

CONSULTATION

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1. Purpose

To bring to the attention of Tenant Representatives the lack of consultation by Milton Keynes Council to the MKCHF.

2. Background Examples

- 2.1 The Housing Allocations policy has been diverted from without any consultation with MKCHF. At Granby Court, lettings are allocated only if prospective Tenant is 21 years old or over and in full employment.
- 2.2 Changing MK Housing. The Housing Options system was introduced without any consultation with MKCHF.
- 2.3 A Welcome Pack has replaced the Tenant's Handbook. The MKCHF found out about this when packs arrived at the TRC for information purposes. No consultation had been sought with the MKCHF.
- 2.4 The implementation of Systems Thinking. There has been non-involvement of Tenant Representatives from the outset and no consultation with MKCHF about its introduction.
- 2.5 The setting up of the Denbigh complex and its costs. The MKCHF had no involvement in this. Tenant participation was through the BSTG, which is not a sub-group of the MKCHF.
- 2.6 The Walkout by Tenant Representatives from the MKCHF meeting on 20 April 2006.
- 2.7 Role of the Forum survey and results indicated the level of involvement and issues Tenant Representatives believe they should be included in.
- 2.8 Milton Keynes Council has ignored recommendations made by the MKCHF at the October 2006 meeting regarding the Granby Court policy.

3. Consultation, or lack of ...

- 3.1 Tenant Representation is recognised as a vital and important part of any good Housing Service. We are entitled to have consultation with Milton Keynes Council under Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985. The implementation of

changes at Granby Court was not brought to the MKCHF for discussion. The Chair and Vice Chair made official complaints.

- 3.2 After repeated requests to see a document about the Housing Options and Changing MK Housing a request had to be made under the Freedom of Information Act.
- 3.3 The Welcome Pack was sent to the TRC as a completed document. There are several errors within the document. There was no consultation with the MKCHF on the document or its contents. We were not informed that the Welcome Pack was a replacement to the Tenant's Handbook. Our logo was used without our knowledge. The Systems Thinking Working Group recommended the introduction of the Welcome Pack.
- 3.4 The Assistant Director of Housing has stated that Vanguard told the Housing Service not to consult with tenants at the beginning of the Systems Thinking process.
- 3.5 When the Denbigh complex was being designed and set up there was no information or consultation brought to the MKCHF. Tenant involvement was centred around focus groups. We have asked for setting up and running costs and comparisons but to date have not received any definite figures. Due to the lack of consultation we have to request information after the event.
- 3.6 The Walkout from the Forum meeting on 20 April 2006 was about lack of consultation and yet, here we are, one year on and the situation appears to be worse than it was then. Not knowing what is going on within the Housing Service, and the lack of consultation, is causing Tenant Representatives to drop out of the process. The Systems Thinking process does not always allow for consultation before new decisions/policies are implemented. There is disillusionment being caused by not being listened to.
- 3.7 Due to comments made by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Housing and documented in minutes of a meeting with her that the Executive are personalising views and issues and being confrontational, the Role of the Forum survey was undertaken. The survey shows the level of involvement, and discussion on various issues, wanted by Tenant Representatives.

4. Conclusion

The MKCHF and Tenant Representatives are not being included in the process fully and so cannot function to their full potential. The level of consultation is unsatisfactory and may not conform to government guidelines. Milton Keynes Council has breached the MKCHF Constitution under Section 1.2 of Terms of Reference.

5. Recommendation

That the MKCHF send this document to the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (and/or other Agencies as deemed appropriate) to be placed on its Agenda as an item for discussion and review.