

Company Number 05564649  
A Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered in England

**St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited**

**WEST AREA BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY 10 MARCH 2008 at 3:30 PM**

**Present**

Andrew Bosmans, Cllr Beryl Roberts, Vimbainashe Mbedzi, Godwin Mudzimu, Ian Gardner, Lyn Ralph, Cllr Pat Haith, Rory Perrett (Chair), Cllr Sandra Holland, Sid Hall, Betty Clayton

**In Attendance**

Judith Jones (Director of Customer Services), Rob Chapple (Business Maintenance Manager), Margaret Butler (Performance Monitoring Officer), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Maxine Newton (Board Support Officer).

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p><b>1. Apologies and Quorum</b></p> <p>1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Doreen Woodhouse.</p> <p>1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present. Rory Perrett chaired the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>2. Declarations of Interest by Area Board Members</b></p> <p>2.1 Ian Gardner, Betty Clayton, Lynn Ralph declared in interest in agenda item number 10 – Estate Improvement Fund.</p>	
<p><b>3. West Area Board Membership</b></p> <p>3.1 Members were asked to note the recent resignation of Mr George Jackson, a tenant representative of the Area Board. Who had resigned because of ill health.</p> <p>The Director of Customer Services advised that she would be visiting Mr Jackson's at the next meeting of his local TARA to publicly thank him for his hard work and commitment to the West Area Board.</p> <p>The Company Secretary asked permission from the West Area Board to postpone seeking a replacement for Mr Jackson, who was due to retire at the 2008 AGM, as any replacement would only be able to take over the remainder of the period due to be served by Mr Jackson, until such time as we have received clarification on the future geographical boundaries of the Area Board.</p>	

3.2 Godwin Mudzimu joined the meeting.

#### **4. Minutes of previous meeting held on 14 January 2008**

4.1 The minutes of the West Area Board Meeting held on 14 January 2008 were approved as a correct record, with the following amendment:

Change the date of the meeting to 14 January 2008 and item 4 & 5 to 12 November 2007.

#### **5. Matters arising from previous minutes held on 14 January 2008**

5.1 **From item 5.2 – ‘Introductory Tenancy Agreement’** – the Director of Customer Services advised that consultation with the Tenants and Residents Associations (TARA’s) regarding the introduction of introductory tenancies has been concluded. The outcome is that the majority (both in terms of individuals and Associations) are in favour of the proposals. This will now be taken for discussion to the Standing Joint Committee of TARA’s and then to the Council. The proposal is to implement introductory tenancies for a period of 12 months and review their effectiveness.

**A member requested further details on the numerical results of the consultation and it was agreed that these would be provided in the minutes.**

JJ

**XXXX SEE JUDITH FOR FIGURES XXXX**

5.2 **From item – 6.6 Number of Non-Lettable Voids** The Director of Customer Services sought permission from the Area Board that an update on non-lettable voids should be given with the Performance Information agenda item.

**Members agreed.**

5.3 **From item - 6.7 Gas Servicing – Outstanding** - The Business Maintenance Manager confirmed that of the 6 properties listed in the previous report all had now had their gas service carried out.

#### **6. Performance Monitoring Information**

6.1 This report was to present the West Area Board with performance information for December 2007 and January 2008.

A question had been received in advance of the meeting relating to a number of graphs where the year end prediction appeared to contradict the recent trend and questioned if this was because the year end prediction was driven by the trend line.

The Performance Analyst advised that the year end prediction in most but not all of the graphs was driven by the trend line. She drew members attention to graph 6 (% of Current Arrears Against Annual Debit) where the year end prediction was driven by the trend line. Then to graph 8 (Number of Evictions Due to Rent Arrears) where the trend line does not drive the prediction against the end of year target.

The Company Secretary raised that training on Performance Information was due to take place at the next Area Board meeting in May 2008 which will assist Members to analyse the data.

6.2 **Non-Lettable Voids** - The Director of Customer Services gave an explanation for the 46 long term voids for the North West area;

- 1 held over for Decency was being used as a respite.
- 1 had fire damage .
- 10 were vacant following the floods.
- 34 were sheltered units (not actively being let while awaiting outcome of consultation with the Council).

In the South West 103 were empty for demolition with Pathfinder. A number of voids were due to fire damage and ongoing repairs. Sandbeck Court is currently being reviewed regarding its future.

**Cllr P Haith – to pass on the address details of a long-term void in Highfields to the Director of Customer Services to investigate.**

Cllr  
PHaith

6.3 **Gas Servicing** – The Business Maintenance Manager explained the increase in outstanding services in the North West and decline in the South West was due to a programme of servicing which had been undertaken in one particular area.

A Member asked what contingencies were in place to deal with adverse weather conditions. He was assured that the company benefits from a range of predictive information from 5 day weather forecasts, information from the Councils Emergency Planning teams etc which allows additional resources to be placed on standby and called upon whenever necessary to deal with the peaks and troughs of adverse weather conditions.

6.4 **Repairs Contact Centre - % of Abandoned Calls** – The Director of Customer Services informed members that the intermitted fault on the DMCB on the VIP telephone system has not yet been identified but work to eradicate the problem and further improve the figures.

6.5 **The Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

## **7. Monitor Allocations to DMBC Properties**

7.1 The Director of Customer Services introduced this report that provided the Area Board with allocations made by SLHD between 1 December 2007 to 31 January 2008.

7.2 She welcomed members to contact her to discuss how they might want to improve the information contained in the report to ensure the data is meaningful.

7.3 It was confirmed that under the present policy allocations of bungalows can be made to persons who are owner occupiers of bungalows, although this had been prohibited under policy some time ago.

The booklet "Choosing An Area", which is sent to all applicants was tabled to inform Area Board Members of the types of properties which are in each area. Members commented on how useful they found the booklet.

**A Member asked if information on what properties have been adapted for less able people could be included into any revision of the booklet.**

JJ

7.3 **The Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

## **8. Analysis of Evictions April 2007 – January 2008**

8.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report that gave an analysis of evictions between 1 April 2007 to 31 January 2008.

8.2 She commented that the general trend of evictions remained unchanged.

Four evictions had been carried out for reasons other than rent arrears. One was because of a breach of tenancy due to the tenant persistent refusal to keep their garden in a reasonable condition. A discussion took place regarding the incentives and assistance provided to tenants to look after their gardens including the 'Doncaster in Bloom' competition and loan of equipment.

8.3 Members expressed some concern that a high proportion of eviction appeared to occur early in the tenancy and asked what measures are in place to offer assistance to tenants to maintain their tenancies. Members were informed that there is a wide range of assistance provided including developments towards a financial inclusion website which contains a Housing Benefits calculator and joint working with the Citizens Advice Bureau.

- 8.4 **Referring to page 4 of the report at table 5 she advised that she was happy to report further detail back to the Area Board on the 'Other – 3' evictions.** JJ
- 8.5 **The Area Board noted the contents of the report.**
- 9. West Area Board Members Attendance**
- 9.1 The Company Secretary presented this report was to confirm the register of West Area Board Members attendance and to seek their instructions on any necessary actions.
- 9.2 Members referred to Appendix A of the report and it was noted that:
- Ian Gardner was present on 14 January 2008.
  - Andrew Bosmans was present on 12 November 2007
  - Godwin Mudzimu was present on 10 September & 12 November 2007
  - Cllr Sandra Holland had put her apologies in for 12 November 2007
- It was noted that Cllr Maureen Edgar had not attended a number of Area Board meetings due to ill health problems.
- 9.3 **The Area Board noted the report and agreed no actions were appropriate.**
- 10. Estate Improvement Fund (EIF)**
- 10.1 The Director of Customer Services presented a document that detailed progress to date of the amount spent of the Estate Improvement Fund for the West Area Board.
- 10.2 A Member confirmed that the erection of fencing at White Rose Court had eradicated the anti social behaviour and this had improved the lives of the tenants.
- 10.3 **It was agreed that a brief update would be available at the next meeting regarding the progress of works in anticipation of the switch to digital TV signals.** RC
- 11 Any Other Business**
- 11.1 Members approved the Company Secretary's suggestion to extend the period of office of the Chair, Rory Perrett as Chair of the West Area Board until clarification of the geographic boundaries and number of Area Boards had been agreed.
- 11.2 Ian Gardner gave his apologies in advance for the next Area Board MN

meeting on 12 May 2008.

**11. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008

The meeting ended at 4.47 pm