

**Riverways Area Panel meeting
(Harpurhey, Miles Platting & Newton Heath and Ancoats & Clayton)**

**Minutes of meeting held on 29 March 2006
Starting at 6.30pm the Monsall Street Local Services Office**

Vice Chair: Sue Abbott

Present:

Sue Abbott (SA)	Vice Chair	Panel Member
Alice Needham (AN)		Panel Member
Pat Glazebrook (PG)		Panel Member
Michelle Blakeley (MB)		Board Member
Marlene Garnett (MG)		Panel Member
Raymond J Eaton (RJE)		Panel Member
Robert Doherty (RD)		Local Services Manager
Paul Maidment (PM)		Asset/Procurement Manager
Michael Lee (ML)		Principal Local Services Manager
Greig Lees (GL)		Investment Strategy Manager
Larry Patrick (LP)		Director Property services
Jim Lawson (JL)		Mechanical, Technical Team Leader
Rhonda Finlayson (RF)		Tenant Liaison Officer
Jayne Boote (JB)		PEP

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and introductions	
1.1	The Vice Chair welcomed all attendees to meeting. The meeting was inquorate, but it was agreed to continue. Everyone was invited to introduce themselves.	
2	Apologies for Absence	
2.1	Vera Salvatore, Ivy Graham, Kath Hope, Barbara Grey, Suzanne Rogers, Sheila Elliott, Brian Eadsforth, Jan Liddle, Cllr Paul Fairweather, Cllr June Hitchen	
3	Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters	
3.1	None Declared.	
4	Minutes of Last Meeting	
4.1	A query made about the future of TA's with Northwards, was omitted. Assurance was given that this would continue. MB queried Items 12, 14 and 17, where references were made to Kevin Taggart (TLO). This was amended to Rhonda Finlayson, TLO, and the minutes were then approved.	

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5	Matters Arising	
5.1	<p>Improvement Works LP advised Item 5.1 in the minutes was not strictly correct.. LP had responded directly to Cllr Mick Loughman about the Victoria Square query. This is now resolved. Details were given of the timescale when this programme was to be completed.</p>	
5.2	<p>Windows at Victoria Square Where the windows are defective they will be replaced. LP advised if in reasonable condition, the original Victorian windows have to be retained. A query was made about Anita St and George Leigh St properties. LP advised that where needed, these properties would get timber framed, double glazed windows, not uPVC.</p>	
5.3	<p>The Area Panel Development Plan GL advised this is still in draft form. Northwards will be working with Enlighten Consultants and will bring further details to the April meeting.</p>	GL
5.4	<p>Amended Leaflets (Voids) Larry Patrick The two repair leaflets presented previously are to be merged into one. Small changes have been made to the empty properties leaflet. The consensus was that all are satisfied with the content of the leaflet. LP also circulated the new Moving Home leaflet for information. This has been redesigned to make things clearer. LP explained that Centrica will be supplying Energy Efficient light bulbs for properties.</p>	Agreed
5.5	<p>Item 7 on the leaflet refers to exemptions to the recharge for repairs. MG queried if the criteria for the elderly is different. LP advised the list of jobs tenants are supposed to do themselves is contained in the two leaflets. It was also asked if there's going to be a change to the Tenancy Agreement. LP explained that there would be no change as MCC is still the landlord.</p>	
5.6	<p>LP circulated a paper regarding the proposed £200 charge to clear any properties and explained the rationale behind it. RJE objected to charging in principle, and said there needs to be a faster response. The rest of the group agreed with the proposals.</p>	
5.7	<p>The Moving Homes leaflet informs tenants about the charge and gives the telephone number for Operational Services who can collect waste.</p> <p>LP advised Northwards have a limited repairs budget, so if money can be recovered this will free up money for extra repairs.</p>	

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6	Minutes of 14th February Board Meeting	
6.1	RJE expressed concern at the reference to low attendance of the Riverways Panel meeting, which seemed a little harsh. Given they do this voluntarily, have personal commitments and other meetings there are genuine reasons for non attendance. The minutes were then noted.	Noted
7	Minutes of Other Panel Meetings	
7.1	Wilton Panel – 24 January 2006 Fourways Panel – 25 January 2006	Noted Noted
8	Tenant Compact Update PEP	
8.1	Jayne Boote confirmed PEP were commissioned by Northwards to work with a Tenant Participation Compact Task Group specifically formed to review the MCC Tenant Compact. Three Task Group meetings were held on 8th,15th and 22nd March 2006. MCC's Compact was measured against the Audit Commission's Core Standards.	
8.2	Mike Stevens explained that the draft compact is currently being written. This will come back to the Area Panel in April for comment prior to being submitted to the Board for approval in May.	
8.3	RF advised individual tenants and Contact Group representatives have attended involved the Tenant Participation Compact meetings.	
8.4	JB assured members the new Compact will not be fixed. It will be an easy guide with a clear decision making route. There is no intention to create duplication of groups. It will have the Northwards stamp and vision, and will be developed over time.	
9	Sub Committee Update	
9.1	First meeting of the sub-committees were held on 1st and 2 nd March. Each sub-committee has elected a Chair and agreed their Terms of Reference.	Noted
10	Local Area Performance Reports	
10.1	RD provided a comprehensive presentation on local performance figures of voids and lettings for Ancoats and Clayton, Miles Platting and Newton Heath Wards.	RD

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10.2	<p>Local Area Performance Reports (continued)</p> <p>Along with details of Neighbour Nuisance, ASBO, Injunctions and other legal action cases that are pending or ongoing.</p> <p>Major Works</p> <p>PM updated the group on major works. The Newton Heath contracts have been extended as tenants are very satisfied. Leaflets were circulated to show the information that will be sent to tenants notifying them of the work. Several queries were made about letters received by tenants prior to work at Christmas, notifying them work was starting. MG gave example of elderly tenant left distressed because work could not be carried out due to inability to get parts for a radiator. PM apologised for this communication breakdown. Ged Pollard is liaising with residents and the TA on this project.</p>	
11	<p>Gas Servicing – Larry Patrick</p> <p>11.1 We have a legal obligation as the landlord to check every property annually, even if no gas appliances are fitted. We have a robust system at present but need to make some improvements.</p> <p>11.2 Larry introduced Jim Lawson who explained about the no access procedure. Letters are now addressed to named tenants. Servicing will in future be done by appointment. 4 two-hour slots per day would be made available to tenants, and literature will also be available in community languages. Wednesday evening and Saturday morning appointments are being made available and the use of text messaging is being explored.</p> <p>11.3 Standard letters were circulated. An optional service of having your gas cooker serviced at the same time for a payment will be made available. With the 3rd letter a Health & Safety Leaflet will be enclosed. On letter 4 the last attempt by the contractor to get in, it will inform tenants about the use of a control limiter. This will be followed up by a personal visit by a Northwards employee, then a final letter sent by recorded delivery, warning of section 54 legal action</p>	
12	<p>Environmental Budget Allocation Briefing – Mike Stevens</p> <p>12.1 Subject to minimum 2* inspection in June there will be £250,000 to spend on Capital Environmental work in 2006/07. The work is separate to that available through the Revenue Budget. Mike would like suggestions from the Area Panels on how we should spend the</p>	

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12.2 12.3	<p>Environmental Budget Allocation Briefing – Mike Stevens (continued)</p> <p>money. Money can only be spent on physical improvements which produce a lasting benefit and must represent value for money. Spending should be sustainable in terms of future costs, and cannot include staff, purchases or repairs to individual properties.</p> <p>Details of suggested schemes will be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>The group were asked to think about priorities for improvement and let officers know at the next meeting.</p>	ALL
13	Complaints Procedure	
13.1 13.2	<p>GL talked through the three Complaints leaflets that will be placed in stands in the local services offices. The procedures are in line with those of the City Council.</p> <p>The leaflets will be A5 size and will have details of freepost address and different languages available. GL asked the group to consider any improvements and feedback any comment through Rhonda Finlayson</p>	ALL
14	<p>Tenant Inspectors Update – Steve Finegan</p> <p>14.1 GL gave a verbal update on the Tenant Inspectors scheme. There was an Open Day at Cheetham Hill LSO on 9 March. Northwards received expressions of interest via the website and telephone. To date, 9 have been short listed. Successful applicants will begin their training during April 2006.</p> <p>GL advised further expressions of interest to become Tenant Inspectors will be welcome, since positions are still available. Application can be made via the Northwards website.</p>	
15	<p>Rotation of Area Panel Members – Greig Lees</p> <p>15.1 This list was included for information only, as it was requested by another Area Panel. However, it will be of use for all Area Panel members. It was agreed at the last meeting that Kath Hope will serve one year and MG is to serve 2 years.</p>	
16	<p>Investment Procurement Update – Larry Patrick</p> <p>16.1 LP explained this was an important process as it was about selecting a partner to work with us to carry out the major improvement works</p>	

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16.2	<p>Investment Procurement Update – Larry Patrick (continued)</p> <p>and repairs to tenants’ homes. LP explained the timetable involved with start dates on site – end of August.</p> <p>The first year’s investment has already been approved by the Board. A Newsletter will be sent to everybody in the near future explaining when people can expect work to start in their area. Four draft leaflets were distributed by Paul Maidment (Window Replacement, Kitchen Improvement, Bathroom Improvement and Central Heating) these leaflets will inform everybody what is happening. A Service Standards leaflet will be available for the next meeting. Paul asked the group to consider any improvements to the leaflets and feed back as comments to him or to Rhonda Finlayson.</p>	
17	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>17.1 A query was made regarding the Inspection period. GL advised the Audit Commission may want to observe a panel meeting as well as possibly holding a focus group of TA representatives.</p>	
18	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>18.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 26 April at 6.30pm in the Red Room, Sure Start, at the North City Family, Fitness Centre, Near Asda, off Moston Lane, Harpurhey.</p>	
19	<p>End of Meeting</p> <p>19.1 The meeting closed at 8.50pm</p>	