



Minutes of the meeting of the BLETCHLEY AREA HOUSING BOARD held on THURSDAY 22 JULY 1999 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Woodcock

Tenant

Representatives: A Laing - Saints/Racecourses Residents' Association
J Marling - Lakes Estate Residents' Association

Officers: S Graham (Acting Head, Neighbourhood Services), J Reed (Policy Manager), C Caves (Senior Housing Officer), C Jones (Tenants' Participation Officer) and T Mabbott (Committee Manager)

Also Present: R Reid (Mears BS Ltd), I Flatt (Mears BS Ltd), S Inman (Mears BS Ltd), G Wilson (Mears BS Ltd),

Apologies: D Mutton (District Housing Manager)

1.0 PROCEDURE - MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Area Housing Board held on 25 March 1999, be approved as a correct record, subject to the final sentence of Minute 21.0 being deleted. It was also pointed out that, although it was stated in minute 21.0, that, "no ... appropriate senior officers were present" a number of senior officers were present at the meeting.

2.0 QUORUM FOR MEETING

It was reported that the meeting was inquorate as there were insufficient residents representatives and no Councillors present. Therefore, while the meeting would be able to comment on the various items, it would not be in a position to resolve any matters. Any matters of decision would therefore need to be referred to the Borough Wide Housing Board.

Tenants representatives noted that no councillors or appropriate senior officers were present. The Board was extremely concerned that the Board and issues arising from it were not being afforded enough importance by councillors. It was agreed that the Chair would write to Councillors who sat on the Board stressing the importance of their attendance at future meetings.

3.0 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED – That J Marling be appointed Chair of the Board for the Council Year 1999/2000.

4.0 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED – That A Laing be appointed Vice Chair of the Board for the Council Year 1999/2000.

5.0 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOROUGH WIDE HOUSING BOARD

RESOLVED – That J Marling and A Laing be appointed as representatives to the Borough Wide Housing Board for the Council Year 1999/2000, with one vacancy remaining.

6.0 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS TERM CONTRACTOR

Members circulated figures for their performance in Milton Keynes since taking over the contract, and agreed that these would be circulated to Board members in future.

Tenants representatives noted that the majority of jobs ordered were for emergencies or first priority calls, and caused difficulties in planning work, especially when there are delays in notifying the contractor. Concern was expressed that there were still instances of tenants being visited by more than one contractor for the same job, sometimes even after completion. Mears explained that this was a result of a rapid response system set up to speed up the completion of high priority jobs.

Tenants representatives expressed concern that a high proportion of Mears' orders had not yet been paid for by Milton Keynes Council, and that this could lead to potential difficulties in future. A particular problem with payment for emergency call-outs was noted. One possible explanation for such payment backlogs was the difficulties with the computing system, which was due to be superseded in August 1999.

It was agreed that officers would liaise with Mears over the implementation of the new system, and that the issue of payment difficulties would be raised with the relevant officers.

7.0 HEATING CONTRACTORS

The Board noted that Morgan & Fone Ltd, the Heating Contractor for the Bletchley Area, had sent apologies for being unable to attend this meeting because it had been re-arranged at short notice. It was also noted that both the responsive repairs contractors and the heating contractors for the Bletchley area

were now on the circulation list and would receive papers for future meetings of the Board.

8.0 DISTRICT HOUSING MANAGER'S REPORT

The Board received a report from the District Housing Manager which outlined activities and performance in the three Bletchley Area Offices.

The meeting received a copy of the "Benefits Briefing for Chairs" in place of the DHM benefits figures, which were not yet available. It was reported that, in future, this item would not be on the District Housing Manager's report, and that someone from the Benefits section would attend the meeting and report directly. Tenants representatives noted that Benefits Officers had been moved from local Housing Offices to a central base at Saxon Court. This was due to difficulties in rapidly processing assessments by computer link, which had led to an unacceptably high backlog.

The report confirmed the current figures for rent arrears, shared ownership, empty properties and repairs with those from one year ago. It was noted that local offices would circulate their Repairs figures to tenants' representatives prior to the next meeting of the Borough Wide Board. Office moves were also noted, as were arrangements for the operation of the Tenants Resource Office at Queensway, Bletchley. It was agreed that a more detailed report on the opening of the Tenants Resource Office would be given at the next meeting of the Borough Wide Board.

9.0 TENANTS' COMPACT WORKSHOP

The Board received an update on the development of a Tenants' Compact, and noted that a number of agreed objectives and an action plan would need to be in place by April 2000.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.30 PM