

# Minutes

Date: 29 January 2025

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Meeting	:	Housing Operations Committee
Present	:	Pam Norton, Board Member Michael Payton, Board Member Barbara Bransgrove, Board Member Annette Dunningham, Board Member Les Cox, Resident Member Anne Brown, Resident Member Jean Gardner, Resident Member Maureen Chapman-Towns, Resident Member John Vine, Resident Member Peter Burdon, Resident Member
In attendance	:	Glynis Gatenby, Operations Director Peter Toulson, Property Services Manager Celia Dawes, Executive Support
Observing:	:	N / A

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Item:	Action:
1	Apologies for absence / declarations of interest
1.1	Apologies for absence were received from Robin Roberts, Chief Executive.
1.2	There were no declarations of interest.
2	Minutes of the HOC meeting held on 16 October 2024:
2.1	Pam Norton asked if anyone felt there was anything missing from the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 or had any comments. There were none.
2.2	The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and were approved.

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Action:

3 Actions from last meeting

3.1 Pam Norton talked through the actions from the last meeting and confirmed that all actions had been completed. There were no questions or comments.

4 Performance indicators (quarter 3, 2024 / 2025)

4.1 Glynis Gatenby introduced the report which provides an overview of performance up to the end of December 2024 and a review of arrears cases exceeding £1,000.

4.2 Our resources:

- average relet times, across our general needs and housing for older people, was just under 20 days which is ahead of our 21 day target. We did not have any general needs voids during this period
- current arrears stand at 0.66%, an excellent result. Arrears remain a key area of focus
- there are now eight cases of arrears in excess of £1,000 which are summarised in appendix 2. Of these, six cases are in our general needs homes and two in our housing for older people. All are being managed as per our policy. Pam Norton noted that all six general needs cases were heading for repossession. Glynis Gatenby confirmed that this will be the case if two miss their next payment, for others we are negotiating for direct payments from Universal Credit etc. Pam Norton asked as these are local authority allocations, did we get any feedback from the local authority regarding reasons for arrears, i.e. increases in rent? Glynis Gatenby replied that we do not hear much from the local authority but, as often covered by the press, people are struggling with debt due to the cost of living. We promote our Helping Hands fund but have only had one take-up recently from residents in our general needs accommodation. (Many residents do not want to share details of their income with us which is part of the application process). Pam asked if the arrears cases in the housing for older people were for the same reason. Glynis Gatenby responded that one was due to the council stopping their housing benefit, but the resident was not aware (the Housing Manager was helping the resident to remedy this and we are hopeful of a backdated payment), the other is due to the resident's transition to Universal Credit and the housing element for which we are hoping to arrange direct payments

4.3 Michael Payton asked if Glynis Gatenby could clarify the term 'relet time', what triggers it? Glynis Gatenby explained that this

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was the period between the end of tenancy date and the date a new tenancy starts. Michael Payton commented that this was an impressive turn around on voids. Glynis Gatenby said that the team are extremely good at arranging a pre-void inspection once we are given notice on a tenancy, before the property is empty. This enables them to prepare for any works required before the property is empty.

4.4

Our communities:

- there is an increase in our social media followers, particularly on LinkedIn – we have also registered for a BlueSky account, which is similar to X (formerly Twitter). This was largely to protect the Sutton Housing Society name
- there was an uptick in the number of complaints and service requests received during the quarter, more in this quarter than in the whole year to date. These were largely related to property and repairs and communication, generally with residents feeling they were not being kept informed regarding progress with their repairs etc. All complaints have or are being dealt with. There have been more registered in January following previous Asset Manager work which Peter Toulson, our new Property Services Manager, is helping to remedy. A review of our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's complaints handling code is attached at appendix 3 for information
- 53 compliments were received during the quarter which brings the total of compliments for the year to date to 116

4.5

Our residents:

- there are four open / active anti-social behaviour cases, three in housing for older people and one in housing with care. The second case listed is the most concerning; it involves the behaviour of a resident at Cloverdale Court. We do not feel that the resident is appropriately housed, and the support needed is not sustainable. We are in discussions with social services and the local authority

4.6

Our homes:

- repairs and maintenance performance remains high – 31 of the compliments received are regarding contractors. Included in the report at item 7.1.1 is an overview of our emergency and non-emergency repairs process / reporting
- compliance remains good overall. The gas safety checks completed within target is currently showing as red. This is due to the CP12 certificates being completed after practical completion of the new homes at Ronald House

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- we are looking at our internal legionella monitoring on recommended actions following reports
- the lift out of action measure has increased. Peter Toulson has arranged an independent report and the minor recommendations will be included in next year's planned maintenance programme
- we achieved our first 'A' rated energy performance certificate at the new home at Bridges Court
- the resident friendly FRAs are available on the website and recommended actions will be completed by the end of this financial year
- cleaning, window cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts are continuing well. We will review the KPIs relating to these works to focus on reported non-compliance
- item 7.9 summarises four new reports of damp and mould, with an update on the existing case at Wandle Valley. We have noticed more reports throughout the year relating to condensation, damp and mould at Dorothy Pettingell House and Furlong Close. Although these are for various reasons, we will carry out a more in-depth survey in the new financial year. The Residents Charter group has looked at the reports and have found no evidence of the issues affecting a disproportionate number of disabled residents or those from ethnic minority groups

4.7 Pam Norton asked if there were any comments or questions – there were none.

4.8 The Housing Operations Committee agreed to:

- i) note the performance for quarter 3
- ii) note the arrears cases exceeding £1,000
- iii) note the review of our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's complaints handling code

5 Operational update

5.1 Glynis Gatenby introduced the report which outlines the key areas of operational work undertaken in quarter 3.

5.2 Community engagement:

5.2.1 Our community engagement offerings have continued with some additional events itemised at point 3.2.

5.2.2 We have had a meeting with InCommon who run the intergenerational project where children from a local school visit Norman House and interact with our older residents. This project

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is due to end at the end of February but due to its success, they have offered to keep it running, free of charge, until the end of July. They have commented that they think this is the most successful project they have had. The school has been asked to promote the project to other schools and we may also join with InCommon to promote the programme. Photos have been included in the report.

- 5.2.3 A very successful Big Bingo event was held for Burns Night.
- 5.2.4 We held a total of 103 opportunities for residents to be involved with 866 participants which is an increase of 10% in the number of events and 20% increase in the number of attendees. In March, Glynis Gatenby and Angie Holland (Community Engagement Officer) will visit schemes to review the events and discuss future events.
- 5.3 Recruitment:
  - 5.3.1 Michael Kilkelly (Asset Manager) left us in December. Peter Toulson joined us in November and is settling into his new role.
  - 5.3.2 Yasmin Taylor is now on maternity leave with her role being covered by Marie-Claire Newman.
  - 5.3.3 Stacey Smither-Moore will go on maternity leave in March and we are recruiting to cover her position in her absence.
  - 5.3.4 Confidential item: Steve Smith will hopefully be re-joining the team for an initial six-week period to assist Peter Toulson, carrying out inspections of our homes. This may become a more permanent position, pending budget approval.
- 5.4 Pets policy – scheme surveys update:
  - 5.4.1 The next scheme to be surveyed will be Old Brewery House. The survey at Griffiths Close will be postponed due to upcoming development work and will be carried out after the defects period, as with the surveys at Trickett House and Ronald House.
- 5.5 Development:
  - 5.5.1 Ronald House: A low key scheme opening was held last week with current and new residents attending. The scheme is unrecognisable – photos are provided in the report, along with a positive comment from a passer-by.
  - 5.5.2 Bridges Court: the new bungalow is now complete and tenanted.

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Again, we have received comments from locals that say it looks like it has always been there!

- 5.5.3 Trickett House: the tender process is underway with a probable start in early Summer, although there is currently no fixed start date.
- 5.5.4 Griffiths Close conversion: the conversion of one large flat into two smaller flats will be undertaken in two phases with SHS funding the first. The second phase will be part of the development works.
- 5.5.5 Cloverdale Court: the main development has been postponed. In the meantime, the reception and communal areas will be refreshed.
- 5.5.6 Wandle Valley: unfortunately, the two planning applications have been refused. We are looking at other opportunities.
- 5.6 Planned maintenance programme 2024 / 2025:
  - 5.6.1 The report includes an overview of progress made with our planned maintenance programme. Most items have now been completed.
- 5.7 Single equalities scheme:
  - 5.7.1 An update on the single equalities scheme has been provided at appendix 1. The residents charter group are very involved with this and are giving excellent help with this work.
- 5.8 Residents charter group:
  - 5.8.1 The residents charter group continue to meet on a quarterly basis to share their views on several topics. Currently they are focussing on sustainability and have discussed what is important to them – they will be writing an article for the spring edition of our newsletter, Sutton Scoop, to encourage other residents to be more sustainable and be aware of the impact of their actions.
  - 5.8.2 An update of the better social housing review (BSHR) action plan is attached at appendix 2 for information.
- 5.9 Jean Gardner referred to the planned maintenance programme update and commented that although WiFi upgrade work had been included at Margaret House, there was no mention of the work at Old Brewery House where holes had been drilled and wires put through walls. Glynis Gatenby responded that this was additional work, not part of the planned maintenance programme,

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	and would check with Stacey Smither (ICT coordinator) regarding next steps / further works required.	GG
5.10	Michael Payton reflected on the community engagement work in general, and in particular the intergenerational project, commenting on how successful this part of our service was and how it is, in his opinion, what makes SHS different. He asked that thanks be passed to the team for their work in this area. Pam Norton agreed and also expressed her thanks. Glynis Gatenby assured Members that this would be passed on adding that the team thoroughly enjoy this aspect of their work.	GG
5.11	There were no further comments or questions.	
5.12	The Housing Operations Committee agreed to: i) note the contents of the report	
6	Any other business	
6.1	Pam Norton asked if there were any further items to discuss – there were none.	

Date of next meeting: 23 April 2025