

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting: Members' Forum
 Date: Thursday 16 May 2019
 Time: 6:15pm – 8:30pm
 Venue: Board Room, Soha Housing

Present

Aurora Acone	Val Kir
Trevor Brewerton	Richard Mandunya
Jennifer Britton	Gerald Prior
Margaret Buckell	Paul Revell
Vanessa Churchward	John Smelt
Bertie Doy	Sue Such
Sean Godfrey	David Wilkins
Peter Haynes	Deborah Wills

Also in attendance

Kate Wareing, Chief Executive
 Maureen Adams, Director of Services & Communities
 Andrea Bain, Resident Engagement
 Chelsea Sleep, Resident Engagement Advisor

Observers

Edwina Lamond, Don Harrison, Carole Burchett

1 Election of Chair of the Members' Forum

Kate chaired the meeting before ratifying the elections. She thanked Val and Edwina for their work in leading the forum. Kate then announced Trevor has been elected as Chair and Vanessa as Vice Chair.

2 Election of Vice Chair of the Members' Forum

Vanessa was elected as Vice Chair.

3 Election of Co-optees

Trevor then began to chair the meeting. The Forum voted to elect Edwina and Vic as co-optees. Trevor passed on Vic's apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting.

4 Apologies for absence

Richard Mandunya , Trish Langford, Margaret Buckell

Trevor then welcomed each new member as they introduced themselves.

5 Approval of Minutes

The Forum approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 March 2019.

6 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting held on 21 March 2019.

7 Chief Executives Update

Kate presented the highlights of Soha's performance from the last year (2018/19).

She explained that Soha it had experienced a good year both in terms of operational and financial performance. One area which required attention was the length in time taken to complete non urgent repairs. The contractor delays over the summer have now been resolved and the service is now in line with targets but will remain an area to monitor.

It took longer to re-let empty homes (voids) last year. The target was 18 days however voids being completed in 25 days due to the increase in lettings with more homes being let, creating more voids.

Arrears at year end were at 2.4%%, a great performance considering the role out of Universal Credit. It is better than the previous year and benchmarks well with other Housing Associations

Kate t presented the key financial outturn data.

Soha received £38m of income last year as expected. Soha is expected to spend £20.8m but actually spent £20.5 million. In addition Soha paid £10.1mi back in interest; this was more than budgeted due to having built properties quicker than expected. The final surplus was £7.4 million with additional income received from Shared Ownership sales, staircasing sales, Right to buy sales and Right to acquire sales.

Kate touched on Membership and explained it has been an important focus for Soha. There are currently 569 members today. She stressed that members receive the same service as residents who are not members. The main difference is in the role of members and the accountability of Board to members.

External updates

- Housing market downturn – this means there is a decrease in Shared Ownership purchases, this impacts Soha's business plan. Soha are planning for house prices not to rise.
- Lots of interest in resident involvement – it is likely there will be a new regulator looking at consumer standards.

- Changes to rights of people who are renting from private landlords - the Government is giving more security to those in private sector.

Internal updates

- New home for Resident Involvement team and Communications team – moving to Maureen’s directorate. This is to share the responsibility between directors. Kate confirmed she will remain very involved in resident engagement. This means that Jackie, Andrea, Chelsea have new roles. Kate asked the Forum for their approval of a new job title for Maureen – Director of Services and Communities. The Forum liked the suggested title and approved.
- The Independent living team have been accredited outstanding for how they manage older person’s accommodation by the Centre for Housing Studies. They were also shortlisted for a national UKHA award and whilst they didn’t win, being short listed was phenomenal in a strong field.
- Some involved residents joined the Board Away Day, they looked at governance.

Quick updates: what’s coming next?

Kate explained what Soha would like the Forum to be involved in

- Growing membership and engaging residents as we develop our plans for the future
- Services and Communities strategy – September 2019
- Asset management strategy – January 2020
- Mobile working for staff
- Soha’s new office
- New branding – new logo, involvement will be required.

Kate then asked the Forum to let us know what they would like to be involved in.

Bertie asked about staff salary, Kate explained the salaries are benchmarked against responsibility.

Vanessa asked if Forum should take it in turns to observe a Board Meeting. Kate confirmed that two members are always welcome.

AOB: Review of Policies & Strategies

Kate explained she would like to streamline the way Forum look at policies and strategies. Kate proposed to change the order so policies and strategies to go to Forum then either SMT or Board. Board will decide which they would like to see and which they would like to delegate to SMT (Senior Management Team). Forum will now only receive customer facing policies and strategies. The paper shows a suggestion of who approves what. There is always the option for Forum to see whatever they like.

Debbie suggested leads indicated by initials Kate Wareing. ,

8 Services Strategy

Maureen explained that Soha were developing a new Services Strategy and before many drafting of the strategy she wanted ask the Forum for their views on which services they valued and which Soha could develop. She consulted them on the following:

- Which services matter?
- Of those services, which matter to which groups of people and why?
- Where should we deliver services e.g. in which localities?

She noted that we would want to include scrutiny findings.

She then presented Soha's standard services, where they are located, services that have been improved by residents input and new services.

Val asked if this was similar to the feedback at the Thank You Event (Estates budget and community investment). Gerald commented that he and Bertie had met with Jackie to discuss what the Estates budget will be used for following on from this consultation and Maureen confirmed that would feed into the strategy also..

Vanessa noted there are bungalows boarded up in her area; she suggested putting a sign up to inform the public about what is happening. Maureen agreed this was a good idea.

Maureen asked if building more Extra Care Schemes was still important. The Forum thought this was a good idea. She then discussed mobile working for staff so that they can access information on visits through connected devices, The Forum thought this was also a good idea. Maureen then reminded them that at previous events they had mentioned having intergenerational activities. Again the Forum liked this idea. Deborah commented she had worked with young people helping elderly people who had dementia. Maureen confirmed she would look into this as an idea through the Dementia Project group Deb then proposed something for new mums who can be isolated.

Maureen thanks the Forum for this feedback and asked the Forum to let her know if they have any more suggestions

9 Portfolio Holders

Chelsea explained that portfolio holders do not have to be members. She asked whether the Forum were happy with their current portfolios, whether anyone wanted to change portfolios and what the best way to recruit the vacancies is. Chelsea informed the Forum that the Head of Housing suggested merging Housing Management, Rental Income and Welfare Reform into one Portfolio. The Forum approved. She then asked if the Forum would like a Portfolio in Shared Ownership, the Forum agreed to merge this portfolio with Legal & Leasehold Services.

The Forum discussed the portfolios and agreed who would take on which portfolio.

Resident Involvement – Edwina Lamond & Richard Mandunya

Customer Services – Carole Burchett & Deb Wills (new)

Housing Management, Rental Income & Welfare Reform – Victor Breach & Val Kir (new)

Responsive & Planned Maintenance – Trevor Brewerton & Don Harrison

Finance – Aurora Acone & Margaret Buckell

IT – John Smelt (new)

Legal, Leasehold & Shared Ownership – Richard Mandunya , Gerald Prior (new)

& Peter Haynes (new)
Design Champion – Sue Such (new)

Peter Haynes commented he was interested in Finance, Aurora confirmed she would like to continue as the Finance Portfolio Holder. Chelsea will check with Margaret whether she would like to continue.

Training – set up objectives & various managers and getting the relationship correct.

Environmental Champion - Kate explained this would involve Improving our environmental impact and looking at renewable energy.

Chelsea will circulate a new list of Portfolio Holders.

10 Resident Engagement Incentives & Exclusions Policy & Procedure

Andrea explained the main changes to the policy:

- changing the word tenant to resident
- more in line with board
- More reasonable as was very outdated – 7 years old
- makes people more accountable for their involvement

She explained DAAG & Seniors were consulted.

Andrea asked whether the Forum thought the incentive amounts were the right level? Val suggested the Chairs receiving a larger incentive than regular Forum members as they have bigger responsibility and have to attend meetings with staff before meetings.

Sue asked about how it affects benefits – in the form of vouchers, Maureen confirmed we would look into this.

The Forum discussed the policy and decided they wanted Forum, Scrutiny and Audit to receive the same amount. The Board remuneration is higher for Chairs and Vice Chairs, so Kate suggested this model for the Forum. The Forum agreed with this.

Andrea asked the Forum to let her know if they had any other suggestions.

11 Customer Services and Operations Balanced Scorecard Quarter 4

Maureen presented the Balanced Scorecard. She explained void relets were not on target as contractors had difficulty recruiting which resulted in a back log.. Rental income – value for money and rents is on target. Rent arrears are also on target this is because we worked closely with residents affected by the benefit cap, bedroom tax or Universal Credit.

Evictions have increased to 21 this last year with the majority due to rent arrears. Most in that category have had rent arrears for a long time. Eviction is a very last resort and residents and staff finalise evictions into this anonymously. Soha have

less evictions than many housing associations. The number of complaints received is also lower than most associations.

Maureen then went through the amber indicators on the Balanced Scorecard.

- Repairs – this is contractor based and due to the number of repairs being reported.
- Satisfaction of ASB – We are ensuring that people understand how we are resolving ASB. Gerald pointed out there was a substantial increase in the ASB cases. Maureen explained this is due to how we record ASB; we have split categories more finely where we may have combined ASB issues in a household in one category. We are seeing an increase in UWB (Unwelcome behaviour – low level e.g. parking issues) we have also seen an increase in drug related issues, cuckooing; this is when people from criminal backgrounds identify single often younger vulnerable people and use their homes as a base to live to conduct criminal activity. There is an increase in the area, please keep a lookout for r neighbours or anything suspicious.. Soha are working closely with the police on this matter.
- IT - we are still halfway through QL project
- Customer Services – We are not answering the calls at the rate the we would like to but we agreed with residents and portfolio holders that the quality of the call matters most. .

Deb asked whether you get a follow up letter if using the app to report a repair. Maureen confirmed a phone call is made to confirm an appointment time. Val asked if there are problems with Voids in sheltered housing. Maureen explained we are identifying those that are harder to let and seeing how we can improve them.

12 STAR Resident Satisfaction report

Maureen reported highest satisfaction was with rents and value for money. Haven't changed much – satisfaction with repairs and maintenance
Satisfaction with neighbourhoods and landlord services is high

Overall quality of home is slightly lower at now at 85% and listening to reviews and acting on them. Jas also reduced,

Peter asked why the numbers differ; Maureen explained we have asked MEL to increase their survey sample as numbers used are small..

Any other business

Gerald explained he has a summary of last year's expenditure for the minutes. He then explained what the budget is currently £7,500. He encouraged residents to apply for an improvement in their area, stressing that it is not for the individual person and must benefit the whole community.

Val commented that the seniors group t have asked for some things to be done which haven't been completed. Gerald explained an application form needs to be completed. Maureen confirmed she will check with Emma Langstaff.

Date of the next meeting

Co-Regulation Away Day - Saturday 15th June 2019

Next meeting - Thursday 11th July 2019

Signed..... **Date**.....

Chair of Tenants' Forum