



WESLO TENANT PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the above meeting held on Thursday 8 July 2010 Bathgate Office at 7.00pm

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

Tenants: Eileen Stirling – Tenant Director, Bathgate
Evelyn Johnstone – Livingston Station
Glen Mulligan - Fauldhouse
Jim Porter - Bathgate
Hugh Ruck – Livingston
Kevin Symon - Uphall
Colin Torrie - East Calder
Sybil Watt – Bo'ness

1 Apologies for Absence

Action

David McLaren, Housing Manager
Donna Jack, Housing Officer, Bo'ness
Alex Bow – Tenant Director, Bo'ness
Janette Wallace – Tenant Director, Stoneyburn
Gordon Smith – Bo'ness

2 Introduction

Margaret invited Evelyn to chair the meeting.

3 Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June were approved by Sybil Watt and seconded by Eileen Stirling.

4 Matters Arising

- a) **Tenant Handbook** – Margaret advised that the draft is in the process of being proof read and it is envisaged that we will be able to pass a sample to the group before general issue to tenants.
- b) **Older Persons Advisory Project (OPAP)** – Gillian advised that there were no changes to the information provided at the previous meeting in June.
- c) **TPAS Annual Conference 2010** – Margaret proposed that Janette, Eileen and Jim attend the conference. Glenn advised that he would now be able to attend if a place was available. Post Meeting Note: Janette is unable to attend and arrangements have been made for Eileen, Jim and Glenn to attend.

DMcL

5 **Policy Procedure Reviews**

The procedures were issued prior to the meeting.

a) **Data Protection Policy**

Susan explained that this policy related to information pertaining to staff. There is further guidance in the Policy - Access to Personal Information – that provides staff with guidance on requests from tenants who wish to gain access to personal information held in manual files or electronically held data which is covered by the Data Protection Act.

Procedure approved.

b) **Ending Share of Joint Tenancy**

Gillian advised that this procedure gave staff guidance on what should happen a joint tenant wished to terminate their share of the tenancy. General discussion took place on what should happen when the parties involved were unable to reach agreement.

Procedure approved.

c) **Equal Opportunities**

Susan confirmed that this policy also related to information pertaining to staff. To illustrate the point, Susan explained that while interviewing candidates for a vacancy recently, she was unable to ask the applicants' age as this could have been construed as being discriminatory. There followed some discussion regarding the Appeals process.

Procedure approved.

d) **Further Education**

It was outlined by Margaret that our further education policy helps and supports staff to develop their skills, knowledge and qualifications.

Procedure approved

e) **Void Management Policy**

Gillian explained that we monitor void performance in a number of ways including Rent Loss and time taken to relet the property. It is in our interest to ensure that properties are empty for as short a period as possible and that the new tenants has access as soon as possible. Several committee members commented that they had received positive feedback from new tenants on the Tenant Welcome Pack.

Procedure approved

f) **Energy Performance Certificate**

Margaret explained that this procedure is relatively new and related to voids and to properties being sold.

Procedure approved.

6 Housing Benefit

DMCL

Margaret advised that West Lothian Council were in the process of introducing a new facility that would enable housing benefit applicants to complete applications online. There was a perception by some tenants in the satisfaction survey that there was a diminishment in the welfare benefit service. David McLaren is meeting West Lothian Council staff to explore this issue and they will be invited to the next TPC meeting.

7 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Margaret distributed a copy of the article that will appear in the July edition of Tenant News regarding the survey findings. The results are based on a similar response rate to that received in 2005 (39%) and in the majority of cases the satisfaction levels have improved. Margaret asked the groups for some feedback on what they thought about the survey. Eileen advised that she was contacted by The Knowledge Partnership in advance of the survey to trial the questionnaire. She commented on the layout and felt that there was some duplication. Glenn and Evelyn felt that the questions relating to personal income and expenses were inappropriate for inclusion in a Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Margaret explained that this information could help us tackle income and fuel poverty issues. It was also pointed out that individuals could choose not to complete this section. The majority of the committee members were happy with the survey.

8 Any Other Business

1. Margaret informed the group that we had some computer equipment that was surplus to requirements. We have some 15" flat screen monitors and Compaq PC's; each machine would come with a keyboard, a mouse and a basic operating system but no applications and no support. These would be available to committee members at no cost. Anyone interested should get in touch with Margaret. Post Meeting Note: Sybil, Kevin and Hugh would like a system (names passed to Kate Hedges 8/7).

2. **Chief Executive Q & A Session 30 September 2010**

Margaret advised that Mike Bruce will attend the next meeting to meet with the committee and to discuss any matter they wish to raise. Committee members were asked to pass any questions they would like to raise with Mike to Margaret in advance of the meeting although she stressed that this was not essential.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 30 September at 7pm in the Weslo Boardroom.

Chair – Glenn Mulligan