

# Minutes



## Tenant and Leaseholder Congress

### Minutes

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010 6.00pm – 8pm

Boardroom, Hounds Gate

#### Present: -

Jean England, Chair (JE)  
Sue Stevenson (SS)  
Ennis Peck (EP)  
John Riley (JR)  
Jacinth Hall (JH)  
Alison Thorpe (AT)  
Lynn Mitchell (LM)  
Ade Aderogba MBE (AA)  
Linda Kerry (LK)  
Lindford Stevens (LS)

Janet Storar (JS)  
Maria Hemphill (MH)  
Robert Morrell (RM)  
Sheila Thwaites (ST)  
Clive Thorpe (CT)  
Andy Reed (AR)  
Ruth Haywood (RH)  
Janet Storar (JS)  
Roy Lawson (RS)  
Malcolm Wood (MW)

#### NCH: -

Amanda Schofield  
Carole Donnelly (CD)  
Gill Moy (GM)  
Cheryll Rawling (CR)  
Mark Sheldon (MS)  
Peter Thomas (PT)  
Simon Temporal (ST)

#### Apologies: -

Cynthia James, Kevin Butt, Kath Biddle, Kate Bowley

#### Action

### **1.0 Welcome, Introductions, Apologies and Matters Arising**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions and apologies were made.

### **2.0 Board Update**

The Board are undertaking a review exercise of capabilities and skills and a report is being prepared to go to the Board

meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June. This is an open meeting and members of the TLC are asked to attend. The meeting starts at 5.30pm. The Equality and Diversity Awards are to be presented at the meeting. Mike Bent has agreed to sponsor next years Diversity week and prizes.

### **3.0 Tenancy and Estate Management Update/Briefing**

- 3.1 GM reported that the staff consultation period on the closure of rent offices and the cessation of the rent collection service has now finished. The recommendation is going to the Board in June to be ratified. There will be a phased closure of offices. Cash will still be collected at the Clifton Cornerstone, Mary Potter Centre and Bulwell Housing Office. Staff have been asked to identify any tenants that may have support needs as a result of ending cash collection. Every tenant who is using the service will have had an individual visit by the end of July to see how we can provide additional support. The finance and Audit Commission will be monitoring the office closures and will report to the board if we have got it wrong. The Board is conscious of the concerns but the Company has to be efficient and give value for money.
- 3.2 An away day on 30<sup>th</sup> June has been arranged to look at the future role of the Housing Patch Managers (HPM's), aiming to give them a much more clearly defined role. We need to engage with staff, talk to them and get them to think about what their role should be in the future, this is a new way of change management. Tenants may then be asked to talk to the HPM's about what they think the role should be. The role can then be publicised in the 'News' – This is your role, this is what you can achieve.
- 3.3 NCH Head Office, accommodation costs are being received from Nottingham City Council Work is underway on a ten year business plan, This will be bought back to future meetings. The journey from two to three stars is a difficult one and cultural changes need to be bought to staff and tenants. The Rents Team being bought together at Houndsgate is impacting on their performance and the arrears reduction has increased.
- 3.4 Customer Service Centre blueprint is nearing completion and the report will be sent to the Board and the Business Development Committee. A working group of Tenants could be set up to look at the Service Centre and the Tenants Resource Centre.
- 3.5 There has been no word on decent homes funding following

the change of Government. Stonebridge may be affected, supporting people funding is a key element.

- 3.6 The Board are very keen on becoming a three star accreditation organisation. It is crucial to have a strong Directive and to have tenants on board.
- 3.7 Future of the ALMO. The meeting was very positive. One of the things discussed was the freeing up of NCH to enable us to get grants.
- 3.8 MW wants to make sure that tenants feel secure that NCH are doing everything they can to protect the services. The TLC should have a voice on campaigning on issues.
- 3.9 Nottingham City Council is very confident in developing its relationship with NCH. It is important that the tenants movement understand what is happening and develop its voice in relation to the agenda. There is no risk to NCH, it cannot be disbanded because it was voted in by tenants. We must ensure that we give value for money and that tenants are satisfied.
- 3.10 TPAS conference, only one person put their name forwards. CJ, ST and MH will be attending.

#### **4.0 Aspley Pilot**

- 4.1 AA stated that there was no update on the pilot. The steering group have agreed six themes; Voids, ASB (including attention on enviro-crime), Hedges, Tenant Involvement and
- 4.2 Details of the pilot need to be taken to Area 3 Panel.

#### **5.0 Void Updates**

- 5.1 GM reported performance on voids as 266 as of today.
- 5.2 Refusal rates have dropped significantly and GM stated that previously the refusal rate was 41%, it is now 28%.
- 5.3 Need to concentrate now on getting properties let quicker.
- 5.4 NCH are now also responsible for non-lettable voids. MW asked if 15 Denton Green had been returned to the housing stock and requested a response to the Board within one week.

GM

## **6.0 3C's Year end summary presentations and questions**

- 6.1 Mark Sheldon gave an overview of the three C's process.
- 6.2 There has been a 10% decrease in stage 1 complaints however there has been a 22% increase in stage 2. There are only 4 complaints at stage 3 which is a drop of 60%.
- 6.3 Repairs received the highest number of complaints but the number has decreased by 20% in one year,
- 6.4 SWM, the level of complaint has gone up but the program has increased.
- 6.5 The target is 97% which was just missed in 09/10 and MS is working with service heads to ensure 100% compliant.
- 6.6 Compliments have risen. The 3'C's are promoted through the 'NEWS', website and housing offices. GM to ask the communications group to look at how we can promote the 3'C's better. GM
- 6.7 No complaints have been upheld by the ombudsman. NCH are not guilty of mal administration. Half the complaints that went to the ombudsman did not follow the correct complaints procedure.
- 6.8 NCH are developing a value for money (VFM) culture. MS is working with Company Managers and groups on a quarterly basis to identify complaints patterns and also sharing best practice and bench marking with other organisations. 3'C's is a standard agenda item at team meetings. We are trying to get it right. AS stated that we have a VFM strategy. There are also efficiency savings through procurement practices that tenants have been involved in.
- 6.9 NCH are looking at benchmarking through Housemark.
- 6.10 We are about to be going into an annual planning cycle with an internal commitment to savings of 20%. There is a VFM culture across the organisation. Business improvement and Development are working with all service areas.
- 6.11 If we get something wrong we are trying to correct it as quickly as possible, therefore paying out smaller amounts of compensation. There is a £14,000 underspend in compensation payouts. GM stated that the compensation payments demonstrate being more effective.
- 6.12 The procurement group on SWM saved over £7 million.

- 6.13 AS said that we must examine trends within the diversity groups.
- 6.14 It was stated that the LIFT offices do not have leaflets and boxes. GM to check. MS said the leaflets have been redesigned. GM
- 6.15 It was suggested that we mystery shop the 3'C's (put a complaint in a box). MS to contact Phil Saunders to arrange. MS
- 6.16 A text number is to be introduced this year, it will be publicised via the newsletter, leaflets and website.

## **7.0 Void rechargeable repairs**

- 7.1 A presentation was given by ST and PT and both came to the meeting to get the opinions of The TLC.
- 7.2 ST was asked about unauthorised alterations. He stated that NCH are trying to get better at pre-termination visits. We need to get the balance of action taken better. We arranging joint visits with property services surveyors.
- 7.3 The question was asked; how far do we go with re-charging?, it is possible that some tenants will abandon their properties if a re-charge is too high. Could there be an in-house handy man service. St stated that he will look into this to see if it is plausible and value for money, things to be taken into account are; if the workmen are doing this, who is doing the responsive repairs and there would need to be a budget. If tenants fail to pay for this service it will become another bad debt.
- 7.4 Forum members wanted to know if new tenants were told categorically that they would be re-charged. ST stated that it was a condition of their tenancy agreement. Tenants have to ask permission to carry out any alterations.
- 7.5 ST was asked if NCH could be realistic when ripping out and replacing improvements, he stated that this is being addressed by the team at the moment. Consultation will be carried out. The policy will need to go to the TEM Forum and be signed off by the operational committee. NCH need to sort out the legalities of leaving alterations in properties and let people know they are going to do it.

## **8.0 Involvement Review update/briefing**

- 8.1 A group of Tenants and Board representatives are overseeing the revue. It is being driven by TSA requirements and is about taking the organisation to the next level of Tenant Involvement. It is all encompassing and will be looking at the critique of tenant involvement, building capacity, tenant scrutiny, local engagement and partnership working. The revue is about embedding practices throughout the Company. It is crucial that we modernise the current system. We need to strengthen Area Panels. Area Panels have a great deal to offer. There needs to be synergy with Nottingham City Homes and Nottingham City Council. The TLC were asked not to have closed minds regarding abolishing Ad Hoc committees that do not have outcomes.
- 8.2 The next step is to submit (See Carole) in October.
- 8.3 The sounding board will be coming out to do lots of consultation. There could be a half day event in July and again in August. The next meeting is possible 10<sup>th</sup> June.

## **9.0 Board recruitment update**

- 9.1 If you want to go on the Board please put your names forward.

## **10.0 Any Other Business**

No other business

## **11.0 Dates of Next Meetings**

TLC/Board 30<sup>th</sup> June