

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited

**EAST AREA BOARD MEETING
MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Present

Rodger Haldenby (Chair), Robert Allen, Lesley Gilfedder, Mavis Pearson, David Nevett and Jim Parkin

In Attendance

Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Dave Abbott (Assistant Director for Estate Management), Shauna Brady (Personal Assistant), Christine Tolson (Assistant Director of Business Performance and Improvement) and Janet Clarke (Assistant Director of Customer Services)

Members of the Public

		ACTION
1.	Apologies and Quorum	
1.1	Apologies were received from Councillor Ken Keegan, Councillor Mrs Moira Hood, Ms Lin Myers and Mr Vic Lowe	
1.2	The Chair informed the meeting of the recent resignation of Councillor Bill Mordue and as no Council representative was present the meeting was unquorate therefore no Business decisions could be made. The Company Secretary informed the meeting that she had reminded the Council of the outstanding nominations.	
2.	Declarations of Interest by Area Board Members	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	Minutes of previous meeting held on 14 July 2008	
3.1	The minutes of the East Area Board meeting held on 14 July 2008 were agreed as a correct record.	
4.	Matters arising from previous minutes held on 14 July 2008	
4.1	From item 4.4 - Any other Business The Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services confirmed that there were no budget constraints to report with regards to the selection of gas fires available to tenants.	

4.2 **From item 5.6- Decent Homes Progress**

It was reported that it had been re-iterated to Contractors that they must use the check list that was designed specifically for the purpose. This is being monitored by the Tenants Liaison Officers.

4.3 **From item 7.1 – Performance Information**

A member queried if any feedback had been received regarding the moneywise website?

It was reported that early indications are that this site is user friendly and will be well utilised by tenants.

4.4 **From item 8.6 – Receive Reports on Evictions**

The Assistant Director of Estate Management reported that for future reports the “unknown” category will be deleted and replaced with “other”. **DA**

4.5 **From item 9.2 – Monitor allocations to DMBC Properties**

It was reported that a newsletter is going out to tenants to advise of the recommendations from the policy review. **JC**

4.6 **From item 9.3 – Monitor Allocations to DMBC Properties**

It was reported that there are a low number of direct match allocations; of these the majority are the allocation of properties with additional facilities for disabled persons that are allocated on medical grounds.

5. Performance Information

5.1 The Assistant Director of Business Performance and Improvement referred to questions arising from members from the Performance Booklet received in advance of the meeting.

5.2 *What are the reasons for the "seasonal trend" for higher debt referred to in the Percentage of Current Arrears against Annual Debit section of the report?*

It was reported that trends have been identified in the amounts of current rent arrears over a year. For example they rise during late August/September when many parents spend any their resources on children’s uniforms in preparation for the new term.

5.3 *What is/will be the detrimental effect of the temporary suspension of works in August/September to the average time to re-let figures?*

The Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services reported that there is expected to be an increase in the number of days some property are void due to the suspension of works because of delays in being able to undertake asbestos surveys.

- 5.4 *With regards to the Non-Lettable Voids in the North-East, are these the same properties each month and what further measures have been taken to re-let?*

The Assistant Director of Business Performance and Improvement reported that many of these properties are the same properties each month and some of these properties referred to in the report are in Graham House.

The issues with Graham House and other sheltered group flatlet schemes had been flagged up with DMBC again and it is hoped a decision can be reached by the end of September 2008.

- 5.5 The Chair congratulated staff on Urgent Repairs being better than target and the appointments made and kept.

- 5.6 *With regards to Gas servicing will the pro-active measures listed in the report work? Will Cold calling be a waste of engineers time?*

The Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services reported that gas fitters only call at properties if they are in the area, by using this approach servicing can be carried out then and there should the tenant be available.

It was reported that Wayne Fox (Temporary Mechanical & Electrical Manager) is looking at other ways of addressing the no-access problem.

- 5.7 *What led to the fault in the Repairs Contact Centre resulting in the un-availability of agents to take calls?*

The fault occurred due to a storm in the Stanley House area that damaged the computer system. Parts had to be ordered to repair the system, with a one day delay,

It was reported that if these two days performance had been removed from the information, the results would have shown little variation from the previous months.

- 5.8 *A member queried if we could see how many callers were in the loop and unable to be answered during this problem?*

It was reported that this information is usually available but as the computer system was damaged this was unavailable.

5.9 *With regards to the Capital Programme information can we have a specific update on the recruitment of Clerk of Works (COW) and are DMBC also providing cover?*

It was confirmed that an additional 5 COW's have been employed through an agency. We are looking towards recruiting in-house COW's in the near future.

5.10 *In the information regarding complaints received, what are the nature of the Complaints?*

The main area of complaints are relating to the Gardens service. The next item on the agenda will address the issue in greater detail.

5.11 *Should the prediction on page 6 & 7 not be a red prediction against the year target?*

The Assistant Director of Business Improvement and Performance reported that she will investigate this and provide feedback.

CT

5.12 **Area Board Members noted the contents of the Report.**

6. **Customer Satisfaction Booklet**

6.1 The Assistant Director of Business Performance and Improvement addressed the Customer Satisfaction Booklet and invited comments from Members with regards to the format and content of the report.

6.2 With regards to the Complaints themes the key theme was the gardens service and the specification of this. It was reported that all the complaints from this service area have been addressed.

6.3 A Member commented that her friend has received a letter about her untidy garden despite her being registered for the Gardens Service.

The Assistant Director of Customer Services responded that she will investigate this issue upon the receipt of address.

JC

6.4 With regards to the information contained within the Overall Decency Satisfaction discussions are being held to investigate other ways of collecting information for decency works.

The possibilities of carrying out surveys mid-works and reality checking are being explored.

6.5 **Area Board Members noted the contents of the Report**

7. Service Level Agreement Monitoring

7.1 The Assistant Director of Business Performance and Improvement reported that the re-occurring themes are around the Gardens service and there is a back log of works with regards to the cutting back of trees, which will take years to recover.

7.2 A Member requested that a letter be sent to tenants advising them of the back log to make them aware of the length of time that they need to wait.

DA/DMBC

7.3 The Assistant Director of Estates Management reported that all of this information is with DMBC.

7.4 The Assistant Director of Business Performance and Improvement circulated a report that detailed SLA savings that SLHD have made.

7.5 A Member sought clarification on point 6.4 and it was reported that a breakdown had been requested to ensure that a robust system is being used.

It was agreed that this breakdown be provided to the next meeting.

CT

7.6 **Area Board Members noted the contents of the Report**

8. Analysis of Evictions

8.1 The Assistant Director of Estate Management reported that he had carried out some comparisons between this year and last and we have carried out 23 evictions this year in comparison with 29 at the same period last year.

8.2 The majority of people evicted being single people, under the age of 30.

8.3 A Member commented that there he is aware of a property where the tenant has not taken up occupation over a prolonged period.

8.4 It was agreed that the Assistant Director of Estate Management investigate this issue as it appears to be a breach of the tenancy agreement.

DA

8.5 **Area Board Members noted the contents of the Report**

9. Monitor Allocations to DMBC Properties

9.1 The Assistant Director of Customer Services provided an update on allocations made between 1 June 2008 and 31 July 2008.

- 9.2 It was reported that there are 10 properties that are void over 2 months out of 60 allocations.
- 9.3 It was reported that staff involved in CBL are satisfied with the process of allocating properties.
- 9.4 A 4 weeks notice period is required from tenants and most tenants telephone to give this notice. A written acknowledgement is always given to the notice.

9.5 **Area Board Members noted the contents of the Report**

10. CBL Presentation and Review of Allocations

- 10.1 The Assistant Director of Customer Services provided a detailed presentation of the review to the CBL procedure.
- 10.2 A member queried the process of allocating bands for tenants?

It was reported that it was quite a vigorous process and exact information is requested. This information is then processed and the correct band selected.
- 10.3 Frances Gisbourne from DMBC assists in the allocation of the band for tenants with medical conditions and she will carry out a high level assessment on high-need tenants.

11. Estate Improvement Fund

- 11.1 The Chair circulated details of estimates received for two suggestions:
- Skips for the Polton Close TARA in Stainforth; and
 - Security Lighting for elderly persons bungalows at the rear of their properties on Graham Road.

A suggestion of kissing Gates and knee-high fencing submitted by the Thorne North Common TARA was also considered.

- 11.2 A discussion ensued and it was confirmed that Internal Works to the addresses at Graham Road will be carried out as part of the Internal works during the 2009/2010 financial year.
- 11.3 It was agreed that the Security Lights be addressed in due course through the Internal Decent Homes works.
- 11.4 It was agreed that the TARA be contacted for further details with regards to the specifics of Skip Hire.

SB

11.5 It was agreed that funding be allocated for the kissing gates, however due to the large area of fencing required that a secondary request for fencing would be declined.

11.6 The Chair reported that he was intending to visit other EIF suggestions tomorrow with a SLHD officer.

It was agreed that Lesley Gilfedder and Mavis Pearson accompany the Chair to look at other suggestions.

LG/MP

12. Nominations of Vice-Chair Results

It was reported that one applicant for the post of Vice-Chair had been received which was Dr Robert Allen.

It was agreed that Doctor Allen be appointed to the post of Vice-Chair.

13. Digital TV Signals

13.1 The Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services reported that the contracts are ready to be signed this week and the F10 is also being submitted this week.

13.2 It was reported that all literature is in draft format and will be agreed at the Contract meeting.

13.3 Consultation will be undertaken with the various TARA's and it was confirmed that a planned programmed will be available in due course, this will be relayed to all once the contracts are signed.

PE

13.4 The Chair commented that High rise blocks will have a more advanced system to cater for all the tenants within the building and enable tenants to have access to Sky if they wish.

14. Any other Business/items for next meeting

There were no items of any other business to report.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on Monday 8 September 2008.

The meeting ended at 8:10 pm.