

**MINUTES OF THE LANDLORD SERVICES WORKING GROUP**

DATE: 9 July 2024

VENUE: Forest Meeting Room (Council Chamber) TIME: 10:00am

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| **Present:** | | | |
| Janet Preston (JP) | | Pam McGowan (PM) | |
| Nicky Larkin (NL) | | Sandra Houghton (SH) | |
| Nigel Hill (NH) | | Cheryl Gamble (CG) | |
| Sue Quincy (SQ) | | Amanda Harper (AH) NWLDC | |
| Isobel Harris (IH) | | Sharon Cole (SCO) NWLDC | |
| Sandra Newell (SN) | | Peter Warren (PW) NWLDC | |
| **Apologies:** | |  | |
| Brian Wills (BW) | | Laura Smythe (LS) NWLDC | |
| Shirley Green (SG) | | Cllr Alison Morley (AM) NWLDC | |
| Cllr A Woodman (AW) NWLDC | | Jane Rochelle (JR) NWLDC | |
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|  | **ITEM** | | **ACTION** |
| **1.** | **Welcome & Apologies**  AH welcomed everyone. Apologies as above. | |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes of the previous Meeting**  Minutes approved and agreed as accurate. | |  |
| **3.** | **Matters Arising/ Actions**  *PM asks what the plans are for weed killing and bush cutting. PA advises this happens every winter and is still being completed now council instructed PA to not use a certain weed killer due to identified risks. JR advised that she would be asking for this to be revisited for the Housing sites.*   * Update 21/05/2024: AH advised that no update has been supplied as JR is unable to make the meeting. The action will be carried forward. AH has a meeting with Parks and she will see if she can get an update from that. * Update 11/06/2024: AH advised that she didn’t have an update, and asked for the action to be carried over to the next meeting. * Update 09/07/2024: AH advised that she didn’t have an update, and asked for the action to be carried over to the next meeting. AH did however mention that Parks weren’t looking to make changes to the weedkiller they were using, the Elected Members made the decision based on the harmful chemical makeup of the old weedkiller and this is why they stopped using it.   PM mentioned that all they do is strim now. AH replied that as the current spray wasn’t effective, Parks had been asked to strim weeds too, but the weather hadn’t been on our side.  JP mentioned that grass was recently cut lovely and the cuttings had been blown off the path, but had been let all over her front door and residents shouldn’t have to clean their doors down after Parks had been and they should take extra care where elderly residents lived. AH replied she would pass the comments onto Parks.  SN commented that one operative had cut the grass, done the strimming and blew the paths himself and had made a lovely job.  SH commented that the grass one side of the path had been cut where she lived, but not the other. AH asked SH to speak to her at the end.  SN mentioned that there were a couple of hedges on Bradgate Drive that hadn’t been cut. AH replied that all council properties that have hedges that are classed are curtilages are the tenants responsibilities. AH asked SN to speak to her at the end as the properties in question may not be council properties.   * Update 10/07/2024: AH has emailed Jason Knight, Leisure Services Team Manager the following message “Our involved tenants have been raising issues regarding weeds and Jane had given a commitment that we would revisit the decision regarding reintroducing the weedkiller we stopped using.  I take it there has not been any contact regarding this and the position hasn’t changed?”.   *JP asked what the plans were for electric car chargers at Howe Court/ Smith Court.*  *AH replied that she wasn’t sure what the Asset Management Team were planning for that, but the council won’t pay for private chargers to be installed and you would need permission to have one installed at your property. AH added, it may have to feature as part of the parking improvement plan of the Asset Management Strategy which has yet to be written, but would ask if we can have an update on what that might be.*   * Update 11/06/2024: AH advised that she didn’t have an update, and asked for the action to be carried over to the next meeting. * Update 09/07/2024: AH advised that she didn’t have an update, and asked for the action to be carried over to the next meeting. * Update 10/07/2024: AH has emailed Asset Management the following message “Our involved tenants have asked if we have any plans to include electric vehicle charging points in the parking areas at Smith/Howe Court.  It would be helpful to understand if there are any plans to review the parking strategy and if the charging points will be included in future plans. Please come back to me as this is an action that has been logged on the minutes for Landlord Services Working Group”.   *AH asked if anyone was aware of the Consumer Standards. There was a mixed response, so AH advised something would be added to the forward plan. SCO suggested that we invite Tpas to come and do a presentation. AH advised that we could hold a separate event for Tpas to present the Consumer Standards. SCO to make enquiries with Tpas.*   * Update 09/07/2024: SCO advised that only one person had put themselves forward for the online training and asked if anyone would be interested in Tpas coming in to do a special session. SCO to contact Tpas and see when they could attend. SN commented that she had been asked if she was interested in doing the training online, was it the same thing. SCO replied that it was, but were looking to do it in person now. | | **SCO** |
| **4.** | **Q4 Performance Update – Repairs & Asset Management**  AH advised that as JR had sent her apologies and the items had been on the agenda for three successive months, she proposed that the item not be carried on to the September meeting. AH asked if there were any questions about the results and if she couldn’t answer them , would take them away.  JH commented that they were solid results against the performance targets. | |  |
| **5.** | **Support Contractor and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)**  AH advised that as JR had sent her apologies, and the item had been on the agenda for three successive months, she would to update as best she could. AH continued, we have been unsuccessful in previous bids from the SHDF, and we had made the decision not to submit again until we had a better understanding of our stock, hence the stock condition surveys being undertaken by Savills. AH added, we did however re-submit the exact same bid this year and have been awarded £2,600,000.00, we do however need to validate our data before we receive the money, so we’ve come full circle, unless we’re confident we have everything in place, we won’t be able to access the funding. AH proposed that the item be removed from the forward plan until we know more and can offer an update. AH apologised that a number of agenda items had been rolled over a number of months and advised that the council must get better at committing to agenda items on the forward plan. | |  |
| **6.** | **Draft Tenant Scrutiny Panel Report**  SCO ran through the summary of the report along with the recommendations, a copy of which was included with the papers. SCO advised that the panel were meeting with AH this afternoon to see if the recommendations are practical for implementation.  JP asked if there was any movement on why she was paying more for grass cutting on the estate than other people. AH replied that she understood that someone from the Rent Accounting Team had been in touch with JP and explained why. JP answered that they had, but just got a glib reply that she had more grass than others. AH replied that she would give a general answer to the issue of service charges rather than specifically answer a questions relating to a personal matter … service charges were introduced fifteen or sixteen years ago, prior to that all rent was pooled into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and grass cutting, for example, was paid for from that account. AH added, the un-pooling of the rent identified that only tenants who benefit from a service should pay for it, including grass cutting, areas were identified and the costs were divided by the properties. JP replied, she paid £25 a week for the services and SG paid £15 a week. AH responded that it wasn’t just grass cutting that the service charge covered, but all services. JP retorted that it was supposed to have been looked into, but it’s not changed. AH advised that she would speak to Rent Accounting and find the answer herself and get back to JP. JP replied, it’ll only be the same answer. AH added, service charges were outside her area of responsibility, and if JP wasn’t happy with the response she’d received, she could always raise a complaint.  JH advised the group that the panel were at the very early stages of looking at their next inspection, and they would be looking at Repairs and how they’re handled and see if they can make it any more efficient. | | **AH** |
| **7.** | **Housing Restructure**  AH commented that she had touched on this subject at the last meeting, but wanted to give the group a better understanding of the changes coming. AH continued, currently there are four teams that report into Jane Rochelle, Head of Housing, these are; Housing Management managed by AH, the Housing Assets managed by Jas Singh, Housing Strategy and Systems managed by David Scruton and Housing Commercial Services managed by Richard James, there will be a fifth team added to this who will be called Building Safety and Tenant Involvement, which will be headed by a new team manager. AH added, the new team will include tenant engagement, or resident involvement as it is currently called and the moves will happen when there is someone in the new team manager post, which will probably be September or October this year. AH concluded, there will be a further round of changes, though we do not know the details of this yet, but will likely be in the new financial year.  PM asked who the new chief executive officer of the council is. AH replied, it’s Allison Thomas who has been with us a couple of years now, and she was the strategic director at South Derbyshire District Council, there was also a change here at director level after Glyn Jones left the organisation. AH added, Glyn had been the director of housing and Andy Barton was now the strategic director of housing and communities, though he doesn’t get involved in the day to day housing activities. PM commented that this is what she had requested be included in Intouch. AH replied that the information wouldn’t have been specifically applicable to tenants, and Allison’s appointment would have been covered by press announcements, which were available to everyone, from a tenants perspective, knowledge of the management structure would be necessary up to head of housing level, Jane Rochelle. PM replied, the involvement used to go higher. AH answered that it’s changed. PM replied, and that’s what we didn’t know. | |  |
| **8.** | **Draft Resident Involvement Strategy**  SCO went through the presentation that she displayed on the screens in the room, a copy of which will be included with the minutes. SCO asked if a new group should be set up or use an existing group. EH answered that people aren’t really interested in new groups and thought it best to add to an existing group. AH confirmed we would add to the forward plan of this group.  . | |  |
| **9.** | **Forward Plan**  AH suggested that if the group are struggling to find suitable agenda items that the frequency of the meetings be reduced. | |  |
| **10.** | **Any Other Business**  NL asked about the window cleaning. AH replied, the communal cleaning contract had been extended for one year, and the procurement process will start soon with the new contracts in place from April next year, it has not yet been decided what will be included in the contract.  CG commented that she didn’t know where her water stop cock was located. AH replied, that ordinarily the housing officer will show you on the viewing, alternatively the info to help identify the stop cock will be in the repairs handbook available online.  JP asked why she was told not to bother with disabled parking spaces on her estate as anyone can use them. AH replied, anyone with a disabled badge can use a designated disabled parking space, and you need to be mindful that the use of them isn’t monitored. JP added that the markings are faded. AH replied, that is something we can look into.   * Update 10/07/2024: AH has requested that Parks are approached to obtain a quote to repaint the markings.   SN asked for a paper copy of the repairs handbook. AH replied, she could arrange for that, but it does need to be updated, so the information may be out of date soon, which is why she recommended looking at the copy online.   * Update 10/07/2024: PW has arranged for a copy to be printed and posted to SN.   AH advised the group that Intouch hadn’t gone out with the rent statements this quarter for the first time as there had been an internal delay in getting everything ready. AH added, it will be posted out separately. PM commented that it would cost extra to post. AH replied, it would, but we had approval for two special editions of Intouch, so the budget was there, but yes, there was an extra cost. | |  |
|  | **Date and Venue of Next Meeting**  Tuesday 3 September 2024 in the Abbey Meeting Room (Board Room), Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN | |  |