

Minutes of the South West Forum Meeting
30 April 2007, 10.00 am
The Haywood Room

Present:

Sue Wilkinson	Chair, SJC, Broomhouse Estate TARA
Lyn Ralph	SJC, Denaby Central TC
Frank Knapton	SJC, Morton and Chaucer TARA
Mavis Williams	SJC
Eddie Orton	Balby Littlemoor TARA
Alan Hornsby	Balby Littlemoor TARA
Maureen Tennison	Edlington Royal TARA
Jim Tierney	Craganour TARA
Colin Leonard	SJC, The Oval TARA
Ann Leonard	The Oval TARA
Averil Redsull	Coronation Gardens
Lynn Chamberlain	CLO (Minute taker)
Helen Kilshaw	Performance Monitoring Manager

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Linda Teasdale and Mike Noble.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

Lyn Ralph said with regard to the second paragraph of Minute 6, the name had been chosen for the new Choice Based Lettings scheme and she would check this and let the next meeting know the name chosen.

Discussion took place about the high proportion of people with rent arrears. Alan Hornsby asked if there were any figures for people who received Housing Benefit. Lyn Ralph said she would find out the figures, but she thought it was about 60%. It was felt that a check should be made on peoples rent paying pattern to see if they suddenly stopped, then someone should visit them before a letter was sent to see if there was any reason why the arrears had occurred. Lyn thought that an officer should visit two weeks after they had moved in to check that everything was all right and to get in touch if they experienced problems paying their rent. A suggestion was made that a visit to schools could be made to try to educate school leavers regarding financial matters and the importance of paying their rent etc. Lyn Ralph explained that this was being looked at with the Credit Union to give talks about how to avoid debt.

5. Performance Monitoring

Helen Kilshaw, the Performance Monitoring Manager, said that she would come to each Forum meeting to give the performance figures. Helen explained that the performance figures were kept in a file in the Haywood Room and the figures would be regularly updated.

Helen went through the performance figures and explained that they were figures for the borough, but she would bring to the next meeting the figures for the South West area.

The question was asked if there were any figures regarding how many repairs had been reported through the wardens. Helen said she would try to find this out, but the fact that it was a warden reporting a repair may not be actually recorded.

Lyn Ralph requested that Helen find out how many people were on Housing Benefit and Helen said she would bring this to the next meeting, but suggested that Dave Harrison, the Rent Collection and Policy Manager be asked to a future meeting as he could answer questions regarding rent.

The point was made regarding repairs that time and money was wasted when inspectors came out to a job when they knew what the repair was and then when they came to do the job they could not finish it as another workmen was required to do it. Lyn said she would e-mail Paul Lightfoot and Rob Chapple to make this point.

Discussion took place again regarding the need to be proactive in preventing rent arrears accruing. Lyn explained that efforts were made; in fact, some of the rent officers took work mobile phones home and rang people on an evening to try and address the problems concerned with arrears. Lyn also thought that SLH were looking into using a debt collection agency to manage the arrears.

6. Chair's Report

The Chair said there was nothing to report at the moment, the outcome of the Inspection would be brought to the next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Discussion took place regarding the collection of refuse bins. Maureen Tennison said that the road sweeping in Edlington was inconsistent. Lyn suggested that Maureen write a letter on their TARA letter paper, to Jane Miller from the Safer, Stronger, Sustainable Communities team, with a copy to Martin Winter and the Doncaster Federation of TARA's.

Maureen also raised the problem of her neighbour's fence, which had been neglected and had now been kicked down allowing anyone to gain access through the garden. An officer from the Conisbrough office was aware of this and was going to deal with it, but nothing had happened. Lyn said that she would chase this up by e-mail.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be Monday, 18 June 2007 at 10.00am in the Haywood Room.