

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

1.30pm 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 in the Windermere room

Present: Sue Layfield  
Jim Layfield  
Charles Howarth  
Stephen Bolton  
Lorraine Birchall  
Gaynor Aplin - Observer  
Sarah Benjamin – Observer  
Pauline Vaughan – Observer (part)

Guests N/A

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

Apologies: Dorothy Dixon  
John Short  
Paul Athersmith

Circulation: As above include all managers

### **ACTION**

#### **1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022- MATTERS ARISING**

1.1 The minutes of the meeting 20<sup>th</sup> January were accepted as a true and accurate record.

##### **1.2 Matters Arising**

The Chair requested the 2022 dates of the Tenants' Committee meetings be added to the website and a link for easier access to the Annual Tenants Report. **EW**

#### **2. STAR SURVEY UPDATE**

2.1 Lyn updated Tenants' Committee we are still waiting for the final report therefore the information received is limited. We have asked MEL to provide a breakdown of the surveys into neighbourhoods to be able to analyse in greater detail and drill down into pockets of dissatisfaction.

2.2 Prize winners have received prizes for completion of the survey initial feedback is that tenants found it relatively easy to complete. A working group is to be established with Tenants involved. The group will ensure actions are completed and monitored.

2.3 JM shared some of the headline results; satisfaction with general needs has increased since the last satisfaction survey whilst sheltered has gone down.

- 86% overall satisfaction
- 85% satisfied with the last repair they received
- 88% satisfied that SLH provides a home that is safe and secure

- 82% satisfied with the overall quality of their home
- 83% satisfied that SLH is easy to deal with

2.4 The Chair asked if next year's survey can be done by SLH. JM responded an external company will continue to do the surveys as they have the tools to break the data down and provide greater analysis. The survey will be done on an annual basis going forward.

2.5 Charles commented if you didn't answer a question you couldn't move on. He asked why a higher proportion of tenants surveyed were sheltered tenants in comparison to general needs. John responded we had lots of no responses to the general needs surveys. MEL were commissioned to do some telephone top up surveys. The survey still passes the threshold of surveys required. We need to try and understand how we can engage better with our tenants in the future and get them to complete the surveys. The tender will need to be considered in terms of procurement moving forward as it will now take place annually and we need to consider survey completion fatigue. Charles suggested adding an explanation at the start of the survey as to why the feedback is needed. This may influence more tenants to complete the survey if they know it may affect where SLH spends money in the future.

### 3. PROGRAMME OF ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 Lyn shared an update on behalf of Sean Ellam the Tenancy Manager regarding the current programme of estate improvements. Consultation has taken place with the tenants and other homeowners. Consultation has been very positive with some great ideas and feedback being shared. Ground works (an external contractor) have been supporting with ideas and design of what the tenants want. We are working to improve things such as parking, drying facilities, fences, and footpaths. We have several different projects up and running across our neighbourhoods in terms of the environmental improvements, all of which are at different stages from initial scoping to currently on site.

3.2 **Longlands View** – *Initial consultation completed and plans in design for proposed works which will be shared with residents in the next 4 weeks.*

**Swan St/Hart St – Ulverston** – *Engagement piece completed, and plans agreed due on site in March.*

**Yewbarrow Estate** - *Engagement piece completed, and plans agreed due on site in March.*

**Thornfield Place** – *Currently working to finalise proposed plans for the area.*

**Dearden Close** - *Engagement piece completed, and plans agreed due on site in March.*

**Castle Walk** – *Initial proposal has been agreed and further costings required before sharing the final proposal with residents.*

**Pembroke Court** – *Initial consultation has been completed and the information has been shared with Groundwork who are now coming back with a design. This will be shared with residents in March.*

**Hallgarth** – *Primary works to a garage site which is historically a problem site in terms of ASB, damage to property and where several garages are now boarded up. Engaged with several groups including SLDC, residents group, Kendal Community Land Trust, The Hallgarth Community Centre and Kendal Futures about the proposals.*

**Owlett Ash Field** – *Initial proposals have been designed following site visits. Consideration is being taken around the available land on the site and preliminary reports gathered in terms of ecological and contamination issues. There is an opportunity to move the play area on the site to a bigger, more convenient space and potential demolition of a small number of garages to facilitate a larger parking area. Work will continue consultation with residents and SLDC around plans. Update in April.*

- 3.3 Sue asked will the estate walkabouts continue to happen in the future. Lorraine added it's great to meet with the Tenancy Officer for the area to resolve issues. John added the Organisational Design and restructure that is currently taking place will reflect this we will be appointing a head of Neighbourhoods and a Neighbourhood Partner will be assigned to each area.

#### **4. GOVERNANCE, TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES & PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

- 4.1 John further outlined the aims of the Organisational Design which started off by assessing where we had skills gaps, what systems are being used and if we were under or over resourced in certain areas of the business. Additional funds and resources have been established within neighbourhoods to ensure the customer experience is better. There will be a named individual for each area within neighbourhoods to ensure there is a dedicated team member.
- 4.2 Alison Kinnon retired January 2022, we have appointed a new Director of Customer Experience Nicki Stockton – she is due to start in June. Sue Boulton (HR Manager) also retired in January, and we have appointed a new Head of People and Culture Shaun Gage. Recruitment for Head of Neighbourhoods, Finance Manager and a Finance Accountant will be advertised internally and externally in the coming weeks.
- 4.3 Employees and Unions have been consulting on future service contributions to pensions due to a short fall in contributions. The pay award offer is also in consultation and is reflective of the current cost of living crisis and recruitment internally and externally to ensure we can continue to be an employer of choice.
- 4.4 The Board are continuing to meet dealing with a new funding agreement to access another £25 million for new development and invest in repairs and maintenance. The Board accepted the Tenant Scrutiny report on grounds maintenance. An Audit & Risk Committee member suggested a reconfiguration of how the scrutiny recommendations are defined – moving the focus away from cost to overall assurance that standards are or are not being met.
- 4.5 John also outlined that the Board will have a tenant Board Member vacancy from September 2022 when Lorraine steps down after serving 6+ the additional one year due to covid. This is usual practice and in line with the Rules. Work around recruitment will need to take place but if anyone is interested in joining the Board they can chat to Lyn.
- 4.6 John will share a presentation at the next meeting on the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) being introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing. He commented on the latest repairs satisfaction results which are lower than we would hope. He added that the team is struggling with appointment capacity; we need to improve repair times and get jobs done quicker and we have a chance to do that following some recent recruitment.
- 4.7 Lorraine asked about the online booking of repairs appointments, when launched will it be area specific. John responded there will be some restrictions, but that testing was still being undertaken, emphasising that the product will only be launched if it adds to

improving customer experience. At present there is a dynamic repairs appointment scheduling system. Time slots will be displayed some will not be available as the scheduling system will work out the best time slot and availability of the repairs operatives.

- 4.8 Pauline expressed her concerns regarding repairs and maintenance; she has a number of outstanding repairs but has not been given an update as to what is happening. It would be good to be contacted by phone so that tenants don't feel they have been abandoned. Pauline appreciates things can take time, but a phone call takes two minutes. EW to follow up liaise with internal colleagues and to provide an update. Pauline also added the colour printing of the KPI report is wasted resources. John responded we this is being updated into a different format – we will ensure we don't send out this printed version again.

EW

## 5. BUILDING SAFETY UPDATE

- 5.1 *SC joined the meeting at 13.20pm*

- 5.2 Susan shared an update in terms of the team and what the team are working on currently. Susan has been in post since April and is still working on getting to know the business and working with the business on its current Transformation programme. The Transformation programme will be a 2 year Journey working on improving systems and processes. Susan shared a presentation with Tenants Committee members that had been sent out prior to the meeting.

- Safety risks are identified, and we work to ensure we comply with all statutory regulations and fix any risks that are flagged.
- Risks have a priority rating to ensure they are completed within the designated assigned time.
- Susan requested ideas and input from Tenants Committee members to help shape services in the future with external contractors and incorporate the white paper.
- We need to ensure policies and information shared is accessible.
- Cycle of programmes include Gas, Fire, electrical, lifts, asbestos, legionella, and trees.
- We have been working on upskilling the team to ensure they are interchangeable and have knowledge within all areas of building safety.
- The Building Safety Strategy is being developed we are working with the comms officer to develop this into easier reading for Tenants.
- A new contractor has been procured for electrical inspections.
- Radon is due to have a full review there is some work to do around dividing up the processes and ensuring tenants get feedback. We are aware of issues raised by TC members, and we are working to resolve these.

- 5.3 Loraine asked if the contract to remove trees has been reviewed recently as she feels we are being overcharged. Susan thanked Lorraine for comments and will be reviewing VfM to test the market and sense check efficiencies soon.

- 5.4 Charles raised concerns about the external contractor Lantei showing up at his house and not showing ID. Susan will investigate.

- 5.5 Jim asked if there is a tree policy and Tree Strategy. Susan responded yes, we have one in place and would be happy to share these with TC members.

## 6. TENANCY FRAUD POLICY

- 6.1 Tenants' Committee members were happy to endorse the policy ahead of the Board meeting for final approval at the end of March.

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**7.1 ASB**

Lyn informed members that we are looking to review our policy and procedure as part of a scrutiny review. We have an external consultant who we engage with on a regular basis on casework. This is a company called ASB action and they are going to be carrying out an audit of cases to support the scrutiny piece, it is hoped that we can engage with a wide audience to gather people's views on our service as a means to improve the work we do. Lyn asked if anyone would be interested in getting involved. Charles offered his services, Lyn to contact Paul and the observers in attendance by phone.

- 7.2 Tenants' Committee members asked for cards to be sent to Sue and Alison following their retirement.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 19<sup>TH</sup> May 2022 Windermere Room**