

Northwards Housing Fourways Area Panel Meeting

White Moss Local Services Office – 9 July 2009 – 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Minutes Chair: John Biggs

Attendance:

John Biggs (JB)	Panel Member
Carol Downes (CD)	Panel Member
John Ward (JWa)	Panel Member
Peggy Yuill (PY)	Panel Member
Mavis Harris (MH)	Panel Member
Joan Fitzgerald (JF)	Board Member
Rob Doherty (RD)	Local Services Manager
Gary Walsh (GW)	Repairs Manager
Julie Wilson (JWi)	Head of Neighbourhood Services (Fourways)
Mike Stevens (MS)	Director of Neighbourhood Services
Lee Dobbins (LD)	Head of Contact Centre Manchester Working Ltd
Julie Goreham (JG)	Resident Involvement Officer (Minutes)
Alisha Matthews (AM)	Observer
Paula Law (PL)	Observer (Manchester Working)

Item	Description	Action
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Welcome and introductions – JB welcomed the Panel and introductions were made. b) Confirm quorate – Meeting was quorate. c) Meeting rules – JB confirmed the meeting rules. 	
2	Apologies for absences	
2.1	Dorothy Le Moignan, Grace Choularton, Andy Steele	
3	Declarations of interests/confidential matters	
3.1	None	
4	Minutes of the last meeting – 4 June 2009	
4.1	Agreed as a true record.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	4.1 PY reported that the service had been completed and Larry Patrick had	

5.2	<p>rung her.</p> <p>11.2 CD felt that people did not know that they needed to apply for a new door. DH explained that there will be a mini-scheme on the estate as the original scheme had been carried out before the criteria changed. DH's team will send out letters to tenants to inform them about the scheme.</p>	
6	<p>On Call Manager – Lee Dobbins</p>	
6.1	<p>LD introduced himself and his role. The Contact Centre went live on 1 July. Prior to the launch he had been in post reviewing the old centre and organising training of the new contact centre's staff. A launch event had been held which JB had attended and the panels will be invited to visit the centre.</p>	
6.2	<p>LD explained the improvements which were to be made through the new centre with support of new technology and additional staffing and a "right first time" policy.</p>	
6.3	<p>CD asked why a surveyor sometimes had to be sent for before jobs could take place. GW explained that the operative sent out may need help. The contact centre needs to identified an issue properly also. JWi encouraged all panel members to report any problems experienced so that Northwards can learn from them and improve the service. LD explained that call centre staff had received training on repairs and the diagnosis materials had been revamped.</p>	
6.4	<p>JB asked about support for adults with learning difficulties. LD explained that a new service would launch in September. Specialist advisors are being trained so that those with vulnerability/special needs can have a specialist advisor they speak to every time they call. They are trialing this system. PY felt that this would be a fantastic service for vulnerable people.</p>	
6.5	<p>JB expressed concern at people being left hanging on the line and felt that the previous system of being given an indication of which number in the queue you are was helpful. LD explained that they are working on matching staffing to call patterns. He will look into whether it is possible to introduce the caller number facility into the technology used.</p>	
6.6	<p>JWi asked about how staff were being trained to deal with ASB, environmental and rehousing issues. LD explained that the staff training with starting with the topics which received highest volume of calls and working down the list. MS reminded the group that there is continuity in staffing from the old contact centre.</p>	
6.7	<p>PY asked how long people would expect to wait for a call back. LD felt that if it is a repairs issue the call back should be within two hours if not sooner. They are working towards being able to give an appointment while callers are on the phone. If it is not a repair then the call back should be within three hours. GW explained that call back time is a fixed agenda item on the</p>	

	liaison meetings between Northwards and the On Call centre.	
7	Business Delivery Plan Update – Mike Stevens	
7.1	Concerns were raised about the readability of the font colour on pages 8-9 of the booklet. The panel was happy with the content.	
8	Access Strategy Update – Mike Stevens	
8.1	MS highlighted section 4 of the report. 4.1 explains about the On Call work. The report shows ongoing work and officers will keep reporting back.	
9	Customer Service Excellence – Mike Stevens	
9.1	MS explain that this was formerly known as Chartermark. This had been awarded to Northwards. The full report is going through the board and will then be available on the website.	
10	Complaints and Praise Update – Mike Stevens	
10.1	MS explained that 34 letters of praise had been received. The target for time taken to answer complaints had been met.	
10.2	PY felt that the customer needed to be kept informed of the progress of issues raised for example being informed when a message has been passed on for the appropriate party to deal with the issue.	
11	Empty Property and Concessionary Decorating Policy	
11.1	There were no comments or questions on this information item.	
12	Repairs Update – Gary Walsh	
12.1	GW explained that there is some information missing due to an IT issue. PY expressed concern that the green figures were not possible to read. GW will ask for the font size to be increased.	
12.2	GW reported that he had attended a conference where dealing with complaints was being discussed. The Ombudsman has emphasised the importance of providing feedback. MS explained that if a complaint reaches the Ombudsman Northwards undertook a full enquiry as even for largely unmerited complaints it is possible to learn something about the way the service can improve.	

13	Major Works Update – David Heys	
13.1	JWi felt that the information had been presented very clearly.	
13.2	<p>DH gave an update on changes to the programme since the papers had been sent out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scheme number 1: there are now 7 private properties on the scheme ● scheme 2: will be completed in August ● scheme 13: will finish in December. Feedback has been positive, with disruption kept to a minimum ● scheme 14: start will be delayed ● scheme 15: Wates Living Space is working on a detailed programme. Works will have to start by end of September to ensure external funds are able to be used. ● scheme 22: Start date is now 31 August 	
14	Environmental Works Programme – David Heys/Julie Wilson	
14.1	DH explained that the dates for the schemes had not yet been finalised, he hopes to have firm dates by next month.	
14.2	JWi reported that a second Tea-mobile event has taken place on the Mill estate. This had gone well with a lot more positive comments including from three individuals who had been very negative at the first event. There is now a group of 15 interested individuals on the estate and Northwards will be working with them, Groundwork and Heath Cole to find match funding for the environmental works that have already been completed.	
15	LSM Update – Rob Doherty	
15.1	<p>Anti-social behaviour</p> <p>RD reported that the Local Services Team had a forthcoming ASBO warning interview for Blandford Drive. They had received information during the Tea-mobile event, which the police had been using.</p>	
15.2	<p>Voids</p> <p>RD reported that there had been a decrease of one from the average void figure in June. JWi explained that there has been an increase in tenancy turnover in Charlestown as a whole. Anne Duffield will be looking into the reasons behind this. PY asked if tenants were charged for the removal of items they had left behind when leaving a property. RD confirmed that they are. When tenants give notice they are reminded that they must remove all items, or be charged £287 for removal. This charge is applied with discretion for example if someone had died.</p>	
15.3	RD distributed the estate walkabout reports. JB felt that the reports were	

	very good.	
16	<p>Community Update and Governance – John Biggs/Sharon McBride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Revolve – JG issued Revolve and asked the Panel to contact her if they would like to add anything to later issues. b) There were no requests for observers for future meetings. JG informed the panel that when the AGM took place due to the rotation system some panel members would be up for rotation. She asked those panel members to consider if they wished to remain on the panel. c) Events 09 update – JG apologised that the events brochure has not been enclosed and MS explained that these would be available from the front desk in the office. JG reported that the next event Northwards was involved in was on 11 July at North City Festival. On this occasion volunteers were not needed but JG encouraged panel members to go and enjoy the event! d) JG circulated fliers on the AGM and recruitment for the board and asked people to complete them if they would like to attend the AGM. She also explained that there was a tenant vacancy and encouraged panel members to think about applying. e) JG asked panel members to complete and return their Fair and Equal Service Forms. f) JG explained that the TSA report was enclosed providing a summary of the results of the first round of consultation g) DH explained that the Impact Report showed some of the achievements of the home improvements programmes and encouraged panel members to look at the list of Northwards achievements on page 59. 	
17	Any other business	
17.1	There were no items of other business	
18	<p>Date and Time of next meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Area Panel Meeting – 6 August 2009 – 1.30pm – 3.30pm (subject to quorum) b) Area Panel Social and Adoption of new Constitution 15 July c) Becoming a Board Member training 8 July d) TSA Local Conversation phase 2 – late July date to be confirmed 	

Meeting Closed 3.10pm