

MINUTES

2nd June 2010

7:00pm Third Floor Board Room, Sutton Gate



BOARD OF MANAGEMENT SUTTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Present: Findlay Macpherson (Chair), Mike Davis (Vice Chair), Michael Baldwin, Samantha Bromige, Lesley O'Connell, Ken Morgan

Staff: Andrew Taylor, Joanne Cambra, Sara Tutton, Derek Vaughan, Dennis Paul, Dawn Eustace, Andrea Howlett, Steve Leitch and Liz Bosch

LBS Representative: None.

Also attended as observers: Beverley Brigden (secretary of SLA), Geoff Christian (tenant), Brian Jackson (tenant) and Simon Bannister (tenant)

1. Apologies

Dilys Lee, Enid Bakewell, Terry Haswell, Ryan Drew, Sharon Prospero, Brendan Crossan and Simon Latham.

FM thanked the residents for attending the meeting and attending the pre Board event at 6pm. FM commented that the residents' views are very important to us and we want to hear their views and address any issues or concerns.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising

No matters arising.

The minutes were agreed as being an accurate record.

3. Complaints Annual Report

DE went through the highlights and key improvements in the report. She highlighted a significant drop in complaints about Repairs due to customer care, contractors and repairs team all working together. The top three areas of complaints received were Repairs, Major Works and Leasehold Services. Leasehold Services is not usually one of our top areas for complaints, but this year we have been more robust with our service charging and due to the economic climate leaseholders have been scrutinising their costs a lot more. SHP had learnt from leasehold complaints in that the response time period wasn't sufficient time for our staff to give a complete response

and therefore have now extended the response time for these complaints/enquires. Also there were a few complaints about the statements not being very clear so improvements have been made to the statements which had reduced the number of complaints about that.

There had been an increase this year in the number of complaints that progressed to Stage 2. All 2nd tier managers had investigated at least one Stage 2 complaint which had allowed them to understand why the complaint had gone to Stage 2 and what could have been done to stop the escalation.

5 Stage 3 appeals had taken place this year and no Ombudsman enquires. The key areas coming out of complaints that residents want to see improved are communication, information and timeliness.

There has been an overall improvement in the response time with complaint responses within the required time frame.

In terms of accessibility to complaints – resident profiling has shown that we are covering all areas, but there are not that many residents with disabilities and older residents that are accessing complaints and are therefore looking at how to address these areas.

MD commented on the high number of Stage 2 complaints that were upheld as this is an important area. He also added that there were a number of complaints around heating so we should be learning from this with our contractors to see what the issues are and how we can prevent problems over next winter.

FM asked what was being done to improve this area. Staff are handling customers and dealing with complaints, but he suggested that at the front end there was a weakness with how issues were dealt with at the outset. Residents may feel that SHP was not taking their complaints seriously.

DE responded to say that having the 2nd tier deal with the Stage 2 complaints had helped to make them aware of the issues and how to resolve them earlier so they don't become escalated. There were also a number of staff undergoing the ICS course which was all about how to deal with customers. Training with Customer Care staff had taken place and SHP was recording all calls at first contact. Customer Care staff were also working with other teams in the areas where they have a champion role.

DE commented that there does need to be more information given out to staff about what has happened as a result of the complaints, such as using the Intranet and other media.

FM added that feedback to staff and residents should not just be done via the intranet and internet but other ways should be used too.

KM asked if the main causes of complaints are monitored. Which DE responded to say that details of all complaints are logged and for example the repairs complaints were analysed to see what the reason for the complaint was and how this could be followed up to

prevent further issues. Half of repairs complaints are about bad quality and this is being followed up with the contractors.

DV added that quality issues are looked at and discussed with KNK and their performance indicators are constantly monitored and they are improving in quality.

ST added that it is not always KNK that fail all the time, sometimes it is SHP's error but regular meetings were held with the Complaints Officer to resolve the issues.

LOC commented that as Wendy Mathys has resigned from the Board another Complaints Champion was needed. LOC commended Wendy for the work she did on complaints.

LOC added that informal complaints are now being logged so surely this will stop complaints going to Stage 1 in the first place which will help improve complaints.

FM thanked DE and her team for the work on complaint handling.

4. Legal Services Review

Steve Leitch presented his report which gave an update on the Legal Services Review. SL mentioned that the action plan dates originally set were optimistic and with the inspection and then year end closing it was not possible to complete all the actions within the required time frame. The action plan dates had therefore been revised.

The Legal Services Service Agreement has been redrawn up and is available for Board members to view should they wish to.

Steve went through the actions and the progress that had been made as set out in the report.

5. Tenancy Conditions

JC presented this item and commented that the report had to be tabled due to the recent closing date for the resident consultation.

31 responses had been received in total. 15 replies had been received about firearms, most of which chose option 1 which was "you must not store any firearms in your home unless legally entitled to hold them, and only in line with a license or where permitted by law".

AT raised that there have been instances where SHP staff have found themselves in danger when a resident had a firearm in their property.

FM commented that it isn't fair to stop residents having legal firearms just because they live in a council property. It is their legal right have a licensed firearm so we can't stop that.

LOC agreed with FM's point and added that SHP staff should be able to ask to see their licence at any time.

MD agreed with FM's point and added that we need to make sure we have guidelines of how to know that the tenant has a firearm. AT added that we could put in the conditions that when they get a firearm they need to let us know and show their license.

The Board agreed to Option 1 – "you must not store any firearms in your home unless legally entitled to hold them,

and only in line with a license or where permitted by law. Firearms include air rifles, shotguns and replica guns.” with a condition included that the tenant should inform SHP when they get a licensed firearm and, including retrospectively, so that we have a note of which tenants have firearms.

Pets – FM suggested that we add to the section about “you dog should be kept on a lead” to include “and kept under control at all times”. The reason is that some owners use extender leads for their dogs which means that their dog is not actually in their control.

Access – **All agreed with this condition.** MD suggested adding “we would normally expect you to move furniture, fittings, carpets and anything belonging to you to allow us to carry out repairs or maintenance.”

Inadequate flooring – AT said that we need to agree with tenants that they need to let us know if they already have laminate flooring so that it is recorded as put in before the new condition started, so that they won’t be expected to take their flooring up. If the flooring causes a nuisance, however, they will be asked to remove the flooring.

JC briefly went through all other areas as well.

The Board agreed the recommendations as stated in the report:

- (i) Considered the proposed changes to the tenancy conditions following the consultation period**
- (ii) Endorsed these, with the amendments mentioned above**
- (iii) Recommended a preferred option to the firearms condition, see agreement above**
- (iv) Recommended how to deal with inadequate flooring retrospectively, see agreement above**

6. Terms of Reference for the Voids Service Review

ST presented the terms of reference for Voids Service Review with the final report going to the Board in September. ST asked for a Board representative on the review, if those interested could let ST know. **ALL**

The Board approved the arrangements for the Voids Service Review.

7. Aids and Adaptations Review

Andrea Howlett presented the report which summarised the process of the review and the key findings. (There were 12 appendices in total but only the key appendices were attached to the report and others were available on request).

Key issues that came out of the review were:

- A quicker end to end service.
- Major works adaptations to have a turnaround of 3 to 4 months with minor works being 3 weeks turnaround.
- Better value for money on adaptations and cost of management of the service.
- More meaningful customer involvement in the service.

There are 24 recommendations resulting from the review, with the 3 key recommendations being:

- Beginning negotiations with Staying Put for phased withdrawal
- Additional investment into Occupational Therapy
- Creating a Disability Forum which looks at all our services from the point of view of residents with disabilities.

LOC asked why the cost of the assessment wasn't covered under financial implications. AH responded that the assessment works are taken out of the existing budget for this so there wasn't an extra cost.

MD commented that this was a good review and asked whether the assessment cost of £20,000 is a cost to SHP or LBS. AH responded that this would be a cost to SHP as it is an enhanced service SHP was asking for not the standard service.

MD also commented that he thinks the proposal for identifying a lead officer within SHP is a good idea and whether there is anyone particular in mind for this. ST responded that Andrew Chalk has ultimate responsibility and Neil Johnson will lead on operational side and then there will be a project officer and administration staff appointed.

The Board agreed the recommendations as stated in the report:

- (i) Approve the review report action plan**
- (ii) The Board are to receive a report in 6 months time with an update on our progress in completing the actions described in the action plan**

8. Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Review

Dennis Paul presented his report and briefed the board on the key recommendations. These being

- More customer involvement especially around procuring services, information sharing, tender contracts especially external decorations contract,
- A longer term partnership for electrical testing,
- Addressing the backlog of electrical inspections on properties.

MB commended Dennis Paul on a good report and was pleased with the outcome.

MD commented that he felt this was a good report but has concerns about the electrical testing. MD said he is not clear what the report

is suggesting about this. DP responded that he is flagging up that this was an area requiring further investigation and that there had already been internal discussions on costs. DP suggestion was to meet the cost of addressing the backlog first and then look at how to deal with the testing on an ongoing basis.

MD's stated that electrical testing at these properties should be carried out as economically as possible, but needed to be done. ST commented that the current approach is to deal with the backlog of testing as part of routine voids inspection and Decent Homes work, where rewires are programmed to be completed alongside kitchen and bathroom renewals. A separate testing programme could be carried out to clear the backlog and any level 1 issues would be addressed straight away rather than as part of the Decent Homes programme.

ST agreed to will take the issues raised by the Board away and draw up options for the next meeting for addressing the backlog of electrical testing. **ST/DP**

MB asked ST if the electrical testing issues could be discussed at the Asset Management Group this month. ST agreed. **ST**

LOC commented that recommendations 23 to 35 were missing from the report. ST will ensure that the board are sent these recommendations. **ST**

KM asked how the chair of service reviews is nominated. AT confirmed that the chair is always an independent manager that is not from the same service that the review is about and EMT select who they believe should chair the review.

The Board approved the recommendations as stated in the report:

- (i) Approved the recommendations contained in the Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Service Review Report**
- (ii) Board to receive a report in 6 months time with an update on our progress in completing the actions described in the action plan**

In addition, the Board requested a report on the options around electrical testing at its next meeting.

9. Repairs Contract Procurement Update

DV presented the updated report on the repairs contractor's performance which was brought to the meeting at the request from the Board at last meeting.

DV gave out a summary sheet which he went through with the Board. DV added that he felt there had been good improvement demonstrating that the contractor had worked hard to perform to SHP higher expectations.

FM thanked DV for his report. He also added that the 'right first time' is more important than how long it will take to carry out the works so this needed to look at in any discussions.

DV said that if SHP were to negotiate an extension then he would wish to discuss the contractor's management arrangements and agree changes with them before awarding the renewed contract. DV believed this would be agreed and would support further improvements in performance.

DV highlighted that SHP was a significant part of the contractor's business and therefore it was in their interest to continue to perform well.

KM commented that HQN's findings seem reasonable. DV said that Appendix 3b shows the pricing structure against other landlords but we need to be conscious that quality isn't lost due to reduced pricing. LOC raised the point about possibility of incentives for improved performance but wanted to make sure that was when their performance exceeded the normal expected performance level. DV confirmed that incentives would only be given in instances where they have gone above and beyond the normal expectation.

10. HRA Business Plan (tabled item)

AT tabled a report on the HRA Business Plan explaining to the Board that the Council review their HRA Business Plan annually. It is due to go to the Executive Committee on 6th July which means that there won't be time for the Business Plan to come to the Board before it goes to the Executive for approval. AT recommended to the Board that BC deals with comments from SHP in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board on behalf of the Board so that the process is not held up.

The Board agreed to BC dealing with comments on the HRA Business Plan in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

Beverley added that Trevor Hart will be attending their SLA meeting on Tuesday evening at 6:30pm to talk about the HRA Business Plan and welcomed Board members to attend.

11. Any Other Business

Customer Involvement Report – the Board noted that staff involved in the St Helier Festival was not highlighted in this report.

LOC raised that in light of Wendy Mathys leaving the Board we need a new Equality and Diversity Champion and Chair of the Equality and Diversity Board committee.

The Meeting ended at 21:10

Date of the next meeting: 7th July 2010 at 7pm
Venue: 3rd Floor, Sutton Gate

Chair	
Date	