

**SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES  
THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 10.30 HRS  
HELD AT  
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL**

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

Guests: Lisa Chant Customer Development Manager – Bramall  
Construction (part)

Officers in attendance: Lucy Reynolds, Senior Strategy Officer, SLDC  
Garry Ronson, Director of Finance – SLH (part)  
Sue Boulton, Business Support Manager – SLH (part)  
Suzy Duffy, Community Participation Co-ordinator – SLH  
John Stirling, Tenant Participation Officer SLH

Apologies: Ian Elleray, Community and Housing manager SLDC

Circulation: As above

Copy to: P Thomas

Circulation of documents: The following documents were circulated

- The current training programme from Trafford Hall
- Feedback from the revised tenancy agreement consultation sessions

**Subject**

**Action**

Margaret Pritchard welcomed Lisa Chant, and took the Decent Homes Report out of order from the published agenda for operational reasons.

**413 Decent Homes Reports**

Lisa Chant presented her report, adding that although there had been number of complaints, these were far outweighed by the number of compliments received. Ulverston south internals had been completed without the possible drop in satisfaction reported to the Committee on 26 June (minute 396). Ulverston south external works

had been delayed by the weather but were still projected to be completed on time. Windermere and Ambleside contracts were progressing without incident. The Staveley contract would commence next week with pre entry surveys, followed by a start on site 3 weeks later. Ambleside and Staveley would be finished by Christmas, and Windermere by January 2009.

Ulverston satisfaction was running at 92% and Ambleside at below 90%. The lower Ambleside figure was thought to be due to the change of kitchen fitting contractor as reported to the Committee on 7 August (minute 409). With approximately 150 properties in the Ambleside contract it only needed a few tenants to give poor feedback for overall satisfaction rates to drop. Extra attention was now being paid to supervision and programming issues in Ambleside.

Peter Bland asked for satisfaction rates for leasehold properties. Lisa confirmed that the number of returned questionnaires from leaseholders was poor, and that this may have something to do with the delay in final accounts being sent out by SLDC. Dorothy Dixon said that work had been completed on her property in summer 2007, but she had only recently received her final account in summer 2008. Suzy Duffy said that she would ask the Leasehold SIG to look at this matter and see how it could be improved.

Both Ron Pritchard and Win Sayers complimented Lisa on the work undertaken at their properties by Bramall contractors.

#### **414 Minutes of previous meeting**

#### **415 Matters arising**

- a. John Stirling referred to minute 411 and said that no objections had been received from councillors to the Tenants' Committee Constitution Delegated Executive Decision of 7 August. The new Constitution came into effect on the expiry of the call in period which was 15 August. As an immediate consequence members would no longer have their housing management area shown in the minutes, and Dorothy Dixon would be formally recorded as a full member of the Tenants' Committee.

#### **Resolved, that Dorothy Dixon be formally accepted onto the Committee**

- b. Robin Martakies referred to minute 402 and said that although he had spoken to Trevor Woodward at the Repairs and Maintenance training session on 28 August he still wished Trevor to attend to report on decoration allowances. Suzy said that she had been working closely with Robin on his enquiry. She had referred the matter to the Voids Service Improvement Group (VSIG) and Robin had been invited to join the Group, where he could be at the heart of tenant involvement in this topic. Robin said that he would be joining the SIG but he still wished an officer to attend the next meeting to discuss the issues he had raised.

SD/JS

#### **Resolved that suitable officer/s be invited to attend the next meeting if possible to discuss the issues surrounding decorations for vulnerable tenants**

- c. John Short asked that his comments at minute 402 (c) would be more appropriately recorded under minute 407.

#### 416 SLH Board minutes (14 August 2008)

Noted.

#### 417 SLH Board Agenda 18 September 2008

Item 5 (Management Accounts) Don Brookes asked why the accounts would be discussed by the Value for Money Service Improvement Group (VFMSIG) and not Tenants' Committee. He asked that the Service Improvement Group report to Tenants Committee. Robin Martakies said that Service Improvement Groups were not sub committees of Tenants' Committee. Joan Chadwick said Service Improvement Groups were designed to capture the views of tenants at a time of change and in the detail of service development. John Short said that with input from Finance and Procurement, Tenants' Committee and SIG there were too many stages to the process. Suzy Duffy proposed that as Garry Ronson was due to address Committee later in the agenda he could be asked about the issues raised at that time.

Suzy Duffy said that she would make a presentation at the next meeting showing how the SIGs and other changes agreed in last year's District wide Tenant Participation Agreement review work in practice. Copy minutes of all the Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) were now displayed in the Resource centre and are available for any tenant to peruse. SD

Item 6 (Tenant Involvement Update) John Short said that the figures showed that no Void Inspections had been carried out by tenants last year and none so far this year. He said that members of Tenants Committee should be doing these inspections. John Stirling said that 12 Void Inspections were carried out in 2007-08 by tenants drawn from the Tenant Involvement Club, and the nil return shown in the agenda paper was a clerical error. Suzy Duffy confirmed that the Repairs section were now organising the inspections and she would ask for a progress report for the next meeting. SD

#### 418 Independent Board Director Appointments

Garry Ronson said that South Lakes Housing was in the same position as other Arms Length Management Organisations established at about the same time; a blend of innovation and experience had to be maintained with all Directors be they independent, council or tenant. The current Board Membership policy had worked well in the early years but it was clear that changes needed to be made in order to maintain the desired blend. Any proposed changes to the Board Membership Policy would come before Tenants Committee for discussion.

**Resolved, that Tenants Committee endorses the reappointment of the retiring Independent Directors.** GR

Suzy Duffy said that Tenants Committee wished to formally review the Management Accounts prior to presentation to the Board. Garry Ronson said that he would do so in future, but cautioned that figures were not produced each quarter due to operational reasons within his department. GR

John Stirling asked Garry Ronson to remain in the meeting in his capacity as Company Secretary for the next item.

#### **419 Tenant Board Director Elections**

John Stirling said that there had been no expressions of interest from the Newsletter advertisement since the last meeting. There were 3 retiring Tenant Directors, and 3 nominations for the created vacancies.

GR

Don Brookes proposed that John Short and Joan Chadwick are reappointed, and Charles Howarth is appointed to replace Ron Pritchard. Peter Bland seconded the proposal.

**Resolved, that John Short, Joan Chadwick and Charles Howarth be appointed Tenant Board Directors.**

#### **420 Update on Future options**

Suzy Duffy said that Ian Elleray had asked her to update the Committee on this matter. She said that all members of Tenants Committee are invited on 1 October when Paul Schofield from Government Office North West would outline expectations for the consultation process. It was important that as many members as possible attend the session. Suzy is also arranging for the Committee to receive a briefing from their Housing Finance Independent Advisor, Graham Martin, prior to the appointment of an Independent Advisor, to set the scene for the options process.

#### **421 Treasurers Report**

Noted with thanks to John Short

#### **422 Members Reports**

- a. Don Brookes referred to minute 397 of 26 June, and had obtained the necessary permission from the Housing Provision Advisory Group to circulate their Scheme Progress Sheet. He gave a verbal update on current schemes for development of affordable homes.
- b. Robin Martakies had attended the Resident Involvement Service Improvement Group (RISIG) where the next Area Discussion Group, Roadshow feedback schedule and STATUS survey were discussed.
- c. John Short had attended the Housing Income Management SIG where feedback from new tenants had been received and discussed.
- d. Joan Chadwick had attended the Leaseholder SIG when the issues of Buy back and loans for service charges were discussed.
- e. Margaret Pritchard had attended meetings of the Office Accommodation Group and looked at options for both Ulverston and Kendal Offices. A single site for both centres had been considered but discounted on efficiency grounds. The Group had recently visited a suite of offices in Kendal that was currently available to lease.

#### **423 Any Other Business**

Suzy Duffy said that she was working on a bid to SLDC for additional monies to be allocated to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to take account of the Community Support work carried out by SLH.

SD/GR

John Stirling would circulate details of seminars on 25 September (Policing Green paper) and 17 October (Not in my Neighbourhood)

Phyllis Tweedale recounted problems on 2 recent occasions when SLDC took her direct debit later than agreed. John Short said that there was also a delay when telephone payments were made. Suzy Duffy to arrange for a report from SLDC. SD

Phyllis Tweedale recounted recent occasions when she had arrived at meetings arranged by SLH only to find that they had been cancelled, causing inconvenience and unnecessary expense. Suzy Duffy apologised on behalf of SLH, and would ask all staff to ensure that any cancellation was accompanied by an explanation. SD

Joan Chadwick circulated a press article regarding affordability.

Ron Pritchard thanked Margaret Akrigg for arranging a meeting with Kendal Town Council Mayor.

Don Brookes suggested that the Committee took advantage of a development/away day, similar to that recently undertaken by the Board. Provision of buffet lunch and a venue away from SLH premises were agreed.

#### **424 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 30 October 2008