

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES
10.30 am THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 2011
HELD AT
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL

Present: Charles Howarth (Chair)
John Short
Don Brookes
Robin Martakies
Margaret Akrigg
Joan Chadwick
Win Sayers
Dorothy Dixon
Margaret Pritchard
Janet Cherry
Ron Pritchard

Officers in attendance: John Mansergh, Performance Manager- SLH
John Stirling, Tenant Involvement Officer- SLH

Guests Jamie Martin, Independent Tenant Advisor- Open Communities
John Sykes, Stock Transfer Project Manager- SLDC

Apologies: Annice Lewis
Doone Ward

Circulation: As above

774 Resignation

John Stirling advised that he had received a telephone call from Anne Corbett, resigning from the Committee. The Committee noted the resignation and thanked Anne for her contribution.

775 Minutes of Previous Meeting (1 September 2011)

Don Brookes said that he was present at the meeting, also at minute 766 it was he, not Robin Martakies who had congratulated SLH on the accounts to date surplus. The minutes as amended by Don Brookes were then accepted as a true record.

776 Matters arising

Minute 770- Robin Martakies asked John Short if he had any further thoughts about the format of the Tenant Newsletter. John said that he had not, as he was reflecting the views of some tenants who found the current A3 format inconvenient. Jamie Martin said that this piece of work should be picked up after the ballot. John Sykes said that he had experience of procuring newsletters for a number of Registered Providers (RPs), and could supply examples if required.

777 Housing Transfer Update

John Sykes said that SLH was now registered with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS). Tenant Services Authority (TSA)

registration was scheduled for 12 January 2012, following an inspection in December 2011. Assuming that tenants vote for transfer, full Council would make their decision on 15 December 2011.

Ongoing work had formally identified land and other assets which would be transferred from SLDC to SLH should transfer be ratified. There remained some uncertainties and further work was ongoing to resolve these issues. The Committee asked for further information to be brought to their next meeting regarding

- a) Grounds maintenance monitoring arrangements
- b) Encroachments onto SLDC land by private owners
- c) The actual boundaries of land to be transferred

JM

John Short asked about the VAT shelter, John Sykes said that specialist advisors had been appointed.

John Sykes said that overall the project was on target and on budget. The Committee thanked John for his clear presentation and the professional way the project was being managed.

778 SLH Board Minutes (18 August 2011)

Noted.

779 SLH Board agenda 20 October 2011

Robin Martakies raised the following matters under item 5.6 (Introduction to the Transfer Agreement)
paragraph 3.2- (Nomination Arrangements) Robin asked for clarification of 'nomination arrangements'. Jamie Martin said that SLDC was currently both a landlord and a strategic housing authority. As a strategic housing authority it had a duty to vulnerable homeless people, such as ex offenders and asylum seekers. It was usual for strategic housing authorities to enter into formal arrangements with Registered Providers (RPs) to house a certain percentage of these vulnerable people. John Mansergh said that negotiations were ongoing with this matter. Robin also believed that access to Choice Based Lettings (CBL) was not being advertised widely enough and circulated an A3 newspaper advertisement from a non Cumbria CBL consortium. Jamie Martin said that there were a number of practical issues which providers needed to consider in their CBL advertising strategy, these included a time-v-cost balance of newspaper advertising and managing the expectations of applicants. The latter was particularly important in an area like South Lakeland, where demand outstripped supply. The Committee believed that awareness of access methods to CBL needed to be raised as widely as possible.

paras 3.11 and 3.12- (Disposal Claw back and Right to Buy Sharing Arrangements) Robin asked for further clarification. John Mansergh said that it was important that SLDC retained some ongoing financial benefit post transfer should SLH choose to either sell some of the transferred assets, or an asset was sold under Right to Buy (RTB). These matters were subject to further negotiations.

John Short referred to items 5.3 (Housing Transfer Update), 5.4 (Housing Transfer Tenant Consultation and Engagement) and 5.5 (Housing Transfer Risk Register), and noted that the work of Tenants' Committee had been formally recognised.

Item 8.2 (Committee Structures/Terms of Reference)- Robin Martakies referred to the final paragraph of section 3, and asked how Tenants' Committee would be involved. John Mansergh said that should the proposal be accepted, tenant scrutiny and involvement would be strengthened.

Item 8.5 (Stock take of Minutes Distribution) John Short suggested that this matter be

included in the work of Jamie Martin. The Committee agreed to this.

780 Downsizing Budget

The report was noted. John Mansergh said that the timescales in the report reflected the agreed 2011-12 Delivery Plan.

781 Tenant Participation Budget

John Mansergh introduced the report saying that the detail reflected previous reports of a similar nature. Future reports could be amended to reflect the wishes of the Committee. John Short asked if the IT equipment which had been purchased was still in use, John Stirling said that it was and would continue to be used, particularly for tenants with disabilities. The report was noted.

782 Treasurers Report

John Short presented his report which showed a slow down in expenditure due to the Tenant and Leaseholder Steering Group (TLSG) meetings having finished for the time being. John was thanked for his report.

783 Members Report

Win Sayers- had attended the Servicing and Maintenance of Domestic Gas Appliances meeting on 29 September. The contract was progressing well with no adverse reports. External auditors were currently auditing performance in this area. John Mansergh said that he would bring their findings to the next meeting of Tenants' Committee. JM

Robin Martakies commented how much gas servicing had improved over the last 15-20 years.

784 Any Other Business

Dorothy Dixon- commented on the decision of SLDC to charge for the removal of bulky household items, and believed that this would result in increased fly tipping.

Joan Chadwick- expressed concern about the approx 400 tenants who 'Door Knocking' staff had been unable to contact, during the consultation period. John Mansergh said that 'Door Knockers' had been instructed to call at a property at various times, but the majority was between 1600hrs-1900hrs, and at different days of the week. Housing Officers were now attempting to contact these tenants to identify those with vulnerabilities who may require extra help and those who may have abandoned their properties etc.

785 Post Ballot ITA Work

Jamie Martin said that assuming that tenants voted for transfer there were some additional areas of work which would require input from the Committee. Examples of the work to be undertaken included, the tenancy sign-up campaign, a revised tenant handbook, newsletter format and content review, and a launch event. The Committee thought that the previous format of the Tenant and Leaseholder Steering Group (TLSG) had worked well, and believed that these arrangements should be resurrected to accommodate the additional work. In the first instance Jamie would circulate some provisional dates.

786 Date of next meeting

24 November 2011