

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited

**EAST AREA BOARD MEETING
MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2008 at 6:00 PM**

Present

Cllr Bill Mordue, David Nevett, James Parkin, Cllr Moira Hood, Robert Allen, Vic Lowe, Lin Myers, Lesley Gilfedder, Mavis Pearson.

In Attendance

Paul Hopkinson (Director of Property Services), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Michael Vickers (Senior Project Manager), Janet Clarke (Asst Director of Housing Management), Lynette Jenkins (Performance Analyst), Shauna Brady (Personal Assistant), Maxine Newton (Board Support Officer).

- | 1. | Apologies and Quorum | ACTION |
|-----------|--|---------------|
| 1.1 | Apologies were received from Rodger Haldenby, Vic Lowe and Cllr Ken Keegan. | |
| 1.2 | It was noted that a quorum was present. Robert Allen chaired the meeting. | |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest by Area Board Members | |
| 2.1 | There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 3. | East Area Board Membership | |
| 3.1 | It was noted that Mrs Lesley Gilfedder and Mrs Mavis Pearson have been appointed as Members of the East Area Board.

Mr Rodger Haldenby has been reappointed as a Member of the East Area Board. | |
| 4. | Minutes of previous meeting held on 12 November 2007 | |
| 4.1 | The minutes of the East Area Board meeting held on 12 November 2007 were agreed as a correct record. | |
| 5. | Matters arising from previous minutes held on 12 November 2007 | |
| 5.1 | From item 5.5 (11.3 10 September 07 meeting) – members were | |

advised that the company was still awaiting the legal position.

5.2 **From item 7.2 – Additional data** – it was confirmed that it as agreed at the last meeting that the additional column would be available on the next Choice Based Lettings (CBL) report.

5.3 **From item 8.2 – Eviction at Rossington** – Members were advised: SLHD had worked with other agencies but had to issue a Notice Seeking Possession (NSP) due to the general poor condition of the property and garden during the summer of 2006. On 20 November 2006 a letter had been received which stated the family had moved to an address in Leicester. A letter was sent on 13 December 2006 asking them what there intentions were with the property, the tenants responded by saying they would return the keys and terminate the tenancy. As this did not occur on 23 January 2007 a Notice to Quit (NTQ) (this was required as the tenants were no longer residing at the property). SLHD applied for a court hearing, which took place on 17 April 2007. SLHD was awarded a 28 day Possession Order, and therefore the property could not be terminated until May 2007. This resulted in a large increase in the arrears.

5.4 **From item 9.1 – Estate Improvement Fund** – David Nevett pointed out that the date of the site meeting was changed and he had been unable to attend.

6. **Performance Monitoring Information**

6.1 This report was to present the East Area Board with performance information for October and November 2007.

6.2 No questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

6.3 The Assistant Director for Customer Services drew Members attention to the current rent arrears position the figures were outside of target. This had been analysed and the resultant Recover Plan was tabled at the meeting.

The deterioration was due to a number of factors. The first part of the action plan was to fill vacancies. A Citizens Advice Bureau advisor had started employment with the company on 3 January 2008 and this was expected to result in long-term improvements. IT training was now in place for the arrears officers to ensure that they are able to use the systems to maximum effectiveness. The collection of garage rents and arrears have now been collated centrally to allow the Rent Officers to be more efficient. Also, the central rents team now carry out quality checks and provide additional guidance to ensure they are covering all options to recover the arrears and that actions are consistent.

6.4 The Performance Analyst asked permission from the Chair and left the meeting.

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

7. Monitor Allocations to DMBC Properties

7.1 The Assistant Director of Housing Management introduced this report that provided the Area Board with allocations made by SLHD between October and November 2007.

7.2 Future reports would include the additional column that gave details of the new bandings. The table showed what type of property SLHD are letting and in what areas.

7.3 A member commented that they found this report useful as it gave information re the type and location of vacancies.

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

8. Receive Reports on Evictions

8.1 The Assistant Director of Housing Management presented this report that gave an analysis of evictions between 1 April to 30 November 2007

8.2 The majority of evictions were due to rent arrears, our intention is to keep the level of evictions down, but unfortunately in some cases it cannot be avoided.

8.3 The new central quality controls of files prior to evictions will ensure that the company acts consistently in all cases.

8.4 A Member pointed out that from the analysis males in their first couple of years of tenancy had the highest proportion of evictions, and queried if this indicated that they were in need of additional support. She was advised that SLHD had started to collate comments from tenants so that it can further carry out further analysis to help identify potential tenants that required more advice and assistance.

8.5 A Member asked if new tenants are offered a choice of rent payment methods. It was confirmed that they are informed that Payment methods included payment by cash, at the post office, pay point, telephone, email, standing order, direct debit, DMCB salary, salary at source for tenants in rent arrears etc. Tenants paying monthly are requested to make payment in advance.

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

9. Repairs & Maintenance Monitoring 2007-08 Quarter 2

9.1 The Senior Project Manager presented this report the purpose of which was to update Area Board members of Capital Works being undertaken and planned for the period 1st October to 31st December 2007.

9.2 He gave a presentation that updated Area Board members of a more up to date position on the Decent Homes program that he said was changing on a daily basis.

One hits construction partners - he explained that contractors were taking longer to complete works. This was largely explained by difficulties relating to the delivery of doors and windows. Properties are not included in the complete statistics until all the elements had been completed. He said that 429 properties were in possession.

Window and Doors contractors - 295 properties were in possession and the programme was on schedule. Kier had found that while working in The Homestead in Bentley large amounts of plaster had had to be replaced. This had not been due to age and construction of the properties and not the company's workmanship.

Spend – total spend to 31 December was £21m, he commented that this was slightly higher than within the project plan.

An additional 1,800 properties on the One-Hit program and 7,000 properties on the Windows and Doors program are projected to be completed in this financial year, the total spend at 31 March would be £55m.

Customer Satisfaction – he said customer satisfaction is currently at 96% (target of 95%). If this is maintained this indicates that as many as 500 customers that are not satisfied and therefore we are not complacent.

9.3 The Director of Property Services said the original plan was for completion by 2010 but the government have reviewed the situation, they are now looking to push back to 2013-14. At this time no information is available re the homes that fall outside of the criteria after this time but discussions will take place with the Council re incorporating this within future asset management plans.

He suggested that in the future East Area Board Members may wish to visit properties which are undergoing the Decent Homes investments and those where the work has been completed. Area Board Members agreed that this would be helpful.

9.4 **The Area Board noted the document.**

10. Estate Improvement Fund – East Area Board

- 10.1 The Director of Property Services explained that most of the work had been done except item 6, £7k was needed to be spent before 31 March 2008.

He provided members with up to date information on the progress of agreed items. Members attention was drawn to items 5 & 6 which had recently been approved. Further schemes need to be considered to ensure that the full funding allocation is spent before the end of the financial year.

11. Any Other Business/Items for next meeting

- 11.1 A member requested a program for next years Decent Homes program. They were advised that the company had recently completed a briefing session for Council Members. Following completion of the formal process with DMBC a report will be brought to the Board and Area Boards.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 10 March 2008

The meeting ended at 19:17 pm