

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES
THURSDAY 14th January 2010 AT 10.30 HRS
HELD AT
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL

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

Officers in attendance: Suzy Duffy- Community Participation Coordinator- SLH
John Stirling- Tenant Participation Officer- SLH
Peter Thomas- Chief Executive- SLH (part)
David Stubbs- Director of Operations- SLH (part)
David Sykes – Assistant Director (Community Investment & Development) (part)
Joyce Sedgwick- Housing and Regeneration Manager- SLDC (part)
John Sykes- Stock Options Study Project Manager- SLDC (part)
Ian Elleray- Community and Housing Manager- SLDC (part)

Apologies: Peter Bland
Dorothy Dixon

Circulation: As above

Copy to:

Action

580 Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed as a true record. Proposed by Margaret Akrigg, seconded by Ron Pritchard.

581 Matters arising

Minute 572 (Grounds maintenance Contract). Charles Howarth said that he had been invited to partake in the evaluation process in error. John Stirling to check that the correct details were passed to staff managing the evaluation process.

J St

582 SLH Board Minutes 10 December

Noted

583 SLH Board Agenda 21st January 2010

Noted.

584 Treasurers Report

John Short circulated his report and verbally updated the Committee on the figures. He noted the possibility of additional meetings being necessary during the Stock Options Study and asked that the budget allocated to the Committee for the year 2010-11 reflected this.

SD

585 Housing Revenue Account Proposals.

David Sykes introduced his paper commenting that restructuring within South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) had resulted in Service Heads taking a more active role in the preparation of their annual budgets; however specialist financial advice continued to be available to assist when necessary. He said that the 2010/11 year end projected figures would allow for the minimum working balance in the account to be maintained at the agreed level of £600,000. £50,000 had also been included for unexpected expenditure arising during the year. It was stated that, by applying the Government's rent restructuring formula, there would be an average rent increase of approx 2% from 5 April 2010.

The 2010-11 budget process had considered 4 growth items covering (a) an infrastructure survey, (b) the biennial Status Survey, (c) a more detailed asbestos survey and (d) an increase in the management fee to compensate for the loss of income following the completion of Decent Homes work.

Item (a) included a contribution from the General Fund (GF) to acknowledge the private ownership of homes on estates. Item (b) was a Government requirement. Item (c) could be deferred and considered in 2011/12. Item (d) represented no change in SLH working but was a different way of funding the work.

Peter Thomas said that there had been a positive outcome to negotiations with the Council for the management fee for 2010-11.

There was a further proposal that full management control of the Major Repairs Allowance would be passed from SLDC to SLH, an arrangement which would give the company more flexibility to manage any slippage to works in the future.

Ron Pritchard welcomed the fact that the persons responsible for repairs would now have detailed responsibility for the budget. He asked if the SLH computer based asbestos register and the Bramall computer based asbestos register were able to talk to each other yet. David Stubbs said that although the two systems were not fully compatible, alerts were generated automatically and provision had been made within the SLH ICT budget to improve the situation.

Joan Chadwick asked if there would be any change in the day to day procedures regarding the discovery and/or removal of asbestos in tenant's homes. David Stubbs said that the procedure to immediately investigate and act appropriately would continue and there was an adequate budget in place to cater for these situations.

John Short noted a General Fund growth bid of £10,000 to recognise the benefit gained by private owners from environmental improvements carried out on estates by SLH, and thanked Suzy Duffy for placing the bid.

Proposed by Robin Martakies, seconded by John Short that the draft 2010-11 HRA budget be supported with particular support given to the maintenance of a working balance of £600,000 together with a contingency of £50,000, and the transfer of full management control of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) from SLDC to SLH as from April 2010.

586 Strategic Options Update

Ian Ellera y introduced John Sykes to the Committee. John had been engaged by SLDC as the Project Manager to draw together the various work strands needed to produce a Stock Options Study report for consideration by SLDC Cabinet.

587 Appointment of Independent Tenant Advisor (ITA)

John Sykes introduced himself to the Committee before making a presentation covering the future investment needs of the housing stock, government policy towards council housing, future funding options to ensure long term investment in council housing and the risks and benefits associated with various scenarios.

The Study needed specialist advice from 3 distinct disciplines, namely independent advice for tenants, 30 year investment advice taking into account the value of the housing stock and communications and media advice to ensure clear presentation of the facts to the many varied parties who had an interest in the outcome. Tenants' Committee would choose the Independent Tenant Advisor and by reason of the Committee being represented on various working groups and the project board, they would be involved in all other areas of work covered by the Study. John stressed that the Study was a partnership between tenants, the Board of SLH and SLDC. Once all parties had received initial presentations and agreed a framework for the work he would attend the next Tenants' Committee meeting to update them on progress to date and receive their nominations onto the various working groups.

588 Members Reports

None

589 Any other Business

Sherralyn Clement- said that some tenants of the flats at Rinkfield had queried the running cost at tenants expense, of recently installed heaters within a communal bin room to prevent water pipes freezing. John Stirling would seek an answer.

JSt/TL

Margaret Pritchard referred to flooding in November 2009 and the extremely cold weather of December 2009 to date which had affected all parts of the District. She said that all SLH staff had worked extremely hard to ensure the welfare of tenants but particular thanks was due to the on call Repairs Operatives. Margaret sought the permission of the Committee to write a letter of appreciation. The Committee agreed.

590 Date of Next Meeting

25 February 2010