

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES

10:30am Thursday 14th September 17 held in the
Windermere Suite, Bridge Mills, Kendal

Present: Stephen Bolton (Chair)
Charles Howarth
John Short
Paul Athersmith
Sue Layfield
Jim Layfield
Dorothy Dixon
Lorraine Birchall
June Peckston

Guests N/A

Staff in attendance: Lyn Richardson - Community Engagement Officer- Minutes
Lisa Maguire- (Business Analyst)
John Mansergh – Assistant Director (Quality & Performance)

Apologies: Win Sayers, Mavis Nelson, Wendy Orr, Kenny Mayo

Circulation: As above

ACTION

1. Minutes of previous meeting (6th July 2017)

1.1 Agreed as a true record.

2. Matters arising

It has been confirmed that some of the changes to the Leasehold Management Policy will be in the Annual Report that is due to go out shortly. Previously the information was only going to be distributed online and Tenants Committee felt that this was not a fair way to share the information.

Relating to point 5. There are now updated fire checks taking place.

Stephen mentioned about the 1st floor Fire Action signage at Dragley Beck and recommended the notice is displayed at the top of the block too. John M

Jim mentioned about parking behind some garages near to their home and that often these areas are blocked which could prevent a fire engine getting access. To address this a surveyor will be sent to access the parking in the area. Lisa M

Dorothy commented on a letter that had been sent out by SLH regarding the fire doors. She contacted the fire service as instructed on the letter and got a letter back saying that they are unable to help.

John M explained that SLH is looking at a new leasehold strategy regarding fire safety but currently SLH has no responsibility to fit the fire doors. However, it is the intention of SLH Board and the Audit and Risk Committee to find a solution. Within SLH stock there are 38 leasehold properties do not have the correct fire door. John M will bring forward a strategy to a future meeting.

John M

In the current climate the fire regulations are not good enough and it is expected that following the Grenfell tower fire that these will be reviewed and change.

There will be a section in the annual report regarding this so that tenants are up to date with the most current information.

3. Minutes of SLH Special General Meeting

The new resolutions were passed at the meeting by a small margin. This relates to a change in board composition with up to 2 council members, 2 tenants and up to 8 independents.

4. Customer Services Scrutiny Panel Report

The tenant scrutiny panel came about after a review by independent tenant advisor, Yvonne Davies where she identified that a clearer process was required regarding monitoring performance.

Sara Brown, John Short, Jim and Sue Layfield took part in 3 meetings focusing on Customer Service. They reviewed this by looking at The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Regulatory standard, STAR survey, other reports and interviewing the Head of Housing and Customer Services. This gave them a good insight into Customer service and helped to shape the recommendations identified in Part 4 of the Scrutiny report.

John M

Recommendation 6 regarding Tenants Committee being involved in the monitoring of the delivery of the Customer Action plan and results of customer satisfaction surveys needs to be added in to the Annual Engagement plan.

John S thanked Lyn R for sending out the staff structure but added that he could no longer find the Housing Officer titles but there were lots of other fancy names. A discussion took place on the changes within SLH and job roles and agreed that tenants need to be made more aware of staff changes as and when they arise. The customer service team have undergone further training to correctly direct calls to the correct service.

Stephen Bolton thanked the tenants that had been involved in this panel and all the hard work that they had put in.

5. Proposed new service standards

The current standards have now expired and SLH is looking to develop a new set of Service standards.

The scrutiny group have already been through the service standards and deleted some and amalgamated others that overlap or say a similar thing. The role of Tenants Committee will be to comment on the recommendations but also make alterations before approving them.

There followed a discussion around a new trial that is going to take place with 100 new customers who are general needs around the Independent Living Offer. The trial will last from November 17 – March 18. There was some concern from tenants about who is paying for the service and how that impacts on the current capacity of ILO's.

It is noted that on page 3 of the service standards that under Independent Living point 1, the words 'general needs housing' needs to be taken out.

John M

6. Annual Report working group

The working group involved June, Wendy and Charles. The group have had a couple of productive meetings and it is now in its final draft. When complete hard copies will be sent to Tenants Committee and to Sheltered tenants. It will be noted on the rent statements that a hard copy can be requested and a box will be kept in the office for this purpose.

The chair acknowledged the work of this group and thanked them for their contribution.

7. July Board minutes

John Short commented on nearly a third of the Board minutes focusing on Fire Safety. He gave an example of a change in behaviour from a tenant at West Ing after a letter around Fire safety was sent from Richard Hayes. This resulted in a fire door not being wedged open anymore. Stephen also cited an example of a tenant who had stored lots of boxes outside their flat but had now removed them. John M confirmed that 1000 letters were sent out to those who are covered by these fire regulations.

Dorothy commented on the statement around leaseholders being able to obtain more money via equity release and that this was not necessarily a solution. John referred to the earlier item that the Board would be reviewing the Leasehold strategy to take in to account recent events.

Currently there are 29 fire doors that need upgrading across SLH general needs stock with most being located on Waterside.

8. Members Reports- Tenant Complaint Panel 5.9.17

The complaints panel is going well with 3 meetings so far.

The process for a complaint from a tenant is for the Manager to investigate in the first instance, then the Director, then the Board and then Tenants Complaints panel.

There is currently 1 case with the Ombudsman and 1 case going to the Board.

The complaints received are very spread across all service areas with no one particular type of complaint more prevalent.

There will be some Data Protection training and how a complaint is dealt with when it first arrives with SLH.

9. Any other business

Jim asked about SLH Pet policy and how many dogs someone is able to keep. There was no clear defined answer so Lyn will send out the policy to tenants committee.

Lyn R

Dorothy asked about whether there was a date for the online portal and when it will be available to tenants. John M explained that cyber tests had taken place but further configuration work and tenant testing was required. This was considered by the tenant scrutiny group with a deadline of autumn 2017. John added that SLH were dependent on work being carried out by the developer and he emphasised that getting the product secure and right was the best thing to do.

Lorraine Birchall would like to note for the meeting on 9th Nov that she will be unable to attend due to a prior meeting.

Stephen requested a copy of the staff structure.

10. Date of next meeting

9th November 2017

Meeting 10.30am

Turkey dinner with apple pie and custard, mince pies.

The meeting closed at 12:30hrs.