

Northwards Housing Panel Meeting Minutes

Panel:Riverways

Date: 18TH June 2008

4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Venue: Carrioca Business Centre, Sawley Road, Miles Platting

Chair: Kath Hope

Vice Chair: Pat Glazebrook

Attendance:

Marlene Garnett (MG)	Panel Member
Ann McBride (AM)	Panel Member
Alice Needham (AN)	Panel Member
Pat Glazebrook (PG)	Panel Member
Kath Hope (KH)	Panel Member
Barbara Grey (BG)	Panel Member
Alison Foster (AF)	Head of Finance
Ray Morgan (RM)	Deputy Rent Recovery Manager
Larry Patrick (LP)	Director of Property Services
Debra Dalton (DD)	Performance Improvement Officer
Andy Wood (AW)	Head of Responsive and Planned Repairs
Dave Collier (DC)	Repairs Services Manager
Matt Jarrott (MJ)	Home Improvement Manager
Paul Blackmore (PB)	Home Improvement Services Manager
Emma Foster (EF)	Head of Neighbourhood Services (Riverways)
Rob Doherty (RD)	Local Services Manager
Sharon McBride (SM)	Resident Involvement Officer (Minutes)

Item	Description	Action
1.	Refreshments, questions to Officers	

Meeting Commenced: 4.00pm

Item	Description	Action
2.	Welcome & Introductions Confirm Quorate.	
2.1	Chair welcomed all attendees at meeting. Meeting was quorate.	
3.	Apologies for Absences	
3.1	Apologies received from Rose McCarton, Steve St Pierre and Joan Toomey.	

4.	Declaration of Interests/Confidential Matters	
4.1	EF reported that there has been no observer requests.	
5.	Minutes of the Last Meeting – 21 May 2008 – Agreed as a true record 21 May 2008 (Confidential) – Agreed as a true record.	
6.	Matters Arising	
6.1	7.1 – EF explained that Anne Duffield will be arranging a separate meeting with the Panel for Re-housing and Allocations.	AD
6.2	16 (AOB) – KH had previously requested if someone from the rents team could contact her regarding a issue concerning letters being generated to tenants requesting payment for rent arrears when they are not in arrears.	
6.3	AF explained that she and RM had come to the meeting to explain this issue. KH explained that she had eventually got to the bottom of the issue as it turned out to be a mistake within the computer system. However, KH pointed out that she was able to investigate this but was concerned about vulnerable tenants that may not be able to understand or deal with this problem which could be upsetting and worrying to them. AF apologised for this and RM offered to reinvestigate this. RM explained that it is unlikely that a tenant could reach £500 in arrears without Northwards picking up on this first and contacting the tenant. RM explained that the introduction of the new CIVICA computer system had experienced problems resulting in “policy run” lists being produced in advance of housing benefits being received which in turn creates “case work”. This generates stage 1 letters. RM added that there had been a week where this had happened and now the offices have been made aware and it has been flagged up with CIVICA to rectify the problem.	
6.4	Discussions took place about the changing systems of paying rent and LP explained about the benefits of the new Rent Cards.	
6.5	RM also informed the Panel that their team also assists Tenants with other services such as benefit advice. RM explained that it’s about working with Northwards. In the case where Tenants refuse to engage when issues are flagged up with rents then Northwards has to go down the legal route. RM gave the direct telephone contact number for rents team: 0161 795 1881 and added that they are looking at rolling out a rent payment location in Newton Heath (because of the distance from Monsall Office), The	

	<p>Sure Start Centre on Droylesdon Road is being considered. The Panel thought this was a good idea. AF added that Northwards will be getting a trailer in the near future to make Northwards more accessible. AF asked that if they can think of any other queries relating to the rents issue then please inform EF or SM who will flag this up.</p>	
7.	<p>International Day – 29 May – Abraham Moss</p> <p>7.1 EF explained that Tara Kelly, Equality and Diversity Officer had previously come to all of the Area Panels to invite Panel members to the International Day. EF said she had been asked by the Chair of the Northwards Board to convey the disappointment that no Panel Members attended and felt that they missed a good opportunity to people involved in hard to reach groups. EF added that she understands that Panel members are volunteers and give up a lot of their time but asked if they could consider at least one or two members attending an event like this in the future and to just bear in mind its' importance.</p>	
8.	<p>Environmental Works Update</p> <p>8.1 MJ issued the Environmental Works update. KH hoped that the Queensferry Scheme will be completed by August, MJ affirmed this would be the case.</p> <p>8.2 AM expressed that she was really pleased with the Winston Road landscaping and metal fencing.</p> <p>8.3 MJ explained that there is a possibility for lottery funding for the Kingsbridge Play area. This will mean that the money already put aside for the scheme can be used elsewhere. The Panel thought this was a good idea. MJ added that there is also a possibility of adding to the funding application the Orford Road and Eastmoor Drive Schemes, KH asked MJ to report back to the Panel on progress.</p> <p>8.4 EF explained that there had been one Resident that had objected to the Orford Road scheme which Leisure services are dealing with. The work has started. KH asked for an update.</p> <p>8.5 EF informed the Panel that a site has not been agreed yet for the Troydale Play area, this will depend on the type of facilities that will be put there. Groundworks will be liaising with residents to discuss options.</p> <p>8.6 MG asked if home-owners will be consulted on the Culcheth Lane Scheme, MJ affirmed that this would be the case.</p> <p>8.7 MJ affirmed that an “apron” will be designed into the</p>	<p>MJ</p> <p>MJ</p>

	Smithfield Car park barrier.	
9.	Major Works Update – Paul Blackmore	
9.1	PB issued the Home Improvement Project summary which demonstrated that overall all the schemes that had been completed tenants were comfortable with the outcome.	
9.2	There had been some concerns with the window schemes in Winston Road but PB explained that this was being addressed.	
10.	LSM Update – Rob Doherty	
10.1	RB explained that there are currently 19 cases with the ASBAT team and he went through the highlights.	
10.2	RB highlighted that in comparison with June 2007 there is a reduction of 52 voids this year. This year it is 70, last year was 132 which is excellent, indicating that less properties are being left unoccupied.	
10.3	Discussions took place regarding activities and facilities for young people in the Riverways area. EF explained that there is a massive piece of work being undertaken with the Wardens engaging primary school children about the effects of ASB on themselves, families, their community and their future and it has been well received. EF added that in the future there could be some scope for the junior wardens going onto the estates with the wardens assisting in events etc. MG gave an update on the ECO youth and how well they have done. MG added it's about believing in young people.	
11.	Community update and Governance – Sharon McBride/Emma Foster	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) SM issued Revolve and asked the Panel that if they would like to see anything in the next edition to please contact her. Reference was made to the front page and the success of the opening day launch of the new community flat, 19 Exbridge Walk in Newton Heath. b) Recruitment and Vacancies – Confidential c) Observers – Confidential d) Riverways Area Panel Study Visit – SM updated the Panel on the progress of the planning for the study visit. SM asked the Panel if she could contact them individually via telephone to get comments about the 	SM

	<p>environmental works in their area to add to the “Tour Guide Booklet” that SM had been preparing for the visit.</p> <p>e) Allocations and Lettings Forum – Following on from May’s Panel meeting, Anne Duffield is leading on a new Allocations and Lettings Forum which will be meeting every 6 weeks. They are looking at getting 2 volunteers from each Area Panel. Ann McBride and Marlene Garnett volunteered. SM to feedback to Anne Duffield.</p> <p>f) Access to Service Kiosks – DD informed the Panel that Northwards are looking at ways of how to increase access to services for Tenants and Residents. They are looking at providing an Access Kiosk with internet access and links to relevant service sites, e.g. City Council, GMP etc, it will also be linked to a printer. It is going to be trialled at a location on Newton Heath. They are considering the Newton Heath Sure Start Office on Droylesdon Road. DD added that this service is free. KH said The Sure Start is local so it’s a good idea. DD added that they are looking at setting this up in the next 6 – 8 weeks.</p>	SM
12.	AOB	
12.1	<p>AW said that Manchester Working are introducing a “handout” technology system to get feedback from tenants once Manchester Working has completed a job at a tenanted property. Instead of asking tenants to complete a customer feedback form and posting it back, the new system proposes to use a hand held computer screen which the tenant will be asked to complete at the end of the job. LP said this will make considerable savings on postage and increase feedback from tenants. AW asked for volunteers to get involved in the consultation of using this system. KH was concerned that older people may have difficulty completing the feedback on the computer. DC said he will be seeing this hand held computer and will feedback at the next Panel. KH said once the Panel has received this feedback they will then decide on volunteers to attend the consultation.</p>	DC
13.	<p>Date and time of next meetings –</p> <p>a) It’s a Northwards Knockout – 13 September</p> <p>b) Awards and AGM – 2 October</p> <p>c) Study visit – Riverways 2 July</p> <p>d) Panel Meeting – 16 July – 3.30pm – 4pm (questions to officers) 4pm – 6pm (meeting)</p> <p>e) Respect event – 5 July – North City Library</p>	

Meeting Closed 5.00pm