

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited

JOINT AREA BOARD MEETING MONDAY 14 JULY 2008

Present

Rory Perrett, Andrew Bosmans, Cllr Beryl Roberts, Betty Clayton, Cllr Mrs Doreen Woodhouse, Godwin Mudzimu, Lyn Ralph, Vimbainashe Mbedzi, Cllr Moira Hood, Rodger Haldenby, Mavis Pearson, Dr Robert Allen, Ian Gardner, Lin Myers, David Nevett, Lesley Gilfedder.

In Attendance

Martin Musgrave (Chief Executive), Judith Jones (Director of Customers Services), Trevor Lincoln (Director of Business Planning), Dave Abbott (Assistant Director for Estate Management), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Sharon Adam (Assistant Director of Empty Homes and Services), Nicky Simpkins (IT & Administration Manager)

Member of the Public

Denis Shaw, Ken Baron

1a. Apologies and Quorum

- 1.1 Apologies were recorded from Cllr Elsie Butler, Cllr Bill Mordue, Cllr Sandra Holland, Jim Parkin and Vic Lowe.
- 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present. The meeting was chaired by Rodger Haldenby.

1b. Minutes of previous meeting held on 12 May 2008

- 2.1 The minutes of the joint meeting held on 12 May 2008 were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes held on 12 May 2008

- 2.1 **From item 2.2 – RSL’s Advertising on Doncaster HomeChoice** – members were advised that work was still on going and that a go live date was not anticipated in the near future. An update will be given nearer the time.

From item 2.3 – CBL Complaint Analysis – it was noted that the trend analysis requested by the West Area Board would be brought to the next meeting by inclusion in the new customer satisfaction booklet.

ACTION

JJ

- 2.2 **From item 5.4 – Paint Package** – it was agreed that a report would be brought to the Board meeting in September with recommendations to change the current paint package to ensure flexibility and choice is offered to tenants. **SA/MN**

It was confirmed that the current paint package maximum allocation for a 4 bed roomed house is currently £90.00.

- 2.3 **From item 6 – Equality Standard** – the Director of Customer Services confirmed that SLHD had achieved level 3.

- 2.4 **From item 7.6 – Service Level Agreements** – details of the savings that have been made to be brought to the next Area Board meeting. **JD/MN**

3. Nominations to RSLs

- 3.1 The Director of Customer Services introduced this report that updated Area Board members on the analysis of nominations made to RSLs between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008.

- 3.2 Members were informed that SLHD have been working closely with the Housing Associations to ensure closer working relationships and towards developing new initiatives including the pilot of RSL's advertising properties through Doncaster HomeChoice.

A Letter is currently being prepared in conjunction with the Council to be sent to a small number of Housing Associations who are still not requesting nominations on the appropriate number of vacancies.

- 3.3 **Area Board members noted the contents of the report.**

4. Review Tenancy & Other Agreements to Occupy (Garage Licence Agreement)

- 4.1 The Director of Customer Service gave a verbal update to the meeting. Members were informed that as the Tenancy Agreement, and other Agreements to Occupy no major amendments were recommended.

The Intake Tenant and Residents Association (TARA's) have made a proposal to SLHD to review the current restrictions placed on dog ownership in flats and to establish a 'Responsible Dog Agreement'.

The Standing Joint Committee of Tenant and Residents Associations would be consulted on this matter, and the Council asked to consider a pilot scheme. If successful this would be incorporated into a future review of the tenancy agreement.

She confirmed that a decision had not been concluded regarding the

garage licenses and she would update at the next meeting.

JJ

Area Board Members noted the contents of the report.

5. Gas No Access Presentation

5.1 The Assistant Director for Empty Homes and Services delivered a presentation to the Area Board that detailed the Gas No Access Procedures.

5.2 A Member queried if the costs involved were picked up by the tenants. It was confirmed that court costs were charged to tenants.

5.3 Another member asked for clarification on the timescales involved to gain access into properties.

They were informed from SLHD initiating action within 16 days but the court decided the actual date for the court hearing. Currently 6-8 weeks was a realistic approximate timescale. Consideration is being given to booking dates in advance as practiced by the rent recovery teams.

The company is reviewing the reasons why tenants were not allowing access into their homes to address what measures we can adopt to encourage them to do so.

5.4 A Member referred to example 3 – an example of a letter used within this process, tabled at the meeting - and asked for the text to be reworded from:-

'If you have already made an appointment to carry out this work please ignore this letter'

They thought the words 'ignore this letter' were misleading. It was agreed that this would be given further consideration.

SA

5.5 It was confirmed that when properties become void they automatically receive a gas service.

5.8 A Member enquired why SLHD trusted third party Corgi registered gas engineers to connect gas cookers in tenant's homes, expressing concerns that safety may be compromised due to the financial constraints of tenants.

Members were informed that it was the responsibility of tenants to have their own gas appliances correctly installed. Legally the company wasn't in a position to offer these services. These are extra services that we may look at providing in the future.

Area Board members noted the content of the report.

6. Status Survey

6.1 The Director of Business Planning presented this report for the Area Board to consider the contents of the 2007 'Mini-Status' survey report.

6.2 He explained to members that from April 2008 the requirement to carry out the Status Survey changed to every 2 years from 3 years. However, the SLHD Board had previously agreed to undertake an annual in house mini survey to ensure the Company was achieving an acceptable rate of improvement.

6.3 A questionnaire was distributed to 4000 tenants, 1,201 were returned. Members were referred to page 2 of the report, table 4.3 where the headline findings demonstrated positive improvement since 2006. Overall 78% of all tenants are satisfied with the service provided by SLHD.

The report confirmed that there are some variations when age differences, ethnic origin and geographical are considered.

The research reported on a snap shot in time and drilled down into service areas to find the root cause of the issues. SLHD is putting efforts into the interpretation and analysis so that we can take appropriate actions.

6.4 A Member queried if the Company were aware of what authorities were in the upper quartile.

It was agreed that a league table would be produced and distributed to members. **TL**

The Chief Executive highlighted that SLHD are seeing significant improvements when compared with other providers across the country.

6.5 A Member enquired why the figure of 4000 tenants had been chosen. Members were informed that the government specifies the sampling methodology.

Area Board Members noted the contents of the report.

7. Optitime Presentation

7.1 Members were shown a live demonstration of Optitime by the IT & Administration Manager.

The purpose of the presentation was to inform members of what Optitime had achieved to date, give a live demonstration and

highlight the benefits.

Jobs are raised in TASK then passed to the Optitime system. This highlights where operatives are working and at what time. The system allows for such factors as leave, training and administrative tasks. The planners are then able to organize the work by postcode as each operative has their patch and works their way around the same postcode.

Where operatives use Optitime in conjunction with mobile working, they are provided with a hand held device, which will instruct them where to undertake the next job, and this reduces the amount of time and fuel etc.

Members were informed of the staged roll out with a completion date of September 2008 when all operatives would have the hand held devices. Currently they receive a run sheet of exactly what they will be doing each day.

It was confirmed that tenants were given approximate times for appointments, either morning, afternoon or evening slots, Optitime texts them in advance.

As a number of Members expressed interest in seeing the system in operation. It was agreed the PA to Director of Customer Services would email a number of dates for Members consideration.

MN

- 7.2 A Member asked what provisions were in place should the system fail. They were informed if Optitime goes down the Company still has appointments in TASK.

It was noted that 98 operatives were currently using Optitime, with 6 utilizing mobile working.

8. Any other Business

- 8.1 Members were reminded of the Business Planning training session held the following day Tuesday 15 July 2008, 6pm-8pm in the Boardroom at St Leger Court.

All

9. Date and Time of next meeting

- 9.1 Monday 10 November 2008

The meeting ended at 6:35pm