

**SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES
THURSDAY 8 APRIL 2010
2010 AT 10.30 HRS
HELD AT
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL**

Present: Margaret Pritchard (Chairman)
Phyllis Tweedale
John Short
Dorothy Dixon
Joan Chadwick
Robin Martakies
Win Sayers
Charles Howarth
Ron Pritchard
Margaret Akrigg
Sherralyn Clement

Officers in attendance: Suzy Duffy- Community Participation Coordinator- SLH
Peter Thomas – Chief Executive (part)
Sandy Ryder – Finance Manager,

Guests John Sykes- Stock Options Study Project Manager- SLDC (part)
Brenda Gray – Housing Portfolio Holder

Apologies: Peter Bland
John Mansergh- Business Improvement Manager- SLH
John Stirling- Tenant Participation Officer- SLH

Circulation: As above

Action

The Chairman commenced the meeting by welcoming, Peter Thomas, Chief Executive, and Sandy Ryder, Finance Manager SLH

604 Minutes of previous meeting (25 February 2010)

John Short reported that two items were not recorded on the previous minutes as follows:-

Minute 598: The matter was raised that extra Tenant Committee meetings may need to be convened due to the stock options review

All Tenants' Committee members would be emailed SIG minutes

SD/J St

605 Matters arising

Minute 602 Ron Pritchard raised the matter with Tom Lynch with regard to permanently lit street lamps at Castle Walk and reported that this matter should now be resolved

606 SLH Board Minutes 4 March 2010

Minute 862: Robin Martakies asked for an update on whether the Residents Questions would remain on the Board Agenda as he felt that it was

undemocratic to omit the opportunity for Residents Questions. Tenants' Committee felt that Residents' Questions should remain as an agenda for the Board.

Action

The Chief Executive replied that this issue would be discussed when he next met with the Chairman of the Board.

PT

607 SLH Board Agenda 4 March 2010

Robin Martakies commented that with regard to Item 7.1, Review of Board Expenses he felt that the Board provided good value for money and that the RPI at 3.7% was a reasonable amount.

With regard to the School Knott report Robin Martakies was pleased to note that the SLH in-house painter would undertake work on behalf of residents who moved to available properties.

Suzy Duffy said that Jacqui Blenkinship apologised for not attending this Tenants' Committee to report on the item 4.2. Portfolio Scoring but she would be available to come to the next meeting to discuss the paper further.

SD

RESOLVED: Suzy Duffy to invite Jacqui Blenkinship to the next Tenants' Committee meeting to discuss the Portfolio Scoring report further.

608 Treasurers Report

John Short reported that a minor change of 20p was to be added to the Tenants' Committee Accounts handout.

SD

John Short also mentioned that he was slightly altering the claim form to take into account the demise of DHP and also said that he was looking for photographs for the cover of the Annual Report.

All to note

The Committee thanked John for his hard work.

609 Management Accounts

Sandy Ryder reported that the overall year-to-date position at the end of February 2010 showed a surplus of £435,443.

John Short asked about the underspend of £29,000 and Sandy Ryder reported that this underspend related to back office functions and was more than just Health & Safety.

John Short asked about the Covalent training and Sandy Ryder said that as far as she was aware John Mansergh had attended Covalent training last week and training should follow shortly.

JM

It was explained that Covalent was performance management software for KPI tracking, action and improvement planning, risk management, self assessments and inspection.

Robin Martakies asked about the natural wastage of staff as he believed a staff member was due to retire this year. The Chief Executive replied that the establishment had been reduced by 10% since its inception in 2004. When a vacancy arose a review was arranged to discuss whether the structure needed to be altered and if a post could be left unfilled. The trend had been to consistently reduce costs and overheads but there is no target on a reduction in the establishment.

610 Review of Area Discussion Groups (ADG) and Family Fun Days (FFD's)

The Chief Executive commented that there had been a lot of confusion with regard to ADG's and the general feeling at the previous Tenants' Committee Away Day was that ADGs did not work. The Chief Executive said that John Short had commented that SLH staff outnumbered tenant attendance at these meetings and there was a need for reformatting of the meeting.

J St

The Grant Applications Panel had been adopted as the best way of dealing with environmental improvements but this had removed a large incentive to attend area based meetings. In response to Tenants' Committee concerns, Alison Kinnon, Housing Manager had developed a new option of Family Fun Days (FFD) to engage with younger people and these had been well attended.

The general view of the Tenants' Committee by July 2009 was that FFD's were successful but they should not replace ADG's. There had subsequently been a review of SIG's but no report or progress about the future of ADG's.

The Chief Executive apologised for any misunderstanding as the intention was that the position on ADG's would be re-examined but no feedback given as to when this would take place. The Chief Executive commented that the long term absence of a housing staff member and the reduced resources had not helped the situation either. Now that John Mansergh was in post, with the introduction of Tenant Service Authority (TSA) there would be a fundamental re-examination of tenant engagement and scrutiny including the role of ADG's.

As SLH was facing a major consultation with the Housing Option Study SLH had to 'step up a gear' in terms of consultation and its primary focus would now be about engaging with people about the housing options.

The Chairman commented that the Area Panel Groups did not attract a lot of people and the suggestion at the time was for a change to Area Discussion Groups which would be advertised but these events proved to be nothing more than 'coffee mornings' with no structure or agenda so in effect ADG's never existed. No-one had joined the SIG or Tenants' Committee from ADG's. Robin Martakies added that it was not an area discussion group with agencies such as the police, Fire brigade and Citizens Advice Bureau attending. The ADG's did not work in format and the way they were organised.

Robin Martakies thanked the Chief Executive for his honesty and apology and said that ADG's were part of the Tenants District Wide Tenant Participation Agreement and could not be got rid of without an amendment to the Agreement.

Ron Pritchard asked about feedback from FFD's and the Chief Executive replied that a lot of this was about building relationships with tenants and the methods for gauging feedback needed to be fine tuned. A Christmas Carol concert last year had been well attended and had brought the community together but SLH needed to use the opportunity and tell people who SLH really are. Ron Pritchard had spoken with 3 people who had attended the Carol Concert and the MUGA in Ulverston who were keen on joining but when he approached them again later on they had gone off the idea.

John Short said that we now needed to talk about the future of ADG's and to encourage all generations to include having meetings at different times of days to encourage younger working people.

Sherralyn Clement said that she had got addresses and contacts of ADG attendees

and could get back to them with things such as the results of the GAP meeting and what had been approved Sherralyn added that a 'wishing tree' was used at the Easter Egg Hunt which identified peoples wishes and concerns.

Action

The Chairman asked if the Environmental Improvements list was published? John Short replied that Peter Bland had had a full list of the environment works. A GAP meeting was scheduled for next week and a report would be in the next newsletter.

SD

Sandy Ryder asked if any tenants had expertise in market research as it would be beneficial for staff to 'tap in ' to this expertise. Robin Marktakies suggested that ADG's now proceed.

RESOLVED:- That staff put together a package for the ADG to be carried forward

DS

611 Housing Options Study Update

John Sykes reported that 3 tenders for the Independent Tenant Adviser (ITA) had been received but one tenderer had pulled out. The appointment of the ITA would take place on 29th April.

The consultation document news received indicated that the level of debt may be in the region of £68-£75M for South Lakeland. There were proposals within the document, which required clarification, which seemed to indicate that the levy on undertaking stock transfer would prohibit this option. Therefore John Sykes said that he was going to write to the government that afternoon asking for clarification of the proposals.

The stock condition will be completed earlier than anticipated with the results being available the first week in May.

The three options would then be put into the models and should be finalised by May

- MRA self financing based on £68/£75M of debt
- Transfer option with 20% levy on receipt
- Model on current transfer rules

SLDC need to feel comfortable with taking on the debt, but 6 weeks of consultation had now been lost due to the election. There was uncertainty over what SLH were consulting on, as the options were now narrowed.

The Chief Executive said it appeared that rural districts appeared to be disadvantaged and the level of debt per tenancy equated to approximately £22,500 for South Lakeland compared to an average of about £13,000 per property.

Charles Howarth asked if there was any right of appeal and John Sykes said that this was a consultation document which we would respond to. There will be an appeal to request more time for consultation particularly as no consultation can take place during the election period.

The Chairman thanked John Sykes for his update.

John Sykes and Peter Thomas left the meeting.

612 Housing Options Study Project Board Terms of Reference and Objectives – for comment report in Board papers, item 4.4

At the first meeting of the Stock Options Project Board held on 18th March it was agreed that key stakeholders would consider and comment on the Terms of the

Reference with comments being taken to the next Project Board on 29th April.

Action

RESOLVED:- Tenants' Committee approved the draft Terms of Reference for the Project Board with no alterations

613 Tenant nominations to Project Board

Suzy Duffy asked if any other Tenants would like to join the Project Board as 2 additional seats had been made available. John Short on behalf of Peter Bland said that Peter would like to join the Project Board.

After a brief discussion it was decided to keep the remaining seat open for any new person who might wish to join Tenants' Committee. Brenda Gray said that the meetings lasted a couple of hours commencing at 4 pm in Kendal.

Dates for the Project Board 29th April, 10th June, 22nd July and 2nd September.

Joan Chadwick commented that members could 'dip and out' of meetings as long as the committee was informed. SR to ensure that members get the relevant paperwork.

SR/JM

RESOLVED:- That Peter Bland be elected onto the Project Board with one remaining seat free. Suzy Duffy to bring this matter back to the next meeting.

SD

614 Regulatory Framework for social housing from April 2010 and the review of the District-wide Agreement

Suzy Duffy presented the report on behalf of John Mansergh asking Tenants' Committee to agree the process and timescale for implementing the TSA standards.

RESOLVED:- That Tenants' Committee agreed the process and timescale for implementing the TSA standards, incorporating the review of the District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement

615 Tenant Conference

A discussion took place as to the venue and date of the Tenants Conference which was to be a half day event.

Phyllis Tweedale suggested that this conference be advertised in the next newsletter with a special flyer advertising the conference and free transport.

SD

**RESOLVED:-i) That the Tenants' Conference will take place on 22 June 2010
ii) That one conference be held in Kendal Town Hall
iii) That Tenants' Committee have a display at the event to recruit new members to the Committee and promote all steps on the 'ladder of participation'.**

616 Risk Management

The new risk register shows SLH's significant risks and a summary of the action taken to mitigate them. There were no other comments on the management actions or any other emerging risks to be added to the register.

John Short commented that Peter Bland had checked these risks against a risk log two years ago and was happy with the register.

**RESOLVED :i) The new corporate risk register summary was noted
ii) No additional comments on the management actions were**

- received with regard to controlling individual risks
- iii) No other emerging risks were identified
- iv) Tenants' Committee will receive quarterly progress reports

Action

617 Any Other Business

Ron Pritchard said that he had been re-elected as Chairman of the Cumbria & North Lancashire Tenants & Residents Participation Forum.

John Short said that the newsletter was a big improvement and tenant friendly. Suzy Duffy said she would pass on these comments.

SD

The Chairman expressed her dissatisfaction with the lack of 'tenant news' in the South Lakes Housing newsletter and asked for more tenant input to be published in the newsletter. The Chairman to discuss this matter with the Chief Executive. Sandy Ryder said that this would now improve with John Mansergh in his role of Communications.

SD

MP/PT

A query was raised about the confusion of the stock option meetings alongside other meetings and Suzy Duffy said that a 'meetings list' would be circulated.

SD

Sherralyn Clement mentioned the Trafford Hall training courses for tenants and community volunteers and this would be brought back to the next meeting

SD

618 Date of next meeting

Thursday 20 May 2010

The meeting closed at 12:55 pm