

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited

WEST AREA BOARD MEETING MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2008 at 3:30 PM

Present

Andrew Bosmans, Cllr Beryl Roberts, Vimbainashe Mbedzi, Cllr Doreen Woodhouse, Cllr Elsie Butler, George Jackson, Godwin Mudzimu, Ian Gardner, Lyn Ralph, Cllr Pat Haith, Rory Perrett, Cllr Sandra Holland, Sid Hall

In Attendance

Judith Jones (Director of Customer Services), Michael Vickers (Senior Project Manager), Rob Chappel (Business Maintenance Manager), Colleen Thompson (Performance Monitoring Officer), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Aileen Tutgun (Personal Assistant), Maxine Newton (Board Support Officer).

- | 1. Apologies and Quorum | ACTION |
|--|---------------|
| 1.1 Apologies were received from Betty Clayton. | |
| 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present. | |
| 1.3 The Director of Customer Services took the role of chair until the Chair, Rory Perrett joined the meeting. She welcomed Mrs Vimbainashe Mbedzi as a new West Area Board Member. | |
| 1.4 Vimbainashe introduced herself to the Area Board. She informed Members that, for the 2nd year, she had agreed to be the Chair of the Doncaster Settlers TARA, the group had started as a focus group but had developed into a TARA. She explained it had been a very interesting journey as she is looking forward to taking part in the West Area Board meetings. | |
| 1.5 Introductions were given around the table. | |
| 1.6 Rory Perrett joined the meeting and took the role of Chair. | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest by Area Board Members | |
| 2.1 Lyn Ralph, Sid Hall and Ian Gardner declared an interest in item 10 – Estate Improvement Fund. | |

3. West Area Board Membership

- 3.1 It was acknowledge that Mrs Vimbainashe Mbedzi has been appointed as a Member of the Area Board. Mrs Mbedzi confirmed that she preferred to be called Vimbai.

4. Minutes of previous meeting held on 12 November 2007

- 4.1 The minutes of the West Area Board Meeting held on 12 November 2007 were approved as a correct record.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes held on 12 November 2007

- 5.1 **From item 3.2 – Andrew Bosmans & Asst Director of Finance meeting** – Andrew Bosmans confirmed that he had met with the Asst Director of Finance before Christmas the meeting had been very constructive, he suggested that other Area Board members may benefit from a training session.

- 5.2 **From item 5.2 – ‘Introductory Tenancy Agreement’** - the Director of Customer Services explained that consultation with the TARA’s had not yet been completed and an update would be brought back to the next meeting. She also confirmed that an information sheet to Councillors would be distributed after the consultation.

- 5.3 **From item 6.4 – CBL** – the Director of Customers Services explained that an update report would be presented at todays Joint Area Board meeting.

- 5.4 **From item 6.5 – Performance Monitoring Information** – Members were advised that the new information would be available for the next meeting.

6. Performance Monitoring Information

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

Questions had been requested seven days in advance of the meeting however, none had been received.

- 6.2 **Page 5 - % of Rent Collected within the Month** – Members were advised that although the trend line indicates that less than the 100% target will be achieved a number of factors including 2 rent free weeks and a 53rd rent week this year are predicted to raise the performance figures.

- 6.3 **Page 6 – % of Current Arrears Against Annual Debit** – Members were advised that a number of issues relating to rent arrears had

been identified. Although the majority of their impact was within the East a Recovery Plan had been produced and was tabled at the meeting. The Director of Customer Services explained that the review had included the workload of officers, and to ensure that experienced staff were located within areas with the highest levels of arrears. The review had identified training needs and to ensure consistency centralised scrutiny has been introduced on all cases where we are seeking possession and the actions being taken on cases where the arrears are greater than £1,500 to ensure consistency.

- 6.4 **Page 9-12 – Average Time Taken to Re-let Empty Properties** – members were advised that the position was stabilising again after the impact of the floods and the introduction of Choice Based Lettings (CBL). A reduction from January 2008 onwards was anticipated.

A member queried whether structural problems with properties may have led to delays in turn around times. However, it was confirmed that this was not the case, delays were down to backlogs.

- 6.6 **Page 13 – Number of Non-Letable Voids** – members agreed that it would be useful to bring to the next meeting details of each of the Non-Letable Voids. **JJ**

- 6.7 **Page 22 – Gas Servicing – Outstanding** – further analysis of the 6 outstanding gas services were requested. **SAdam**

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

7. Monitor Allocations to DMBC Properties

- 7.1 The Director of Customer Services introduced this report that provided the Area Board with allocations made by SLHD between 1 October and 30 November 2007.

- 7.2 This report had been provided to the Area Board for two to three cycles and Members were asked to consider the content of the report and the relevance of the information it provided.

The Chair commented that it gave members a flavor of the number and types of property available for re-let.

Another member commented it would be useful to see a comparator of pre and post Choice Based Lettings (CBL), to determine if allocations were being made more quickly.

Another member queried where ‘Clayton’ was located and how many SLHD properties were there and allocations made. It was agreed to bring this information to the next meeting. **JJ**

Members agreed to still receive the information in its current format with the additional data that compared pre and post CBL JJ allocations.

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

8. Analysis of Evictions April – November 2007

8.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report that gave an analysis of evictions between 1 April to 30 November 2007.

8.2 Referring to table 2 in the report a Member pointed out that Cusworth showed high in percentage terms because the company manages very few properties in this area. It was agreed that the inclusion of the number of properties available in each area would be beneficial.

8.3 Referring to table 5 in the report members were advised that more work was being done on the number of evictions carried out on tenants who had occupied tenancies for less than two years including information relating information to ensure that the BME tenants are not being disproportionately disadvantaged.

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

9. Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring 2007-08 Quarter 2

9.1 The Senior Project Manager presented this report that updated the Area Board of Capital Works being undertaken and planned for 1 October to 31 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.

He said that next years programme funding was still to be confirmed.

9.3 The Area Board noted the presentation and report.

10. Estate Improvement Fund (EIF)

10.1 The Director of Customer Services presented a document that detailed progress to date of the amount spent of the Estate Improvement Fund for the West Area Board.

10.2 She pointed out that a number of projects had been completed, parking bays at Cridling Gardens in Norton and Adwick and procurement of the 'night vision' equipment, currently on loan to South Yorkshire Police. The night vision equipment had made a significant difference to the area, this project had been match funded with other partnering organisations.

10.3 Further costings on more projects were being obtained to ensure full spend of the fund.

10.4 A Member queried why Stonehill Rise, Scawthorpe had been deferred as this was scheduled to be completed at the last meeting. Another Member confirmed that it was cost prohibitive. The Director of Customers Services confirmed that she would obtain confirmation from the EIF sub committee minutes of the decision to not proceed and not to carry the project forward to the following year.

10.5 Another member pointed out the project for provision of fencing to front of bungalows, saying she thought that there should be no maintenance involved with the projects. She was informed that SLHD had erected fencing that did not have any ongoing year on year financial costs. It was agreed that the provision of fencing was an acceptable use of the fund.

10.6 It was agreed that when the costings where available for the other projects it is expected that the £40K funding would be totally utilised.

10.7 The Director of Customer Services raised that through Decency work the main contractors were setting up a community fund, and that **JJ**

next year match funding of schemes needed to be considered.

10.8 The Chief Executive entered the meeting.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 One member commented she had received comments from some people who felt discouraged by the introduction of a financial assessment from those senior citizens who were owner-occupiers. It was explained that this allowed the allocations to be prioritised to those who had no other means of providing themselves with suitable accommodation but it should be noted that personal circumstances are considered and allocations to senior citizens who were owner occupiers has occurred.

11.2 A Member raised concerns arising from the recent tragic event where a faulty thermostat had led to boiling water spilling onto a child. The Chief Executive advised that SLHD will be taking direction from DMBC and the Department of Communities and that Area Board Members would be kept informed. **PH**

It was emphasised that this was not a council housing problem but of general concern to all householders. There may have been an overflow running which highlights that there is a problem and should always be reported for investigation. It was agreed that it may be beneficial to highlight these recommendations within Houseproud. **JTurner**

11.3 A Member asked if there were any plans to install carbon monoxide in all properties. Members were advised that the company were about to embark on a programme servicing of solid fuel heating systems and this will reduce the risk of incidents. There are not plans at this time to routinely provide carbon monoxide detectors.

Carbon monoxide detectors were installed into the majority of solid fuel heated properties designated for senior citizens and linked to the alarm service.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 10th March 2008

The meeting ended at 4.48 pm