



WESLO TENANT PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the above meeting held on Thursday 22 April 2010 Bathgate Office at 7.00pm

Present from Weslo: David McLaren, Housing Manager
Gillian McAllister, Assistant Housing Manager
Margaret Walker, Admin Officer
Susan Anderson, Estates Manager, Bo'ness
Donna Jack, Housing Officer, Bo'ness

Tenants: Andrew Sneddon, Tenant Director, Linlithgow
Eileen Stirling – Tenant Director, Bathgate
Janette Wallace – Tenant Director, Stoneyburn
Glen Mulligan - Fauldhouse
Jim Porter - Bathgate
Hugh Ruck – Livingston
Gordon Smith – Bo'ness
Colin Torrie - East Calder
Sybil Watt – Bo'ness

Action

1. Apologies for Absence

Alex Bow – Tenant Director, Bo'ness
Janette Wallace – Tenant Director, Stoneyburn
Evelyn Johnstone – Livingston Station

2. Introduction of Staff & Chair

David McLaren introduced Susan and Donna who will be representing the Estates Department over the next 12 months at committee meetings. The meeting was due to be chaired by Evelyn Johnstone however, as she was unable to attend David handed over to Colin Torrie, who had agreed to chair the meeting.

3. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2010 were approved by Sybil Watt and seconded by Andrew Sneddon.

4. Matters Arising

- a) **Tenant Handbook** - David advised that we will be obtaining quotes for the publication of the handbook. It is hoped that production will be complete by the end of the Summer.
- b) **Rents Incentive Scheme** – Discussions at Executive Team has resulted in this being postponed until late Autumn.

DMcL

5. Older Persons Advisory Project (OPAP)

Gillian advised that to date there have been 104 home visits securing accumulated benefits of £191,000 for tenants – £19,000 of this is made up of Housing Benefit.

Gillian informed the committee that the project has entered the Scottish Charity Awards 2010 for the 'Partnership Award'. The ceremony will take place on 10 June 2010 and the committee wish them success.

6. Garden Aid Scheme

David confirmed that the scheme was launched in West Lothian on 1 April. Weslo is now providing the service direct to its' eligible elderly or infirm tenants. Staff involved in the scheme will be available for other duties at the close of the growing season. David reported that tenant feedback to date has been very favourable.

7. Policy Procedure Reviews

a) Compulsory Participation by Owners in Maintenance Works

- Glenn asked for clarification on why owners are involved when improvements are proposed. David explained that there has to be 100% agreement by owners before improvement works can be undertaken. Procedure approved.

b) Former Tenant Debt Recovery

- David explained that this was a relatively new procedure that was put in place following an audit of our debt recovery processes. Procedure approved.

c) Tenant Allowances

- d) Gillian presented this procedure which details how staff should determine allowances payable at the start of tenancies or when there is work carried out to properties. Procedure approved.

e) Owner Occupiers Annual Invoicing

- David explained that while this procedure was primarily a Finance function, Housing Management staff are involved in dealing with many queries that arise from owners. Procedure approved.

f) Arrears Control

- David explained that the guiding principals of arrears control are early intervention, personal contact and realistic repayment arrangements. Procedure approved.

g) Annual Gas Service during House Sale Enquiry

- h) Margaret outlined that this procedure aims to ensure that all gas systems are maintained in a safe manner in the period leading up to the sale of a property. Procedure approved.

i) Care in the Community Statement

- David explained that this statement encapsulates what Weslo aims are in relation to Care in the Community projects. He also advised that there are several long standing projects operating throughout our stock. Statement approved.

j) Customer Care

Margaret presented the procedure and advised that we had recently received guidance from the Plain English Society relating to the proposed Tenant Handbook. We have developed a "style guide" from their report and this will be incorporated into the Customer Care Policy Procedure. Procedure approved.

Hugh and Jim commented that they had found the documents well presented and easy to read.

The Tenant Directors commented that they appreciated sight of the policies and being aware of the content will benefit them in carrying out their Board duties.

It was agreed that where a large number of lengthy documents were to be reviewed, we will issue them early to give committee members time to read them over in advance of the meeting.

8. Equalities Action Plan

David explained that Weslo's Equalities Action Group which is made up of staff and Tenant Directors – Janette and Eileen, are looking at equality issues as they may affect tenants. Census forms have been issued to all tenants and approximately 90% have been returned and the information received has been input into a database. We will be sending approximately 400 letters to those tenants who have identified a particular need need. The information will be used to ensure that we respond to those needs in an appropriate manner.

9. Business Plan

The content of the draft Business Plan 2010/11 was duly noted.

10. TPAS Annual Conference 2010

Margaret had circulated the TPAS Flyer for the 2010 Annual Conference & AGM that will be held at the Apex Hotel, Dundee between 8 & 10 October 2010. It was agreed that we would be sending Susan and Donna along with three tenant delegates. All those present expressed an interest in attending.

Margaret agreed to review previous attendance and contact the successful delegates once contact had been made with those not in attendance.

ALL

Post meeting note – Glenn will be on holiday therefore will not able to attend.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

David asked the committee to consider the time that the meeting is held. Weslo would be happy to provide sandwiches, tea and coffee if a day time or early evening time was suitable. Findings were :-

Jim – Only available after 7PM

Eileen – Only available on a Thursday but prefer evening

Sybil – Available Monday, Thursday or Friday

Colin – Available Monday - Thursday

Hugh – Available anytime

Glenn – Available Thursday & Friday

Andrew – Available Monday, Wed – Friday

Gordon – Available anytime

It would be appreciated if those not in attendance could contact Margaret Walker with their preference on receipt of the Minutes before any final decision is taken on the timing of the committee meetings.

All

Given that there were a number of Policy Procedures due for review in June, it was agreed that an additional meeting to discuss these would be scheduled for 10 or 17 June. Date to

be confirmed.

Post Meeting Note – meeting scheduled for 17 June.

Future Meetings

It has been suggested that it would be beneficial if the Tenant Participation Committee were to meet prior to the Board Meeting. This will mean a change to the previously agreed scheduled meeting. The new dates are: - Thursday 8 July, Thursday 30 September 2010 and Thursday 20 January 2011.

All

12. Any Other Business

David informed those present that Weslo had introduced a set of Corporate Operational Performance Indicators. He outlined the background to the development of the COPI's and explained how they will help staff to measure their performance.

Jim Porter mentioned that there were an increasing number of potholes in roads within the estates following the recent bad weather. David confirmed that the majority of the roads within our estates had been adopted by the local authorities for maintenance purposes and any defects should be passed to the Council.

Evelyn will chair the next meeting.

EJ

Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 17 June at 7pm in the Weslo Boardroom. (Policy discussion only)

Full Meeting - Thursday 8 July at 7pm in the Weslo Boardroom

Chair – Evelyn Johnstone