

WOLVERHAMPTON FEDERATION OF TENANTS' ASSOCIATIONS C.I.C

Minutes of the General Meeting 7pm Monday 18th November 2019 at Coven Lodge.

Attendance: as per list.

1. Apologies:

Marie Lane, Jean Jones, Paul Ryder, Margaret Perry.

2. Declarations of interest:

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 21st October 2019:

Agreed.

4. Matters arising:

Ann said she had some concerns about the presentation on the proposed allocations policy. Bob said the officers were not able to answer all the queries raised.

5. Rents and Service Charges 2020-21– Darren Baggs, Wolverhampton Homes.

Darren said he was doing the presentation on behalf of the City Council. He said that the Housing Revenue Account is ring fenced and is funded by tenants rents and service charges and pays for the housing service and Council borrowing. The rent income forecast is £89.9 million and garage rents £0.5 million, and £6.3 million from service charge. The total income £95.7 million. The forecast expenditure is £46.7 in management and maintenance, depreciation (major repairs) £18.1 million, interest on debt £9.7 million, contribution to capital financing £0.5 million, repayment of debt £20.7 million bringing the total to £95.7 million.

In 2016/17 the Government imposed a 1% reduction on rents for 4 years and there was a freeze on service charges except for gas and electricity. Managing agents' fees were also frozen.

Darren said the budget for the 5 year capital expenditure is £388 million of which £141 million is for new build and fire safety.

He said the capital programme priorities for 2020-21 are the high rise infrastructure programme that includes the installation of sprinklers, stock improvements on voids and temporary accommodation, reroofing, the Heath Town refurbishment, and new build. Most new build to be delivered by WV Living and WHs will make a small contribution on infill sites – about 35 homes per year. There was a discussion on types of new build and the life span of system built properties. Ann asked about the income from leaseholders, and Darren said this is included in the income from service charges.

Darren said the Regulator of Social Housing is to set a new rent standard from 1st April next year. The Government commitment is to allow rent increases for 5 years limited to the consumer price index plus 1%. He said the management agents fees are to be reviewed in 2020/21, although under the partnership agreement with the Council Bushbury Hill's fee has been agreed for 15 years. The rent increase proposed is 2.7% for rents and for garages. There will be no service charge increase except on flatted estates where they have not recovered the full cost of services. There was a discussion about laundry prices. In particular where some tenants only pay a service charge for use and others have to pay a higher cost when purchasing tokens. It was felt this should be looked into as it is not equitable. Dave raised concerns about service charges on heating, Darren said these charges are to cover any replacement in future years. Ann said the income from storage heaters is greater than the cost of replacement. Bob said that detailed costings should be presented and that the presentation is meaningless without them. There was a discussion about rent arrears and universal credit.

No one agreed with the proposals put forward by the Council as regards rents for next year. The majority abstained from voting due to lack of information.

6. Correspondence:

None.

7. AOB:

None.

Ann wished everyone a happy Christmas and said the next meeting would be in February, weather permitting.

Date/time next meeting: Monday 17th February 2020, 7pm at Coven Lodge.