

Minutes

Minutes of Area 6 Panel
9th November 2009
6.30pm – 8.30 pm
Kingston Court

PRESENT: Sheila Thwaites (Chair) - ST Carol Tomkiss - CT
 Kate Bowley - KB Cynthia James - CJ
 Audrey Davies - AD Sandra Stones - SS
 Jenny Thompson (NCH) - JT Andrew Filer (NCH) - AF
 Alison Birch - AB Cllr David Mellon - DM
 Darrell Smith (NCH) - DS Phil Saunders (NCH) - PS
 Allan Breeton (CDP) - AB Jackie Medcalf (Notts probation) JM
 Garry Handley (NCH) - GH

APOLOGIES: Jacinth Hall, Ann Gibbons, Val Bemrose, Alan Hoban,
 Janet Glass (NCH)

		Action
1	<p>Welcome and introductions & apologies</p> <p>ST opened the meeting and asked for introductions and apologies.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of last meeting / matters arising</p> <p><u>Item 3</u> CJ raised a concern over the windows being used in St Anns. GH advised to pass on any details to him to take forward. ST confirmed that id leaseholders wanted to use Nationwide to have new windows, no authorisation was required from the Leaseholder team, and reduced NCH rates would be charged by Nationwide. If any other window company was used authorisation was required.</p> <p><u>Item 4</u> CJ asked how Sneinton had been given a 3* rating as an estate. PS gave clarification that the Tenant Service Inspectors review estates using a pictorial guide (as discussed at the September meeting) to try and ensure they are a fair reflection of standards. NCH have also recently taken part in a benchmarking exercise with Derby Homes where tenants from Derby inspected Nottingham estates and vice versa. The outcome of this was that NCH out-scored Derby Homes. PS continued that NCH have approached Sheffield Homes and St Leger Homes with a view of working</p>	GH

	<p>with both of them to expand the project as they are more comparable in size, and would give a more rounded view.</p> <p><u>Item 4</u> KB advised that the pilot did not start until the start of November, and there had been a few issues currently with regard to what services were provided by the weekend mobile caretakers. KB requested Ian Perry to write and confirm details.</p> <p><u>Item 5</u> KB requested an amendment to the minutes to show that the land requested to be renovated was on Newark Crescent, not adjacent to it.</p> <p>ST asked for an update on what stage the environmental schemes are at. DM and JT confirmed that the schemes for St Anns have all been agreed, but the schemes for Dales have yet to go to Area Committee. There is still time therefore for further suggestions to be made for this area.</p> <p>Any details of other schemes to go to DM or JT as soon as possible for costing. JT advised any money not spent from the budget this year will be lost. KB requested recycling bins to be located o Newark Crescent. CJ requested details of the schemes that have been agreed for St Anns so that she can pass the details on to her TRA group.</p> <p>KB raised an objection to a dropped kerb being put in on Newark crescent, as the feeling of the panel was that is was not required. JT to remove this scheme from the environmental list.</p>	<p>IP</p> <p>DM / JT</p> <p>DM / JT</p> <p>JT</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Justice Seen, Justice Done</p> <p>AB and JM presented on this item (presentation enclosed). This subject is high priority across the City, and has cross-party support, so will continue even if there is a change of government.</p> <p>AB's role is to help deliver better partnership working in this area and to advertise the services that are provided and who to contact in different instances, and to improve the service provided to victims of anti-social behaviour and crime.</p> <p>Community Payback was previously known as Community Service which was always done quietly as did not want negative feedback. Work is now visible with approximately 60 adult offenders (aged 17 – 70) currently working 6 days a week across the City.</p> <p>Presentations being done at each Area Panel, to give an opportunity to engage with the community to find suggestions for work to do.</p> <p>Offenders are supervised at all times, and can do work such as garden / land clearances, litter picks, painting and decorating, and small building work. All jobs are risk assessed prior to being started.</p>	

	<p>Work has been done already around the St Anns area (such as painting railings and removing overgrown shrubbery), but not many jobs have been identified for work around Sneinton.</p> <p>JM advised work has also recently been done at Highfields Park, Wollaton Park and Colwick Woods.</p> <p>They want the community to nominate work to be done, and 3000hrs have been ring-fenced for work within the NCC boundaries. Contact details are available on the leaflets enclosed.</p> <p>Some specific issues were then raised which were to be taken up outside of the meeting.</p> <p>CJ passed on her thanks to AB and JM for coming along and that this piece of work was being taken forward.</p> <p>AB confirmed that they would be happy to come out to any other meetings that the group wanted. Please contact Katy Follows at the Crime and Drugs Partnership (0115 9156383) or AF who will organise this to happen. KB advised she would like AB and JM to attend a future Leaseholders Forum. AF to pass on details of future meetings to AB.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Business improvement plan</p> <p>PS presented this item with the purpose being that consultation is required with the group on the priorities they had over the next 3 years, so that NCH can look at delivering the service they would like. With funding likely to be reduced, NCH will need to prioritise certain things in order to continue the good work they are doing, but also to improve and strive towards gaining a 3* result from the audit inspection planned for two years time.</p> <p>CJ advised that the repairs service is a priority as there are still lots of issues raised at the TRA meetings she attends. Handheld technology has also not yet been introduced, which was promised as part of the tender process which the NCH repairs service won.</p> <p>DS replied that the new technology is still being researched, as they wanted to ensure that the best technology was bought with the correct systems in place to benefit and suit NCH and its tenants and leaseholders. A consultant has been brought in who helped introduce handheld technology in Doncaster which will hopefully help to reduce any issues from happening as procedures can be put in place before they occur. A pilot for this to be introduced is likely to be in February 2010, with a full roll-out expected to be operational by the end of the financial year. This technology will then be looked at for other departments to use during the following year. The technology will also make operatives much more accountable for the work they do, which should increase customer satisfaction.</p> <p>ST asked how far back the software can be used to look at information from</p>	

past repairs.

DS replied that we can currently go back around 10 years to look at the details of repairs that have been carried out, but this is only as good as the information that has been input on to it, but the new technology will bring a visible improvement to the repairs service.

ST and KB both advised that repairs are also a big issue with leaseholders, as often repairs are not completed satisfactorily the first time, resulting in leaseholders being charged twice for the same repair.

DS confirmed that the new technology will reduce down time for operatives, and also reduce the time required for the administration of repairs, so this will allow more time for Maintenance Managers to do quality checks.

CJ also raised the issue that several complaints from her TRA meetings have been raised, and not been addressed by NCH.

DS replied that the new technology will not resolve all problems, but the bonus system currently in place for operatives is also being reviewed, where by any payment that is received will be linked to the customer satisfaction of the tenant or leaseholder.

AB then suggested due to time constraints that any further issues could be directed directly to PS. The panel agreed this. PS's contact details are: 0115 9157392 or email Phil.Saunders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk

CJ then posed a question to DM as to his thoughts as a councillor in the area.

DM advised that the cases he receives are predominantly complaints or problems, and the majority are to do with the repairs service.

DM continued that another issue in is the lack of NCH properties in some areas, which causes isolation for some tenants, so something could be done to ensure these people can be heard.

DS raised an observation that several people have held off having day-to-day repairs done in case they won't get Decent Homes work done to their property. This is not the case, as work will be done based on condition and age of the fittings.

DS continued that overall satisfaction on the repairs service has risen considerably over the past two years based on the STATUS survey. PS added that the latest results put NCH up to the upper quartile of organisations across the country in terms of performance, which is a big improvement on the last survey.

AB asked what return rate there was for the STATUS survey.

PS responded that KWest conducted the survey on behalf of NCH to provide an independent result, and the response rate of 25% was above nationally recommended figures.

The panel felt that these figures did not reflect the opinion 'on the street'. PS responded by saying that people will generally only advertise complaints they have rather than compliments. The results do also show that although 80% of people are satisfied, 20% are still dissatisfied, so there is still work to

	be done.	
5	<p>Performance – Jenny Thompson</p> <p>JT apologised that she had left the performance figures, but from memory advised that replies to councillor enquiries, general correspondence and complaints had all been done within the agreed timescales. The only performance issue was that over the past month, it took on average 69 days for a void property to be re-let. The reasoning behind this is that it has taken multiple offers for a property to be let. Work is still ongoing to improve the standards of void properties across the city in consultation with tenant Services Inspectors.</p> <p>A discussion then took place with regard to complaints not being dealt with. JT and GH replied that putting figures in to context, St Anns Housing Office had only received 3 official complaints in October, and they cover around 5000 properties. Complaints can come from other sources, as there were 81 councillor enquiries last month, with the majority not coming to NCH before this stage. Results show that NCH deal with complaints effectively, and hopefully will persuade people to come to NCH first rather than their local councillor. DS added that as services improve and confidence of people grows, this will hopefully happen.</p> <p>PS confirmed that all complaints are looked at by the Executive Management Team, but if anyone had any issues with regard to complaint, please pass these through to GH or JT to take forward.</p>	
6	<p>Any other business</p> <p>KB raise an objection to the idea of offering empty sheds on Newark Crescent to other residents, as this may cause security issues.</p> <p>AF confirmed that NCH are now using a new taxi firm (DG Cars) following a tender process and consultation with tenants and leaseholders. The booking process is still the same, but open return taxis cannot be booked, so a return will need to be booked using an estimated time, staff will be on hand to amend these times if need be.</p> <p>AF advised the panel of an event looking at the rent setting process at the Ice Arena on 16th November. If anyone is interested in going please confirm to AF who will pass on their details.</p> <p>AF also informed the panel of a change to the ‘Get Involved Week’ for next year. The format in September 2010 will be a ‘Get Involved Month’ along similar lines to Comic Relief or Red Nose Day, where tenants and leaseholders are empowered to hold their own events using a ‘how to’ guide. Support would then be provided to the group to stage the event themselves rather than being officer led.</p> <p>CJ started a discussion on trying to increase the number of people involved with NCH. When the Participation Compact was first introduced, Marianne Hood stated 3000 more people would become involved. AF confirmed that there are currently around 2200 people involved with NCH in various ways,</p>	

	<p>with the majority unfortunately not wanting to attend meetings, and wanting to be consulted in other ways. AF continued that this is a common occurrence across the country, and the Involvement Team were looking at this currently to try and increase numbers of involved tenants and leaseholders.</p> <p>AB raised the issue of marketing and that this could be improved, with KB adding that information could be put in to 'New Lease' magazine for leaseholders information. AF will take this information forward.</p>	AF
	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Monday 11th January, 6.30pm at Kingston Court</p> <p>The main agenda item will be voids and lettings</p>	