

**FIRST CHOICE HOMES
SADDLEWORTH & LEES LOCAL BOARD**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 14th September 2005**

PRESENT:

Councillor Brian Lord, Chair; Jean Bradley, Tenant Board Member;
Edith Bentley, Tenant Board Member; John Hudson, Council Representative
Winifred Dillon, Independent Member; Councillor Val Sedgewick;
Bill Hullah, Tenant Board Member

APOLOGIES:

Linda Pepperell is unfortunately no longer available as an Independent Board Member, as she is re-locating to Yorkshire.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Walsh, Area Service Manager; Sue Walker, Board Support Officer;
Lynn Phillips, Minute Taker

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Mary McLeverty.

2. SELECTION OF INDEPENDENT BOARD MEMBERS

Councillor Hudson asked if it is possible to recruit independent members from a wider area. The Chair asked Sue to issue a press release in the Oldham Chron and Advertiser to recruit new independent members. Sue explained the criteria should not necessarily be where an independent member lives, but what skills and experience can be brought to the Board. SUE agreed to issue press release.

3. ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIR

Brian Elliot has suggested a sub group be formed, with the assistance of Tim English, to discuss a local lettings policy for Saddleworth & Lees. It was agreed that COUNCILLOR LORD, COUNCILLOR HUDSON, and EB would form the sub group, assisted as required by SUE.

4. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY CONTRACT OR MATTER TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

There were no declarations of interest.

5. ELECTION OF TENANT BOARD MEMBER TO THE MAIN BOARD

Jean Bradley was elected to serve on the Main Board.

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 AUGUST 2005

JEAN asked that item 5 of the previous minutes, Update on Tenant Elections, be amended to clarify it was in fact prospective new Board Members who failed to attend the meeting held on 27th July 2005, and not the existing Board Members themselves.

BH asked if decant arrangements have been made for Holland Close (item 7, Progress on PFI), as this was missing from the minutes. It was agreed the minutes should have shown decant arrangements have been made for Holland Close.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

8. PERFORMANCE CONTRACT

Gary Walsh presented and distributed copies of the Saddleworth & Lees Team Contract 2005-6. Each service unit in the plan was discussed:

- Voids: WINIFRED commented PFI voids should be omitted. The average re-let out-turn for S&L 04-05 is 55.6 days, with a target of 30 days. GARY explained the figure is affected by some void properties awaiting central heating replacement. Low staffing levels at various times also contributed. COUNCILLOR HUDSON said figures were improving this quarter. GARY added each fortnight staffing levels for each area are assessed, and workmen moved from area to area as needed, however in practise this doesn't always work. COUNCILLOR LORD asked GARY to monitor that situation. GARY assured COUNCILLOR LORD he fights the staffing battle constantly, and is looking at resources across the borough being fair. COUNCILLOR LORD suggested he and GARY meet to discuss and format this topic as it was disappointing the out-turn is 50% below target.
- Repairs: WINIFRED asked why are Royton and Shaw more consistently on the ball than S&L. GARY replied the movement of resources and holidays affects non-urgent repairs figure. It is difficult to assess performance over a month or quarter. It would be preferable to assess figures at year-end. BH asked why the total number of jobs completed was not indicated. GARY explained the reasons why this is not possible. COUNCILLOR LORD suggested when an agenda is lighter, GARY should produce performance sheets to show the Board. WINIFRED queried appointments kept. GARY explained the definition of an appointment (access required). GARY said he is very proud of urgent repairs, as not one has been missed in 12 months. With local repairs, all agreed 93% satisfaction is a good out-turn. BL added effort is needed for COT time. GARY replied the figures are moving in the right direction.
- Heating: COUNCILLOR LORD said no complaints from tenant's received recently. GARY added Apollo is good, with satisfaction levels rising.

- ASB: Figures are difficult to assess. SUE queried 52% target in satisfaction of handling a complaint. COUNCILLOR LORD discussed the length of time it takes to get action taken against ASB tenants. COUNCILLOR HUDSON added ASB figures should be challenged because of the expense of ASB cases. COUNCILLOR LORD asked GARY how much training is given to FCHO staff to deal with the legalities of ASB. GARY replied more than ever. COUNCILLOR LORD added Holts and Alt are included in the S&L figures. EDITH asked if the mis-treatment of properties is included in ASB figures. GARY replied yes. COUNCILLOR LORD explained the matron sheet, a method to record noise.
- Caretaking: WINIFRED asked GARY if it is a high risk job i.e. dealing with needles. COUNCILLOR HUDSON said caretaking was not a problem in S&L's. GARY said there is to be a major review on caretaking in order to deploy more staff locally. JEAN commented there were only two window cleaners working in the area presently. BH questioned the target of three days to clean a void, because he witnessed properties becoming empty that took between three and five weeks to clean. COUNCILLOR LORD explained the notice period, and WINIFRED explained the need to completely clear properties for health and safety reasons. COUNCILLOR LORD added the subject of direct lets had been raised at Scrutiny.

COUNCILLOR LORD and WINIFRED noticed some figures were incomplete. Was the reason being staff had been diverted during the inspection? GARY to enquire. To summarise, the key objectives of the delivery plan are to ensure the Board challenge the figures to ensure a better service to customers.

9. BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE

SUE presented. Attendance of the S&L's Board is extremely good. Apology recording was discussed; it was decided not to necessarily announce the reason for a Members apology.

10. UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

GARY distributed programme update:

- Vaughn Grove: completion expected 7th October 2005.
- Benyon St: complete
- Lodge Lane: completion expected 7th October 2005.
- Hey Crescent: completion expected end September 2005.

COUNCILLOR SEDGEWICK discussed Benyon St with GARY, as there is a small piece of overgrown land to the front of the bungalows, and could any money left over be used for this area? COUNCILLOR LORD commented it was agreed any spare money should be used in Greenfield, however GARY will assess Benyon St.

JEAN questioned the dates of October 24th and 26th October for the estate walkabout and bus tour.

11. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

COUNCILLOR HUDSON made advanced apologies for various dates and COUNCILLOR LORD is abroad from 2nd November.

SUE presented dates for the first quarter of 2006: 25th January, 15th March, 26th April.

SUE asked the Board to consider an earlier start time. The Board agreed 7pm to remain. SUE asked if venues used are acceptable. COUNCILLOR LORD asked for large chairs at St Thomas's! SUE to investigate COUNCILLOR LORD's suggestion of Springhead Community Centre.

12. UPDATE FROM MAIN BOARD

All Members received de-brief and all were in agreement. GARY said he must conduct one-to-one's with Board Members and it was agreed he would make contact on an individual basis.

13. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

There were no items for future meetings.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of any other business.

15. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

7pm, Wednesday 2nd November 2005, Springhead Infant School, Cooper St.

CLOSED SESSION

16. LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS & POWERS (STANDING ITEM)

SUE presented, and stated it is important that in the next twelve months, Board Members should be performing their duties. SUE asked how assistance could be given if required. CL said that items regarding Performance, Duties and Responsibilities should be fed slowly into each agenda. Agreed COUNCILLOR LORD and SUE to meet to discuss all items, and when to add them to future agenda's. SUE commented the Chadderton Board have requested Performance, Duties and Responsibilities as a substantive item with the FailSueorth Board joining especially as external consultants would be present. This meeting is scheduled for 6.15pm on the 20th October 2005 at the Falcon Centre, Victoria St, Chadderton. SUE to send details.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm