

Minutes

**Minutes of Area 3 Area Panel meeting held on
Tuesday 24th March 2009 at The Sheila Russell Centre**

PRESENT:

Clive Thorpe	(CT)	Chair
Ina McCallum	(IM)	
Bert Marshall	(BM)	
Brenda Peel	(BP)	
Jeff Herring	(JH)	
Sue Stevenson	(SS)	
Carole Limb	(CL)	
Anne Gowing	(AG)	
Gill Moy	(GM)	Director of Housing Operations
Chris Holloway	(CH)	Housing Manager
Tim Shirley	(TS)	Data Asset Manager
Lynne Row	(LR)	Project Liaison Officer
Jenny Eurge	(JE)	Regeneration Coordination Manager
Jim Hartshorn	(JH)	Property Services
Claire Reeves	(CR)	Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Officer

APOLOGIES:

Margaret Pugsley, Carole Limb, John Hendren, Peter Linford, John Day and Alison Thorpe

1.0 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2.0 Minutes from the last meeting and Matters Arising

2.1 GM updated the Panel about rent setting. The Government Guideline for the rent increase 2009-10 had been 6.4%. Nottingham City Council (NCC) had agreed to increase the rent by 5% and rent increase letters had been circulated to this effect. The Government has subsequently decided that due to the economic climate and the feedback from tenants the guideline increase should be reduced to 3.1%.

ACTION

NCC is now carrying out the 28day consultation on the new guideline rent. New rent letters should be circulated in June.

- 2.2 CH updated on point 11.1 to advise that he was awaiting feedback from the CCTV team and would update further.
- 2.3 CH updated on point 11.3 that the Neighbourhood Managers meeting would be taking place on Thursday and he would feedback further after this meeting.
- 2.4 CH updated on point 11.5 that the Police were investigating the issues on Lindfield Road.

3.0 Regeneration of the Area

- 3.1 JE advised that the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) Report would be submitted to executive board in April. The working groups would be meeting again in May to decide the neighbourhood plans if the report was accepted.

4.0 SWARM

- 4.1 TS attended the meeting to update the Panel on the progress of the SWARM programme. He also attended to discuss with the Panel the Environmental Budget
- 4.2 SWARM
- 4.3 TS circulated a presentation to the Panel and advised that the programme was now streamed so Secure would be delivered first, then Warm and then Modern as per customers' feedback. Every NCC tenant will receive a full stock condition survey that will assess the needs of the property. 6,600 properties are receiving a stock condition survey in area 3.
- 4.4 TS advised that NCH are working to bring properties up to above the Decent Homes Standard by 2013.
- 4.5 TS also advised that NCH had implemented the Helping Hands Programme to support vulnerable tenants whilst they have SWARM improvement completed to their home.

- 4.6 AG advised that she had been told by her doctor that she requires a shower but she had been told she couldn't have one by NCH as she has wooden flooring.
- 4.7 TS agreed to investigate.
- 4.8 Environmental Budget
- 4.9 TS advised that £17m of Decent Homes money had been allocated for environmental improvements for the city which will be delivered over 4 years. We have looked at each area surveys and allocated it a category based on need. The resulting category then allocates the pot of money that will be available for each area over the 4 years. We will be inviting potential environmental schemes from the community under 3 themes; Improving Security, Improving the Environment and Improving Spaces. The Panels role will be to look at the schemes and prioritise them so these can be put forward to Area Committee.
- 4.10 CR suggested that the Panel could consider carrying out a tour to look at the proposed schemes to help prioritisation.

TS

5.0 Performance in the Local Area

- 5.1 CH circulated the area performance bulletin.
- 5.2 CH highlighted that all estates in the area had achieved at least a 2* status except Broxtowe which had returned to 1*. The Housing Patch Managers (HPM) have an action plan to increase the star rating at Broxtowe. Bilborough Housing Office had also achieved office of the month in February.
- 5.3 BP raised the issue of student properties in her area and that due to the turnover of students there can be issues with rubbish.
- 5.4 CH advised that if there are properties which are an issue we can liaise with NCC and the university to try to resolve them.

6.0 Local Area Round Up / success stories

- 6.1 BP reported that the CPO's and PCSO's in her area are very good and will talk to the students if there are issues.
- 6.2 CL reported that the old Council yard had been cleared.
- 6.3 Ina reported that a clear up had taken place in her area where items were collected from peoples homes. She felt that a letter should be sent to these people advising them that they have to dispose of their rubbish correctly in future.
- 6.4 CH advised that Housing Patch Managers (HPM) do write to tenants to advise that a clean up is a 1 off and that they could be in breach of their tenancy.
- 6.5 CT reported that STARA had not met in the last few months but hoped to be back meeting regularly soon.
- 6.6 JH advised that the parks committee now has a bank account and constitution.
- 6.7 SS advised that Aspley has gone up from 2* to 3* in the recent estate assessments.

7.0 Area Committee Update

- 7.1 The item was deferred to the next meeting

8.0 Any Other Business

- 8.1 GM advised that a paper had been submitted to Board regarding future service delivery and budgets. The rent increase this year is 3.1% and is excellent news for tenants in this economic climate but does have implications for NCH, we have to prepare for a £3million saving during 09/10. Our biggest cost and biggest asset is staff followed by office accommodation. When we benchmark NCH against other similar organisations nationally we are low performing and high cost. We need to assess our value for money and look at our processes to make sure they are SMART. We are looking at the number

of outlets from which we deliver our services. The STATUS survey told us that 16% of people visit a housing office but most people contact us via telephone. We are investigating consolidating our contact centres to create better value for money and extend the service we can offer to tenants. We are also investigating implementing a visiting service so we can see tenants in their own home rather than tenants coming to us. We are looking to become more proactive and have staff out on the estates rather than based in an office.

- 8.2 GM advised that permission had been given by the Board to consult with TRAs and Area Panels and tenants and leaseholders about potentially closing some of the offices as we have been analysing the footfall to offices and to some it is very low. If any housing offices do close we will deliver services in a different way e.g. through surgeries or a free phone or touch screen computer in partners offices e.g. libraries.
- 8.3 GM advised that Southglade housing office had a very low footfall and we have written to tenants and leaseholders in Southglade to advise them that we are proposing to close the office. The Access Centre next door to the housing office has agreed to have a free phone and touch screen computer if the office does close. We will also be consulting over the future of Bilborough housing office as this also has a very low footfall. Tenants can pay their rent via PayPoint, at the Post Office and via Direct Debit. Cash collecting is comparatively expensive. We are in discussions with the library to ascertain if they could host a free phone and computer kiosk.
- 8.4 JH thought that closing the housing office could discourage people from paying their rent.
- 8.5 GM advised that housing office closures had been risk assessed and it was found that when some offices were closed to carry out DDA improvements this had a low impact on rent collection. We have good alternatives ways for tenants to pay their rent.
- 8.6 IM was concerned what would happen to the staff.

- 8.7 GM advised that there are vacancies at the housing offices so any redundancy can be minimised and we will consult with staff.
- 8.8 Some panel members felt that older people would be concerned about using direct debit as an alternative.
- 8.9 CT asked how long the consultation period is.
- 8.10 GM advised that the next Board meeting is May but we may need more time to make sure we can consult everyone. If the housing offices don't close we will have to make savings in another area as there is only one pot of money.
- 8.11 IM asked who could provide No Football signs
- 8.12 CH advised that NCH can put up but they are not enforceable as there is no action NCH can take. We have to look at cases carefully and see if damage is being caused. Instances can be reported to the ASB Helpline 920 20 20.

9.0 Date, Time and Venue of next meeting

26th May 2009, 9.30am-12.30pm, Sheila Russell Centre