



North Area Forum Minutes

Minutes of Meeting:

Date: 15 March 2011

Time: 10.30am

Venue: Tenant's and Resident's Resource Centre

Present:

Keith Jobson	Secretary Middlegate TARA, and Vice-Chair SJC
Cllr Tony Sockett	Bentley Ward
Mick Werritt	SLHD Director of Property Services
Helen Kilshaw	SLHD Senior Performance Analyst
Ian Bateman	SLHD Neighbourhood Manager
Tracy Ager	SLHD Team Leader – Area Based Services, North
Vivien Binks	SLHD Community Engagement Officer
Laura Greenwood	Scrutiny Panel
Norman Hayes	Scrutiny Panel
Alan Sherratt	Scrutiny Panel
Ernie Plastow	Model Village TARA, Treasurer SJC
Tim Bartlett	Redmond Community TARA
Rose Lambert	Chair Woodlands New Estate TARA
Mary Paton	Woodlands New Estate TARA
P Turner	Woodlands New Estate TARA
Ann Pawson	Chair Highfields TARA
Alex Riggans	Highfields TARA

Apologies:

Judith Jones	Director Customer Services
Margaret Bates	Treasurer Homestead TARA
Bernadette James	Secretary Homestead TARA
Frank Protheroe	Committee Homestead TARA
Sue Wray	Chair Redmond TARA
Maureen Tennyson	Scrutiny Panel

Item No	Item	Action
1.	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <p>Keith welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending</p>	
2.	<p><u>Health and Safety</u></p> <p>Keith advised the members of the meeting that in the case of fire, the fire exits were located to the rear of where he was seated or through the double doors, through the kitchen (Please mind the step as it is steep)</p> <p>The toilet facilities are located through the double doors and straight through the door at the end of the office</p>	

3.	<p><u>Minutes Accuracy</u></p> <p>Tim Bartlett requested Minutes to be sent to all attendees prior to the Forum meetings. Keith replied that Minutes would only be sent to Secretaries of each TARA. VB to action.</p> <p>Ian Bateman advised that his comments at the last meeting had been omitted, will forward correct text to VB for inclusion.</p> <p>Item 6 should have been headed “Directors Report – Paul Lightfoot”, Paul delivered the Report as Mike Werritt had sent Apologies. VB to amend.</p> <p>Apart from the above, Minutes were passed as a true and accurate record by Rosemary Lambert and Alex Riggans.</p>	<p>VB</p> <p>IB VB</p> <p>VB</p>
4.	<p><u>Matters Arising from Last Meeting</u></p> <p>Page 2 Performance Indicators – Helen Kilshaw Helen had previously asked the members of the meeting to look at what they wanted to feature in future performance indicators, and how the information can be best presented. Helen has not yet received any feedback, therefore will continue with current format.</p> <p>Page 3 Spare Land, 47 – 49 Lawn Avenue Mary Paton had previously enquired whether the spare land, 47 – 49 Lawn Avenue could be allocated to potential housing use. Mick Werritt to investigate.</p> <p>Page 3 Empty Flats in Woodlands View Ernie Plastow had enquired about future plans for the empty flats in Woodlands View. Ian Bateman had replied that the sheltered scheme was under review, and the flats could become a long-term void until a decision was made by DMBC. Tim Bartlett then enquired whether this block of properties could be sold to a private developer, however Ian explained that not all of the flats are empty, and this proposition would involve decanting tenants. Mick Werritt to report to the North Forum in next few weeks.</p> <p>Page 4 Redmond TARA Tim Bartlett reported that the TARA is placing emphasis on the younger elements of the community, and has received £10,000 Lottery Funding to deliver a Life Skills course in association with Adwick Fire Brigade. Keith congratulated Redmond on winning Best Achieving TARA Award at DFTRA AGM.</p> <p>Page 4 Woodlands TARA Ian Bateman reported that a Community Noticeboard would be sited on the Oval. Ian to action.</p>	<p>MW</p> <p>MW</p> <p>IB</p>

5.	<p><u>Performance Indicators – Helen Kilshaw</u></p> <p>Helen provided each member of the meeting with a copy of the performance indicators for January 2011. She explained that figures for February 2011 would be sent to EMT later that day, and then be available for dissemination.</p> <p>Ian Bateman advised that low Anti-social behaviour figures reflected Neighbourhood Alliance visits and issues addressed by Estates Officers and Estate Walks.</p> <p>Helen reported that Repairs indicators had spiked at the end of 2010 and beginning of 2011, due to adverse weather conditions. Mick Werritt added that SLHD had asked tenants' permission to re-arrange appointments of routine Repairs in order to address the emergencies caused by very low temperatures and snow. Gas Servicing was also very low in January, partially due to the adverse weather and No Access. SLHD do work closely with Estates to minimise issues of No Access, and can act on repeat cases.</p> <p>Mary Paton queried the length of time to re-let vacant homes. Mick Werritt explained that re-let times vary significantly between properties, due to a variety of factors including major works such as re-wiring, or asbestos surveys required.</p> <p>Helen Kilshaw highlighted the borough figure for Rent Arrears of former customers. She suggested providing a breakdown for the North area, to compare with the boroughwide figures.</p>	HS
6.	<p><u>Managers Report – Ian Bateman</u></p> <p>Tim Bartlett reported that Redmond Community Hall had been broken into, this had been reported to Police, and then the thieves had returned the following week to break in again. Ian Bateman commented that SLHD are jointly working with the Police and DMBC to carry out patrols and roll out the Stay Safe scheme. SLHD Estates staff also organise verification visits and work in partnership on the Rolling Wagon, which is now going to operate on a recycling basis. Wayne Goodwin from the Police is providing the programme for future Neighbourhood Alliance initiatives.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Directors Report – Mick Werritt</u></p> <p>Mick Werritt advised that SLHD are organising Voluntary Redundancies, in line with Government cutbacks. The business is now realigning to ensure delivery of frontline services. The Decency budget for this year has been cut from £33.5M to £12.9M, and SLHD had expected £78M to complete the rest of the Decency scheme, but have currently been offered £49M. The organisation is looking at further efficiencies, and some of the money saved will be allocated to the Decent Homes Programme. However, as a result of these cutbacks, SLHD are considering six options on how to proceed with delivering Decency to the rest of the housing stock, while still aspiring to the Doncaster Decency Standard, and will be carrying out Consultation in the near future.</p>	

	<p>Tim Bartlett commented that he had recently received his Council Tax bill from DMBC, and was surprised that there had been no increase, given the current economic climate. Mick replied that any increase in Council Tax would not impact on funding for SLHD services. Cllr Tony Sockett further explained that there is currently a Government edict stating that Local Authorities will not increase Council Tax this year. This Government freeze anticipates additional transitional funding being available. However, Local Authorities have taken massive cuts over the last 25 year resulting in services being cut back. The new Localism Bill is giving responsibility to third sector organisations without relevant support.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Scrutiny Panel Laura Greenwood introduced herself as Chair of the Scrutiny Panel. This group has been set up to independently analyse SLHD services and processes. The Scrutiny Panel are currently working on their first project, with each member assessing a different area of Choice Based Lettings, and then they will jointly produce a Report on this service area. However, there are currently only four members, resulting in their workload being quite intense. This project should be completed by the end of April. It is then hoped that more members will be recruited to the Scrutiny Panel at this time, ideally aiming for a maximum of twelve members. Fliers have been sent out to advertise the vacancies and Laura requested that this information be relayed back to all TARAs and TCs.</p> <p>Estate Improvement Fund Community Skips – 23 TARAs have taken up the initiative. Skips have been supplied to all applicants, and any money left over has been returned to the SLHD Estate Improvement Fund. Ernie Plastow reported that Model Village TARA had a Community Skip recently but no tenants used it – therefore the Committee collected rubbish all morning on their trailer and still filled the Skip by midday. Rosemary Lambert added that Woodlands New Estate TARA almost filled a Skip this year despite no leafleting. Tim Bartlett told the meeting that enterprising youngsters at Redmond TARA had charged people 50p to collect rubbish for the Community Skip. Alan Sherratt had collected rubbish from his neighbour, but been advised that people can only deposit their own items in Skips. He suggested that there should be sensible Guidelines that enable people to help their neighbour.</p> <p>Repairs Ernie Plastow reported a complaint arising from an individual Repair. Anne Pawson delivered a compliment to Mick Werritt on excellent work carried out on a previous report. Mick Werritt reminded everyone that all feedback is very important to SLHD, both complaints and compliments to be sent to Louise Cameron at St Leger Court.</p> <p>Doncaster Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations Keith Jobson explained that the Grant Funding to the Federation had finished last year. Since then, they had relied on raising money through catering and room hire at the Tenants Resource Centre. Tim Bartlett proposed writing to David Cameron and Nick Clegg</p>	

	<p>regarding this issue. Cllr Tony Sockett considered that the Federation volunteers were part of the Big Society, and gave their time because they cared – it was most unfortunate that third sector Grant Funding was very limited at this moment in time. He suggested the group apply for a North Doncaster Development Trust MicroGrant.</p> <p>Keith continued that he anticipated Government cutbacks to result in a reduction to 30% of last years' income from room rental and catering, as organisations reduce the number of meetings held and the provision of food. He has made representation to DMBC that if the Federation folds, this will reduce the avenues of feedback from independent views across the community. DFTRA have only asked for a nominal amount to ensure that the Federation survives in the current economic climate, and volunteers are only paid minimal expenses and lunch allowance. As yet, Keith has not received a reply.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Date & Time of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Tuesday 17 May 2011 Venue : Circuit House, Circuit Road, Woodlands</p>	