

Minutes

Date: 19 April 2023

Meeting	:	Housing Operations Committee
Present	:	Pam Norton, Board Member Michael Payton, Board Member Annette Dunningham, Board Member Barbara Bransgrove, Board Member Maureen Chapman-Towns Jean Gardner Donna Edinboro
In attendance	:	Robin Roberts, Chief Executive Glynis Gatenby, Operations Director Michael Kilkelly, Asset Manager Celia Dawes, Executive Support

Item:	Action:
1	Apologies for absence / declarations of interest
1.1	Apologies for absence were received from resident members Kay Bish and David Brigden.
1.2	There were no declarations of interest.
2	Minutes of the HOC meeting held 25 January 2023:
2.1	Pam Norton asked if anyone had any comments on the minutes from the meeting held on 25 January 2023. There were none.
2.2	The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and were approved.
3	Actions from last meeting
3.1	All actions were reported as having been completed with the Communal lounge hire policy having been brought back to this meeting for approval.
4	Performance indicators (quarter 4, year-end 2022 / 2023)
4.1	Glynis Gatenby introduced the report which reviews the performance measure results for quarter 4 / year end.

Item:**Action:**

4.2

The following were highlighted:

4.2.1

Our resources:

- average relet time across all our properties is 22 days, 35 days for our general needs lets and 21 days for our older people homes. The general needs figure is above the 21 day target due to tenancy management issues at Wandle Valley. There have been no more vacancies in our general needs homes to help us reduce the relet time
- rent collection / arrears performance – current rent arrears overall as at 2 April 2023 stood at 0.8% which exceeds the 2021 / 22 figure and is an excellent result, particularly considering the additional pressures due to the rising cost of living
- there are just two cases of arrears over £1000. Eight cases were reported at the last meeting so good progress has been made

4.2.2

Our communities:

- there are currently 42 tablets out on loan which is our highest number to date
- 57% of our residents in our older people's housing are using digital platforms
- 28% of residents using the resident app
- we currently have 961 followers across our social media accounts – striving to reach 1000
- 172 compliments have been received, the highest number being for our service, followed by our staff
- two complaints and 14 pre-complaints were received

4.2.3

Our residents:

- there are two open cases of anti-social behaviour which includes one hate crime. The table now includes the date when each case was opened as requested.

4.2.4

Our homes:

- emergency repairs; 100% completed within target, urgent and routine repairs; 99% completed within target
- electrical safety is now back at 100%
- five properties are without an EPC with 99% done
- lift out of action measure stands at 23 days – one lift at Cloverdale Court was down for a few days
- compliance for gas, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, lifts and legionella is at 100%, the updated asbestos register has been shared with contractors
- fire risk assessments (FRAs) are available on the web / by request with new FRAs being carried out by the end of June 2023
- service contracts going well (cleaning, window cleaning and grounds maintenance)

Item:**Action:**

- no new cases of damp or mould. One case at Wandle Valley has had remedial work carried out and is under control / being monitored whilst the family await a transfer to more suitable (larger) accommodation

4.3 Glynis Gatenby confirmed that all backdated information had been cross checked to orders etc so that the status of any reported damp issues was known. The only outstanding case was the one at Wandle Valley. Staff have received training and any repairs requested or conversations with residents where words such as damp, mould or condensation are picked up and reported. Robin Roberts added that reports would not be dismissed due to “lifestyle” and all reports would be checked and resolved. Michael Kilkelly said that our contractor, Acorn, were on board and gave assurance that cases will be pro-actively managed.

4.4 Our people:

- staff training is undertaken in various ways, on-line, webinars and in-person, with 552 hours being completed between April 2022 and March 2023

4.5 Pam Norton commented that she understood that the lift breakdown issues were being solved by storing and using parts from replaced lifts. Michael Kilkelly responded that only the lifts at Thomas House and Old Brewery House were similar. Cloverdale Court has a platform lift and because it is not used often, it can be problematic. Preventative works have also been organised for a lift at Trickett House, until the new lift is installed during planned development works.

4.6 Robin Roberts added that we are installing new lifts as we add floors to buildings. The information is broken down for Board into routine work (where we can control and repair) and for works which are due to issues which are out of our control.

4.7 Pam Norton asked about the ‘helping hands’ fund. Glynis Gatenby confirmed that this is the hardship fund which has been renamed. This will be promoted in the next issue of the newsletter (due mid-May).

4.8 Pam Norton congratulated the team for the arrears figures which she felt were incredible.

4.9 Pam Norton asked if there were any further questions or comments on the report. There were none.

4.10 The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:
i) note the contents of the report

Item:**Action:****5 Safeguarding summary**

- 5.1 Glynis Gatenby introduced the report, stating that Sutton Housing Society only has a legal responsibility to ensure that any concerns are passed on to the relevant authority – no investigation is carried out by its staff.
- 5.2 All new staff are made aware of their responsibilities and regular training is undertaken through the Local Authority which we can attend free of charge.
- 5.3 Annette Dunningham asked if, once our concerns are reported, do we monitor. Glynis Gatenby confirmed that all cases are logged, checked and chased where necessary.
- 5.4 There were four safeguarding alerts raised during the last year which related to four separate individuals, two in our older people's housing and two in general needs, all of which were male. In comparison, last year there were 11 cases relating to seven individuals. The categories are listed at item 5.1 of the report and as at the end of March, only one case remains open. All of the eight cases carried forward from last year have now been closed.
- 5.5 Pam Norton asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.
- 5.6 **The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:**
i) **note the contents of the report**

6 Annual summary of voids and lettings 2022 / 2023

- 6.1 Glynis Gatenby explained that since April 2021, we have issued a report to the Housing Operations Committee summarising our letting activity from the previous financial year. This report covers 2022 / 2023.
- 6.2 In the last year we had 59 homes that became vacant (including Cloverdale Court) for a variety of reasons including new builds, residents moving into care or passing away. Nine of these homes remained vacant as at 2 April 2023 (two were awaiting nominations and have now been let). The void works to one home have now been completed.
- 6.3 Of the 50 lettings carried out, 38 were in housing for older people, nine in housing with care (Cloverdale Court) and three in general needs. All the general needs and Cloverdale Court homes were let via the London Borough of Sutton (LBS). We can now house people directly from our own waiting list into Cloverdale Court and already have current residents expressing their interest to transfer.

Item:		Action:
6.4	Of the 59 vacant homes, lettings have been very even between Sutton Housing Society (SHS) direct lets and LBS nominations with a roughly 50/50 split.	
6.5	There have been 13 applicants refused with reasons listed at point 6.1 with no appeals made. We have received two compliments on our lettings work and no complaints.	
6.6	Glynis Gatenby added that she had carried out an exercise around CORE data which identified no surprises or issues of concern.	
6.7	Lettings at Ronald House, after the completion of development work, are anticipated to take place in late October / November 2023 – five new homes and four other vacancies that have naturally occurred during the year and will be relet to our development standard.	
6.8	Pam Norton asked what the total number of older people homes we currently have. Robin Roberts responded around 80% of our stock is older people housing, approximately 400 homes.	
6.9	Pam Norton asked if there were any questions or comments on the report. Barbara Bransgrove requested a wider variety of colour to differentiate the sections on the pie chart. Glynis Gatenby agreed to do this.	GG
6.10	The Housing Operations Committee agreed to: i) note the contents of the report	
7	Single equalities scheme update	
7.1	Glynis Gatenby explained that this report details our equality, diversity and inclusion work, ensuring fair treatment of residents and staff and recognising people's differences. We aim to provide good awareness with regular staff training and new staff being aware of the policy.	
7.2	The attached appendices show completed actions for the single equalities scheme for 2022 / 2023 and proposed actions for 2023 / 2024.	
7.3	The action points on the new proposed single equalities scheme include standard items (requirement by the GLA and the London Mayor's office) for us to contribute to the Inclusive London agenda by tackling inequality in affordable housing, as well as additional actions monitoring service and tenant satisfaction measures.	
7.4	Annette Dunningham suggested that if HOC members were to discuss this, could training be made available? Glynis Gatenby agreed this	

Item:	would be beneficial and will look to organise (to also include the residents charter group, contract group and Board Members).	Action: GG
7.5	Pam Norton asked how challenging was digital inclusion. Glynis Gatenby responded that we do face some challenges. Staff ensure residents are kept up to date, what sessions are available (around IT, scams etc). Paper fliers are still used as well as the digital notice boards – we continue to use different methods to cover all angles. Michael Kilkelly added that contractors also report back to staff if they become aware of any issues. Glynis Gatenby said that if a lift went down, the resident app sends a message, we would put something on the scheme digital board and also drop a leaflet or letter to keep every resident informed.	
7.6	Annette Dunningham suggested that we could encourage residents to hold coffee mornings where they can share experience / information etc. Glynis Gatenby agreed and said she would mention to Stacey Smither-Moore (IT coordinator) and Angie Holland (community engagement officer). Robin Roberts added that we cannot have a “one size fit all” approach and have to cover all abilities but there will be a natural transition over time as people become more digitally aware. Pam Norton agreed, everyone has to have the choice. Glynis Gatenby added that we have a target this year around updating our housing management system which will record a resident’s preferred contact method – paper, email etc. Jean Gardner suggested this could reduce paper use / wastage.	GG
7.7	Pam Norton asked if there were any further comments or questions. There were none.	
7.8	The Housing Operations Committee agreed to: i) note the contents of the report	
8	Operational update	
8.1	Glynis Gatenby introduced the report and highlighted the following:	
8.2	Community engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new line-dancing class will be starting at Trickett House in mid-May • there were three recommendations from the service review undertaken by Campbell Tickell and work is progressing on these. The strategy has been developed and will be shared in May with the resident charter group – this touches on loneliness, isolation etc and the first annual review of the impact of our community engagement work has been carried out and will be presented to the Board at the May meeting • there were just under 300 opportunities for residents to be involved throughout the year 	

Item:**Action:**

8.3

Staff:

- the new resident liaison officer, Osei, joined the team one month ago. He will be basing himself at Ronald House during the development and also at Norman House during the defects period
- a new lettings officer has been appointed
- Sally is currently our interim trainee property officer and we will look at the role again in the summer and appoint permanently to the role by the end of September

8.4

Development:

- Norman House – all the homes are now let and the residents are settling in well. There have been some teething problems between old and new residents but there is a regular staff presence to encourage residents to come together. There are some outstanding defects which are being worked through and the garden has been started with residents being involved in choosing plants etc. A new gardening club will be started
- Kent Court – the new flat is now let with the resident very happy with their new home
- Ronald House – the development of five additional flats plus new communal lounge, lift and full refurbishment is progressing well. Works should be completed at the end of October
- Bridges Court – approval granted by Board for the development of a bungalow (OPH). The scheme will start later in the year
- Thomas House – 18 flats. Informal consultation with residents will take place during 2023

8.5

Planned maintenance:

- listed at item 6.1 of the report is an update of our 2022 / 2023 programme. Most items have been completed with some having been moved due to development works
- item 7.1 shows the planned maintenance programme for 2023 / 2024
- Old Brewery House will receive a new look communal lounge, new communal kitchen and WC, new doors, flooring, laundry and internal / external decorations

8.6

Annette Dunningham asked if items could be added on to the programme, such as a security gate at Peppermint Court car-park? It was agreed that this would be discussed and a solution sought. If it can be accommodated in the current financial year, it will be included.

RR / MK

8.7

Donna Edinboro asked whether surface mounted electrics could be chased in in individual flats. Glynis Gatenby responded to say that when a flat becomes void, this work can be done but it will not be carried out in occupied flats due to the disruption caused.

8.8

Jean Gardner asked what commercial laundry equipment is. Glynis Gatenby confirmed that the machines are commercial grade which

Item:		Action:
	are quicker and have roughly the same load weight as existing machines. Jean Gardner requested basic instructions be given for the new machines at Old Brewery House. Michael Kilkelly said he would organise a “show and tell” with residents once the machines are installed.	MK
8.9	Jean Gardner asked if she could give some feedback regarding refurbishments at Old Brewery House. Glynis Gatenby requested that this is given to either herself or Michael Kilkelly outside of the meeting. Jean Gardner did however point out that contractors do not always carry ID (this is in hand with new ID cards being created) and notice not always being given to residents of works commencing. Michael Kilkelly replied to say that he does arrange meetings, but turnout is poor. He will look at other ways to inform residents.	MK
8.10	There were no further questions or comments.	
8.11	The Housing Operations Committee agreed to: i) note the contents of the report	
9	Policies for approval	
9.1	Glynis Gatenby introduced the report stating that the communal lounge hire policy has been brought back with the changes requested at the last meeting. The compensation and other payment policy had minor changes which were highlighted and the recharge policy (which had been circulated outside of the HOC papers) again had only minor changes which had been highlighted.	
9.2	Annette Dunningham asked if non-residents would be charged for use of the communal lounge, could that be anyone? Glynis Gatenby replied that there could be some movement but if the family of a deceased resident, for instance, wanted to hold the wake for example, we may charge but we would not advertise it’s availability.	
9.3	Pam Norton asked if there were any further questions or comments on any of the policies. There were none.	
9.4	The Housing Operations Committee agreed to: i) approve the Communal lounge hire policy ii) approve the Compensation and other payments policy iii) approve the Recharge policy	GG / cd
10	Any other business	
10.1	There was none.	

Date of next meeting: 19 July 2023