



CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

7 November 2013

PRESENT:

Directors

Robert Buckley (Chair)
 Pauline Dillon
 Kathryn Ferdinand
 John Hamilton
 Joachim Moussouanda Mouanda
 Gordon Spring

Advisers

Neil Bouch	Director of Customers and Communities
Natalie Hewitt	Head of Corporate Services
Julie McCartney	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Louise Taylor	Equality and Diversity Manager
Janice Adams	Leasehold Services Manager
Deborah Ewart	Housing Services Manager
Stuart Gibson	Governance and Risk Officer

24 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 12 September 2013 were approved as a correct record.

25 MATTERS ARISING – ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PARTNERSHIP UPDATE – APRIL TO JUNE 2013

(a) Safetyworks! Initiative

Over 388 year 6 children attended from 16 schools over a two week period. There has been no formal evaluation yet with the Fire Service but it was very well received. The committee will receive a report at a future meeting.

(b) Mental Health Link Worker

George Parkin had been appointed as Mental Health Link Worker. He will be developing briefing and referral information and reporting in January. More detail will be provided in the ASB Update to the committee in February 2014.

26 REVIEW OF LEASEHOLD MANAGEMENT POLICY

The committee received a revised Leasehold Management Policy, which was discussed and agreed by leaseholders at the Leasehold SIG on 14 October 2013.

Leaseholders identified a number of changes/improvements they thought would be beneficial to include in the policy, details of which were reported.

The committee also received details of key developments in the following areas in 2012/13 that the Leasehold Services Team in conjunction with the Leasehold SIG has assisted with: -

- Management Fee
- Welfare Reforms
- Gas Servicing
- Buildings Insurance
- Shared Ownership
- Customer Satisfaction and Performance

Recently the Company has accessed up to £1,000,000 worth of funding to enable qualifying leaseholders to have their boiler replaced for free through the 'Affordable Warmth' grant. It is estimated that qualifying leaseholders will save up to £300 a year on their heating bills and leaseholders on the scheme will also receive a 5-year warranty on their new boiler. The Leasehold Services Team will be marketing the gas servicing scheme as part of the package of works.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the Leasehold Management Policy be approved.
- (ii) That the update on the Leasehold Services Team activities be noted.
- (iii) That the Leasehold Services Team be congratulated on the work being carried out in the service.

27 CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY – UPDATE – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2013

The committee received an update on customer involvement activity for the second quarter of 2013/14.

During the period, 78 involvement activities took place, with customers being involved in involvement activities on over 3,500 occasions, although some may have been involved in more than one activity.

There have been a number of outcomes from customer involvement during the period and details of these were reported.

There are a number of service standards in place for involvement to help monitor performance and ensure the Company continues to involve customers in the way services are delivered. The results at the end of the period were all exceeding or on target.

Details of the Summer of Fun, outcomes from Service Improvement Groups and Mears community initiatives were reported.

A number of activities are planned for 2013/14 and details of these were also reported.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

28 MOVING FORWARD CUSTOMER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2013/14 – UPDATE – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2013

The committee received a six month update on the Moving Forward Customer Training Programme for 2013/14.

Providing training and support to customers appropriate to their needs is a service standard for the company. The current target is for 180 attendees to access the Moving Forward training during 2013/14.

A total of eight courses have been delivered during the period. There have been a total of 84 customers attending the training, which is an average attendance of 11 people per course. This is an increase of three people per course compared to the same time last year. To date, five demand led courses have taken place this year.

An evaluation form is distributed at the end of each course to help gather feedback. Satisfaction figures are based on 81 responses, with 100% of attendees satisfied overall with the course they attended.

In partnership with Mears, the Company has delivered a programme of practical sessions to help build skills in areas including painting and decorating, plumbing and electrics.

The Company has recently secured repeat funding to deliver Energy Best Deal (EBD) training to vulnerable tenants and leaseholders to help ensure they are on the best energy deal for them, aiming to avoid tenants and leaseholders going into fuel poverty.

External funding has been secured from Skills for Life, where the Company receives approximately £3.95 per person per hour of learning for capacity building courses. There is now a restriction on the amount of funding received of £624 for the academic year 1 September to 31 August.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

29 TALISMAN REVIEW – RENT AND INCOME – RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee received a response to the Tenant and Leaseholder Independent Scrutiny Management Panel's (TALISMAN) recommendations reported to the committee in September 2013.

The report and recommendations made by TALISMAN were welcomed. Feedback from the review and the recommendations made has been shared with the team through briefing sessions and team meetings.

A number of the recommendations have already been addressed fully or in part by the service. Training and development needs will be addressed as part of the employee appraisals and 1-2-1's between team members and their line managers.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted.
- (ii) That the committee receive a six-monthly update on outstanding actions from TALISMAN reviews.

30 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2013

The committee received a performance update for the period April to September 2013, as well as an update on the following anti-social behaviour (ASB) procedure developments: -

- Customer satisfaction
- Hate Crime incidents
- Domestic Abuse
- Customer Assessment Tool
- Vetting and exclusions
- ASB Training Programme
- Legal tools and powers
- Customer Involvement
- Knowledge Exchange Partnership
- ASB Conference

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

31 FORWARD PLAN

A forward plan of reports that will be presented to meetings of this committee during the next year was submitted.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

32 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday 27 February 2014 at 10am at Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Team Valley, Gateshead.