 23 November 1998 to 30 November 1999. S Aslett reported that he hoped to present the information in a graph form to future meetings so that it is easier to interpret.

F Smith stated that it would be useful to have the amounts of arrears outstanding by Estates in order to identify where the problem estate areas exist. S Aslett pointed out that this information could be compiled by using the new IT system.

S Aslett agreed to speak to Councillor Pendry and M Simm about the problem with rent arrears on which they needed further information.

23.0 INTRODUCTION TO RESPONSIVE REPAIRS TERM CONTRACTOR

R Reid representing the Responsive Repairs Term Contractor (Mears Ltd) for the Bradville/Greenleys area was present at the meeting.

He circulated a report on voids to those present and outlined the recent negotiations which he had undertaken with officers of Milton Keynes Council to further improve the system.

The representative from Mears informed the Board that Mears had recently appointed a Quality Assurance Manager to check on works completed by their operatives. This was done by sampling of the main tasks carried out and the evidence to date was positive.

The following problems were identified by Residents' Association members:

(a) 18 Drovers Croft

F Smith reported that an Order had been issued in June with a completion date of 13 July. However no one from Mears had been out to do the work. The tenants were experiencing problems with a need to reseal windows and door frames.

It was agreed that Mears would look into this.

(b) F Smith reported that there was a need to clear up the mess at the car park at Drovers Croft where door frames etc were being left.

The representative from Mears pointed out that every void that was handed back was inspected. If there was any sign of rubbish around the void property Mears could be failed on that void.

It was agreed that this would be looked into.

(c) H Taylor mentioned delays that had taken place with the installation of her kitchen. She was pleased with the work. However, she had experienced some delay and felt that other tenants in a similar situation should be informed by letter of the reason for any delay.

(d) M Simm pointed out that the tenant of 97 Woolmans had only had part of her floor tiling completed and was still waiting for the rest to be done.

S Hoppie pointed out that he had chased this up and was disappointed with the lack of response from Mears.

(e) Councillor Pendry pointed out that he had 4 - 5 complaints from the residents on Fullers Slade about dampness and what action could be taken regarding this.

The Board noted that the problem with the sheltered housing flats at Fullers Slade was mould growth and damp because of poor circulation in the properties, particularly in the bathrooms and the kitchens which caused obvious difficulties with living conditions. To alleviate this the Council was installing special fans to increase the ventilation at a cost of £400 each. However, to concentrate the budget purely on the flats would mean neglect for other tenants.

(f) Councillor Pendry pointed out a query which he had received from the residents of the flats that had two asthmatic children and the need to prioritise their flat for action.

S Aslett agree to speak to Councillor Pendry outside the meeting.

(g) S Smith asked when the last structural inspection of any properties in Fullers Slade had taken place. He thought that it was laid down that such a survey should be carried out every 5 years.

S Hoppie pointed out that he had no knowledge of any instruction given by the Development Corporation to carry out structural

surveys every 5 years and was not aware of any obligation that the Council was under in the way that F Smith described.

- (h) M Simm asked if the window replacement programme at Fullers Slade had been stopped. S Aslett pointed out that the window replacement programme was continuing next year and that he would look into the situation and inform Councillor Pendry of the position.
- (i) M Simm warned the Board that he knew of the case of a tenant who had been informed that "half the work required in his kitchen could be completed now and the other half in 6 months time". S Hoppie said that he would look into the situation at this particular property.

24.0 HEATING CONTRACTORS

The Committee was informed that the representatives from Wheldons the Heating Maintenance Repairs contractor for the Bradville/Greenleys area had sent apologies for attendance at the meeting.

H Taylor provided details to the Board of the difficulties which he had had with the heating contractor not turning up at the given time for work at her Council property.

She felt that others in a similar position should at least receive a courtesy phone call from the heating engineer to state what the position was as in her particular case both herself and the contractor from Mears had experienced some inconvenience.

The difficulties in contacting an engineer on the site were pointed out by S Hoppie. S Hoppie undertook to find out what had happened in H Taylor's case.

25.0 TENANTS COMPACT WORKSHOP

The Board noted that the Housing Committee at its meeting on 30 November 1999 had resolved the following:

1. That Area Housing Board meetings continue until the end of this Council year and then be suspended for a period of one year.
2. That the Area Housing Boards be replaced during any period of suspension with monthly Borough Wide Boards with at least 2 of the meetings being formal Borough Wide Housing Boards.
3. That the proposed new arrangements be reviewed after 9 months of operation and recommendations be made as appropriate.

Clare Jones circulated information on the new tenant participation structure.

She pointed out that there was £25,000 in the budget to spend on the Tenant Participation Compact and asked for suggestions on how this money could best be spent.

The Board noted that it was hoped to open the Queensway office after Christmas. The furniture was on order and a PC and photocopier would be

provided and a training resource library set up. Tenants representatives had painted the office. She was presently checking on a room which could be set aside in the Centre for children, subject to insurance being available.

J Blake pointed out that monthly meetings to deal with Borough Wide Contractors was not a good idea. C Jones reported that it was hoped that contractors appearing before the Borough Wide meetings could appear in a separate time slot at the meeting.

F Smith pointed out that Tenants Representatives and members of the public could ask questions as he intended to do at the full Council about the decision of the Housing Committee to suspend Area Housing Boards.

C Jones pointed out that the Tenants' Participation Compact would be coming into existence at the same time as the other changes proposed in local government.

RECOMMENDED -

1. That senior officers and Councillors be requested to attend the Borough Wide Board to provide detailed information on changes which the Council proposed to make arising out of government legislation on the future of local government.
2. That a Selection Panel be set up to determine the consultant to be appointed on how to implement the Tenants Compact Work Shop.
3. That the Selection Panel comprise 2 tenants from each of the Area Boards as well as the Chair of the Housing Committee.
4. That the representatives of the Bradville Greenleys Area Housing Board be M Simm and H Taylor.
5. That money be provided in the budget to appoint a consultant on the Tenant Participation Compact and how it could best be implemented.

26.0

NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following questions were asked:

- (a) M Simm - Tenancy Agreement

What is being done to enforce Tenancy Agreements where matters are arising such as car repairs and car spraying taking place outside Council properties?

- (b) There is a caravan situated outside the flats at 19 - 22 Woolmans where it appears that electricity is being used from the flats without authority.
- (c) A tenant at 71 Woolmans is experiencing harassment from children who are constantly turning off his electricity supply.
- (d) H Taylor was unaware of who was responsible for the re-surfacing of the car park on Greenleys.

S Aslett informed the Group of the following:

1. Action was being taken against the person responsible for car repair work.
2. An investigation would be carried out into the caravan outside the flats at Woolmans.
3. A letter would be sent to parents of children at Woolmans informing them that they face eviction under the Tenancy Agreement if their children continue to harass tenants.
4. The Council had been responsible for the work being carried out to the car park at Greenleys. In future, Tenants Representatives would be informed of any other work being carried out by the Council so that they could have the appropriate information available if they were asked for information by tenants.

27.0

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 9 March 2000 at 7.30 pm.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.26 PM