

Minutes

**Minutes of Area 3 Area Panel AGM held on
Tuesday 28th April 2009 at The Sheila Russell Centre**

PRESENT:

John Day	(CT)	Vice Chair
Ina McCallum	(IM)	
Carole Limb	(CL)	
Jill Dickens	(JD)	
Jeff Herring	(JH)	
Sue Stevenson	(SS)	
Grenville Bucknall	(GB)	
Lynnda Kerry	(LK)	
Diane Hudson	(DH)	
Peter Turner	(PT)	
Dr M Alum	(MA)	
Anne Gowing	(AG)	Observer
Maria Hemphill	(MH)	Observer
Kate Bowley	(KB)	
Councillor L Unczur	(GM)	Director of Housing Operations
Chris Holloway	(CH)	Housing Manager
Alix Dale	(AD)	Communications Officer
Chris Thelen	(CT)	Property Services
Claire Reeves	(CR)	Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Officer

APOLOGIES:

Paul Rowe, Margaret Pugsley, John Hendren, Peter Linford, Clive Thorpe and Alison Thorpe

1.0 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

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

2.0 Area Panel 3 Achievements 2008-9

- 2.1 JD highlighted the Panel achievements for 2008-9 which included; a bus tour of the area, inclusion of rear gardens during estate inspections which the area office had implemented and the setting of the forward plan

ACTION

for 2009/10.

- 2.2 The Panel felt that they had made a positive contribution to improving services.

3.0 Election 2009-10

- 3.1 CR invited nominations from Panel members for the position of Chair and Vice Chair for 2009/10.
- 3.2 Clive Thorpe nominated himself for re-election to the position of Chair
- 3.3 John Day nominated himself for the position of Vice Chair.
- 3.4 No other nominations were received
- 3.5 As there were no other candidates Clive Thorpe was seconded to the position of Chair for 2009/10 and John Day was seconded to the position of Vice Chair for 2009/10.

4.0 Signing of the Forward Plan

- 4.1 The Panel agreed the Forward Plan but as the Chair had sent his apologies it was decided that signing of the Forward Plan would be deferred until the next meeting.

5.0 Secure Warm and Modern (SWARM)

- 5.1 AD attended the meeting to update the Panel about the SWARM programme.

AD advised that 2000 windows had been completed to date in Aspley.

DH asked why Beechdale is being done later in the programme.

AD confirmed that she would feedback to Beechdale TRA about the SWARM programme at their meeting.

AD advised that coffee mornings would be held for tenants in areas where SWARM work is being carried out.

AD circulated the Improving Your Home booklet

AD

which had been developed in consultation with the SWARM Customer Care Group.

JH asked if loft insulation is included in the SWARM programme.

AD confirmed that it would be if there was less than 200mm.

Councillor Unczur asked if tenants could refuse the work.

AD advised that tenants can refuse the improvements but we work with tenants to try to support them to have the work completed.

6.0 Environmental Schemes

- 6.1 CH circulated a list of the proposed environmental schemes and advised that these would be priced so that the Panel could prioritise them.

7.0 Local Area Performance Round Up

- 7.1 CH provided an update on local area housing office performance during the last year.

CH reported that there are now no 0* estates in the area and the housing office is working toward raising the standard of all the estates to 3*. Performance is on a general upward trend and Bilborough has been office of the month.

JH asked about the proposed closure of the Bilborough housing office.

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