

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited

**WEST AREA BOARD MEETING
MONDAY 12 MAY 2008 at 3:30 PM**

Present

Andrew Bosmans, Cllr Beryl Roberts, Vimbainashe Mbedzi, Cllr Doreen Woodhouse, Cllr Elsie Butler, Godwin Mudzimu, Lyn Ralph, Rory Perrett (Chair), Cllr Sandra Holland, Betty Clayton.

In Attendance

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

- | | ACTION |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Apologies and Quorum | |
| 1.1 Apologies were received from Ian Gardner. | |
| 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present. Rory Perrett chaired the meeting. | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest by Area Board Members | |
| 2.1 There were no declarations of interest raised at the meeting. | |
| 3. Minutes of previous meeting held on 10 March 2008 | |
| 3.1 The minutes of the West Area Board Meeting held on 10 March 2008 were approved as a correct record, with the following amendment:

Apologies were received from Cllr Elsie Butler and not recorded. | |
| 4. Matters arising from previous minutes held on 10 March 2008 | |
| 4.1 From item 3.1 – West Area Board Membership - The Director of Customer services confirmed she had visited George Jackson at his local TARA to thank him for the hard work and commitment he had contributed to the West Area Board. | |
| 4.2 From item 5.1 – Introductory Tenancy Agreement - she also advised that following consultation with the TARA's the next stage in the process was to provide a written report to DMBC for approval. | |

4.3 **From item 6.2 – Non-Lettable Voids** – she confirmed that the property at Highfields had been investigated and Cllr Pat Haith had received a response. The property had been abandoned and notice had to be served before SLHD could terminate the tenancy.

4.4 **From item 7.3 – Choosing an Area Booklet – Adapted Properties** – members were advised that investigations had been carried out to for the feasibility of including properties that had been adapted in the 'Choosing an Area Booklet. The outcome was that it was not felt that this would be helpful for customers because the level of adaptations provided may vary considerably and as they have not been consistently recorded on the property file this may only become apparent at the time of the first visit to the void.

Members agreed that the format of the booklet should remain unchanged.

4.5 **From item 8.4 – Analysis of Evictions** – the Director of Customer Services gave a further breakdown of the 'Other' 3 evictions by ethnicity referred to in last months report. One eviction, one tenant described himself as originating in Iraqi; the second from Pakistan and there was no details for the third.

4.6 **From item 10.3 – Digital TV Signals** - The Business Maintenance Manager informed the Area Board that the capital investment team were currently drawing up a list of properties that will be effected by the switch over, the works are scheduled to be carried out in 2008/09 & 2009/10.

5. **Performance Monitoring Information**

5.1 This report was to present the West Area Board with performance information for February 2008 and March 2008.

5.2 **Current Rent Arrears (page 1)** - The Director of Customers services commented that it was pleasing to see SLHD had achieved year end targets. She confirmed that the difference in percentages between the North West and South West were still being investigated, the South West being higher.

It was noted that the Direct Debits paid on 1 April 2008 would be included in the 2007/08 statistics and that this would impact in the return for the first quarter of 2008/09.

5.3 Members enquired about the different response times for urgent and non-urgent repairs.

The Business Maintenance Manager confirmed the 5 categories of repairs;

Category	Description	Response timescale
A	Emergency Repairs	2 hours
B	Urgent repairs	24 hours
C	Routine repairs	5 days
D	All other repairs (non-urgent)	within 20 days
E	Batched repairs (non-urgent)	Can be scheduled as part of a programme or works in order to take advantage of economies of scale.

He advised that this information was available on the SLHD website which detailed the categories and examples of each category of repair.

A Member enquired about the criteria for “Batch Repairs” and it was explained that, following consultations with tenants, these are repairs that have no health or safety implications and where efficiency saving can be achieved by undertaking a number of similar repairs within the same area at the same time.

It was suggested that a report is brought to the next meeting of the West Area Board detailing the criteria and procedure for completing batch repairs.

RC

Vimbainashe Mbedzi commented on the time taken to complete a roof repair to her home and it was agreed that this would be investigated outside of the meeting.

VM/RC

Another Member said they were aware of instances where a repair had been reported which had health and safety implications and classed as a batched repair. Business Maintenance Manager to speak to the Repairs Contact Centre Manager.

RC

5.4 **Estate Management (page 2)** – members were advised that as these figures were only just starting to be collated nationally it was difficult to comment on performance against other organisations. What was important that the company dealt with the numbers that it received and concentrated on providing appropriate resolutions so that cases may be closed.

Members were asked to note that the figures include actions taken for breaches of tenancy conditions.

5.5 **Percentage of Current Arrears Against Annual Debit (page 6)** – member noted the action plan that had been put in place had positively effected the figures with targets met.

5.6 **Number of Evictions (page 8)** – SLHD in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau, Danum Credit Union and other agencies are continuing to work to reduce the number of evictions. Advice and assistance is given at the beginning. SLHD are also investigation the cost benefits of providing pre tenancy courses this may include income management and advise on preparing low cost nutritious meals if appropriate.

5.7 **Average Time Taken to Re-let Empty Properties (page 9)** – members were advised that the disappointing year end results were due to 2 issues: the impact on letting properties which had been void for a long period and the decision to suspend allocations to ensure that the victims of the 2007 floods had adequate alternative accommodation.

5.8 **Number of Non-Lettable Voids (page 11)** – it was suggested that a training session may be useful for members on the differentiation between lettable and non-lettable voids.

LM/MN

North West – the number of non lettable voids had reduced to 44 properties: 1 flat at Askern where there had been fire damage, 11 properties at Toll Bar where tenants had accepted permanent alternative tenancies, and 32 sheltered units which are currently part of the Councils options appraisal of this type of accommodation.

South West – the number of non lettable voids had reduced to 34: properties had been bought by pathfinder. The Director of Customer Services informed Members about 1 property which had been identified as suitable for a pilot to convert from a 1 to 2 bedroomed property.

5.9 **% of Appointments Made and Kept (page 15/16)** – performance has improved over the past 6 months. However, Optitime has recently been implemented. This allows the operatives to be directed from their completed task to other work in the same area. This was already resulting in efficiency saving, which are predicted to increase. Mobile working, which is due to be rolled out next month will also provide further efficiency gains.

It was agreed that a demonstration of the Optitime system would be provided to the next Area Board meeting

RC

- 5.10 **Gas Servicing – (page 19/20)** – Members were advised that concerns had been raised regarding the methodology used by the partnering contractor to monitor outstanding servicing. This has been addressed and has resulted in an increased number of outstanding services in January. Currently there are 28 outstanding properties all are currently being actioned within the no access procedure.
- 5.11 **Repairs Contact Centre – Average Queue Time (page 22)** – it was raised that there appears to be an intermittently fault on the VIP telephone system. This is still being investigated in conjunction with the Council.
- 5.12 **Complaints Received – (page 25)** – Members requested a detailed analysis of complaints and compliments. Members noted that Choice Based Letting queries on bandings had been included as complaints.

It was agreed that a complaints and compliments report with trend analysis would be brought to the next meeting.

JJ

- 5.13 **The Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

6. Monitor Allocations to DMBC Properties

- 6.1 The Director of Customer Services introduced this report that provided the Area Board with allocations made by SLHD between 1 February 2008 to 31 March 2008.
- 6.2 She said that in previous meetings members had been asked if they would like to see additional information, none had been requested but she asked members if they would like to see properties void for longer than 2 months highlighted in the report.

Members agreed.

JC

The report indicates that some properties remain unpopular. We have benchmarked this against other ALMOs and this range of activity appears comparable.

- 6.3 **The Area Board noted the contents of the report.**

7. Analysis of Evictions - 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

- 7.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report that gave an analysis of evictions between 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 and for the year 2007/8.
- 7.2 A Member raised that Conisbrough had not been included in the table on page 3 of the report.
- 7.3 It was explained that where possessions are left in the property , and

we are unable to trace the tenant, this is kept for 6 months and then disposed of.

7.4 The Area Board noted the contents of the report.

8. Estate Improvement Fund

8.1 It was noted that the new Estate Improvement Form would be distributed with a copy of Houseproud to all tenants in June with a return date of 18 July 2008.

Members were encouraged to think of other ways in which the fund could be promoted.

A Member referred to the success of the purchase of night vision goggles that were part funded last year for the Safer Neighbourhood Team at Edlington. It had been agreed that ongoing revenue costs would be met by partnering agencies.

The meeting thanked those Members who had managed the fund last year and agreed that they should continue.

Members also acknowledged the help and assistance provided by Dave Wilkinson.

8.2 The Company Secretary advised that a flyer was being sent to all the Tenants and Residents Associations (TARA's) as well as it being promoted in Houseproud.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 No items were raised.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 14th July 2008

The meeting ended at 16.51 pm