

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

12.30pm 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022 Windermere Room

Present: Sue Layfield  
Charles Howarth  
Stephen Bolton  
Lorraine Birchall  
Lesley Peters  
Gaynor Aplin

Guests N/A

Staff in attendance: John Mansergh – Director of Business Improvement  
Lyn Richardson – Customer Engagement Partner  
Emma Wilson – Corporate Support Assistant

Apologies: John Short  
Dorothy Dixon  
Pauline Vaughan  
Jim Layfield  
Sarah Benjamin

Circulation: As above include all managers

## **ACTION**

### **1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 14<sup>TH</sup> July 2022- MATTERS ARISING**

1.1 Members of the committee approved the Minutes 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 as a true and accurate record.

### **2. ANNUAL TENANTS REPORT**

2.1 Lyn asked Cttee members for volunteers to read through the Annual Tenant report and provide feedback. TC members requested a paper version be sent out in the post. Charles, Lesley, and Sue volunteered.

**EW**

### **2. COMPLAINTS POLICY & COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

2.1 SLH have completed the Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment Code, this is now an annual requirement. SLH have added clarity around the Cumbria Choice and Allocations policy and how complaints in this area are dealt with. The target date to acknowledge and respond to a complaint is 5 working days, in line with the revised Code. Complaints can be reported by any means, phone, written, chat, or face to face.

Lesley asked about how complaints are managed within the system. John stated that there is an internal workflow within Cx (Housing Management system) to ensure that the complaint is dealt with and responded to in the

appropriate time frame. We also need to ensure we capture any learning to ensure we make improvements. This will be done through what's called the 'Learning Loop'. Rosie Chambers and Louise Thompson now manage the complaints process with managers from around the business investigating and responding to the initial complaint.

2.2 Loraine asked about insurance claims and whether SLH have any cover that can be extended to tenants due to rising energy costs and the cost of living crisis. John responded if tenants are struggling, they can contact the Income team, they would be able to advise and sign post to support.

2.3 The Chair asked are disrepair claims being made against SLH. John responded yes, we have had a few but most we have been able to resolve at pre legal action stage. There are three cases on at the moment.

2.4 Cttee members endorsed the Complaints Policy prior to final approval at the November Board meeting.

### **3. TENANT BOARD DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT**

3.1 Interviews took place in the Windermere Room with Cttee members leading the process. Loraine will be stepping down as Tenant Board Member following 7 years of service. Following deliberation Cttee members felt that the position really needed to be offered to a tenant, so they have lived experience in supporting the Board to make future decisions. Lesley was informed of her nomination to the Board. John will report to the Board and AGM.

JM

### **4. RENT SETTING INTRODUCTION**

4.1 Cath shared a presentation on rent setting and the Government consultation due to take place over the next few months regarding the rent cap. The Government are proposing 3%, 5% & 7% rent caps. Responses are invited by the 12<sup>th</sup> of October. Cath explained there will be some tough choices about where we make cutbacks, but one thing we must not do is impact the customer experience. We still need to provide an excellent customer service. There needs to be an honest discussion about priorities whilst maintaining Building safety obligations and meeting regulations. Cath highlighted the significant loss in rent compared to CPI will be £1.3m in the first year rising to £10.5m should the rent cap be imposed for 2 years.

4.2 Cttee members had various ideas about what the rent cap should be set at. With some proposing 3%, 5% and 7%. Charles added rents could potentially become unaffordable with the cost of living crisis and increased energy bills. Loraine feels that rents should be increased up to 7%, adding that benefits will likely increase to cover the additional cost of housing.

### **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Circulate the dates for the 2023 Meetings.
- Email links to the Chair for meal options for the November Meeting.
- Share the new Structure of the Organisational Design with Cttee members at the November Meeting.

EW

### **6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 Coniston Room.**

