

Minutes



Minutes of Tenants and Leaseholders Congress 28th January 2010, 6pm – 8pm Boardroom

Present:

Jean England – **JE**
Jacinth Hall – **JH**
Maria Hemphill – **MH**
Linford Stevens – **LS**
John Riley – **JR**
Roy Lawson – **RL**
Robert Morrell – **RM**

Sue Stevenson – **SS**
Sheila Thwaites – **ST**
Dave Bennett-Bull - **DBB**
Cynthia James -**CJ**
Helen Thomson - **HT**
Ade Aderogba MBE – **AA**
Alan Hoban – **AH**

NCH

Amanda Schofield –**AS**
Gill Moy – **GM**
Janet Glass **JG**
Carole Donnelly - **CD**

Apologies: Janet Storar – **JS** Chris Langstaff –**CL** Margret Pugsley – **MP**
Alison Thorpe – **AT** Clive Thorpe - **CT** Sue Stevenson - **SS** Jackie Brown - **JB**
Ennis Peck - **EP** Kate Bowley - **KB** Tricia Quinn -**TQ**
Kevin Butt & Kath Biddle taxi issues prevented them from attending

1.0

Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

The Chair Welcomed everyone to the meeting, mentioned the apologies and started the meeting

2.0

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Chair ran through the page numbers,.
The Minutes were signed off by the chair

3.0

Matters Arising

CJ was omitted from the attendees and **AH** was omitted from the apologies. **CD** to amend.

CD confirmed that Kevin Butt had been approved to go forward to the board and fill the casual board vacancy until September. It was noted that **CJ** had withdrawn her nomination due to excessive work and voluntary commitments. It was therefore noted that the TLC no longer needed to vote on this as only one candidate had been selected/nominated. **CD** highlighted that further vacancies for tenant and leaseholder board members will occur this year and further information

Action

will be brought to the March meeting.

GM & AS updated the TLC on changes to the reporting structure for the Tenant & leaseholder Involvement Team, from December the T&LI team have moved from Housing Services under the directorship of Gill Moy to the Strategy & partnership team under the direction of Amanda Schofield, Carole Donnelly will be reporting directly to Janet Glass in Business & development (BID) The main thinking behind this is to accommodate the new Tenant Services Authority (TSA) empowerment agenda for scrutiny and co-regulation. No changes should impact on the current service provided by the T&LI team. **AS** confirmed that the opportunity to link in with the equality & Diversity section and Marketing will bring additional benefits across the company and for tenant engagement.

ST raised a query regarding the TSA not covering leaseholders, **AS** confirmed that we have raised this on a number of occasions and the TSA as a governing body does only cover tenants, however NCH will always involve tenants as well as leaseholders in all areas of the business.

4.0 Update of Modernisation of Tenancy & Estate Management (TEM)

GM gave a verbal update on the consultation exercise currently underway on the closure of offices and the cash collection. **GM** confirmed that the consultation letter was sent out week beginning 18th January 2010 with consultation/comments due to close on Friday 19th February. This letter provides you with an opportunity to comment on the proposals to change your housing service in accordance with Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985.

Concern was raised by a number of TLC members that they hadn't received the letters, **GM** to chase as a matter of urgency that all letters had been forwarded.

GM confirmed that following the consultation a report will go to Board on the 25th March regarding the outcomes of the consultation and new proposals for cash collection for NCH tenants and leaseholders.

GM also confirmed that the Tenancy & Estate Management service is due to be modernised following this review. Discussions have been held at the TEM forum, Housing services sub committee and working groups across the company. Further updates will be brought back to the TLC meeting with regard to new working methods and the 'customer service centre' which appears to be the way forward for NCH.

GM also noted that no decision had been made on the accommodation strategy, including remaining at Hounds Gate (awaiting rent confirmation from NCC) relocation of the Harvey Road offices and the role of the Area Offices. **GM** confirmed that during this review process the role of the Housing Patch Manager will need to be reviewed, to enable them to provide a more local based service.

AS raised the 'Aspley Pilot' and is keen to look at what are the key issues for tenants in shaping services, not just at NCH but across NCC and other service providers. NCC neighbourhood management were leading this pilot with NCH role being critical to the success, we will use this opportunity to 'trail blaze' the TSA local standards agenda and develop a 'local compact' further details to be brought back to the TLC in March

GM updated the TLC on the Sheltered Housing review conducted by NCC, NCH are looking at the services we provide and how improvements could be achieved. It was noted that there is pressure on Supported People funding, with money being tight for the next financial year.

GM noted that successes in reducing rent arrears over the last 12 months and the

GM

AS

priority is to reduce the former tenant arrears debt. Voids had decreased over the last few months with Richard Holland now working with the team to introduce a faster turnaround, 342 voids compared with over 450 a few months ago.

Concern was raised about the length of time payments take to get onto our IT system when using a paypoint machine, MH gave an example of a 10 day delay which led to an arrears letter being received by the tenant leading to much distress. Plus it was noted that you can not pay by cheque at a paypoint machine.

DBB noted that although the voids had started to decrease they were still too high and that the target was 300 by the end of March 2010. **DBB** requested that the current state of voids be included at every TLC meeting and debated. It was confirmed that the TLC had a duty to monitor the voids across the city, especially as it impacts on costs. **GM** was asked to produce a 18 month plan on what are the optimum number of voids, costing, average re-let times and average costs and bring back to the next TLC. Monthly update on void requested at all TLC meetings.

GM/RH

RL was concerned about the number of outstanding repairs when voids were let to new tenants, as a Tenant Inspector he has raised this issue a number of times. He requested that repairs are completed within the appropriate timescales and the are completed up to an acceptable standard.

CJ raised an issue of tenants wanting to downsize but being unable to do so, **GM** requested details be forwarded so she could ask the local office to look at freeing up larger properties, it was noted that the delay is often due to the demand for 2 bedroom bungalows outstripping supply. **DBB** noted that under occupation was an issue across the city and needs to be communicated more effectively at an Area panel level and look at incentive schemes and promoting in the newsletter.

GM stated that we are piloting a programme on under occupying and incentives are considered.

GM left the meeting after this section.

5.0 Performance Management 1/4ly review

Repairs

During Qtr1 – 3 ,we received in excess of 90,255 repair requests and

- We made and kept 96.1% of all repair appointments – a slight improvement on next year
- Completed 93.3% of repairs on the first visit – against a target of 85%
- We completed 95.6% of all routine repairs within 15 days from when you reported them - an average of 8.2 days (an improvement of 5 days compared to last year)
- We completed 99.2% of all emergency repairs within target – compared to 97% last year. We are ranked 6 out of 13

Initiatives implemented towards the end of last year have come to fruition e.g. implementation of fencing initiative to complete more repairs / maintenance through planned programmes has impacted positively on repair completions in the 2009/10 operating year. This is monitored as part of the Repairs Contract.

- Tenant satisfaction with the operative resolving the issue has

increased from 6.9 to 7.64

- Overall customer satisfaction has improved in most areas – current score of 7.98 out of 10. 7.4 this time last year.

Quarterly repairs improvement groups - focus on customer feedback and low satisfaction scores, performance, complaints, learning from VMS and customer feedback, learning from others and best practice.

We have installed 1666 Kitchens - KeepMoat

The Modern living programme (kitchens, bathrooms) have been completed in Clifton North

We have installed 1307 new bathrooms - KeepMoat

The Modern living programme (kitchens, bathrooms) have been completed in Clifton North

We have replaced 7791 windows – DLO, Nationwide, Yorkshire windows

The windows programme is currently being carried out in Aspley Ward.

And installed 8558 Heating appliances (Boilers and Heaters) – DLO, SPI and Vinshire

The Warmth programme has commenced in Bestwood, and Bulwell Forest

DBB wanted to know if the number of repairs will go down following the completion of the decent homes programme and a full impact assessment will be required. AS confirmed that the Asset Management strategy will be completed by 2013 and will impact on spending/savings e.g. the window painting programme will no longer be required.

Estate Management

The tenant inspection team visit neighbourhoods on a quarterly basis to assess the condition of gardens, grassed areas / hedges, fencing, footpaths, litter, gravity and illegal parking.

At the end of September

35 estates had a 2 or 3 star rating

26 estates has a 3 star rating

However, 2 estates have gone from a 2 star to 1 star rating (St Anns and Kingsthorpe Close). Broxtowe and Crabtree have remained 1 star. We are undertaking surveys of customers in these areas to identify more generally customer perception – which will result in improvement meetings with TEM team, caretaking team.

20 high rise blocks are now deemed to be of 2 or 3 star standard

Highcross court is 1 star

74% satisfied with their area as a place to live compared to 71% last year.

CJ was concerned about the Kingsthorpe rating and rising crime rate in the area. And do the TSI really reflect the residents concerns. This issue had been recently discussed at the area 6 panel, especially in regard to losing funding if an area is rated as a 3 star.

Tackling ASB

582 new cases so far this year – on average 400-500 at any moment in time

We have resolved 68.5% of all cases within 3 months

Early Intervention such as tenancy warnings having positive impact – 450 early interventions (667 tenancy warnings, 32 ABC agreed, 5 parenting contracts, 57 mediations, 12 Family Intervention Project referrals, 17 solicitor letters before

action).

Of all the cases we have had this year:

113 Enforcement actions were taken - Tenancy Notices

85 court orders possessions, however, 27 tenants surrender their tenancy under the threat of proceedings, thereby reducing cost (not having to go to court). The court granted 132 injunctions.

Rent Collection

First 9 months of this year have seen significant improvements

- At the end of December, 100.5% of rent and brought forward arrears, from 2008/09, was collected.
- Increased collection rates mean that arrears are £739,000 lower compared to the end of December 2008 and over £1.2m lower when compared to December 2007.
- There are now only 3 cases city-wide that owe more than 52 weeks net rent.
- There are also only 24 tenants out of 29,000 that owe between 39 to 51 weeks net rent.
- There are 17,417 cases that have either a zero or credited balance.
- The Rents Call Centre are having their best year ever collecting £1,214,955 in cash payments between April and December 2009, compared to £1,372,979 for the whole of 2008/09.

A new poster campaign has been launched – focuses on the support available to those customers who can't pay..

Lettable voids down to 340

Working practices amended so that only essential repairs are carried out when the property is void

If possible, works required to meet the Decent Homes standard will be carried out in line with the schedule for the Secure, Warm, Modern programme, from the appropriate budget.

Tenant satisfaction is currently 7.2 out of 10, with the highest scores being in relation to

Did the property you were offered match what you asked for?

How do you rate the service/information provided by staff when signing up for the property?

How easy was it to understand what is expected of you as a tenant from the Tenancy Agreement?

Lowest scores in relation to condition of home considering the Lettable Standards given and the arrangements made for carrying out any outstanding void repairs.

Scores have remained relatively unchanged since this time last year – lowest and highest scores in the same area.

Customer Care and Satisfaction

The 3Cs procedure is maintaining the consistently high levels of customer feedback. However, there has been a significant reduction of 11% in the number of complaints received in Quarter 3 of 2009/10 in comparison to the same Quarter of 2008/09.

The following volumes have been received between April and December 09:

3111 Stage One Complaints, 38% of which were justified, 26% partly justified and 33% considered unjustified.

447 Compliments

201 Stage 2 Complaint Appeals

4 Stage 3 Complaint Appeals

19 Local Government Ombudsman Enquiries

We have responded to 97.3% of these complaints within 5 days

At the end of Quarter 3 2009, 96.9% of complaints were responded to in the 5 day target.

The percentage of enquiries responded to in 5 days has increased from 91.6% at the end of 08/09 to 95.9% at the end of Quarter 3 2009.

A wide variety of questions, comments and issues were raised during this presentation.

6.0 Business Plan update – Janet Glass

The draft business plan was presented to the group, copy of handout attached with full details.

JG confirmed that NCH were moving from a 1 year plan to 3 year plan and developing a 10 year partnership with Nottingham City Council (NCC)

JE wanted to know how we can be more involved and make a real difference, need to look at a range of ways to be involved, **CD** noted that we are constantly developing involvement opportunities and need to move away from the 'older/tired' way of meetings for meetings sake, we need to be more creative especially if we are to involve those currently disengaged or not normally involved.

AH wanted to know how NCH support the more vulnerable and can we link this into the sheltered housing review. Possibly need to look at vulnerable persons criteria. **AS** explained the 'hub & spoke' approach currently being considered as a way forward for sheltered housing, for example using more mobile wardens.

Discussions also centred around the positive role the police in Nottingham are having but statistics become distorted due to the inner city Nottingham Police being linked into the wider Nottinghamshire area. Unfortunately due to time constraints the discussion was cut short.

7.0 Tenant Services Authority (TSA) update Carole Donnelly

CD gave a verbal report on the next stage of the TSA consultation, confirmed that the final event had been held at the Ice Arena on Monday 25th January 2010 and had been a very useful exercise in putting together our final response before consultation finishes on the 5th February 2010 with the new regulations coming into force from April 2010. **CD** thanked those who had participated in the process.

AS raised that the Chair of the TSA Anthony Meyer will be coming to see Chris Langstaff before the consultation closes on the 5th February and would be an excellent opportunity for NCH to be involved in the process.

CD confirmed that the next stage would be to look at local standards within Nottingham and the Aspley Pilot will enable us to take this forward and roll out across the city. Additional workshops/focus groups will be organised over the next 6 months with local standards needing to be in place by April 2011.

8.0 National Tenant Voice update Carole Donnelly

CD gave a verbal update on the NTV she had just returned from the first NTV Council meeting and was delighted to inform the group of the exceptional number of highly talented tenants that had been recruited to the NTV Council. The process for recruiting the Governing Board was now underway with 6 independent board members being recruited through an open process and the 9 remaining place including the Chair to be recruited from the NTV Council members (again through an open recruitment process)

AS requested that the names and location of those from the East Midlands be brought to the TLC and look at the possibility of inviting them to a future meeting. **CD** explained that the NTV Council members were not representatives of these organisations but acted as individual tenants looking at national policy matters. **AS** wanted to know if the TLC would like to lobby the NTV in the future. **CD** to investigate options.

CD

CD confirmed that the next NTV Council meeting will be in April and thanked NCH for supporting her in this crucial role for tenant involvement.

9.0 Tenant & Leaseholder Conference 20th March

CD re-confirmed the date for the Conference as Saturday 20th March and requested those interested in attending to contact the tenant involvement team as soon as possible.

10.0 Any other business

Unable to take any other business as the meeting had over ran. Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Date of next meeting 24th February TLC & Board 6pm – 8pm

