

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES

2pm 11th November 2021 via Zoom

Present: Sue Layfield
Jim Layfield
Charles Howarth
Stephen Bolton
Lorraine Birchall
Paul Athersmith

Guests N/A

Staff in attendance: John Mansergh – Director of Business Assurance (part)
Alison Kinnon – Director of Customers (part)
Emma Perie – Interim Head of Assets (part)
Sean Ellam – Interim Tenancy Manager (part)
Lyn Richardson – Community Engagement Officer
Emma Wilson – Governance Support Assistant (minutes)

Apologies: Dorothy Dixon
John Short

Circulation: As above include all managers

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 15th July 2021- MATTERS ARISING

- 1.1 The minutes from the meeting held on 14th October 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.
- 1.2 The Minutes from the AGM held on the 14th October were approved as a true and accurate record.

2. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Emma Perie and Richard Hayes joined the meeting at 12.40pm

- 2.1 Emma P shared the presentation on SLH's drive towards achieving Net Carbon Zero. One of the ways this will be achieved will be to make SLH homes much more energy efficient by improving the EPC (energy performance certificate) rating. SLH has a target of 2025 to improve all homes to an EPC band C rating this is ahead of the government's target of 2030. Currently most SLH homes are a high band D or below some homes will never reach this target but it will be offset by implementing other greening measures like tree planting. SLH have applied for government funding to help make improvements. The current cost to improve homes is predicted to be £9.9m. SLH wish to have a no regrets policy to ensure the right decisions are made when choosing options to improve a homes energy efficiency. SLH want to involve customers as much as possible to ensure they have all the information available to them to support the improvements. Customers should feel included and reassured that improvements are in their best interests with a phased approach. This will involve good communication and tailoring of language that is understandable to meet the needs of our customers.

- 2.2 Charles highlighted the need to ensure homes can breathe so that moisture and damp don't start to form. Homes should have good ventilation whilst maintaining heat. Richard agreed with Charles and explained this is part of SLH's no regrets policy to ensure we choose the right heating source.

Richard Hayes left the meeting at 1.10pm

Alison Kinnon joined the meeting at 1.10pm

3. RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE POLICY

- 3.1 Alison explained to TC members that the rent and service charge policy had been externally reviewed and training provided for employees who will need to implement the new policy by DTP. The Policy itself has only had minor amendments. The 2022/23 rent review will be recommending to the Board an increase of 4.1% on rents. This is made up of CPI 3.1% + 1% uplift this is the maximum rent increase that can be applied. Over the last 4 years SLH have not been able to apply any rent in creases due to the Welfare Reform that stated rents had to reduce each year by 1%. SLH still have lower than rents than other social housing providers. The additional rent increase is needed to support the greening agenda, maintain homes and to continue to develop new homes. There is currently over £3,000 people waiting for homes on the CBL register. Another recommendation Alison will be making to the Board is to set up a hardship fund for anyone who is genuinely struggling. Alison also informed Tenants Cttee members she had attended a Place Shapers conference along with another 45 organisations they all shared the same issues and will be applying the maximum rent increase.

- 3.2 ***Tenants Committee members endorsed the Rent and Service Charge Policy and the Rent Increase for 2022/23 ahead of approval at the Board meeting tonight.***

Alison Kinnon left the meeting at 1.20pm

Sean Ellam joined the meeting at 1.20pm

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

- 4.1 Sean shared an update with Tenants Cttee members regarding the neighbourhood investment programme. Tenancy Management officers and Lyn have been engaging with customers to identify what is important to them on their estates. Engagement has been online and at community centres. £4.5m has been committed by SLH over the next 7 years. Following a period of consultation we have now identified 8 sites to make improvements we have also been working with a company called Groundworks who will help with the design and improvements of the estates. The first sites to see improvements will be Hallgarth and Owlet Ash work will commence in the next 3-6 months. Sean explained we need to consider our investments and ensure they can continue to either be self-maintaining or the site is added to a continued maintenance programme.

Sean Ellam and Emma Perie left the meeting 1.40pm

John Mansergh joined the meeting at 1.40pm

5. PERFORMANCE UPDATE

- 5.1 John joined the meeting and shared a brief update with tenants Cttee members in terms of SLH performance to date.

- *Performance is generally OK*

- *The STAR Survey results are due back in the next month this will be shared at the next TC meeting in Jan, hoping for more than 500 returns.*
- *Repair's completion target dates need to improve however there are factors that are impacting inability to recruit, a rise in covid cases, summer holidays and the back log of repairs following lockdown.*
- *Health and Safety is going well.*
- *Rental Income is still on target.*
- *Development of new homes continues with new sites approved by the Board at the September meeting.*
- *The EPC rating of homes is 95% complete the outstanding 5% is due to access issues.*
- *We need to improve the letting of Void properties sourcing external contractors and delays in the My new Home process have held up the letting process.*
- *Covid is still a very real issue with more employees having to isolate due to positive tests the main point of contact seems to be through children and schools.*

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 Paul raised concerns about a Rogerson's gas contractor that had visited someone's home and left a job incomplete causing a gas leak and he had been seen disposing of paperwork in a public bin. EW to follow up with HM.
- 6.2 The Chair asked Cttee members for feedback on dates and times for the new year. Cttee members agreed meeting times should be 12.30pm-2.30pm. EW to email 2022 dates out to Cttee members.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 20th January 2022 Windermere room 12.30pm.