

# Minutes



## Minutes of TLC and Board meeting Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### **TLC Members:**

Jean England (JE)	Kath Biddle (KBi)
Clive Thorpe (CT)	Ennis Pack (EP)
Robert Morrell (RM)	Roy Lawson (RL)
John Riley (JR)	Alison Thorpe (AT)
Maria Hemhill (MH)	Linford Stevens (LS)
Jacinth Hall (JH)	Sheila Thwaites (STh)
Cynthia James (CJ)	

### **Board Members:**

Janet Storar (JS)	Peter Linford (PL)
Dave Bennett Bull (DBB)	Val Schneider (VS)
Margret Pugsley (MP)	Paul Rowe (PR)
Suhail Hashmi (SH)	Kevin Butt (KBu)
Ade Aderogba MBE (AA)	

### **Also in Attendance:**

Gill Moy: (GM)	Director of Housing Services
Amanda Schofield (AS)	Director Strategy & Partnerships
Sue Taylor (STa)	Assistant Director Housing Services
Carole Donnelly (CD)	Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement Manager
Janet Glass (JG)	Head of Business Improvement & Development
Andrew Filer (AF)	Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement Officer

### **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Chris Langstaff, Alan Hoban, Alison Birch, Mrs Anderson and Lynn Mitchell.

### **1. Minutes of last meeting 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009 / matters arising**

- 1.1 RL missing from names of attendees. AF has now amended the minutes accordingly.
- 1.2 No other matters arising from the last meeting. The minutes were duly signed off as a true record of the meeting.
- 1.3 CD requested volunteers from the floor to put themselves forward to help with the review of the Choice Based Lettings policies and procedures. VS and MP volunteered. CD to talk to them outside of the meeting.

- 1.4 JE advised the group that NCH have been short listed for a TPAS award for Best Practice in Youth Involvement. The ceremony is being held on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

## **2 Tenant Involvement review**

- 2.1 For those that did not attend the presentation is enclosed.
- 2.2 AS started the discussion relating to the 'compact' review looking at the vision from NCH, where NCH currently are, looking at the key issues surrounding the new Tenant Service Authority (TSA) approach to tenant scrutiny, and how NCH need to adapt for the future.
- 2.3 CD has started up a working group several months ago to start this discussion, and had asked AS to bring the findings so far to this meeting for wider discussion.
- 2.4 EP requested members receive copies of the new TSA regulations when they are released in March. This was agreed.
- 2.5 The group agreed with the strengths and issues highlighted, with JS adding that it fully encapsulates where the working group has got so far. One of the main issues discussed is the value for money of holding so many meetings, and the need for them to be meaningful and are outcome based rather than being 'talking shops' as some of them are.
- 2.6 CT suggested producing a protocol card for tenant / leaseholders representatives to give to others advising of different actions to take should they have any complaints or concerns.
- 2.7 It was raised that leaseholders were not mentioned. NCH have raised this with the TSA, and feel this should not be the case, so will continue to involve and consult with leaseholders as they do now.
- 2.8 Another large issue discussed is the inconsistency of feedback received, with CJ adding that tenants and leaseholders need to play a bit part in ensuring staff are accountable for giving the feedback requested. JG added communication is vital in the process and there is sometimes a breakdown in the 2-way information exchange up and down the involvement structure which needs to improve. JH raised the question whether the problem with feedback not being given is due to staff just not doing the work, not having time to do it, or a whether it is an issues with NCH as a whole. AS replied that it is possible a staff issue with a lack of time to get the information due to attending a large number of meetings, but the issue could also lie with confusion over who is responsible to resolve it (ie NCH or another partner organisation). This highlights the fact that the forums and panels are there to scrutinise NCH on wider issues than personal problems, but not necessarily currently used in that way.
- 2.9 VS suggested publicising details of actions / outcomes from meetings to give feedback on meetings. KBu added that this would be a good way for information to be exchange between groups.

- 2.10 It was discussed that there is also an inconsistency in the standard of the various forums / panels, as some do challenge, rectify issues and make change, but increasing the capacity of groups and improving them won't be able to happen over night, so patience is required.
- 2.11 There was a general feeling that involvement has come a long way in the last couple of years, with tenants and leaseholders now feeling that it is a true partnership, but there is still room for improvement. GM added that she felt NCH could be scrutinised further by tenants and leaseholders. CJ agreed that involvement had come a long way, and she was now proud to be a volunteer with NCH.
- 2.12 The TSA taking over as the unifying body is very important as it will bring about more consistency not only within NCH, but with all housing providers across the country. NCH have consulted and involved tenants and leaseholders through all of the 'conversations' that have been held through the process of the TSA taking over. A full response to the last consultation was submitted after the event NCH held in January. A copy of this response will be sent out with the minutes. AS added that herself and Chris Langstaff had recently had a meeting with Anthony Mayer (Chair of the TSA), and given him direct personal response, especially relating to the exclusion of leaseholders.
- 2.13 As NCH has been rated as a 2 star organisation with excellent prospects for improvement, it is unlikely that we will be inspected in the first round of inspections, as the TSA are targeting the worst performers first. It is also NCC that will be deemed responsible for any problems as they are still classed as the landlords. This also was raised at the meeting with Anthony Mayer, with NCH suggesting the TSA should also look at the governance of the ALMO as well as the local authority. AS added that NCH need to ensure our own Board fits in to the TSA governance criteria in case there are any issues raised in the future.
- 2.14 Equality and diversity is a theme which runs through all six standards identified. Scrutiny by tenants and leaseholders, partnership working and resolving issues first time are the key points to take on board. It has also previously been suggested to invite a local National Tenant Voice representative to come along to the next meeting.
- 2.15 JG continued that a self-assessment document needs to be submitted by NCH in October showing how we meet the national standards. Another big project that needs to be done is to look at local standards. There is no definition of 'local' from the TSA, so we can make our own decision. AS has already been in discussion with Chief Executives from other housing providers across the city to ensure partnership working is used with whole communities to develop these standards.
- 2.16 It was again re-iterated that leaseholders will be fully involved as NCH have committed to do this. AA advised that the National Federation of ALMOs is also pushing for the TSA to include leaseholders.
- 2.17 MP advised that there are already partnership groups up and running (Local Action Groups) that NCH could learn from.

- 2.18 DBB carried on to say that this is a huge agenda, and too big for one group to deal with. He suggested it was broken down in to 'bite sized' segments for different groups to dissect so they can be more effective and focussed. AS agreed this, and most of the standards would fit in to the group structure we currently have.
- 2.19 KB asked how much clout the TSA actually have. It was confirmed the TSA could take over an organisation or install new management if it was felt necessary. They can also carry out short-notice inspections (24 hours notice). The TSA also invite complaints directly from tenants, ensuring NCH are held to account. A discussion took place whether people may take complaints to the TSA if they don't get the answer they want from NCH. It was confirmed this would not happen, the official route to the Ombudsman would be used as it is now. CT added that a clear protocol needs to be in place so any issues are channelled through NCH rather than going directly to the TSA.
- 2.20 STh raised an issue that she had been told a leaseholder would be charged £500 by the TSA if they raised a query. It was advised this is not correct. The Leasehold Valuation Tribunal does however make this charge if a dispute is taken on by them.
- 2.21 In conclusion, the way forward following this discussion would be to review the service fully, ensure involvement is embedded in all services areas (not just the involvement team) and to research best practice and learn from others, to make certain there is effective local engagement across Nottingham. The Board have recently changed the way it works, and the rest of the involvement structure needs to adapt so that there are still good links between them. At the most recent Involvement review group it was decided to concentrate on local involvement with initial discussions with the Chairs of local groups to be help shortly. If any one else would like to join this working group, please contact CD.
- 2.22 CJ raised the question about how Housing Aid fitted in to the TSA. AS will clarify and feedback to the group at the next meeting.
- 2.23 JE and JS added that these are exciting times ahead, but responsibility and commitment is required to take this forward, as need to remember that it is the 'big picture' being looked at, and not used for personal issues.

### **3. Any other business**

- 3.1 AS advised that the National Federation of ALMOs has advertised its latest awards, and NCH are looking for any suggestions nominations. None were given at the meeting.
- 3.2 CJ asked whether she and STh could have a meeting with NCH management about how to take the Area 6 Panel forward. GM agreed and will discuss outside of the meeting.
- 3.3 CD reminded everyone of the Annual Conference on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March. Everyone is welcome. Invite letters have gone out this week, so please return replies before Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March to avoid disappointment.

**Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 30th June 2010

**SIGNED..... DATE.....**  
**(Chair of TLC)**

**SIGNED..... DATE.....**  
**(Chair of the Board)**