

## **SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES**

1:30pm 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 via Go-To-Meeting

Present: Sue Layfield  
Jim Layfield  
Loraine Birchall  
Charles Howarth

Guests N/A

Staff in attendance: John Mansergh – Director of Business Assurance  
Lyn Richardson – Tenant Engagement Officer  
Alison Kinnon – Director of Customers (part)  
Emily Graveson – Communications Officer (part)  
Fiona Harrison – Tenancy Manager (part)  
Emma Wilson – Governance Support Assistant (minutes)

Apologies: Stephen Bolton  
Dorothy Dixon  
John Short  
Paul Athersmith  
June Peckston

Circulation: As above include all managers

### **ACTION**

#### **1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021- MATTERS ARISING**

- 1.1 Minutes from the meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record with the exception of removing a second R from Loraine's name.

#### **2. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS AND ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS**

- 2.1 Alison advised Tenants' Committee that delivering Neighbourhood Plans and Estate Improvements is one of the priorities in the Business Strategy 2020/25 in the Growing theme. Alison said some of the estates across the district are starting to look a bit tired and need some investment to spruce them up. More than half of the properties on some estates have been sold therefore we will have to engage with other partners and stakeholders such as residents, Cumbria County Council, South Lakeland District Council, Police, local schools etc. The types of things that might require investment include; fencing, render wrap of homes to improve the physical appearance, the lay-out/design of communal areas to reduce anti-social behaviour, footpaths, street lighting, not having enough car parking on estates and planting areas looking unkempt etc. The view is that if we invest in the estates it will improve the appearance of homes and the estates, in turn leading to improved customer perception

and satisfaction that their views are being listened to. Homes will become more popular with safer and more attractive estates where children have safe play areas, which in turn will improve their health and wellbeing.

- 2.2 Fiona provided the Committee with information around how data would be collected from residents via a survey and how this information will be analysed to help prioritise where we spend our estate improvement funds and help develop a programme of works. There is lots of work on-going behind the scenes, we are trying to be creative, we have put together a digital questionnaire through survey monkey. The content of the survey was shared with Committee members to get their views and comments. The survey is digital by default we envisage the survey being shared via social media platforms and community pages to promote and push the survey. It won't be a one off survey it will be issued each quarter to gain interest and results. Feedback that is gathered will be fed back to Committee members. There is a link that will provide direct access to the survey, it will also take you to the SLH website to give background and information on why we would like members of the community and our tenants to take the survey. We will be using a voucher incentive to engage people and promote people to take the survey. The SLH website shows the estate action plans, currently we have 125 estates across different geographical locations. There will be a drop down so you can choose where you live. This will also be flagged in my home section of the website. There will be a map to identify the area you live in when taking the survey. The asset management model generates a score when data is inputted enabling SLH and other stakeholders to invest in the areas the community want most. The survey questions are rated 1-5 this will allow us to assess the estate we will then ask people to list 5 priority issues this help generate the key actions and lead into the estate action plan. There is an option to upload any photos or letters to enable us to consider other options. If other stakeholders are involved, we will ensure this is flagged with them. Timescales will be identified, and the action plan will be live and kept updated for anyone accessing the SLH website to see. Fiona asked Committee members for any feedback regarding the survey and data collection.
- 2.3 Sue asked is there the possibility to send the questionnaire in paper form for anyone who can't access it digitally. Fiona at present to ensure we can assess the data it needs to be inputted into survey monkey to then go into the assets model. We don't wish to exclude anyone. If any members of the community or our tenants wished to provide feedback, they could contact the customer services team who would facilitate the completion of the survey via the phone.
- 2.4 Charles asked how the survey will be advertised to people who haven't got facilities to go online or access the internet. Fiona responded there will be some posters developed that will have a QR code this can be scanned and will direct people to the SLH website and the survey. Posters will be displayed in the community centres and shops. Charles was keen to involve everyone and not exclude people. Alison suggested Committee members suggest ways in which we can reach out to all community members and tenants to gather feedback. Charles suggested text message would also reach a wider audience. Sue suggested she would be happy to post paper surveys in her local area so information can then be inputted to Survey Monkey, Loraine would be happy to do this. Fiona added there will also be consultation on the final vision and project to get everyone involved and enable their voice to be heard.

### 3. SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER

3.1 John provided an update on the Social Housing White Paper highlighting new 7 new charter commitments which are;

- To be safe in your home
- To know how your landlord performing
- To have your complaints dealt with fairly and promptly
- To be treated with respect
- To have your voice heard
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
- To be supported to take your first step to home ownership – extending the product and getting people on the ladder.

**Safety** – this has come out of the Grenfell enquiry. New legislation to strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing’s consumer regulation standards to explicitly include safety. Expect the Regulator of Social Housing to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding with the Health and Safety Executive to ensure effective sharing of information with the Building Safety Regulator.

**Performance** – we will need to provide clear information on how the landlord is performing, we need to decide how to do this going forward not just in a digital way. We need to ensure information is accessible to all. Ensure a breakdown of how landlords spend income. Housing Associations to be more transparent and operate under an open responsive manor, further regulation to follow as part of a new ‘access to information’ scheme.

**Complaints** – new complaints procedure in process, the revised SLH policy is now live with an improved visibility on the website to report a complaint following Jim’s suggestion. Customer satisfaction to be launched follow up surveys are now being sent out post complaints. Customer satisfaction to be added to the next agenda for Committee review.

**Respect** - Transforming the consumer regulation role of the Regulator of Social Housing (“the regulator”) so it proactively monitors and drives landlords’ compliance with improved consumer standards. Give the regulator the power to publish a Code of Practice on revised consumer standards to be clear what landlords are required to deliver.

**Voice heard** - Expect the regulator to require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually improve the way they engage with social housing tenants. Lots of work on-going around SLH neighbourhood plans and the Committee debated earlier.

**Quality homes** – Review the decent homes standard including access to quality of green spaces and energy efficiency. The regulator will be producing new consumer standards review the current ones. There will be KPI’s and tenant metrics.

**Home ownership** - Implementing a new, fairer, and more accessible model for Shared Ownership. Implementing a new Right to Shared Ownership for tenants of housing associations and other private registered providers who live in new grant funded homes for rent

- 3.2 Charles asked about the decent home's standard is there an actual standard or is it up to each Housing Association. John responded yes there is a current standard, but it is basic and housing associations have gone above and beyond the standard. There is to be a national review of the standard this will include the communal areas and spaces as well as the internal areas within a home. We know there will be more green measures e.g. the government target that all properties meet EPC band C by 2030, SLH have ambition to achieve this by 2025 but there is currently a funding gap and we need access to grants.
- 3.3 John made Committee members aware that Ian Mitchell will be leaving the organisation in March this year. This will have a big impact on the team he has great knowledge of around building safety compliance and he has been excellent at responding to Committee enquiries. Loraine asked for her best wishes to be passed on.
- 3.4 John added that the Social Housing White Paper is a good document for tenants to use to raise concerns with their landlords. Lyn suggested going to TPAS website as they have some good information and training on the standards around supporting tenants. John will need to produce a self-assessment for SLH it will involve Committee members. John suggested focusing on one of the 7 charter commitments at each meeting. It will provide a framework and shows commitment to improving services. The Committee agreed to add this to their engagement plan.

#### **4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 4.1 Sue asked for clarification on what Fiona had stated are SLH estates not necessarily occupied by SLH tenants? Loraine responded yes some have purchased their own home some are leasehold and mixed estates. We would consult everyone on the estate. John added we would look to engage with other stakeholders and agree where we could potentially join-up investment activity.

Lyn has contacted Dorothy, John and Paul all are doing well and still wish to be involved with the Cttee and provide input where possible. Paul is hoping to join a meeting in the future.

#### **5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 18<sup>TH</sup> March 2020**