

# ACTION SHEET OF THE HOUSING FORUM

**15 MARCH 2007**

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	SUBJECT AND DECISION	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	COMMENT
1.	<p><b><u>MINUTES</u></b></p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Milton Keynes Council Housing Forum, held on 15 February 2007 be approved as a correct record, subject to Minute 5.0 Resolution 2 being amended to read “That Environmental Health be invited to attend a future meeting of the Forum and a further discussion be held on DATS owned by the Council”.</p>	Kay O’Callaghan	
2.	<p><b><u>ACTION SHEET</u></b></p> <p>The Chair requested a breakdown on the repairs carried out to homes in Granby Court under the Decent Homes Standard.</p>	Mat Bishop	<p>Granby Court has been deferred to 2007/8 of the Decent Homes programme as communicated at the February Forum meeting.</p> <p>The works that will be completed to these properties are in line with the survey of each individual property against the Decent Homes Standard. Typical examples of work that will be completed are kitchen replacements, bathroom replacements and electrical works to meet the requirements of an electrical test.</p>



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3 (cont)			<p>The current high level of reserves is required to enable contributions to be made to support the ongoing capital programme to the tune of around £3m per year to achieve, in particular, the Decent Homes programme.</p> <p>See table attached</p>
4.	<p><b><u>ADVANCE NOTICE OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p>Representatives requested that the following business be considered later in the meeting:</p> <p>(a) Rent Increase</p> <p>Jeanette Marling reported that letters had been sent by the Council regarding the rent increase and stated that next year appeared to be 53 weeks for people who paid by direct debit.</p>	<p>Ceri Davies/Pam Wharfe/John Bate</p>	<p>The Council's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March.</p> <p>The rent charge is raised every week on a Monday. A '53-week year' arises when there are 53 Mondays between 1 April and 31 March the following year. This happens every six years, on average.</p> <p>Milton Keynes Council, like a number of other councils, has a rent 'holiday' every year, where rent charges are not raised for two weeks. For Milton Keynes Council, this holiday is at Christmas. Other councils normally use the same weeks, or two weeks in the summer. It gives some relief from regular payments at what can be expensive times of the year for many tenants.</p>

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			<p>The question arises whenever there is a 53-week year, should the council charge for 50 weeks, as it does in a normal 52-week year and give a 3-week rent holiday; or should it give the usual 2-week holiday, and therefore charge for the remaining 53 weeks?</p> <p>This is not as easy a question as it might appear at first glance, but the correct answer is that we should stick to two rent-free weeks whatever the number of Mondays that happen to fall into the council's financial year. The rent charge is for 365 days (366 in a leap year), or 52 weeks plus one or two days. In most years, the council isn't charging for the extra day. In a 53-week year, however, the charge catches up with the odd days that haven't been charged before</p> <p><b><u>Example</u></b>  MKC's current average weekly rent charge is £67.50. This is based on charging for 50 weeks in a 52-week year. However, the Government assumes that all councils charge for all 52 weeks, so converts that average rent to <math>50/52 \times £67.50 = £64.90</math> - the average rate that tenants would be charged if rents were charged every week. If we look at this over the long-term:  Over 12 years, the Government assumes the revenue we raise by charging every week,  <math>= 52 \times 12 \times £64.90 = £40,630</math></p>

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	<p>(b) Asbestos removal</p> <p>Gwyn Murphy to provide the address for Pam Wharfe where asbestos was removed by Contractors who were not wearing protective clothing and also if it was correct that a tenant could be charged £300 if they were not in when the contractor arrived to carry out work to the property.</p>	Pam Wharfe	<p>If the Council charges 50 weeks for ten of the years, and 51 weeks for the other two (53-week) years, the revenue raised = 50 x 10 x £67.50 plus 51 x 2 x £67.50 = £40,630</p> <p>But if we give three rent-free weeks in the two 53-week years, the income is 12 x 52 x £67.50 = £40,500</p> <p>The reason why there should only be two rent-free weeks each year, regardless of how many Mondays happen to fall in the period, is not simple to explain. The example above shows that, whatever an individual councils' charging policies, the Government expects the same number of rent-free weeks each year, to fit in with rent restructuring assumptions on average rent.</p> <p>This matter is still under investigation.</p>

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	<p>(c) Servicing and Installation of Gas Boilers</p> <p>The Chair queried the frequency of servicing of gas boilers in Council properties and asked for clarification regarding the procedure for servicing gas boilers and what constituted a service.</p>	Matt Bishop	<p>The requirement under the regulations is for an annual safety check. A 10 month process is employed by the service such that an appointment is made with the tenant 2 months prior to the service date. This gives time for access to be rearranged if the time does not suit the tenant and also gives appropriate time for a no access procedure if the tenant fails to allow access.</p> <p>The following are the typical elements that constitute a gas heating service and safety check though the specifics will vary depending on the type of system installed at the property. Note: this is a list of technical items of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine all gas appliances in the property.</li> <li>• Check for correct ventilation requirements.</li> <li>• Service appliance, brush / vacuum / wipe as applicable.</li> <li>• Flue flow test, spillage test if required.</li> <li>• Check flue integrity, route and termination.</li> <li>• Check cables, pipe routes in compartments/annular gaps.</li> <li>• Check fuse rating.</li> <li>• Reset thermostats / timers / switches to original settings.</li> <li>• Check / set burner pressure to data plate specification, gas rate if required.</li> <li>• Gas tightness test / let-by test.</li> </ul>

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	<p>(d) British Gas</p> <p>(e) Allocation of properties at Granby Court</p> <p>(f) Sustainable Communities Public Meeting</p> <p>A meeting was being held on Thursday 22 March 2007 at 7-7.30 pm at the Lakes Estate Community centre in Bletchley and all residents representing the Fenny Stratford Residents Association and the Lakes Residents Association were invited to attend.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check meter bonding, pipe seals into building, gas cock operation etc.</li> <li>• Check cooker (if fitted) for stability bracket, correct hose configuration etc.</li> <li>• Clear catchment space and test flue of gas fire, even if tenants own fire.</li> <li>• Enter all appliances on CP12, even if tenants own. Include Landlords name and address, record any defects, and record date.</li> <li>• If any appliance is ID/AR and is cut off, issue warning notice and apply label.</li> </ul> <p>Apply / fill in existing service label Apply/ fill in service label.</p>

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5.	<p><b><u>THE USE OF DAT RECORDERS BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT</u></b></p> <p>Janette Bobey requested a breakdown of the figures for seizures of equipment and callouts for Tenants and Homeowners.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	Simon Teesdale	The return is that standby has received 263 calls over the last 12 months. We have also as a team dealt with 3 seizures of noise equipment over the last year.
6.	<p><b><u>NEIGHBOURHOOD AGREEMENTS</u></b></p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>		
7.	<p><b><u>THE MANAGEMENT OF GARAGES IN MILTON KEYNES</u></b></p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>		
8.	<p><b><u>ROLE OF THE HOUSING FORUM</u></b></p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the matter be discussed at a future meeting of the Housing Forum.</p>		



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9.	<p><b><u>A NEW WAY OF DEALING WITH NOISE NUISANCE</u></b></p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the report be noted.</li> <li>2. That representatives e-mail Simon Aslett with any questions they may have regarding this issue.</li> </ol>	Simon Aslett	
10	<p><b><u>REPORTS FROM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Margaret Burke reported that Bradville North End Residents' Association had submitted a letter of objection regarding a planning application for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOS) on their estate and the Development Control Committee had refused the application.</li> </ol> <p>She advised the Forum that if only one letter of objection was received regarding a planning application it had to be considered by Development Control Committee.</p>		

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	2. George Chennell thanked Charles Allum and the Tenants and Residents Association for attending a meeting with the new Warden for Durrans House.		

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11.	<p><b><u>HOUSING FORUM EXECUTIVE/TENANT PARTICIPATION LIAISON MEETINGS</u></b></p> <p>The Forum received the Minutes of the Housing Forum Executive/Tenant Participation meetings held on 22 January and 5 February 2007.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>HOUSING FORUM EXECUTIVE MEETINGS</u></b></p> <p>The Forum received the Minutes of the Housing Forum Executive meetings held on 4 December 2006, 15 and 29 January 2007.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	

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13.	<p><b><u>MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL HOUSING FORUM GRANT PANEL MEETING</u></b></p> <p>The Forum received the Minutes of the Milton Keynes Council Housing Forum Grant Panel meeting held on 10 January 2007.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	