

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting: Members' Forum Meeting
Date: 14th September 2023
Time: 6pm – 8:00pm
Venue: Boardroom

Present

Ann-Marie O'Sullivan - Chair	Amanda Browning
Vic Breach – Vice Chair	Clive Jepson
Gerald Prior	Martyn Thorne
Peter Haynes	Bertie Doy
Margaret Buckell	
Sarah Simmonds	
Deb Wills	
Brian Foley	
Deb Wills	

Also in attendance

Kate Wareing, Jackie Logan & Michelle Pugh-Roberts, David Reynolds & Caius Galliers

Apologies

Kay Sentance
Aurora Acone
Gerald Prior
Doreen Gow
Trish Langford

Observers

Angela Harding

1.Approval of Minutes July 13th – Approved

2.Matters Arising

Peter Haynes – Following on from the recent mystery shopping report that recently came to Forum, Peter noted that not much had changed with the call waiting times in his personal opinion.

Kate explained that the overall service has improved significantly in most areas, although there will always be peak times where call waiting times are high i.e. Between 8:30 and 10:30 or after the school run at 3pm. It was agreed that Michelle will send the customer services statistics out to the Members Forum.

3.Chairs Report by Ann-Marie O’Sullivan

I would like to thank those who came to the Board AGM last week. It was great seeing so many of you on such a sweltering day. It was sad to say goodbye to Lucy Weston. Lucy has worked tirelessly in her role as Chair of the Board. She was really interested in linking the work between Soha, the Board, and the Members Forum. Lucy could see the worth of all three working together. Thankfully we now have Jenny Ekelund, who I look forward to working with.

We have a full agenda as always. Please remember this is your Forum and your input is necessary. Please keep up with the Portfolio Holder updated and anything else you feel we should discuss. Agenda items need to be into Michelle as soon as possible and any AOB may be considered if brought to my attention beforehand.

At the last Forum meeting one of the members suggested we consider appointing tenants as customer service agents to assist with taking phone calls etc. into customer services at busy times. After discussing this matter with Soha’s Customer Services Manager we have decided not to recruit tenants as CS Agents as we need to be able to have Agents taking calls quickly in a crisis, so could not rely on tenants being available, or able to take calls at short notice. We would also need to introduce some form of zero-hour contracts, which is not something we do at Soha. Training, provision and servicing of equipment, GDPR etc. are also potential barriers.

Congratulations to Martyn who has just been appointed as a Board member and thank you for all the hard work and time you have put into being a member of the Forum. You will be missed by all.

4.Chief Executive update by Kate Wareing

External news

- Inflation has reduced slightly at 6.8% in July with CPI at 6.4%.
- Interest rates increased to 5.25% but they are climbing at a slower rate than what we have seen recently. Every time the interest rates increase by 1% our interest rates increase by eight hundred thousand pounds. We are currently not bidding for any new homes as we do not want to lock into any more long-term debt while rates are high. This will be rel looked at by the Board in October.
- Draft Consumer Standards have now been launched. This will come into our regulatory structure in March.

- Fire Safety Remediation Survey for 11 metre plus buildings for the RSH and DLUHC. We currently have no building over 11 meters tall. A report was submitted to our regulators this month with a nil return.
- RAAC concrete issues - focus is on schools at present, but we will be surveying some homes. 1950 to late 1980's properties will be looked at.
- NHF have launched a new campaign called "what will happen if we don't act" The lack of any long-term plan for housing has led to the housing crisis we are living through today. The number of children living in temporary accommodation will rise from 131,000 to 310,000 by 2045 and social housing lists will grow to 1.8 million an increase of more than 50%. By 2045 5.7 million household will be paying a third of their income into housing cost.

Internal news

- Martyn Thorne and Janet Crooks have been appointed to the Board and Jenny Ekelund has been appointed as new chair designate.
- Repairs work in progress currently stands at 1414, a reduction of 1000 jobs from last quarter. We currently do at least 450 repair jobs a week. As of today its 1370, active jobs waiting. We have a third contractor on our books now as we move closer to autumn.
- Retrofit programme has started with window replacement.
- Francis Curtis Court in Wallingford official opening is on 28th September opened by MP David Johnston.
- We have seen improvements in resident satisfaction for Q1 under the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- The locality teams have been busy with events including playdays, community chats and skip days as well as resident consultations, making our relationships with residents more personal and forming a good community link.
- The Makespace area at the Soha offices that has up till now been let out is now back in Soha's direct management. This space will be known as the Community Station. This space will be made available to community groups and resident events.

5. Draft Consumer Standards by Kate Wareing

These new standards are important to us as an organisation and important to you

for holding us to account, making sure that we do a good job in terms of service delivery to you.

Previously the Consumer Standards were regulated by our Board but what's changing is, these standards will now be regulated by the Social Housing regulator making sure we are complying with new Consumer Standards. We have a Consumer Standards tracker in place focussing on transparency, influence and accountability Standards, Safety and Quality Standards, Neighbourhood & Community standards, and Tenancy standards.

An internal document was shared with the Forum detailing how we will achieve a series of outcomes.

6. Update on Ipads/Tablets by Caius Galliers

Caius is an infostructure support engineer at Soha. Caius addressed the Forum by ensuring them that he is not only there to support Soha staff but also there for the members of the Forum too; following a few issues that have been raised with their tablets and iPad provided by Soha. Caius informed the Forum that potentially they will all be receiving new or updated devices with the same software installed as Soha employees that will be pre-configured.

7. Locality links to be identified by Members' Forum by Ann-Marie

Ann-Marie asked the Forum who would be interested in becoming a locality link for their local area. The reason this position has arisen is so there is a strong link between the Forum and the voice of the community. A report after each meeting between the Locality Lead and Locality Link will be taken to the next Members' Forum meeting for noting or discussion. The members present at the Forum meeting were interested in being Locality Links for their area, time depending.

8. Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Management report by Kate Waring

The management report was presented to the Forum showing how Soha are performing against targets that were agreed back in March. This data is shared with the Forum on a quarterly basis.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures Q1 was presented to the Forum showing the latest set of data comparisons compared to other housing providers who are asked the same set of questions by Acuity. All the ones showing in green show that Soha are within the top quartile of housing associations. The ones highlighted in red for Q1 show that we are just above the lower quartile so this is not where we want to be and are working hard to improve.

Comparison with other Housing Providers – Q1 2023-24 Rentals

Overall Results	75th Quartile	Median	25 th Quartile	Soha Q1
Satisfaction with overall service	81%	73%	63%	81%
Satisfaction with Soha providing a home that is safe	84%	77%	73%	87%
Satisfaction with well-maintained home	80%	70%	65%	80%
Satisfaction with repairs completed in the last 12 months	81%	75%	66%	68%
Satisfaction with time taken to complete repairs	78%	70%	58%	62%
Satisfaction with listen to views and act upon them	72%	60%	54%	69%
Satisfaction with communal areas	73%	66%	60%	61%
Satisfaction with ease of dealing with Soha	83%	74%	67%	83%
Satisfaction with handling of complaints	44%	34%	28%	44%
Soha is making a positive difference in my community	75%	67%	62%	77%
Keeping residents informed	79%	71%	67%	74%
Treating residents fairly and with respect	84%	76%	72%	84%
Satisfaction with ASB	66%	58%	53%	66%

9. Equality and Diversity Inclusion Strategy by Jude McCaffrey

This strategy will now come to the November Forum meeting following further works on the action plan.

10. Tenant Times update by David Reynolds

David Reynolds the Communications manager came to the Forum to get their feedback on the Tenant Times.

We have noticed that there is less and less engagement with the article. The publication as it is in its present form is not relevant anymore. The way forward we suggest is to move to an electronic or digital version of the article, but it would be

a targeted locality edition so its relevant geographically. Locality links having the option to feed into the articles. The majority of the Forum were happy for this change to happen.

11. Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct by Vic Breach

The updated terms of reference and Code of Conduct we distributed to the Forum to agree and sign.

13. Succession planning By Vic Breach

At the July meeting Peter raised that he would like to discuss succession planning. A list of elected Forum members went out with the Forum papers dating back to 2020 showing who was elected to give the Forum an idea of how much longer each person will be in post.

The current Members Forum Constitution states:

Forum Members shall be elected for a fixed term of office. The fixed term will be for a term of three years, unless the Members' Forum resolves otherwise. No fixed term shall be set which would cause the relevant Forum Member to serve for a term of more than nine consecutive years. Except where the Forum in its absolute discretion agrees that circumstances exist where it would be in the best interest of the Forum for a Forum Member to serve for a longer period. At the end of the three year period, all Forum Members who have come to the end of their fixed term will need to retire from the Forum. They can apply for re-election for a further three year fixed term, subject to serving a maximum of nine consecutive years. Natural vacancies may be filled with co-opted members.

Terms of Office for Members Forum revised 2021, to commence from 2020

April 2020 - AGM	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Start of 3 year fixed term	No elections	No elections	Any Member (whether existing Forum member or not) stands for election to the Forum for a 3- year fixed term only	No elections	No elections	Any Member (whether existing Forum member or not) stands for election to the Forum for a 3- year fixed term only	No elections

The Forum had a vote as to when the Terms of Office should be dated back to 2018 or 2020. The Forum was all in favour of 2020 with no abstentions. This item will be shared at the November Forum again for those that were not present.

14. Portfolio Holder update on repairs and maintenance by Ann-Marie

This item was not covered due to time restraints but will be covered at the November meeting.

15. Forum priorities for discussion time for next 12 What do you think the Forum needs time to discuss together, what are your priorities?

This item was not covered due to time restraints but will be covered at the November meeting.

Date of next meeting – November 16th

Signed..... Date.....
Chair of Members' Forum