

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES
10.30 am THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2011
HELD AT
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL

Present: Charles Howarth (Chairman)
Dorothy Dixon
Joan Chadwick
John Short
Margaret Pritchard
Doone Ward
Robin Martakies
Don Brookes
Glenise Brood
Margaret Akrigg
Ron Pritchard
Annice Lewis

Officers in attendance: John Mansergh, Performance Manager- SLH
Peter Thomas, Chief Executive- SLH
Russell Clarke, Director of Asset Management- SLH
John Stirling, Tenant Involvement Officer - SLH

Guests Jamie Martin- Independent Tenant Advisor

Apologies: Wyn Sayers
Janet Cherry

Circulation: As above

787 Minutes of Previous Meeting (13 October 2011)

Agreed as a true record.

788 Matters arising

None.

789 SLH Board Minutes (20 October 2011)

Minute 1075. Robin Martakies asked if the recently published government Housing Strategy had provided any clarity to the issue of 'right to buy' (RTB) properties. He was concerned about where a replacement property would be built to replace a sold property, and the length of time it would take. Peter Thomas said that the Housing Strategy did not provide detailed answers, but the business plan of the new style SLH did take account of the uncertainty. Jamie Martin said he would circulate a paper to the Committee regarding current and proposed RTB discounts.

Minute 1077, point 8. Robin Martakies said that the Board owed it to their tenants that any training needs of a Board Director should be provided without being dependent on a budget. John Mansergh confirmed a detailed Board Development Plan and budget were available.

790 SLH Board agenda 30 November 2011

Item 5.5, para 4.4 (Validation Reports). Don Brookes asked for more clarification regarding rent increases. John Short said that the figures were for prediction purposes only. Russell Clarke confirmed that the tolerances were within government guidelines and he had no concerns. There was no change in government rent setting policy. Jamie Martin said that there was a 5 year rent protection promise in the Offer Document, which could not be changed now.

Item 7.3 (Heating Contract) Robin Martakies said that the satisfaction figures being provided to the Board in the report did not match those provided to the Resident Involvement Service Improvement Group (RISIG). Russell Clarke said that performance was satisfactory, but there but improvements could be made with the management of the contract.

Quarter 2 Performance Indicators (Responsive Repairs) - John Short thanked staff for reporting additional repairs on behalf of tenants during the door knocking period. Don Brookes commended staff for the quality of information contained within the Delivery Plan report.

Item 8.1 (Meeting dates 2012). The Committee agreed to the proposed schedule of meetings, subject to agreement to the Board meeting dates.

791 Grounds Maintenance monitoring update

Simon Hughes said that the current contractor was being retained for a number of years post transfer. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) had been established with SLDC and Continental Landscapes, with the power to summon either party before Tenants' Committee should the need arise. A sum of £8,500 had been set aside to monitor the contract with Tenant Inspectors being recruited and trained in 2012. As a general statement, a higher standard of maintenance would apply to Sheltered Housing sites.

Dorothy Dixon asked who would take responsibility for particular pieces of land on estates. Peter Thomas said that as a general principle, where SLDC was the majority owner on an estate, the responsibility would pass to SLH. Maps showing the boundary of responsibilities would be published once SLDC had formally agreed to transfer. Russell Clarke said that he had experienced housing transfer in the past with similar stock numbers, and in his view negotiations and clarification with regard to ownership would continue long after transfer. The key to high service delivery was partnership working, not documentation. Jamie Martin said that it was clear to him from early meetings with SLH tenants that grounds maintenance matters were of real concern to tenants. He had examined the contract and it was detailed and adequate. With tenant and community monitoring there was significant potential for improvement in service delivery. Tenants should embrace the new opportunity to monitor and improve the service.

792 Improvement Programme – Consultation and engagement

Russell Clarke said that he was committed to full consultation and engagement with tenants regarding the Improvement Programme. It was clear from the level of debate at Committee today that there was a depth of knowledge and experience available to guide him in the future. The Committee should be proud of their achievements since the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) had been created.

793 ITA Post Ballot work

Jamie Martin said that the promises made in the Offer Document now had to be delivered by SLH. There was a list of 21 matters which needed further work to strengthen and protect what works well and give more powers for scrutiny and

change. Jamie proposed a schedule of 7 dates to meet with tenants to informally discuss the issues. (The schedule would be confirmed and circulated once the Board agreed their 2012 meetings).

794 Treasurers Report

John Short presented his report. The balance was higher than anticipated and he suggested that a hot lunch be provided on one or two occasions of the seven meetings with Jamie Martin, when the early ones were taking place during cold weather. The Committee agreed to the suggestion and thanked John for his work.

795 Resident Involvement Service Improvement Group 10- November 2011

Robin Martakies reported that all matters discussed at the meeting had been covered earlier in the agenda.

796 Members Reports

Joan Chadwick- reported that she had resigned from the SLDC Housing Advisory Group. John Stirling to enquire if Tenants Committee would be able to nominate a replacement.

JSt

Ron Pritchard- reported on feedback received following the Cumbria and North Lancashire Tenants Forum Awareness Day on 26 October in Ulverston. Whilst generally positive, there was room for improvement, and the Forum had decided to engage professional speakers in future and not rely on willing participants from other agencies. Ron also updated the Committee on a presentation Forum members had received yesterday from Nic Bliss, from the Confederation of Co-operative Housing. Nic outlined his work regarding Tenant Panels and a consultation paper would be circulated early in 2012. Ron said that there was little difference between the views of Nic Bliss, and the situation on the ground in SLH. Jamie Martin said that once his seven sessions had finished, SLH Tenants' Committee would be at the standard aspired to by all of the National Tenant Organisations.

797 Any Other Business

John Short- asked about the recent Reader Panel (RP) document 'Annual Equality Questionnaire'. He believed that some of the questions were very intrusive and contrasted the eight pages in the document with the two pages he recently completed as a Board member. John Mansergh said that he would try to reduce the number of pages without compromising our legal obligations and desire to tailor services around the needs of tenants.

JM

Dorothy Dixon- asked if the Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) would be resuming shortly. Jamie Martin said that this would be covered in his sessions.

John Mansergh- said that the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) were visiting SLH on 6 and 7 December as part of the registration process and there was an opportunity for tenants to give their views. John Short, Charles Howarth and Margaret Pritchard would be available if needed.

798 Date of next meeting

12 January 2012, subject to the schedule of Board meetings being agreed.