

Northwards Housing Panel Meeting Minutes

Panel: Wilton

Date: 03 March 2009

6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m

Whitemoss Road Local Services Office, Community Room

Chair: Anne Heywood

Attendance:

Anne Heywood (AH)	Panel Member (Chair)
Charles Taggart (CT)	Panel Member (Vice-chair)
Sue Ratchford (SR)	Panel Member
Mark Bainbridge (MaB)	Panel Member
Joan Wilson (JW)	Panel Member
Mavis Wilkinson (MW)	Panel Member
Cllr Ken Barnes (KB)	Panel Member
Cllr Naeem Hassan (NH)	Panel Member
Steve Kirkham (SK)	Head of Home Improvements
Claire Tyrrell (CMT)	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Mike Stevens (MS)	Director of Neighbourhood Services
Dave Jones (DJ)	Voids Manager
Andy Woods (AW)	Head of Responsive and Planned Repairs
Julie Goreham (JG)	Resident Involvement Officer

From 6.00pm refreshments were provided and officers were available to answer questions. The meeting commenced 6.30pm

Item	Description	Action
1	Welcome and introductions	
1.1	a) AH welcomed attendees to the meeting	
1.2	b) & c) Quorate was confirmed and meeting rules explained. AH asked that panel members make every effort to arrive on time.	
2.	Apologies for Absences	
2.1	Apologies had been received from Jim Burke, Melanie Beckford, Jacqui Tomlinson and Danny Whitelock	
3.	Declaration of Interests/Confidential Matters	
3.1	There was to be a request for observers made under 12 c). No Declarations of Interest were made.	
4.	Minutes of last meeting 03 February 2009	
4.1	The minutes were approved.	
5.	Matters arising	
5.1	KB raised concerns that Arthur Kay had not been invited to attend the meeting. CMT explained that he had been invited to the study visit, and the Grounds Maintenance Standards were advertised in	CMT

	Revolve, CMT agreed to send the standard to Councillors. KB asked that the standard be circulated in the April papers, and Arthur Kay be invited to the May meeting if questions were raised following the circulation of papers.	
5.2	5.2 British Gas Partnership KB expressed concern that the panel had altered a decision on the ice rink. JG explained that she had detailed quotes for the ice rink hire and proposed that the rink was held for two days on the Riverdale estate and one day in the Cheetham area, during the Easter holidays. This was agreed. JG to progress.	JG
5.3	5.3 CMT reported that the study visit had been good but not well attended with a few last minute drop-outs. She asked the panel if they felt the visits should continue. SR felt that they were no longer well attended as they had run their course. AH felt that specific visits e.g. re environmental schemes were worthwhile but not study visits.	
5.4	13.2 CMT reported that the wardens were scheduled to attend the April panel meetings.	
5.5	15.2 JG distributed a draft training programme for the panel training event. CMT explained that it would be more practical to hold the training early in July rather than in the May half term as Northwards has an event in May half term. The panel agreed on 21-22 July.	
6.	Inspection Update	
6.1	CMT reported that the post-inspection Action Plan is being completed and will be taken to the Board meeting on 10 March. It will be brought to a future panel meeting.	
6.2	MW asked if the result had been released to the press. CMT reported that it had, on 12 February.	
7.	Business and Delivery Plan Update (Claire Tyrrell)	
7.1	CMT explained that following input from the business planning event the business and delivery plan had been put together and would be going to the board meeting on 10 March. An action plan will follow. Attendees to the Local Conversation event on 4 March will carry out some prioritisation of the objectives that came out of the January event	
8.	Repairs Quarterly Update (Andy Wood)	
8.1	AW explained that the panel had requested bimonthly reporting of figures so these would be brought next month.	
8.2	There are now hand-held devices in operation and so far the use of the devices is going well.	
8.3	Empty Homes Standard AW invited comments on the amendments to the Empty Homes Standard. The panel members were in agreement with all the proposed amendments on page 9. Panel members raised questions about when tenant alterations would be removed and the property restored once a tenant vacated. AW explained that it depended on the condition of the item – items in good condition would be left, if they were in bad condition a view would be taken as to whether it was cheaper to repair or to remove the item - this includes laminate floors. Carpets are usually removed	

	unless in very good condition.	
8.4	KB asked about the installation/repair of fires which would give a background heat in one room if heating breaks down. SK explained that the home improvements team would replace a fire, if a fire was present, whilst carrying out improvement works. Checks are being made on whether the radiators are an adequate size for the room.	
8.5	<p>AW invited comments on the rest of the standards document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floors: MaB felt that the size of the gap (i.e. 5mm) should be included – “small” gap was open to interpretation. There was no mention of floor tiles, and this should be included. ▪ Staircases: MW asked if it could include handrails on both sides of the staircase. CMT explained this change could be made as an adaptation to the property for those who needed it ▪ Electrics: MaB asked if something could be added in around the condition of heaters, fires and surrounds to electric fires, which can be unsightly ▪ Gas Central heating: MaB asked how old a boiler needed to be to be replaced. AW explained that it would be broken beyond economic repair, or very old and due for renewal. MH asked if radiators are looked at. SK explained that old radiators are usually still in good working order, but may have silted up. As part of the Home Improvements programme the system gets power-flushed. Defective radiators are replaced. NH asked about the introduction of condensed boilers. AW explained there is not an automatic upgrade. ▪ Decoration: Tenants are now given Johnsons vouchers not B&Q . AH asked about badly hanging wallpaper. AW explained that if it was bad it would be stripped. JW asked what happened if there had been an extreme colour scheme. CMT explained that it costs £350.00 per room to decorate as part of the void works, so it is not possible to re-decorate such rooms. MW asked how much new tenants are given for decoration. CMT explained that it is £25 for a living room, or equivalent in materials. ▪ Kitchen: “replaces” to be replaced by “replaced”! ▪ Bathroom: MaB asked if a shower curtain and rail was fitted and if so if this could be listed. The panel felt that if a rail is damaged it should be replaced, but no new curtain put in. ▪ Additional comments: MaB asked if there could be an extra section on safety and security e.g. security lights, window locks. KB felt this was a good idea. MW asked if this would include gates etc. 	
8.6	AW explained that comments from all panels, and the Repairs and Improvements Forum, would be considered and incorporated where possible, taking into account the cost implications	
9.	Environmental Works Update (Steve Kirkham/Claire Tyrrell)	
8.1	SK explained that there was a revised figure for Torcross of £21,000, against the original budget of £32,000. Finningley had been costed at £16-£17,000 giving a total of £38,000 instead of £80,000, if both schemes are completed together. This would give a total of 15 spaces. KB and MaB felt that this was a good price. The panel agreed to take this forward.	

8.2	SR expressed concern that there was a missing piece of fencing which had never been installed during the works on Ruthin Avenue. CMT will speak to Manchester Working. JW reported that one of the panels had been removed as they are not secured.	CMT
8.3	SK reported that works at Central House are ongoing.	
8.4	MaB asked if the saving on Finningley Road/Torcross Road could be carried forward for future schemes. SK confirmed that it would.	
10.	Environmental Works Programme	
10.1	CMT distributed a breakdown of the projects which the panel had considered at previous meetings. CMT asked the panel for their view on the £12,000 for a youth-focussed consultation process on Waterloo Road East. MaB felt that it was youth work rather than environmental and therefore not eligible. CMT explained that it was for consultation on environmental works. KB felt that there was always a cost for consultation activity. AH asked for a vote, 7 voted for, 1 against, 0 abstentions.	
10.2	CMT suggested an open spaces consultation on the Torcross site. KB asked that community garden be listed. CMT said that feedback would be brought back to the panel after the consultation.	
10.3	AH asked if there were still plans to have railway sleepers on the Ruthin Avenue works. CMT said that this was unlikely and that options were being looked at. Works in this area will be left until after the window replacement which is ongoing until August. SR reported that workmen have been throwing windows on the flower beds. SK will speak to the contractors.	SK
10.4	SK explained that the next stage for the schemes will be to carry out environmental impact assessments and seek approval at the Asset Management Sub-committee for the spending in May.	
10.5	CMT invited panel members to bring any additional schemes forward. JW asked if hand rails and benches on Acre Top could be considered. CMT queried whether the scheme would make an environmental improvement. MaB asked if there could be fencing on Weldon drive where the wheelie bin had been burnt out. CMT will bring a costing to the next meeting, Steve Shaw had been looking into it.	CMT
10.6	KB asked if the Babbacombe Grove car parking scheme costs could be decreased in line with the lower price for the Torcross/Finningley schemes. CMT will ask for a combined costing and bring back. KB felt there should be a cheaper option for the Chain Road scheme and asked for this to be explored. KB also asked if car parking and landscaping could be considered for Booth Roydon between Victoria Avenue and Howden Road. The Panel agreed to look into this.	CMT
11.	LSM Update (Claire Tyrrell)	
11.1	Anti-social behaviour CMT reported that there had been an eviction, and one NAN, one probationary tenancy extension, and an injunction.	
11.2	Staffing CMT reported that there are currently staffing shortages in the Cheetham office. Kelly Richardson will be coming back from secondment earlier than planned to ease this. The Re-housing team	

	will be assisting by carrying out lets. CMT asked panel members to report any issues they were having because of the short-staffing to her.	
11.3	Voids Currently there are 52 voids with the Cheetham office. Eight had come back in one day, and fifteen are expected back this week. Currently the three day let turnaround target is not being met, and is four days. This is being looked into, and a meeting is taking place with Manchester Working about the way that properties are coming back from them.	
12.	Community Update and Governance (Anne Heywood/Julie Goreham)	
12.1	a) AH drew the panel's attention to the minutes of the chairs and vice-chairs meeting. CMT explained that the constitution review group would meet on the 11 March, and the Resident Involvement Agreement review at the end of March. AH reported that a skills audit of panel members will take place in June-July. One-to-one reviews of panel members will take place once the chairs have been trained to carry these out. Panel members will be asked to comment on a draft work programme at a future meeting. The fact that the panel ID badges are out of date had been raised.	
12.2	b) JG circulated copies of Revolve	
12.3	c) Hightown Residents Association had requested to send Carol Connolly and another committee member as Observers to the April meeting. The panel approved this.	
12.4	d) CMT reported that the next in the series of tenants events would take place on 28 May and will be a Food and Dance festival. Northwards would be having a major role in the Queens Park festival in Harpurhey on 11 July.	
13	Quarterly performance management report	
13.1	CMT invited questions on this report. None were raised.	
14	Any other business	
13.1	JG explained that TPAS were running a training event on tenant-led scrutiny on 18 March and asked that anyone interested in attending inform JG or Diane Roberts by 11 March.	
13.2	SR expressed sorrow at the death of Cllr Bill Risby, and gave her condolences to his family.	
16.	Date and time of next meetings	
	a) Area Panel Meeting 7 April 2009, Cheetham Hill Local Services Office	

Meeting closed at 8.20pm