

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held at 5:15 pm 12th July 2007 at Little Aynam House, Kendal

Present: Mary Dowling – Vice Chair
 Ron Pritchard
 Joan Chadwick
 John Short
 David Vatcher
 Robin Brown
 Paul Jones
 Peter Bland
 Peter Thompson

Officers: David Stubbs
 Garry Ronson
 Sue Boulton
 Peter Thomas

Apologies: Christine Chadwick
 John Stanton – Chair
 Graham Donning

Observers Margaret Pritchard

NO

TITLE OF MINUTE

ACTION

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Glen Joseph from BMG and Margaret Pritchard, the newly appointed Chair of Tenants' Committee.

Glen Joseph made a presentation on the key findings on the status survey 2006/07 which assessed the levels of satisfaction within housing services and tenant priorities. South Lakes Housing was benchmarked against other housing organisations. Overall results compared to other parts of the housing sector were generally in the top quartile.

After the presentation a discussion took place with regard to topics which had come up in the survey including lack of car parking, communication with tenants and the need to deliver improved planned maintenance. Paul Jones pointed out it would have been useful to separate Councils and non ALMO's and added that overall South Lakes Housing had achieved excellent results.

The Vice Chair summed up that there were clearly areas to address and proposed either a Board away day to look at where SLH are now and examine findings, or ask Management Team to carry out further work with proposals presented either to September or October's board.

The Vice Chair thanked Glen Joseph for his informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the emergent trends from the survey be analysed by the Management team in order to produce an action plan and presented at the September/October Board meetings. SMT

507 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING ACTION

Amend the apologies of 31st May 2007 to include Gwen Murfin

Subject to this amendment the minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings.

508 MATTERS ARISING

Min 501: The 'away day' has been set to become a strategic options review. PT

509 REPORTS FROM TENANTS' COMMITTEE

Ron Pritchard as Chair of Cumbria & North Lancashire Tenant Participation spoke about the recent meeting of the North West Tenants and Residents Assembly at which 70 people attended. The meeting related to social and affordable housing with workshops for affordable housing, fuel poverty and debt management.

Paul Jones noted that the final quarter figures had not been discussed by SLDC in the Tenants' Committee minutes 3 July 07. Robin Brown, who was an observer at the Council Cabinet meeting, reported that questions had been asked but could not be answered until the Board had discussed the performance figures.

John Short gave his apologies and left the meeting.

The Chief Executive added that a programme of reporting performance to the Cabinet had been agreed with SLDC.

510 REVIEW OF THE SLH TENANTS' AGREEMENT/COMPACT

The Chief Executive said a 'root and branch' review was now being carried out which would produce a much stronger framework for tenant involvement and consultation.

Ron Pritchard commented that SLH needed to become more involved in getting out and talking to tenants again and David Vatcher queried the term 'young people' and enquired as to what age is referred to? The Chief Executive replied people under 34.

The Chief Executive added that a 'surfer machine' had been hired at a recent event and a lot of the young people were happy to fill in questionnaires before being allowed to use it which was a novel way of encouraging young peoples' thoughts and ideas.

The Vice Chair concluded that Directors looked forward to receiving the next report in September.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the contents of the report

511 CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY UPDATE: LAKES AREA

Ron Pritchard asked on behalf of Marianne Hood if all the tenants had been consulted before the decision was made for the Ambleside office to close.

The Chief Executive replied that consultation had been achieved through Tenants' Committee and surveys and the newsletter although there was little response. However this was not surprising as the office was very little used. However more cost effective and improved access would be achieved by a presence for face to face to face contact in the Windermere Cash office and Ambleside library.

David Vatcher queried the travelling costs of the staff affected and the Chief Executive replied that by having all the Housing Officers together in Kendal, there would be better communication and co-ordination and therefore greater productivity with a more supportive and consistent approach. Any home visits to be made could be done straight from leaving home as the officers concerned were based in the Lakes area.

ACTION

Robin Brown asked why the appointment service was being offered when home visits were available? Home visits would still be the primary means to contact people but with the option of an officer interview.

Gwen Murfin suggested that maybe SLH in partnership with Age Concern visit together?

The Vice Chair suggested that a six monthly report be made to the Board to inform Directors on how well the scheme is working, with information on costs, any increase in mileage costs, number of visitors to the Library or Broad Street and age of customers.

SAB

RESOLVED:- That a report on the effectiveness of the new arrangements be taken to the Board in six months time.

- That Directors to note the closure of the Ambleside area office and the arrangements put in place for alternative access arrangements.

512 CONTRACT MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Operations reported that Summerlands would be considered at full Council on 17th July with regard to possible compensation payable to residents. This money would be made available from the General Fund.

Paul Jones expressed a concern over the Council's 50% reduction in the external painting budget and the change from a 5 to 8 year cycle. The Director of Operations commented that the option of an 8-year cycle was only a consideration at this stage.

The Chief Executive replied that at the last budget round, the Board was fully involved in addressing the financial priorities about what cuts had to be made and the Vice Chair added that difficult choices had had to be made.

Robin Brown suggested that as SLDC had an under spend maybe it would be worth approaching SLDC now? Paul Jones proposed that if there were savings in other budgets that these may be used to bolster up painting in February/March next year.

DS

Peter Thompson asked when the DHP progress report was going to be provided and the Director of Operations replied this would be presented at the next Board meeting.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note progress

513 FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

The Director of Finance reported to Directors that to ensure consistency, the Terms of Reference, Financial Procedures and Standing Orders would be reviewed at the same time each year from now on.

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve the Terms of Reference, Financial Procedures and Standing Orders

514 FINANCE & PROCUREMENT MINUTES

ACTION

RESOLVED:- That the minutes be accepted.

515 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Director of Finance asked Directors for a mutually convenient date to hold the AGM.

RESOLVED:- The date of the next SLH Annual General Meeting will be held on **Friday 14th September 2007** – venue to be confirmed

Robin Brown said that he had now been appointed as the official opposition spokesman for Housing.

Gwen Murfin reported that she was now the Mayor of Kendal and enjoying her new role.

516 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 23rd August 2007 at Little Aynam House, Kendal.

517 MINUTES OF PART II

The Part 2 minutes of 31st May 2007 were accepted as a true record of the proceedings.

Meeting closed at 19:35