

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES

1:30pm 15th July 2021 via Zoom

Present: Sue Layfield
Jim Layfield
Charles Howarth
Stephen Bolton
Loraine Birchall

Guests N/A

Staff in attendance: Cath Purdy – Chief Executive
John Mansergh – Director of Business Assurance
Lyn Richardson – Community Engagement Officer
Susan Claxton – Building Safety Manager (part)
Simon Hughes – Income Manager (part)
Emma Wilson – Governance Support Assistant (minutes)

Apologies: Dorothy Dixon
John Short
Paul Athersmith
June Peckston

Circulation: As above include all managers

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 13TH MAY 2021- MATTERS ARISING

1.1 The minutes from the meeting held on 13th May were accepted as a true and accurate record.

1.2 John S reported he was pleased to see backlog of repairs is nearly cleared.

2. TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

2.1 Cath informed Tenants' Cttee members that the LEAP Beyond transformation programme is about improving services and ensuring changes made have a positive impact on customer services. We know we need to do better. Often, we find we are duplicating processes and that there are gaps in some areas of the business that need additional resources. The LEAP Beyond programme was started last year, this was to align improving services for our customers. We have done 20 + process reviews of different areas of the business. As part of the Transformation we are reviewing resources and ensuring they are in the most appropriate areas. Colleagues will receive training to ensure they have the skills to meet our customer needs and continually improve services. Cath will provide an update on the Customer First approach at the next Tenants' Cttee meeting.

- 2.2 Jim asked about communication between Housing Managers and Tenants and having a face to face approach and if this has been considered as part of the Transformation process. Cath responded this is part of the Transformation agenda, we want to have more colleagues out and about in the community engaging and working with tenants. Neighbourhood plans are currently being worked on, lots of engagement is taking place and more to follow.

3. SLH RULE CHANGE – NOMINATIONS TO BOARD AND SHAREHOLDING

- 3.1 Cath updated Tenants' Cttee members the Rules change and will be shared at the AGM in September. There are two parts to it. The first part is about shareholding, SLSC will be unable to vote and take part in general meetings like the AGM. The second part is about reducing the Board Council nominations. Cath asked for Tenants' Cttee views.

- 3.2 Following discussions Cttee members were in full agreement with the proposal.

- 3.3 Cath added we need to have a wider debate about tenant shareholders and how our customers voice can influence SLH decision making in the future.

4. SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER 'ACCESS TO INFORMATION'

- 4.1 John reported all public services are subject to the Freedom of Information Act but historically this has not included Housing Associations. The Social Housing White Paper has included an 'Access to Information' scheme for all housing providers. This is still in consultation and will be limited to social housing enquiries only. Subcontractor information will fall within the scope of the access to information. John will provide further updates as and when the government makes the changes. Tenants' Cttee members will be asked for input and support as and when needed.

5. COVID UPDATE

- 5.1 John updated Tenants' Cttee members regarding the relaxing of the restrictions and what this will mean for SLH customers and colleagues. New guidance has been published by the Government. Covid secure guidance was previously legislation but there is now more onus on businesses to ensure we have safe working practices in place. We are in the process of reviewing our current risk assessments. As part of the review we need to consult with customers, colleagues, and unions. We will not be going back to how things were before. Most colleagues wish to continue working in an agile way. We will continue to work with current risk assessments to ensure colleagues and contractors are safe until a full review and consultation takes place.

- 5.2 As of the 19th July SLH will be increasing face to face work but will still maintain 2 + meter distancing. We need to consider more and more colleagues are testing positive 1 or 2 a week, this is a significant increase on where we were before. This will impact on services therefore we are not all rushing back to the office. This may lead to delays. Whilst we appreciate covid should not be an excuse the increase in positive testing may have an impact on services. Customers will be asked if they want SLH staff members to wear face coverings. The office will remain closed in the short term and will be

discussed at the next Board meeting. John asked Tenants' Cttee members for feedback.

- 5.3 Tenants' Cttee members are supportive of the new working practices from the 19th July and feel that the safety of customers and colleagues should remain high priority.

6 INCOME STRATEGY

- 6.1 Simon suggested not to go through the Income Strategy in detail as Tenants' Cttee members had received a copy ahead of the meeting. Simon asked if there were any questions.
- 6.2 Jim asked who an appropriate Body would be to allow breathing space in terms of rent arrears. Simon explained that an Insolvency service such as Citizen's Advice would provide the tenant with support. Nationally there has not been many applications to evict tenants and SLH have had none to date. We are pleased with the Income Team's performance no evictions have taken place and reduced number of notices and enforcements have been issued. We are working to maintain this and keep tenants in their home. There are savings from not taking tenants to court. SLH are Moving away from Capita to Allpay and this has allowed a greater choice of dates for customers to make rent payments.
- 6.3 Universal credit £20 additional weekly payment will be going in the Autumn and there is a campaign to lobby against this. Corporately we will be trying to support tenants to keep this payment.
- 6.4 John S provided email comments which stated that the document was useful and informative.
- 6.5 Charles asked will Allpay be able to save some of the tenant's details as capita doesn't do this currently. Simon responded and advised that recurring card payments will get around this and save details.

7. BUILDING SAFETY MANAGER INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 Susan introduced herself as the Building Safety Manager and has been in post since April. Susan is reviewing all areas of compliance including grounds maintenance and trees. Susan asked what Tenants' Cttee members would like to know more about. We are going through a lot of changes at present with Transformation programme. We have over 10,000 trees to manage which require servicing every 3 years Susan will be reviewing the tree strategy this will include the long term plan.
- 7.2 Radon also falls under Susan's remit. Sue asked if data from readings is communicated to Tenants as she is aware her neighbours reading was high. Sue added if she requires a pump can SLH inform her of what the process of instillation is and when this will happen. Charles has also returned his radon detector and had no feedback. Jim added radon monitoring should be in policy, it should state that the monitors are installed in the winter and not in the spring or summer as tenants ventilate properties more in the summer which could affect the readings.

SC

- 7.3 Lyn suggested covering smaller topics some areas of compliance will be covered in September in the scrutiny panel review.
- 7.4 The Chair explained that regular reporting on compliance through KPI's is shared with Tenants' Cttee members.
- 7.5 Charles asked if paths and communal walkways are included within grounds maintenance. Susan explained regular checks take place these are then given a risk rating which informs the process of when work needs to be completed. EW
- 7.6 Loraine raised several areas of concern around Kirk Flatts, asbestos shed roofs, grounds maintenance, rubbish that has been dumped, damaged fence and fly tipping behind the fence. EW to email Susan, CST, and tenancy management to support with resolving the issues raised.
- 8. SCRUTINY REPORT NEW PANEL NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD**
- 8.1 Lyn asked if Tenants' Cttee members had any questions regarding the report.
- 8.2 Charles asked about recommendation 6 in the report why is this an additional cost and has not already been budgeted for. John suggested Lyn seek clarification from IT, however the change to the interface has been budgeted for. Data and information have not been budgeted for there is a pot of money to support Transformation, but we need to prioritise investments. Charles responded lots of money has been spent on software this should already be included and be in a future budget. LR
- 8.3 Tenants' Cttee members are happy for the Scrutiny report to be endorsed and shared with the Board. The Chair thanked those involved in the Scrutiny report on behalf of the Cttee. Lyn is seeking nominations for September this will be the community standard. Lyn will post out the standard.
- 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 9.1 Charles informed Tenants' Cttee members he has submitted a formal compliant regarding new windows. Charles was informed by letter that the window fitting would be going out to tender the next day he had someone knocking on the door asking to look at his windows. Charles is speaking to Richard Hayes Director of Assets next week as he is unhappy at the lack of manager contact following his compliant.
- 9.2 The Chair shared an update from the Regulator that there will be greater emphasis in working towards getting tenants and landlords talking.
- 9.3 Loraine also shared an update the Regulator is fully aware of the lack of communication from landlords regarding updates following reporting of repairs. There is limited news and feedback on the repair timescales and what is happening.
- 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 9th September 2021 and AGM meeting Nominations for vice Chair all other positions to be discussed at the meeting.**

