

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited

JOINT AREA BOARD MEETING MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2008

Present

Andrew Bosmans, Cllr Beryl Roberts, Cllr Doreen Woodhouse, Cllr Elsie Butler, George Jackson, Godwin Mudzimu, Ian Gardner, Lyn Ralph, Cllr Pat Haith, Rory Perrett, Cllr Sandra Holland, Vimbainashe Mbedzi, Cllr Bill Mordue, David Nevett, James Parkin, Cllr Moira Hood, Robert Allen, Mavis Pearson, Sid Hall, Lin Myers, Lesley Gilfedder.

In Attendance

Martin Musgrave (Chief Executive), (Paul Hopkinson (Director of Property Services), Judith Jones (Director of Customers Services), Dean Rothwell (Assistant Director of Financial Services), Paul Lightfoot (Assistant Director Property Services), Rob Chapple (Business Maintenance Manager), Sue Bowie (Temporary Asst Director of Housing Management), Rebbecca Wilkie (Asst Director of Housing Management), Aileen Tutgun (PA), Shauna Brady (PA), Maxine Newton (Board Support Officer).

- | 1. Apologies and Quorum | ACTION |
|---|---------------|
| 1.1 Apologies were recorded from Betty Clayton, Rodger Haldenby, Vic Lowe, Cllr Ken Keegan. | |
| 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present. The meeting was chaired by Rory Perrett. | |
| 2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 12 November 2007 | |
| 2.1 The minutes of the joint meeting held on 12 November were approved as a correct record. | |
| 2.2 Matters arising from previous minutes held on 12 November 2007 | |
| 2.3 From item 2.5 – it was confirmed that a letter had been sent to Counillor Ros Jones. | |
| 2.4 From item 5.1 – Appointment Chair/Vice Chair – it was confirmed that the rotational requirement of the Chair and Vice Chairs is not March each year but following on from the AGM in November. | |

2.5 A decision was taken at the request of the Chief Executive to bring agenda item 7 – Review of SLHD Governance to the third item on the agenda.

3. Review of SLHD Governance - (Original Agenda Item 7)

3.1 The Company Secretary presented this report the purpose of which was to acquire the Area Boards comments on the proposal of the Working Party convened following the Board and Area Board Members discussion on 7 November 2007 which are to be reported to the Board at their February meeting.

3.2 The proposals are for the Main Board to hold 10 meetings a year alternating between Policy & Strategy and Resources. HR and Finance & Performance Committees responsibilities are to revert back to the Main Board, and the number of Area Boards to mirror DMBC's structure and hold alternative meetings within their areas.

3.3 These changes would be implemented for a year and then there will be a review. The Area Boards comments will be included in the report presented to Board on 6 February 2008.

3.4 A Member enquired if other, perhaps less expensive venues could be considered for the Joint Area Board meetings (JAB). It was explained that the racecourse had been given as an example and other venues would be considered. Members suggested the Carr House Centre and Ivanhoe Center.

The Chief Executive commented he felt that the Area Board would benefit from the proposal to hold alternative meetings within their areas .

3.5 A Member raised concerns that DMBC's future structure may split into multiple areas and the effect of mirroring their structure could cause difficulties as we have experienced some difficulties in Area Board Member recruitment.

3.6 The Chief Executive commented that the consensus was that the current structure of the Area Boards was that they were not working effectively. This report was put together after consulting with Chairs and Vice chairs. What the proposal was recommending is using a Neighbourhood model. He pointed out there are distinct advantages with mirroring the future structure of DMBC as this will reduced confusion during meeting with community partners who work within different boundaries.

3.7 A Member expressed the opinion that holding meetings within local communities may increase the currently low level of public attendance.

3.8 Members debated the effectiveness of holding JAB meetings. The

Director of Property Services responded by explaining that there were some environmental programs that would need a consistent decision across the borough. Strategic decisions would be better dealt with at a JAB. He was challenged that these decisions may need to be tailored to suit the needs of a specific community.

3.9 The Chair summarised by saying the Area Boards agreed:-

- **In principle to mirroring the future structure of DMBC, with a view to not over complicating the structure.**
- **Joint Area Board to remain.**
- **4.2.4 - Area Board membership not to be decided until the new DMBC structure is known.**
- **To the proposed changes at:**
 - **4.2.1 – Board**
 - **4.2.1.1 – Committees of the Board**
 - **4.2.1.2 – Board Champions**
 - **4.2.1.3 – Board Forums**
 - **4.2.2 – TOR**
 - **4.2.3 – Area Board meetings**

4. Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plan Review (Original Agenda Item 3)

4.1 The Temporary Assistant Director of Customer Services presented this report that updated Area Boards of the revised Tenants Participation Strategy Action Plan.

4.2 She asked Area Board members to note the monitoring report of the Tenants Participation strategy and revised action plan that related to 2008. She commented during 2008 the intension is to carry out extensive consultation to develop an update for 2009 onwards.

4.3 **The Joint Area Board noted the report.**

5. Monitor Nominations Made to RSL's (Original Agenda Item 4)

5.1 The Assistant Director of Housing Management presented this report that gave the Area Boards an analysis of nominations made to Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) between 1 April 2007 and 30 September 2007.

5.2 The Area Boards were informed that this was the second report on nomination rights, The majority of agreements with RSL are that on new developments the Council receive 100% nomination rights (nominations from the Housing Register are provided for each vacant dwelling), and that this usually falls to 50% nomination rights on subsequent vacancies (on each alternate vacancy the RSL makes contact requesting the Council to provide nominations from persons

on the Housing Register).

During the first quarter very few Housing Associations adhered to the agreement however, many have a small number of vacancies. The position has improved and more Housing Associations are abiding by their agreements. SLHD will be continuing to work with the Housing Associations to monitor the situation.

- 5.3 In past reports the Salvation Army and YMCA have been included however as they often accept referrals from the Council Homeless Team this was distorting the statistics and requested the Area Boards consent to remove them from future reports. **JC**

The Area Boards agreed.

- 5.4 Another member queried if there were any penalties imposed on the Housing Associations. She was informed that there wasn't any legal penalty that the company could impose.

Each RSL's record is taken into account when decisions regarding future schemes are made.

- 5.5 **The Joint Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

6. Effective Operation of Building Services (Original Agenda Item 5)

- 6.1 The Assistant Director Property Services presented this report that advised the Area Boards of the operation of Building services in relation to responsive repairs, empty homes and gas servicing.

- 6.3 He highlighted that two key developments which are due to be implemented in the near future will make a positive contribution to our effectiveness. The first is the implementation of Optitime that allows the repairs jobs to be more efficiently distributed to the workforce and therefore reduce the average job cost and the beginning of a mobile working program.

- 6.4 A member enquired if the properties affected by the floods were included in the figures and timescales for repairs.

Properties affected by flooding fell into two major categories. The first was where the properties were only flooded for a short period. These properties were repaired without the need for tenants to be moved. The second category was where the water reached greater depths and remained in the homes for prolonged periods, e.g. the Toll Bar area of Bentley. As there have dried sufficiently they are to be included within the Decent Homes work schedule. Work has begun on some properties and families will be returned to their homes as soon as possible.

6.6 A Member raised that the current appointments system was not working for some tenants. It was agreed that the present system is rather inflexible, as it cannot account for workforce illness etc. These difficulties will be addressed by the introduction of Optitime.

6.7 The Director of Property Services highlighted to the Area Boards that the report was very similar in content to the performance information booklet. He asked the Area Boards to consider if they would prefer to receive additional or more meaningful information. He suggested more in depth information on initiatives ie OPTITIME.

Board members agreed to review the information received.

**Area Board
Members**

6.8 **The Joint Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

7. Choice Based Lettings (Original Agenda Item 6)

7.1 The Assistant Director of Housing Management updated the Joint Area Board on the implementation of Choice Based Lettings following the go live date on 1 November 2007.

7.2 The company is continuing to contact customers in the priority bands who are not placing any bids, and asking them if they understood the process and how it works.

7.3 Initially there had been a back log of properties waiting to be advertised however we are now up to date. This week approximately 40 properties will be advertised.

7.4 Members queried how many bids had been received from the implementation date. This was approximated at 4,000 bids on 278 properties.

7.5 A Member said that concerns had been passed to her as flats at Jubilee Court at Wheatley had been advertised as persons over 40 being eligible. The advert did not mention that each first floor flat in the building had the benefit of a stair lift. More senior citizens may have bid for the flats if they were aware.

It was explained that many one bedroom properties designated for senior citizens do not attract any bids and although the team use actively marketing techniques there were occasions when they had to reduce the age criteria to attract interest. New tenants were always made aware of the sensitive nature of the letting and asked to be considerate.

A Member asked whether there were still assurances that the bungalows would not have the right to buy. This was confirmed that this was still the case.

7.6 A Member commented on how surprised they were at the number of bids made through the website as apposed to the freephone. It was felt that this may have resulted from the promotion of the website and that monitoring will continue to ensure customers needs are met.

7.7 **The Joint Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, on the grounds that exempt information as amended defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule A to the Act is likely to be disclosed.

8 Overview of Procedures for Contractor Tender and Selection (Original Agenda Item 7)

8.1 The Assistant Director of Financial Services presented this report that updated the Area Boards in regards to contracts awarded with a value in excess of £50k in the period 19th October to 14th December 2007.

8.2 Only one contract had been let in the period, which was for 'Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Environmental Improvements Programme'. The approval for the award of the contract had been signed off on 12 December 2007.

8.3 Members were given a summary of current tenders that were work in progress.

8.4 He explained next time the report was presented to the Area Boards it would detail contracts in excess of £75,000 rather than £50,000.

8.5 **The Joint Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

9. Minutes of previous Board and Committee meetings – For Information

9.1 Members noted the minutes of the HR Committee dated 8 August 2007.

9.2 Members noted the minutes of the Board meeting dated 1 August 2007.

10. Date and Time of next meeting

10.1 Monday 10th March 2008

The meeting ended at 18:15 pm