

Company Number 05564649  
A Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered in England

**St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited**

**JOINT AREA BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY 12 MAY 2008**

**Present**

Rory Perrett (Chair), Andrew Bosmans, Councillor Mrs Beryl Roberts, Betty Clayton, Councillor Mrs Doreen Woodhouse, Cllr Mrs Sandra Holland, Godwin Mudzimu, Lyn Ralph, Vimbainashe Mbedzi, Cllr Bill Mordue, Jim Parkin, Cllr Ken Keegan, Cllr Mrs Moira Hood, Rodger Haldenby, Lesley Gilfedder, Mavis Pearson, Dr Robert Allen and Vic Lowe.

**In Attendance**

Paul Hopkinson (Director of Property Services), Mahroof Hussain (Diversity Manager) Judith Jones (Director of Customers Services), Jane Davies (Business Planning Manager), Dean Rothwell (Assistant Director of Financial Services), Denise Sayles (Procurement Manager), Dave Abbott (Assistant Director for Estate Management), Shauna Brady (PA), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Helen Kilshaw (Performance and Information Manager), Paul Lightfoot (Assistant Director of Property Services) and Sharon Adam (Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services).

**1a. Apologies and Quorum**

- 1.1 Apologies were recorded from Ian Gardener, Councillor Mrs Elsie Butler and Councillor Nigel Hodges.
- 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present. The meeting was chaired by Rory Perrett.

**ACTION**

**1b. Minutes of previous meeting held on 10 March 2008**

- 2.1 The minutes of the joint meeting held on 10 March 2008 were approved as a correct record.

**2. Matters arising from previous minutes held on 10 March 2008**

**2.1 From item 2.2 CBL**

The Director of Customer Services circulated details of 5 properties that had been void for longer than 2 months including details of the property at 4 Moffatt Gardens, Clay Lane which was the focus of the original member enquiry.

It was reported that 4 Moffatt Gardens was originally advertised in

the gold band, however the prospective tenant declined and the property was re-advertised to all bands.

It was agreed that this level of information be available to the Area Board at future meetings.

JJ

## 2.2 From item 3.2 Monitor to nominations to RSL's

The Director of Customer Services reported that a Meeting with RSL's had occurred and subsequent meetings will follow. The meeting highlighted that in some instances we have been unable to offer nominations where the void property was considered "hard to let"

An initiative where the RSL advertise their property within the CBL system is to be piloted with Railway Housing. Further updates will be provided.

JJ

## 2.3 From item 4.3 CBL Update

The Director of Customer Services reported that from 1 November 2007 to 30 April 2008 the total complaints recorded across the organisation was 910, of these 68 complaints had been regarding CBL. This equates to around 7%.

It was reported that during its earlier deliberations the West Area Board had requested the information broken down by trend analysis.

JJ

## 2.4 From item 4.4 CBL Update

The Director of Property Services provided an update on the RIBA competition and details of the shortlisted applicants were circulated for information.

Representatives of the 4 shortlisted designs had each provided a presentation to a panel comprising of representatives from SLHD, DMBC, the SJC and an Architect.

The idea selected was from the Crawford Partnership and was a prefabricated pod that is constructed on site and would work to provide an additional bedroom to one-bed roomed bungalows. The Crawford Partnerships have costed their design at £25, 000.

A member asked if the roof space at some properties could be utilised. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that this is being considered.

The Director of Property Services reported that we are in discussions with DMBC with regards to identifying 3 or 4 properties and funding sources to gauge customer reaction. This pilot will be carried out

during this financial year.

**2.5 From item 6.2 Election of Chairs/Vice Chairs and Future Appointments of Area Board Members**

The Company Secretary reported that a meeting with the CEO and Directors will be held later in the week to discuss and agree the forward plans. A decision had not been reached yet by DMBC with regards to the different Areas.

**2.6 From item 10.2 – Any other Business**

The Chair thanked all who attended the Main Board and Area Board Team Building Event on the 9 April 2008.

**3. Equality and Diversity Stats**

3.1 The Diversity Manager provided a presentation on Customer Profile Questionnaires and Hate Crime Reporting.

3.2 He provided an insight into how the information will be used by Staff at SLHD to provide a better service to customers.

3.3 It was reported that 14, 849 CPQ's had been completed and another 6,322 are still to be collected. This equates to CPQ information held for 70% of Customers and a tremendous amount of effort has gone into this information gathering by all involved.

3.4 The information had identified a number of customers who were not receiving their full entitlement of Benefits and assistance has been given for them to claim an additional £84, 000.

3.5 A member queried if the form was available in different languages?

The Diversity Manager responded that whatever assistance is required is provided to complete the form. Leaving forms with tenants is avoided.

3.6 A member asked what the value is of asking tenants of their sexual orientation?

MH responded that this information is purely for statistics to ensure that all of our tenants needs are met and no-one is discriminated against for any reason.

3.7 A member asked how many people refuse to complete this information?

The Diversity Manager reported that this information will be made available to the next meeting.

**MH**

3.8 The Diversity Manager reported that definition of Hate Crime was an incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate linked to race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.

3.9 A group based on the Racist Multi Agency Partnership model will be developed to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to Hate Crimes.

The official timescale for implementation will be confirmed and staff will be trained appropriately to respond to Hate Crime incidents.

#### **4. Repairs and Maintenance Policy Presentation**

4.1 The Assistant Director of Property Services reported that original policy was written in 2006 and had now been updated to reflect Customers growing expectations, changes in legislation, industry best practice and improvements in service delivery.

4.2 Extensive consultation had been undertaken in compiling the policy which has been approved by the SJC and the SLHD Board.

4.3 Advice on the compilation of the policy was also provided by the Housing Consultancy Partnership.

4.4 Customer satisfaction levels are rising and we are now in the top quartile in the Country.

4.5 It was reported that a full copy of the policy was available upon request or on the Internet.

#### **5. Lettable Standards Policy Presentation**

5.1 The Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services reported on the revised policy and explained that this policy will ensure that a consistent approach is maintained across the borough.

5.2 The policy was reviewed by DMBC, tenants, SLHD Staff and the SJC.

5.3 It was confirmed that in some circumstances certain works are now undertaken once the tenant has moved into the property.

5.4 A Member queried what the paint package entitled tenants to?

The Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services reported that the paint package is delivered directly to tenants homes and the maximum allocation for a four bed-roomed house is £90.00

The paint package consisted of primer, brushes, sandpaper and everything that is needed to decorate.

5.5 A Member reported that she was pleased that the re-washing of all taps is now undertaken in one visit.

5.6 A Member queried if we are carrying out Decent Homes works using the in-house teams?

The Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services reported that a pilot was currently being undertaken to see if we could provide this service efficiently and cost effectively.

5.7 It was reported that a full copy of the policy was available upon request or on the Internet.

## **6. Progress to Equality Standards**

6.1 The Diversity Manager reported on the need for a structured Equality Standards process.

6.2 He reported that there are 5 levels within the Equality Standard.

6.3 Only 2 or 3 organisations across the county are at level 5.

6.4 It was reported that to reach level 3 we need to work in partnership with DMBC.

An external accreditation by Edge Hill University will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

6.5 A work programme to achieve Equality Standard for Local Government Level 3 was considered.

### **The Joint Area Board agreed the report**

## **7. Service Level Agreement Monitoring**

7.1 The Business Planning Manager provided a report on the performance monitoring and quality checking of the Councils services delivered via Service Level Agreements during quarter 3 of 2007/08.

7.2 The system is now more transparent as we now know exactly what we are paying for and we have a detailed service specification.

7.3 A member asked how many service level agreements there are?

The Business Planning Manager reported that there are 35 service level agreements.

7.4 It was reported that in the past exceptions have been reported to the Finance and Performance Committee, this information will now come to the Area Boards so any comments as to the format will be welcome.

7.5 A number of the SLA's have been approved and various cost savings have been identified.

The SLA's are monitored and we have a duty to revise these in keeping with service needs.

7.6 A Member reported that by reviewing the SLA we have saved a tremendous amount of money.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial if details of savings that have been made could be available to the next meeting.

JD

7.7 A Member commented that he was concerned about item 8 regarding the speed of processing Housing Benefits as the report stated that speed has increased but accuracy has decreased.

It was reported that this is now carefully monitored by the Housing liaison group.

7.8 A member raised a query relating to point 6 of the report asking the value of the late invoice payments.

It was reported that the average value was approximately £845 per invoice.

The Assistant Director of Financial Services reported that there are now 100 outstanding invoices, some of which are due to outstanding information from suppliers.

7.9 A Member queried if any systems are in place to prevent this situation from re-occurring?

The Assistant Director of Financial Services reported that measures have been put in place.

7.10 A Member reported that she receives continuing complaints from the Rural Repairs group regarding the inadequate levels of grass cutting.

The Business Planning Manager reported that she will monitor this as we are now entering the summer season.

JD

#### **The Joint Area Board Agreed the Report**

### **8. Housemark PI Benchmarking**

8.1 The Performance and Information Manager reported that she will be presenting this information on a quarterly basis.

8.2 Performance benchmarking facilities are provided by Housemark.

A problem with rent arrears benchmarking has been discovered with some ALMO's. Three of the rents indicators per quarter are not cumulative as per the guidance. This has been brought to the attention of Housemark and we are awaiting a response.

HK

The Director of Property Services reported that benchmarking information is not always exact due to some organisations failing to submit timely/accurate information.

8.3 It was reported that Performance of % of urgent repairs completed within Government Time limits was just within the lower quartile.

The Director of Property Services said that measures are in place to reach the 100% target for urgent repairs and it is in the remit of the Business Manager to ensure that these targets are achieved.

**The Joint Area Board noted the report**

## **9. Overview of Procedures for Contractor Tender and Selection**

9.1 The Assistant Director of Financial Services introduced Denise Sayles (Procurement Manager) who will be presenting this report at future meetings.

The report in future will be amended to contracts over £75k.

DS

Rodger Haldenby queried if he could have a full programme of works for the Digital TV upgrade.

PE

**The Joint Area Board noted the report**

## **10. Minutes of previous Board and Committee meetings – For Information Any Other Business**

10.1 Members noted the minutes of the Finance & Performance Committee dated 14 November 2007 and 16 January 2008.

## **11. Any other Business**

### Training/Board Forum

The Company Secretary thanked members for their attendance at the Performance Training sessions. A pro-forma was circulated for members to identify any further areas of training they may require.

ALL

Members were asked to respond as soon as possible to an email from Maxine Newton requesting information on Area Boards Members attendance at the forthcoming Board Forum.

Councillor Mrs M Hood and Godwin Mudzimu commented that they could not recall receiving this e-mail.

**ALL**

**11. Date and Time of next meeting**

11.1 Monday 14 July 2008

The meeting ended at 6:45 pm