



not clearing grass or weeds, and there were lots of potholes in roads and pavements. She commented that tenants are less inclined to keep their own areas tidy if the general area is looking drab.

KL said there are some minor ground control issues but they're being picked up but the area as a whole looks bad despite Ground Control's efforts.

JR had several residents complain about money being spent on Clements and asked when will money be spent on the chalkstone estate? Fencing is bad for example. SN suggested Havebury should start task and finish groups for areas and projects because the estate looks very bad.

AJ referenced the neighbourhood visions. JF to look back at those and consider NIP funding for the area. JF added that there had been a communal garden project on the birdlands area of Chalkstone. The purpose of estate gradings is to look at where we can make improvements. Havebury can take videos of areas to report back to the Vision Group for suggestions and comments.

JF

3.2 DT reported that they are already busy with the cutting season. There had been issues on the Howard and Mildenhall Estates in Bury. Additional machinery had been sourced to keep up and there were additional teams in Haverhill too.

3.3 KH asked if Havebury have a voice with the council. JF reports back with issues and his team signpost customers to the council, we have a good working relationship but we can't influence where they work.

AJ said we have a good relationship with the council but would encourage local residents to speak to local councillors as well to strengthen your voice. It is a good area of influence and it helps combine Havebury and council offers for a better looking area.

PP has spoken to two councillors and nothing has happened. And also the local MP who contacted the council but nothing happened.

AJ suggested the Forum invite the grounds team from the council to see if they would be happy to attend a Forum meeting.

3.4 KL admitted that Ground Control had struggled in April and the weather had been a big factor, they were slowly getting back on top and dry weather will help.

Cutting in Haverhill is currently better than Bury. Some areas have been too wet to cut with large machinery, then the warm weather came and the grass grew very quickly.

3.5 SN asked whether Ground Control have enough teams. DT reported that they had. One team ended last month but they are covering that, they were just caught out by trying to avoid damaging areas with heavy machinery. Lots of teams are doing extra hours to catch up including bank holidays. Mildenhall area still needs work which is being done this week.

3.6 The Ground Control report showed that 0 fly tips had been collected. KJ asked if this was a sign of success of the Tenants Facebook page. KL clarified that there were still flytips but they were being collected by

Havebury Rangers and not Ground Control.

- 3.7 PP complimented Ground Control reporting that the garage area around Crowland Road in Haverhill was looking lovely.
- 3.8 TD asked whether the report can be in black and white. The rest of the Forum preferred colour but agreed it was too small. ED to print on A3 next month.

ED

Ground Control left the meeting.

#### 4. **Neighbourhoods Team - Grounds Maintenance and Rangers Reports**

- 4.1 JF said the report was prepared a week in advance for Forum and that the team had been inundated with phone calls and he was concerned that Ground Control were not keeping up. That said they had been faced with problems and St Eds were also struggling because of the sudden change in weather. He commented that he had not been happy with the quality of the work, particularly in Bury areas but that improvements were being seen. It had been a tough start to the season.

- 4.2 SN commented that at interview stages of contract offer Ground Control assured Havebury that they didn't sub contract and would always have plenty of staff but it has been an issue. JF replied that Ground Control do have more staff on the ground than previous contractor Norse, or than St Eds have.

#### 5. **Grounds Maintenance Contract**

- 5.1 JF introduced the paper and added that LN, SN and JR had been involved on the task and finish group. JF was hoping to go out to advert a little later than planned on the procurement timetable to allow for decisions to be made within the Neighbourhoods review, although it was still possible to come in on time for the contract renewal in February 2019. This time of year gives the best opportunity for a handover.
- 5.2 JF was asked if the contract would be combined again as Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing. He confirmed they would. He replied that Ground Control were more impressive at Grounds Maintenance as that's where their skills lay, but that cleansing could be improved. For example weeding of block paving and hardstandings could be better.
- 5.3 SN Commented that new developments were wide spread now. Would they ordinarily be included in the overall contract or would local contractors be found to carry out this work.

JF replied that we had looked at that option but had decided to go with one contract. Some section 106 homes (those brought as part of a private development), came with a management company in place and we had no choice on that. He added that we try to keep grounds maintenance requirements to a minimum in further away areas. The contractor is not obliged to take on new sites and Havebury have to come to an agreement on that.

5.4 KJ asked about contract management. JF replied that it was robust, previous problems have stopped and we have, in the past, withheld payment. Changes in Ground Control management hadn't helped overall but the top level management had been consistent.

## **6. Development Update**

6.1 PB introduced himself as interim Development Manager. 207 homes had been completed in the 17/18 financial year and 265 were planned for this year. In total 1350 were planned by 2023, 400 of those were still to be confirmed. Some development included open market sales; our first scheme with planning for an open market scheme near Ely should start by the end of the summer 2018.

6.2 We have increasing shared ownership which is a bigger part of the business now and there is a big demand for it. We are now finalising procedures to make it effective and we're doing market research to make sure we have the right sites.

6.3 PB showed images of 4 different sites to the Forum. They asked to confirm their date for a visit to some new developments with Matthew in June.

MD

6.4 PB said Havebury are looking at lots of section 106 homes. While it means we don't get to design them ourselves it does mean they are more affordable to Havebury. PB defined what S106 homes are. 30 to 35% of a new private development should be affordable housing. Many of these are bought by Housing Associations and many developers now approach us in advance of building. The earlier we are on board the more we can influence the specification.

6.4 It was asked what impact it had on repairs as S106 homes all have a different specification compared to what Havebury would put in. PB replied that basic repairs nowadays tend to be a replacement and not a fix as it's more cost effective. S106 are such a big part of private developments now that some include social housing specifications for kitchens etc.

6.5 The Forum thanked PB for the update and he left the meeting.

## **7. First Focus Update**

7.1 RW gave a presentation on the results of the tenant-wide consultation for the Customer and Repairs Offers. The Forum focussed on the results of the digital offer, with 60-70% of tenants saying they would use it across a range of services. There was enthusiasm at the potential of the offer and JR commented that some would simply not use it through preference. RW agreed and added that we were asking more detailed questions about online interest in the current Neighbourhoods Consultation.

7.2 Results showed a demand for repairs appointments for weekday evenings and Saturdays. They showed that one third of tenants would like something that we don't currently offer. KH asked how contractors feel about this. RW replied that emergency repairs are already carried out outside of usual

office hours and whilst it was still early days the initial discussions had been positive.

- 7.3 In terms of Right First Time the results showed that 91% of tenants that responded would prefer to speak to anyone that could help. Only 9% wanted to speak to the same person each time unless it was a personal or ongoing issue.
- 7.4 KJ asked about technicians getting parts delivered to jobs to save their travelling time. RW replied that our Jewsons partnership includes a delivery to site service and that we have storage available in some areas of our stock that the technicians can access.
- 7.5 RW added that the technicians were already keen on the service changes, particularly ownership of their own jobs and stock. There were more conversations to have and some training to take place in some areas.

The Forum thanked RW for the update and appreciated the hard work that the team had put in.

## 8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 Following a recent incident LN suggested that tenants that miss their agreed appointments should be recharged if they are not at home. Some Forum members agreed. AJ replied that recharging is not our attention but if a tenant misses two agreed appointments then we will only offer emergency repairs, as is common in the sector.
- 8.2 JR reported difficulties in contacting Fosters contractors about her electrical check and felt that it wasn't good enough customer service. She had received a chasing letter with an appointment date that she couldn't make, and had not had a first letter. AJ replied that Havebury had applied some pressure to Fosters to complete outstanding electrical checks in line with our health and safety responsibilities, and that the time pressure had come from Havebury and not Fosters. ED to report back to team. ED
- 8.3 SN raised the tenant priorities budget which had previously been agreed by the Forum as a 50/50 split between fencing and positive ventilation systems. Given that ventilation systems are sufficiently budgeted for within the Capital programme SN suggested that the £100,000 tenant priorities budget should all go towards fencing for this financial year as this is an important area for tenants. It was unanimously agreed by Forum. MD to implement. MD

**Date of next meeting: Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2018, 5-7pm**