

Northwards Housing Panel Meeting Minutes

Panel: Wilton

Date: 21 October 2008

6.45 p.m. to 8.45 p.m

Cheetham Hill Local Services Office, Community Room

Chair: Anne Heywood

Attendance:

Anne Heywood (AH)	Panel Member (Chair)
Charles Taggart (CT)	Panel Member (Vice-chair)
Mike Bolshaw (MiB)	Panel Member
Jim Burke (JB)	Panel Member
Joan Wilson (JW)	Panel Member
Sue Ratchford (SR)	Panel Member
Mark Bainbridge (MaB)	Panel Member
Melanie Beckford (MeB)	Panel Member
Ken Barnes (KB)	Panel Member
Naeem Ul Hassan (NuH)	Panel Member
Jacqui Tomlinson (JT)	Local Services Manager
Steve Kirkham (SK)	Home Improvement Team Leader
Claire Tyrrell (CMT)	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Larry Patrick (LP)	Director of Property Services
Arthur Kay (AK)	Street Scene Services
Gary Walsh (GW)	Repairs Manager
Julie Goreham (JG)	Resident Involvement Officer
Mavis Wilkinson (MW)	Observer
Susan Edgar (SE)	Observer
Anne Doyle (AD)	Observer
Carol Connolly (CC)	Observer

From 6.15pm refreshments were provided and officers were available to answer questions. The AGM commenced 6.45pm, followed by the panel meeting

Item	Description	Action
1	Welcome and introductions	
1.1	a) The panel agreed that AH would continue as Chair during the October meeting It was decided to move forward to Item 6.	
6.	Street Scene Services (Arthur Kay)	
6.1	AK gave an overview of the service that Street Scene provide to Northwards.	
6.2	MiB asked if there was a master plan for dealing with the leaves. AK explained that there was and that work was underway. MiB asked if collected leaves are composted. AK replied that they send very little to landfill.	
6.3	KB felt that the flower beds are a mess, and had not been weeded during the summer. He expressed concern that no-	

	one knows what level of service to expect. JW was also concerned that residents groups do not know who to ask for what. AK explained that the overall idea of In Bloom is that residents take ownership of flower beds. AK needs to be informed about any new beds, e.g. if bidding for CASH grants, to ensure that these can be added to the maintenance schedule. CMT explained that previously if a new area came through she was not informed, but now she will be informed and can bring in AK	
6.4	KB expressed concerns that grass cuttings are not collected following mowing. AK explained that the cuttings cannot be collected as they would require storage and even temporary storage is expensive due to the breakdown of the cuttings. It is better for the environment to cut and drop the cuttings. AK recognised that clumping of grass is unsightly. CT and JW asked about the use of green bins/compost bins. LP stated that some councils do collect grass and asked about the costs. He also felt that if the grass is cut frequently the cuttings are shorter and less obtrusive. LP explained that grounds maintenance was the biggest criticism in the tenant's survey. AK explained that usually there are just problems with large cuttings early and late in the season, and that they aim for 10 day cuts, but it has been a difficult year with the weather. AK will cost-up cutting collection again.	
6.5	KB asked who pays for the service. LP explained that it comes out of the central Manchester City Council budget. Changes to the schedule come out of Northwards Budget. AK explained that they were striving for more improvements to the estates	
6.6	SE expressed concern that mowers were damaging young trees in Lower Crumpsall. The trees have no guards. AK stressed that he needed to be kept informed so that staff could be briefed.	
6.7	AK invited members of the panel to visit Street Scene Services at Grimshaw Lane for further details on the scheme. CMT suggested that this be included in the next panel study visit. AK can be contacted on 205 6742.	
1.	Welcome & Introductions Confirm Quorate	
1.2	b) CMT asked for views from the panel about the process for selecting the chair and vice chair of the panel. The panel agreed that those interested in either position should inform JG who would circulate ballot papers which can be brought to the next meeting, and counted at the beginning of the meeting so that the new chair can start that evening. Those interested should provide some brief information about their suitability for the role.	JG
1.3	c) & d) Quorate was confirmed and meeting rules explained	
2.	Apologies for Absences	
2.1	Apologies had been received from Mike Stevens	
3.	Declaration of Interests/Confidential Matters	

3.1	No confidential items were discussed. No Declarations of Interest were made.	
4.	Minutes of last meeting 16 September 2008	
4.1	The minutes were approved.	
5.	Matters arising	
5.1	<i>Item 6.1</i> MiB asked if Elaine Gladstone had received the panel's good wishes. CMT and JT confirmed that these had been passed on	
5.2	<i>Item 14.1</i> MaB thanked CMT for her support, and explained that he planned to continue on the panel. AH stated on behalf of the panel that she was pleased he would be staying	
5.3	<i>Item 9.13</i> KB reported that the extreme sports event had gone well and Northwards had gained valuable publicity. He thanked AH for opening the event.	
7.	Repairs Quarterly Update	
7.1	GW distributed the latest results on satisfaction around repairs. There are more smiley faces reflecting the work with Manchester Working to keep improving the service.	
7.2	MaB asked why there is a high figure for August for NHL905 (average cost per empty property). LP explained that this was because Manchester Working had not processed all invoices when the figures were given so the average was based on a small number of properties, including one which had been costly and skewed the results. With all properties included this figure becomes approx £2630.	
8.	Major Environmental Works Update (Steve Kirkham/Claire Tyrrell)	
8.1	SK explained that there would be an event for further consultation on Centaur Way on Monday 27 October.	
8.2	SK explained that work on the Queens Road Maisonettes is complete except for one gate and some turf. AH asked if a notice can be put on the gate to ask people not to park in front of it. MW/SE asked SK for information on the photovoltaic cells, which SK gave and explained they are thinking of rolling the technology out.	JT
8.3	JW asked about whether the replacement of communal doors and windows in communal areas would be carried out as part of the Munn Road scheme. SK confirmed that the doors are being programmed in; window replacement will take place next year.	
8.4	KB asked how the car parking schemes were progressing, how faults to boilers, etc fitted by contractors are dealt with and about the total spend of environmental projects and if the money will be spent in time. SK explained that there is no problem with rolling spend forward should there be an under spend. On Call are aware of schemes being carried out by contractors and there is a 6 month period after contractors have completed works in which they are responsible for any	

	repairs. AH asked if On Call can pass on details of the repair to contractor rather than the resident have to phone them. LP explained that this is what should happen, and if it does not then he will raise it with the On Call Manager.	
8.5	SK and JG explained that in Hendham Vale they are awaiting a sign, which permission is being sought to site. A planting day will take place on 28 October for the planters the scheme has funded.	
8.6	SK explained that the car parking schemes are going through the planning process. KB stated that two of the schemes look positive, but there is some uncertainty around Weldon Drive. CMT explained that consultation letters on this scheme should have gone out.	
8.7	SK explained that the Sandyhill Court scheme is complete and has had good feedback. Central house should complete next week	
8.8	SK explained that Temple Square was complete. AH said that there were still some broken flags, but those that are a trip hazard have been replaced.	
8.9	SK explained that the play area on the Appleford estate would be reinstated after use as a compound facility, by December.	
8.10	MaB highlighted an issue on p.11 that if site investigations take place before speaking to residents they are not happy. SK explained that letters had been sent out prior to works.	
8.11	MaB asked about the opportunity to pay for additional improvement works, and asked if this can be done retrospectively. SK explained that project managers know about this, and are being asked to promote it more, and that retrospective works may be difficult and more costly.	
8.12	Pot of Gold CMT explained that £7000 of the Higher Blackley money has gone to the Extreme Sports event where JG had obtained feedback from 50 attendees which will influence the spend of the other £3000. A Cheetham and Crumpsall scheme will see the money distributed at an event in November.	
8.13	Partnership with British Gas British Gas have £6000 to spend on community initiatives in the area. Panel members should bring project ideas to the next meeting to make a decision on which to fund.	ALL
8.14	CMT explained that ideas for the environmental schemes for the panel must be in by Monday so they can be costed up, prior to a bus tour of the potential schemes before the next panel meeting. SK explained that there will be around £150,000 for the 2009-2010 with approx £220,000 for 2010-2011. LP explained that the scheme was originally a 3 year scheme, but has been extended. KB felt the panel should look to fund a 2 year programme.	
9.	LSM Update (Jacqui Tomlinson)	
9.1	JT distributed the voids figures and explained that the high ready to let figure is due to a large number of people leaving their properties in August. The team have halved the re-let time, and are maintaining a 3 day turnaround of letting properties. CMT explained that the push on rent arrears will	

	result in some evictions for those not paying rent and thus higher voids figures over the coming months. JW asked how long re-lets are taking. JT explained it is an average of 39 days from the hand-in of keys.	
9.2	JT reported that there are currently 23 cases with the Anti-social behaviour team. There is 1 injunction in Cheetham, 1 notice to seek possession in Higher Blackley, there has been 1 ASBO obtained, 1 interim ASBO and 1 ASBO warning undertaken, and 1 seizure of equipment in Crumpsall.	
9.3	MaB said that he had recently visited the Cheetham office and been impressed by the way Bernadette Carding and Christine Martin-O'Hara had dealt with some customers.	
10.	Community Update and Governance (Julie Goreham)	
10.1	JG distributed the October issue of Revolve and invited articles for the November issue, which need to be submitted by the Friday before the next panel meeting	
10.2	JG welcomed Mavis Wilkinson who had been elected to fill the tenant vacancy.	
10.3	There had been no requests to observe the panel at future meetings	
10.4	JG reported that dates for the Fourways and Wilton study visits are yet to be confirmed, and she will bring an update to the next meeting. CMT outlined plans for the visit to potential environmental works projects and explained that it would be in the morning of the 10, 11 or 12 November. JG will ring around to find people's availability and the visit will be organised in line with the majority of people.	JG
10.5	JG explained that the board AGM had gone well, and that Marjan Bazargan from Temple Square was elected onto the board, Michelle Carmichael was reappointed, and Paul Seymour and David Leah were formally appointed as independent board members. JG added congratulations to JB for his award and offered to give a list to all award winners to anyone who wished to see it.	
10.6	JG explained that the panel action plans would be being brought back to the panel for further discussion	
10.7	MiB asked about the leaseholder's forum. CMT explained that no-one attended from the Wilton panel, so he could attend if he wished. Currently 7-8 people attend regularly.	
10.8	JG asked if panel members would be happy to have a list of contact details for panel members to share amongst the panel. Most were in agreement, JG to compile a list of details of those who are willing to be included.	JG
11.	Re-inspection Update (Larry Patrick)	
11.1	LP reported that the self assessment had been returned on time, and the inspectors would be present from 19-28 November. The standards for assessment have changed slightly since the first inspection. The inspection action plan following the last inspection is close to completion. There will be a different inspection team from last time; the inspectors will	

	look at every aspect of the service. The inspectors will chose which tenants representatives they meet. They will have mystery shoppers carrying out investigations up to and during the inspection.	
11.2	MiB asked what would happen if Northwards obtains 3 stars. LP explained that it means that reinspection would not take place for 3 years, that only 3* ALMOs can build new stock, and also it would have benefits for the reputation of Northwards.	
11.3	MaB asked if Northwards would look to build new properties once the decent homes standards have been met. LP felt that there was some stock that Northwards would seek to rebuild. MiB asked if Northwards can borrow money. LP explained that this cannot be done. Money is only channelled through the council as this way VAT does not have to be paid which saves money in interest payments while waiting for getting VAT back.	
12	Any other business	
12.1	KB felt that Arthur Kay's presentation had left some questions unanswered and if there is a Service Level Agreement. CMT explained that there is not one in place but there is now a set of standards. KB asked that this be made available to the panel. CMT to bring to next meeting. CMT explained that Street Scene Services will be supervising some of the community payback teams to bring grounds back up to standard. These areas will then be added into the maintenance schedule.	CMT
12.2	CMT asked the panel if they want a social event at Christmas. There was an expectation that an event would take place, but the annual event had taken place in July. She explained that Whitemoss Road Local Services office had been booked for the afternoon of 18 December and if the panel were in agreement a "pot luck" lunch could be arranged with panel members and staff providing food.	
12.3	AD and CC thanked CMT and others at Northwards for their help at a clean-up/planting day for the Hightown Residents Association.	
13.	Date and time of next meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Performance Management Briefing – 4 November b) Area Panel meeting – 19 November, Whitemoss Road Local Services Office c) Christmas social 18 December 	

Meeting closed at 8.47pm