

LAMBETH LIVING BOARD

Wednesday 26 September 2012 at 7.30 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT: Hazel Barlow, Nick Cattermole, Michael English, Keith Hill (Chair), Lynn Holman (Vice-Chair), Danny Sutcliffe, Councillor Matthew Bennett, Glen Falconer, Christine Scales, Stephen Tate, John Green, Sarah Jane Lucas, Councillor Matt Parr, Kieran Casey, Councillor Lib Peck, Lucy Williams and Rachel Sharpe

APOLOGIES:

ALSO PRESENT: Tina Bull, Ola Akinfe, Cedric Boston, Terry Gallagher, Mark Howarth, Neil Litherland and Katy Gibbins

*Action
required by*

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting on the 25 July 2012 be agreed as a correct accurate of proceedings, subject to Sarah Jane Lucas being added as present.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS ESCALATION

The report was introduced by the Head of Service Improvement who advised that:

- It was difficult to measure escalated complaints as all complainants had the right to escalate whatever the original outcome.

- There was a twelve month window allowed to escalate complaint, from when the response was received.
- Most of the complaints from residents came via telephone calls. The Service Improvement team were now looking at early resolution and treating this as an opportunity to deal with potential issues before they become formal complaints.
- A majority of complaints were around repairs and officers needed to look further into the classification to ensure correct and relevant data was being captured when recording these complaints.
- The reasons for escalation varied, but mainly the reasons were that
 - Not all issues in complaint were addressed
 - Complaints were not answered
 - Promises made by officers were not kept
 - Complainants were unhappy with the stage one outcome or how their complaint was dealt with.
- More work needed to be done on the system used to record complaints (the Council's system: Respond) to ensure correct data and classifications were being captured.

The following observations and comments were made by Board Members:

- The quantity of stage one complaints still seemed high. Board Members wanted to know how that compared to other ALMOs or Housing Associations.
- Some comparative data against last year's figures on repairs complaints would also be useful.
- There was concern about the repairs as this was a major issue for tenants and it seemed officers were unable to determine where the process was going wrong to avoid complaints having to be made.

In response to some to the questions raised, officers advised that:

- Complaints were not coming from one particular contractor or area, although it was noted that areas may have specific issues.
- The newly appointed Customer Repairs Manager was currently an interim position, but if it worked well they would look to make it permanent.
- The Service Improvement team were encouraging officers to deal with complaints within the 10 day deadline where possible.
- For missed appointments tenants would receive £20, which came from the contractor and not Lambeth Living. There were currently some delays in processing this fee and officers were exploring a voucher system to speed up process.
- Of the tenants that received a repairs service only 3% made a complaint.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted

5. AUGUST PERFORMANCE DIGEST 2012

The report was introduced by the Interim Chief Executive who highlighted that:

- Compared to last year there had been significant overall improvement in key areas.
- Performance by Vangent was not as expected, due to the unforeseen circumstances in August (details of which were set out in the report).
- He suggested that the Board consider in more detail the repairs issues at the next meeting.
- They would include more detail in the legend to explain how the Green, Amber and Red statuses were calculated in future reports.

In response to questions from Board Members, officers stated that:

- The eight officers taken on by Vangent at their Hellaby office were on a fixed term contract and would continue over the Christmas period. They did have contingencies in place to deal with problems, however the problems they encountered in August only lasted for a few hours, so it was difficult to enact contingencies in that short space of time.
- There were some concerns about the contractors and each had different areas of concerns. The Director of Property Services and the Chief Executive were meeting with the contractors regularly to monitor and manage the situation.
- Lambeth Living were participating in a benchmarking club managed by Housemark and information was circulated to Board Members.
- There was a lot of work being carried out in partnership with the Council to tackle the effects of the welfare reform. This included modelling the impact and income stream for Lambeth Living and the introduction of the three outreach workers to engage with tenants and offer advice and support on the changes.
- The changes and implementation of the universal credit was a huge area of concern to the organisation.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Performance report be noted

(2) That the proposal to look at the repairs service in greater detail at the November 2012 meeting be noted.

6. LAMBETH LIVING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2012 / 13

The report was introduced by the Interim Head of Communications, who informed the Board that the focus for the organisation and the Communications Team was to increase resident satisfaction and enhance the reputation of Lambeth Living.

In response to questions from Board Members, officers advised that:

- There was no specific communications plan for repairs, but that may change in the near future.

- Printed materials would still be available and taking the needs of the visually impaired would always be a consideration when preparing new materials.
- They were looking at building interactivity in to the new website, however there was not a lot of flexibility due to constraints by the Council.
- SMS messaging would be introduced in the next couple of weeks for repairs appointments.

Members of the Board were pleased with the proposed re-design of the website and asked that they be kept fully informed on the look and operation of the final design.

They also asked that other innovative ideas be explored such as using mobile phone applications (apps) to report issues and using the website to report repairs and other problems as it was thought this would better engage the younger people.

Some Board Members were concerned about the different handbooks for Tenant Management Organisation's and Lambeth Living, as it was felt much of the content would apply to both areas.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Communications plan be approved.

(2) That the Strategy Committee take responsibility for the development of the Lambeth Living website.

7. PROPOSED LAMBETH LIVING COMMITTEE 2012/13

RESOLVED:

That the membership for the Audit, Business, Customer, Investment Committees for 2012/13 be agreed.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

CHAIR
LAMBETH LIVING BOARD

Contact for Enquiries: Neil Litherland
Tel: 020 7926 3804
E-mail: nlitherland@lambethliving.org.uk
Web: <http://www.lambethliving.org.uk>