

Tenants' rent consultation 2013/14

Appendix 5

The Tenants' rent consultation meeting took place on 11th December 2012 with Lewisham Homes managed tenants. Brockley Tenants were consulted as part of their panel meeting held on 13th December 2012. Excalibur tenants consultation took place on 17th December 2012.

Views of representatives on rent rise & savings proposals				
	Lewisham Homes	Brockley PFI	Excalibur TMO	
No of representatives (excl Cllrs)	20	13	5	
Rent Rise	See over	No comments	See over	
Savings Proposals:-				
1. Hostels	No comments	n/a	n/a	
2. Lewisham Homes Fee	No comments	n/a	n/a	
3. R&M Inflation	No comments	n/a	n/a	
4. Void reduction	See over	n/a	n/a	
5. Bad Debt Provisions	No comments	n/a	n/a	
6. Paladin Bins	See over	n/a	n/a	
Service Charges	See over	See below	n/a	
Garage Rents	No comments	No comments	n/a	
Tenants Fund	Agreed	Agreed	No comments	
Heating & Hot Water Charges	No comments	n/a	n/a	

Summary of other comments made by representatives

Lewisham Homes Panel

Rent rise:

Concern was expressed about the rent rise being greater than the increase in pensions.

Tenants Service Charges:

No comments were directly made about the increases in service charges although several were made about service delivery. These are to be taken up by Lewisham Homes.

Savings Proposals:

Void Reduction: Tenants were assured that this would not impact on quality.

Paladin Bins: Tenants were advised that this cost did not drive the rent increase and wouldn't be passed on as service charge this year.

Brockley PFI Area

Tenants and Leaseholders Service Charges:

No specific issues were raised about individual increases although a general question was asked about how tenants and leaseholders could be sure that the charges represented value for money. The meeting was advised that the proposed increases were calculated on a cost recovery basis and, while a rise in excess of 4% was allowable under the contract, the proposed increases ranged between 0% and 3%. Officers also updated the meeting on the progress of the local and central PFI benchmarking exercises currently being undertaken.

Several issues, outside the scope of the rent consultation meeting, around management costs and performance were raised. RB3 will be looking to resolve these with leaseholders.

Excalibur TMO

Rent rise

The main comments received from the TMO Committee was to question the validity and justification of any rent rise to be imposed on tenants in view of the poor condition of their property, and the fact that no major investment has ever been undertaken to the estate stock.

A query was raised relating to the rent rise imposed for 2012/13 which the committee felt was excessive at 10%, especially regarding the condition of the stock.

Officers have checked this and can confirm that the borough average rise for 2012/13 was 7.04% or £5.76pw.

In relation to the TMO, the average rise was £6.10 or 8.97%

There were a number of questions raised on the regeneration scheme for the estate as well as the TMO management & maintenance allowance, which was reducing as stock is lost to the regeneration project.

Although not directly related to the rent rise meeting, officers responded that questions on the regeneration scheme would be passed onto the regeneration team for a response.

In terms of allowances, officers responded by demonstrating that the actual allowance paid per unit managed was increasing, but acknowledged that overall payment was reducing as stock is lost to the TMO and passed to the regeneration project.

Officers offered to work with the TMO to identify efficiencies and other savings opportunities, to reduce some of this pressure.

In addition officers have requested the TMO forward their asset management plan which should identify areas of pressure within the maintenance regime for council consideration.