

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

**Minutes of meeting held at 6:30pm Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007  
At the Community Room Cheetham Hill Local Services Office**

**Chair: Sue Ratchford**

**Present:**

Sue Ratchford (SR)	Panel Member
Charles Taggart (CT)	Panel Member (Vice-chair)
Mark Bainbridge (MaB)	Panel Member
Jim Burke (JB)	Panel Member
Anne Heywood (AH)	Panel Member
Mike Bolshaw (MiB)	Panel Member
Joan Wilson (JW)	Panel Member
Melanie Beckford (MeB)	Panel Member
Naeem Ul Hassan (NUH)	Panel Member and Councillor (Cheetham)
Ken Barnes (KB)	Panel Member and Councillor (Higher Blackley)
Mike Stevens (MS)	Director of Neighbourhood Services
Claire Tyrrell (CT)	Principal Local Services Manager
Nicola Holmes (NH)	Northwards, Resident Involvement Officer
Tony Budgett (TB)	Northwards, Surveying Manager
Georgina Muir (GM)	Observer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>A full Quorate was in attendance. Introductions were made by everyone.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absences</b></p> <p>Apologies received by: Richard Lockwood, Diane Roberts</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Declaration of Interests/Confidential Matters</b></p> <p>Item 4b and 12 declared as confidential.</p>	
<b>3a</b>	<p><b>Vacancy</b></p> <p>NH explained that Georgina Muir had expressed interest in the vacant tenant position on the Panel. Joan Wilson proposed her for this position</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<p>Jim Burke seconded the nomination. There were no objections and Georgina was welcomed to the Wilton Panel.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b>	
<b>A</b>	Minutes from the 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2006 agreed	Agreed
<b>B</b>	<p>Confidential minutes from the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006 agreed. NH explained that she had produced a leaflet especially aimed at encouraging people in Crumpsall to get involved. She would work with the NSO on this.</p>	Agreed
<b>5</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
	<p>7.3 AH asked if it was true that owner occupiers living in the middle of a roofing home improvement scheme would get their roofs done for free. MaB replied that he had recently looked into this and no they would not be getting roofs for free.</p>	
	<p>7.5 Anne asked if the website with searchable facilities for the home improvements is up and running yet. MS replied that it is not up and running at the moment but that it will be in early February.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Repairs Update</b>	
	TB circulated the local performance indicators report for the Wilton Panel and invited questions.	
7.1	<p>KB commented that the people who usually fill in the tenant reply forms will generally be the ones who are in some way unhappy with the work. The people that are happy do not generally reply. TB said that he would agree with this comment. MS replied that we do get significant response rates and that they do mostly indicate Northwards are performing well and most people who reply are satisfied. He said that more information on the actual response rates can be presented to the Panel.</p>	TB
7.2	GM asked how Northwards records and monitors the performance of the out of hours emergency service. MS said that information about this would be brought back to the next meeting.	TB
7.3	<p>GM asked if a variation order is a common occurrence. TB replied that an operative is required to do any additional works on site if it is reasonable and possible. If not they are required to ring the surveyors and follow the order for work through. GM commented that in her experience this does not always happen. JW commented that in her experience variation orders went smoothly.</p>	

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7.4	<p>JW brought up the issue of vacating tenants leaving properties in a mess. MS explained that Northwards does have procedures for dealing with this, but was looking at how to make further improvements. MS explained that a report on this issue would be brought to a future Panel.</p> <p>MaB commented that people seem to be able to cause damage to their properties and then get re -housed in the future. MS explained about the review list procedure.</p> <p>JB thought that new tenants should be shown around the house by a member of staff and be made to sign to keep it in that condition. MS and CT explained that this does now happen.</p>	
7.5	<p>GM asked how many people take up the offer of help with decorating. TB explained he was not sure of the numbers. MS explained that Northwards are intending to review the whole void process, and this would be discussed at a future meeting.</p>	
6	<p><b>HIP Environmental Works</b></p> <p>6.1 NH explained that consultation is being undertaken for the environmental works in Cheetham Hill. The order is currently being raised with contractor and works are to commence February / March (actual dates subject to confirmation).</p> <p>6.2 MS added that at the next meeting Matt Roberts will be coming along with further details and also to discuss drawing up a structured 2 year plan for the next phase of environmental works.</p>	
8	<p><b>PLSM Update</b></p> <p>7.1 CT introduced herself as the new Principal Local Services Manager for the Wilton Area. She gave an update on local issues.</p> <p>7.2 KB asked about the effects of last week's storm. CT explained that the worst damage was on Tweedle Hill Road. Northwards are currently looking into insurance claims and whether to have one claim for the whole of Northwards or to break the claims down. KB asked what he should tell tenants with regard to replacing fencing. CT replied that she would need to get back to KB with the details. MeB reported two trees that had been blown down in the storm and were still blocking the path today. CT said she would follow it up with the environment officer.</p>	<p>CT</p> <p>CT</p>

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7.3	<p>GM commented that she would like to see the building on Walker Road used as a drop in centre.</p> <p>KB said that this would be subject to the wider plans for the area.</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p>	<p><b>Customer Satisfaction Survey</b></p> <p>MS invited questions and comments on the report or action plan.</p> <p>MaB asked if people could still continue to pay rent at the post office if direct debit is brought in. MS explained that direct debit will be an extra way to pay and that people will still be able to pay at the post office. AH commented that the department of work and pensions is encouraging people to open bank accounts rather than collect benefits at the post office.</p> <p>MiB brought attention the fact that leaseholders are underrepresented. He thought it could be due to a mistake in the mail out of the surveys as he himself never received one. MS explained that Northwards needs to do more to engage with leaseholders in general and have now set up a leaseholder's focus group.</p> <p>MaB asked if the ASB results could be broken down further. MS explained that Northwards are going to do a follow up survey to the people who responded to the ASB question.</p>	
10	<p><b>Tenant Inspectors</b></p> <p>MS invited questions or comments on the Tenant Inspectors report.</p> <p>JW explained that the inspections are going very well. Improvement as a result of the inspections are moving at a fast rate. One of the things she has witnessed is how common it is for a vacating tenant to leave a property in a mess, as discussed earlier in the meeting. KB asked who picks the properties for inspection. JW explained that the tenant inspectors themselves do. MeB commented that it would be a good idea to fine people for vandalism, similar to what happens when people leave rubbish behind.</p>	
11	<p><b>Inspection update</b></p> <p>NH gave the Panel members a letter from Robin Lawler explaining the stars.</p>	

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11.1	<p>MS informed the meeting that it is now official that Northwards have achieved a two star rating from the audit commission. This will release the £131m. He explained that the inspectors will probably come back in 12 – 18 months: this needs to be decided by the Board and agreed by the Housing Inspectorate.</p> <p>MaB asked if more money is awarded for 3 stars.</p> <p>MS explained that more money is not awarded for 3 stars but that it is possible that 3 stars bring extra freedoms and it may happen in the future that more financial flexibility will become available.</p> <p>MS explained that the report was very positive about the Area Panels.</p> <p>AH asked if it was possible that the money would run out before 2010 due to inflation and some people could be left without home improvements.</p> <p>MS explained that the money is released in sections and there is an agreed process between ALMO's and the Government which will make sure that this doesn't happen.</p>	
11.2	<p>JB asked if Northwards had been approached by the government and asked if they would extend the Decent Home Improvements time frame.</p> <p>MS explained that yes the Northwards had been asked – in common with other ALMOs - but they have not agreed to extending the Home Improvements past 2010. Discussions about this are continuing.</p> <p>MS said that a summary of the inspection report would be made available.</p>	MS
11.3	<p>MaB wondered if Northwards are getting value for money on the Home Improvements. For instance a 1 year guarantee on the new roofs is not much.</p> <p>NH said she would check this issue with Matt Roberts.</p>	NH
11.4	<p>MB commented that the improvement scheme on Cooper Lane does not appear to be managed properly. Decisions have been made that do not make sense, for instance a new gate has been put in but no dropped kerb.</p> <p>GM commented that there was a similar situation on Erskine Road and intends to replace her new wall with privets because she is unhappy with the work.</p> <p>MS said he would arrange for both of these issues to be looked into.</p>	MS
12	<p><b>Constitution Review</b></p> <p>MS explained that there is a difference in the preferences between the Area Panels. The Board decided that they would invite two members of each panel to form a working group in order to look at the constitution. The group will report back to a meeting of all 3 Panels; then there would be a report back to the Board, following which the</p>	

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	<p>Board will consider the matter again.  Mike Bolshaw and Anne Heywood volunteered to be on the working group.  KB asked why each Panel could not have its own constitution  MS explained that this was not considered good practice as there should be a common set of rules that everyone understands. However this may be something that the group would like to debate.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Any other Business</b>	
11.1	<p><u>Business Plan</u>  MS reminded Panel members of the Business Plan meeting on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2007.  Members wishing to come:  Joan Wilson  Melanie Beckford  Sue Ratchford  Anne Heywood  Georgina Muir  Charles Taggart</p> <p>Mark Bainbridge expressed a wish to be involved but was unable to make Saturday morning meetings.</p>	
11.2	<p>JW spoke of a member of Northwards staff coming to her block of flats to check for cavity wall insulation. There is confusion over whether the flats have insulation or not.  MS said he would follow it up.</p>	MS
	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	<p>The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 6.30pm at White Moss Local Services.</p>	
	<b>End of Meeting</b>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 8:25pm</p>	