

## Riverways Area Panel

### Meeting

Date: 20 January 2010

Location: TLM Centre, Jocelyn Street, Monsall

Chair: Kath Hope

Vice Chair: Pat Glazebrook

### Minutes

#### Attendance:

Kath Hope (KH) – Panel Member

Pat Glazebrook (PG) – Panel Member

Rose McCarton (RM) – Panel Member

Fred Steadman (FS) – Panel Member

Edith Webster (EW) – Panel Member

Norman Hart (NH) – Panel Member

Barbara Grey (BG) – Panel Member

Jean Gibbons (JG) – Panel Member

Susan Sugden (SS) – Panel Member

Lee Wilbraham (LW) - Wates

Paul Maidment (PM) – Head of Home Improvements

Tracy Panesh (TP) – Money Advisor

Ade Abioye (AA) – Deputy Rent Recovery Manager

Gary Walsh (GW) - Repairs Service Manager (Fourways)

Emma Foster (EF) – Head of Neighbourhood Services (Riverways)

Michael Hutton (MH) – Local Services Manager (Riverways)

Sharon McBride (SM) – Resident Involvement Officer (Riverways)

Nicola Holmes (NiH) – Resident Involvement Officer (Riverways) (Minutes)

#### Meeting commenced at 4.00pm

Item	Description	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
1.1	KH welcomed attendees to the meeting and introductions were made.  SM announced that she was leaving the post of Resident Involvement Officer (RIO) to take up her new role as Customer Experience Manager at Northwards. SM thanked everyone for their hard work and for making her time as RIO very pleasurable. Nicola Holmes is now RIO for the Riverways Area. KH thanked SM for her hard work and commented how much she will be missed.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.1	Julie Barton and Ann McBride.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest/Confidential Matters</b>	
3.1	None	

<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of last Meeting</b>	
4.1	Agreed as a true record.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
5.1	<p>RM asked for an update on Northwards first Youth Panel held in November. SM explained that the event ‘Shout Out’ held at Cheetham went really well. 12-15 young people attended and got involved through a series of workshops. It is hoped this type of event will be held in other areas of Northwards.</p> <p>RM suggested that Northwards work in partnership with the Manchester Youth Service who are currently involved in building a state of the art youth centre in North Manchester, ‘My Space’.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Rents – Ade Abioye and Tracy Panesh</b>	
6.1	AA explained the role of the Rent Recovery Team. AA explained that a team of 21 are responsible for rent collection and arrears. The Rent Team aims for a proactive approach rather than just enforcement. The Team helps people apply for grants and benefits and often refers tenants to other service providers for extra support.	
6.2	<p>JG asked why some tenants receive phone calls from the Rent Team even when they pay regularly.</p> <p>AA advised that the Rent Team do make courtesy calls to stop small problems escalating into major arrears. AA advised that the easiest way to pay the rent is by direct debit and that the tenancy agreement states that rent should be paid in advance.</p>	
6.3	<p>RM asked for the percentage of arrears for the Riverways Area.</p> <p>AA advised that he did not have the exact figure but the rent collection would be around 99.6%. It was agreed that exact rent collection figures be a regular agenda item for future Riverways Panel meetings</p>	AA/NH
6.4	<p>TP described her role as Money Advisor. TP works closely with the Benefits Agency and the Credit Union to pro-actively halt debt problems. TP holds drop in surgeries between the hours of 10am - 1pm: Cheetham Hill Local Services on Mondays, White Moss Road Local Services on Wednesdays and Monsall Local Services on Thursdays. NH and RM requested posters advertising this service.</p>	TP/NH
6.5	<p>NH suggested that many rent arrears problems are due to tenants being unaware that housing benefit may not cover the whole of their rent.</p> <p>EF advised that Local Services do use the ‘Benefits Calculator’ when new tenants sign up for a property.</p> <p>TP added that two weeks into a tenancy the Rent Officers make contact with the new tenant to go through any issues.</p> <p>MH added that Local Services are now able to scan documents over to Housing Benefits at the Let appointment.</p>	

6.6	SS commented that the prize draw is a great incentive.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Community Update and Governance – Kath Hope/Sharon McBride/Nicola Holmes</b>	
7.1	<p>a) Revolve – SM distributed Revolve and asked Panel Members to send any new stories to NiH. (Contact details are the same as Sharon except for email:n.holmes@northwardshousing.co.uk)</p> <p>b) TSA formal consultation – NiH advised that Northwards will be providing feedback on the 6 National Standards for Social Housing on the 5<sup>th</sup> February so all comments and suggestions need to be submitted to NiH before that date.</p> <p>c) Excellence committee – SM reminded volunteers that the first meeting for training will be on the 2nd March.</p>	
7.2	KH asked why Newton Heath has not been featured in the Northwards Natter after news stories and photographs have been submitted. EF advised she would discuss the matter with the Communications Manager	EF
7.3	PM informed the Panel that Northwards is involved in three Tenant Services Authority local pilot schemes. One of these is on the Orford Road Estate in Newton Heath. The intention is to set the standard on how tenants can play a key role in improvements	
<b>8</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	
8.1	SM explained that KH will shortly be conducting one to ones with each Panel member. This will be an opportunity for each member to go through their learning and development skills and needs.	
8.2	<p>KH suggested that the Northwards Trailer/Tea Mobile be put to more use. It could be used to attract more members of the BME community if taken out to specific areas.</p> <p>Ideas for places were put forward including: The bingo hall, Monsall estate, Newton Heath and Harpurhey Market.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Tea Mobile would be an agenda item at the next meeting</p>	NH
<b>9</b>	<b>Customer Satisfaction Survey</b>	
9.1	EF reminded the Panel that this survey is carried out every year.	
9.2	<p>KH commented that she was disappointed at what appeared a lack of support for elderly people during the adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>EF advised that Northwards Wardens contacted all the tenants that are known to Northwards as vulnerable and carried out many home visits. PM added that the Wates Managers visited over 40 properties on Troydale and fixed the problem that caused the water to be frozen. KH asked that this be publicised.</p>	

<b>10</b>	<b>Repairs – Gary Walsh</b>	
10.1	<p>GW explained that due to the adverse weather conditions, the KPI's for December are not yet available.</p> <p>GW gave an update on the Heating Repairs Telephone Analysis Survey. 1300 calls have now been made. This figure is 34% of those requesting repairs to heating or hot water systems. The first 100 calls showed that 11% of appointments had not been kept. This went to 4% in December but is now at 10% again for the last 100 calls.</p> <p>For 300 calls made during November/December an average figure of 84% of repairs were completed first time. The first 100 calls showed 20% of tenants were not kept informed where repairs could not be completed first attempt. The last 100 calls showed this figure to be 9%.</p>	
10.2	<p>KH advised that she has asked Oncall to attend the next panel meeting. This is to discuss lack of communication with contractors in particular.</p> <p>GW advised that this is recognised as a problem. A 'Repairs Chaser' system is in use whereby wherever possible the same engineer attends the same job if it is a recurring/ongoing job.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Major Works Update – Paul Maidment</b>	
11.1	PM presented the Project Status Report	
<b>12</b>	<b>Environmental Works Programme – Paul Maidment</b>	
12.1	PM discussed the ongoing schemes. He highlighted that the Newton Heath scheme on p39 should read Eastmoor Drive rather than Edmonton Road Estate. The future Newton Heath scheme on p40 should read Edmonton Road and not Eastmoor Drive.	
12.2	PM presented the Panel with a design for a kick rail to stop joy riders on Monsall where shops have been knocked down. Local residents will be fully consulted on the plan.	
12.3	KH commended the Panel on the amount achieved in the last year.	
<b>13</b>	<b>LSM Update – Mike Hutton</b>	
13.1	MH circulated the Local Services Report. There are currently 99 cases of ASB, 103 voids and three new Neighbourhood Services Officers.	
<b>14</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
14.1	NH advised the Panel that he has been appointed as a Tenants Rep	

	to the National Tenants Voice and will be attending a conference with the TSA shortly and will report back.	
14.2	PM explained that as the Decent Homes works were coming to an end, Northwards is working on the details of the future programme of works. PM invited volunteers to be involved in the procurement process from the start. Meetings will be held in Wigan but transport will be provided.	
14.3	RM suggested that where a report is enclosed in the agenda pack then it not be discussed unless there were additional points to raise at the next Panel meeting.	
<b>15</b>	<b>Date and time of next meeting –</b>  a) Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2010, 4:00pm – TLM Centre b) Business Plan Event – It's Your Business – Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2010	

**Meeting closed at 6.00pm**