

**Wilton Area Panel
(Cheetham Hill, Crumpsall, Higher Blackley)**

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 4th April 2006

**At the Cheetham Hill Community Room Local Services Office
Starting at 6.30pm
Chair: Sue Ratchford**

Present:	Anne Heywood	Panel Member
	Charles Taggart	Panel Member (Vice Chair)
	Sue Ratchford	Panel Member (Chair)
	Jim Burke	Panel Member
	Irene Madden	Panel Member
	Doris Leach	Panel Member
	Sue Pemberton	Panel Member
	Eileen Kelly	Panel Member
	Richard Lockwood	Board Member
	Ken Barnes	Panel Member and Councillor (Higher Blackley)
	Mike Stevens	Director of Neighbourhood Services
	Larry Patrick	Director of Property Services
	Liz Welsh	PEP
	Nicola Jones	Principal Local Services Manager
	Kevin Taggart	Tenant Liaison Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Introductions were made by everyone. A full Quorate was in attendance.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for Absences</p> <p>Apologies given by: Melanie Beckford, Steve Finegan, Greig Lees.</p>	
3	<p>Declaration of Interests/Confidential Matters</p> <p>None Declared.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting</p> <p>Apologies were omitted for Richard Lockwood. The minutes were agreed.</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Area Panel Development Plan Enlighten have started the Development Plan. First will be the Board and then the Panel: a draft will be available for the next Panel Meeting.</p> <p>Amended Leaflets (Voids) Repairs Leaflet has been merged into two. Void Standards Leaflet was circulated at the meeting. Sections have been amalgamated - clearer information and additional items included based on feedback from the Area Panels. Coun Ken Barnes asked about fencing and gates being repaired and replaced as standard on all voids. He asked could this be passed to the Board for consideration: a vote was taken and this was carried on the Chair's casting vote. LP suggested that the surveyors on inspection over the next two months could cost this up. The leaflet in its current form was agreed in the meantime; as was the paper circulated by LP explaining the proposed £200 charge for cleaning empty properties (the exemptions to this were noted).</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Board Meeting Minutes (for Noting)</p> <p>The panel noted the minutes held on 14th February 2006.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Minutes of Other Panel Meetings</p> <p>Fourways Panel 25/01/06 were noted. Riverways Panel 25/01/06. Jim Burke asked about point 5.2 - the problem with Victoria Square. LP explained the problem was to do with the windows with it being a listed building.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>8</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p>	<p>Tenant Compact Update –PEP</p> <p>Liz Welsh from PEP talked through the compact report.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Jim Burke asked about grants – how much would be available? Mike Stevens said the detail of this will be considered by a Resident Involvement Task Group. In the meantime the total amount available is the same as before Northwards took over management.</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
9	<p>Sub-Committee Updates – Greig Lees</p> <p>9.1 A total of 4 Sub-Committees were established at meetings held on March 1st & 2nd. Terms of Reference have been agreed, and work is under way to develop their work programme.</p>	
10	<p>Local Area Performance Reports – Nicola Jones</p> <p>10.1 Performance Management Framework has almost been agreed with the Council and will go to the Board next week.</p> <p>10.2 Coun Ken Barnes wanted to know do management monitor reports on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis. Mike Stevens said that this varied according to what was being monitored – however that a single report for Council, Area Panels, Sub-Committees and Board will be prepared on a monthly basis, and it is intended that a copy will be available for the next meeting. A new computer system is to be introduced in October, which should improve the quality of information even further.</p> <p>10.3 Voids: Coun Ken Barnes wanted to know why houses set aside for Asylum Seekers were left empty for months. Mike Stevens replied that he had a meeting with the Asylum Team next week and would report back on this to the next meeting.</p> <p>10.4 Larry Patrick spoke about Major Works: there will be a traffic-light report regarding progress on schemes.</p> <p>10.5 An Anti-Social Behaviour issue was raised by Jim Burke – this is being looked-into by Nicola Jones.</p>	
11	<p>Home Finder - Mike Stevens</p> <p>11.1 MS circulated a pack of information about Choice Based Lettings, and asked people to look at this before the next meeting for a more detailed discussion then.</p>	
12	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour – Mike Stevens</p> <p>12.1 Guidance to staff is being reviewed, including in the light of concerns raised at the last meeting. This should be completed in May. Better monitoring of Anti Social Behaviour will be possible when new computer system is introduced in October. Jim Burke wanted to know what support would be given to people affected by Neighbour Nuisance. Nicola Jones replied that as now an Action Plan is drawn up for each case and agreed with the complainant.</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
<p>13</p> <p>13.1</p> <p>13.2</p> <p>13.3</p> <p>13.4</p>	<p>Gas Servicing – Larry Patrick</p> <p>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>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>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> <p>Sue Pemberton asked who appointments be adhered to, as people work. Larry replied that they would.</p> <p>Coun Ken Barnes asked who monitored the contractor's performance: Larry Patrick replied that we do and we will report on performance at future meetings. Coun Barnes also asked could people who had already purchased their home from the council have work carried out as well? LP said he would look into this – but he was clear that this couldn't be at the expense of performance on the work we were legally obliged to carry out on homes for which we are responsible.</p>	
<p>14</p> <p>14.1</p> <p>14.2</p>	<p>Environmental Budget Allocation Briefing – Nicola Jones</p> <p>A briefing note was distributed round the meeting. £250,000 has been agreed to spend on Capital Environmental work in 2006/2007 subject to minimum 2* inspection. The work is separate to that available through the Revenue Budget. Nicola would like suggestions from the Area Panels on how we should spend the money. Money can only be spent on lasting physical improvements and not "one-offs" and must represent value for money. It cannot be spent on staff, purchases, or repairs to individual properties and has to be sustainable and have a lasting effect on the area.</p> <p>Anne Heywood asked how the figures were divided between the 3 Area Panels. Larry Patrick said it was based on the housing stock in each area.</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
<p>15</p> <p>15.1</p> <p>15.2</p> <p>15.3</p>	<p>Complaints Procedure – Steve Finegan</p> <p>All leaflets are to be “Northwardsised”, at the moment they are at a draft stage. Mike Stevens said these will have a Freepost address.</p> <p>It had been suggested that we move the different languages from the back sheet to the inside cover. Sue Pemberton said that it was easier to look on the back instead of routing through a booklet: it was agreed that this would be preferable.</p> <p>When ready a specific stand will be displayed in the Local Services Office. The procedures are in line with these of the City Council.</p>	
<p>16</p> <p>16.1</p> <p>16.2</p>	<p>Tenant Inspectors Feedback – Steve Finegan</p> <p>To date we have had 9 people short-listed. There will be informal interviews and training will begin for successful candidates. Tenants can still express an interest via the Northwards web site or respond to a leaflet/poster. Inspection reports will be fed back to the Panel each month.</p> <p>Also raised was that we are now looking to recruit Mystery Shoppers and over the next month groups will be contacted to see what volunteers we can find to test our services.</p>	
<p>17</p> <p>17.1</p> <p>17.2</p>	<p>Area Panel Membership/Rotation – Greig Lees</p> <p>Details of all Panels were enclosed, giving length of time served by each Panel Member.</p> <p>Two names had been suggested for the Leaseholder position available on the Panel – contact will be made with these people to see if they are interested.</p>	
<p>18</p> <p>18.1</p> <p>18.2</p>	<p>Investment/Procurement Update – Larry Patrick</p> <p>LP explained that this was an important process as it was about selecting a partner to work with us to carry out major improvement works and repairs on tenants homes. Start dates on site – end of August.</p> <p>Investment: The first year's investment has 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.</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
18.3	Leaflets were distributed in draft form (Window Replacement, Kitchen Improvements, Bathroom Improvements and Central Heating). These leaflets are to inform tenants what to expect when work starts. A Service Standards leaflet will be available for the next meeting.	
19	Any Other Business	
19.1	Anne Heywood asked about the heavy vehicles that were using Temple Square early in a morning working on the new Health Centre. Were there specific times that work should begin and end? Larry replied that it was probably a contractor for the Primary Health Care Trust and a board should be displayed with a contact phone number on. Nicola Jones said she would look into the matter on Anne's behalf.	
19.2	Sue Ratchford mentioned that Northwards Housing would be holding an Open Day at Hexagon Tower on Friday, April 7th from 12pm until 4pm: all welcome.	
	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 April at 6.30pm at The Cheetham Local Services Office, 49 Cheetham Hill Road, Cheetham.</p>	
	<p>End of Meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed 8.45pm</p>	