

# NOTES OF THE CENTRAL STREET AREA HOUSING PANEL

Thursday, 12 February 2009– Brunswick Estate Meeting Room – 7pm

**Present:**

Helen Cagnoni (HC)	Greenwood, Wilmington, Farringdon TRA (Chair)
Chris Ruff (CR)	Mulberry Court
M Blundell (MB)	Mulberry Court
Peter Stacey (PS)	Margery Street Estate
Janet Doaling (JD)	Charles Rowan House
Shirley Lefevre (SL)	Pleydell Estate TMO
Terry Lefevre (TL)	Pleydell Estate TMO
Dennis Kleinburg (DK)	Whitbread TR
Jo Pamment (JP)	Lagonier House TRA
Elaine Smalley (ES)	Lagonier House TRA
Blanche Woodbridge (BW)	King Square TRA
Frances Sullivan (FS)	King Square TRA
Danny Unstead (DU)	Pleydell Estate TRA
Una O'Halloran (UH)	St Lukes TRA
Irene Francis (IF)	St Lukes TRA
Jyoti Vaja (JV)	Bunhill ward Councillor
David Selo (DSO)	Director of Resources, HFI
David Salenius (DS)	Area Housing Manager, HFI
Miranda Griffith (MG)	Community & Service Development Officer, HFI

<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
1.1	<b>Apologies received from:</b> Adrian Hall Sonya Andermahr Charles Burnett Sheila Best Valerie Semper Joe Trotter	
<b>2</b>	<b>NOTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
2.1	HC is concerned that under item 2.5 on the minutes HFI is no under obligation to replace pipe work. DS responded that a pressure test is currently carried out on pipes when replacing a boiler. If a radiator needs to be replaced, HFI will look into it.	
2.2	TL reported that some people in Gambier are having problems with the pressure on the new radiators.	
2.3	SL reported they've had a meeting with the projects team today and Karyn Linkson was adamant that leaseholders won't get new radiators; they're only obligated to replace boilers.	
2.4	JV asked DS to take ask the projects team why leaseholders aren't given the option of why their radiators aren't replaced, and if they do replace them why they'll have to pay for it.	<b>DS</b>
2.5	JV requested that item 2.10 on the actions arising list is carried over to the next	

	meeting.	<b>DS</b>
2.6	TL asked if there was any update on 2.11 regarding ISHA. DS responded there is a contractor on board who can do the required works on Pleydell estate. DS will chase them again for a date of completion.	<b>DS</b>
2.7	UH asked about item 2.8 and when windows on Godfrey House will be finally secured. DS will chase property services and report back on this.	<b>DS</b>
2.8	The Chair referred to the detailed response regarding voids and where the money goes if void properties don't get Decent Homes works. DSO reported that money is ring fenced to the general Decent Homes programme and goes into making another home reach the standard.	
2.9	HC queried about seeing the HRA Green Paper review and wanted to see what LBI had responded. DSO reported that this information would have to be sourced from to LBI Housing department. Another round of consultations will also be called in March.	
2.10	TL reported that item 9.3, regarding fixing the broken concrete around the perimeter of the estate hasn't been done yet. The location is Bath Street and the corner of Radnor Street, where the bins were originally sited. This will be fed back to the projects team.	
2.11	DS reported that under item 9.5, the National Grid are currently on site, however the projects team have been struggling to get correct information from them.	
2.12	ES reported there have been letters from National Grid on her block saying work will be starting on the 12 <sup>th</sup> of January. There hasn't been any communication from them since then.	
2.13	BW reported that the issue of lighting on Rahere House under item 11.1 has now been resolved.	
<b>3</b>	<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT: REVIEW OF RENTS, FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2009/10</b>	
3.1	DSO briefly talked through the report, explaining that the panel were required to comment on the options for rent increases.	
3.2	HC reported that where it's been discussed overall in London, Islington seems to have higher increases than in other areas. DSO reported that option 1 is all dictated by the national formula. The maximum rent increase any tenants can have is inflation plus £2.	
3.3	HC asked about saving and that the budget gap doesn't tell us what tenants have to pay extra for and why should it come out of rents.	
3.4	HC feels it shouldn't go over 5% in the midst of a credit crunch crisis and there will be more money taken out of the major budgets.	
3.5	IF reported that loft insulation and roof insulation is currently covered by government grants. HC asked for a breakdown on how many households need these kinds of insulations.	
3.6	JD asked if other types of insulation are currently being looked at. DSO reported that solar panels, wind farms on Kestrel, green roofs and more efficient lighting are currently being implemented.	

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p> <p>3.14</p> <p>3.15</p>	<p>JD asked why Charles Rowan isn't being offered double glazing and windows are being replaced with single glazing, which contradicts energy saving measures. DS will raise this question with the projects team.</p> <p>DU asked how many people living on estates in Islington are on benefit. HC reported it was 64%.</p> <p>JV commented that most people have had Decent Homes work done in the borough, so any benefit from the additional 59p on rent won't be seen for another 7/8 years.</p> <p>HC feels there is not enough background information with the report.</p> <p>HC would like an alternative option of 5%.</p> <p>DSO reported if there was a lower rent increase there would be a cut in the services. Option 1 is the usual rent increase.</p> <p>11 people on the panel voted for going with Option 1, with no one voting for Option 2.</p> <p>There was a unanimous vote in favour of Option 3.</p> <p>HC wanted it noted that the increases stated in the report are above rates of inflation.</p>	<p><b>DS</b></p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Bike parking on Estates – Cycles and Motorbikes</b></p>	
<p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p> <p>4.9</p>	<p>BW asked why black cabs are allowed to have reduced estate parking charges, and feels it is unfair considering they already don't have to pay the congestion charge.</p> <p>DSO commented that at the moment there is no extra money to do some of the bike shelter work, but they want to first check if people actually want this provision. The question around motorcycle parking is whether they should charge.</p> <p>BW feels that bike stands are a good idea. At a recent block inspection there are many bikes that are parked in communal areas because people don't have room to keep them in their flats. Keeping them on balconies is a fire hazard.</p> <p>DU said that it's also a fire risk leaving bikes in flats as it can make it hard to get out of the flat.</p> <p>ES suggested that thefts can go up when there is communal parking of bikes. DS reported that he's been in contact with the LBI expert on cycles and is receiving good advice on how to make them secure.</p> <p>JV reported that old bike sheds could be converted, and also that cycle stands are near CCTV cameras.</p> <p>HC feels that motorbike parking should be treated like cars and made to pay.</p> <p>IF reported that bike sheds are derelict on Bath Court; if they were done up people would be happy to use them.</p> <p>HC reported that most of the building work that's gone on in the last 20 years have resulted in gas pipes being put on the outside of the building, which could potentially be very dangerous. This should be raised as a risk on the report, especially as it was reported at the last meeting.</p>	

4.10	It was agreed that the panel were generally in favour of bike stands and sheds.	
4.11	TL reported that Maynard court had 18 spaces for bike stands but no one parked their bike in there. This could be due to fears over their security.	
4.12	DS asked whether if there were spaces available if people would be happy for motorbikes to park in them. Most people on the panel said they would be.	
4.13	JV suggested that secure bike cages be created.	
4.14	HC asked which budget this should be come out from. JV suggested asking LBI for a growth bid.	
<b>5</b>	<b>5% Sustainability, Tenants Compact, Community Safety and Estate Security</b>	
5.1	DSO presented the above report and explained that it is asking the panel to agree the principles contained within it.	
5.2	HC reported that one of the issues raised at a recent Tenant Compact meeting was pigeon netting. She'd noticed that a hawk had been used on estates and maybe that should be used rather than netting as people found it quite claustrophobic. She requested that this be flagged up as an extra for the Tenant Compact fund.	
5.3	The panel agreed that the current system of Tenants Compact and Estate Security funding works well.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Financial Inclusion Statement</b>	
6.1	DSO presented the report, stating that it details some of the things HFI are doing to support their residents and to get general views and feed back on these.	
6.2	HC commented that in point 3.3 on the report there is a big difference between Islington residents and the national average of people claiming benefits.	
6.3	HC asked why the figures quoted on 3.3 are from 2004 and not more recent.	
6.4	HC feels concerned about how HFI feel they're going to get people into work in this current climate.	
6.5	HC asked whether the budget projects mentioned in item 8.1 was coming from the HRA budget. DS reported that it wouldn't be further funded by the council.	
6.6	DSO stated that this issue is being picked up by the housing finance revenue. Current regulations go back to 1996 to give authorities the option of using the HRA, although there may be a review coming up around this. This would be currently coming from the council management fee – there may be some more guidance in the near future.	
6.7	HC reported that the London Federation have objected about this in the past, and feel that housing revenue should be purely used for repairs and management of flats and be ring-fenced. HC feels that because all tenants also pay council tax they are being double charged.	
6.8	ES stated that if people work in Islington you can't get a council flat. HC agreed that social housing used to house a much more mixed community.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Tenant Satisfaction Survey</b>	
7.1	DSO stated that results from the above survey show the highest levels of satisfaction for a few years. Most tenants are satisfied.	
7.2	SL asked if the survey was sent out to all estates. DSO reported it was sent to 7,000 and 2,000 replied which is a good sum.	
7.3	DS was concerned that results for value of money for rent were very poor and wondered why. UH feels that tenant dissatisfaction with major works would have had a big impact.	
7.4	JD asserted that there was great dissatisfaction with Apollo, and wondered why when contractors failed so badly they're offered another job by HFI.	
7.5	HC commented that its part of a framework; tenants were assured if they have too many complaints they wouldn't be continued to be used. HC feels it should go out to tender on an individual basis.	
7.6	DS reported that the way contractors work is tested is through satisfaction surveys, and the vast majority of satisfaction levels are high, usually coming to about 90%.	
7.7	JD requested that qualitative analysis be performed on results as well as quantitative. The roofs have been badly repaired and they are leaking on Charles Rowan and if the contractor doesn't do the work properly it doesn't matter what the survey says.	
7.8	JV commented that 2010 is the Decent Homes deadline. HFI will have to re-tender on the framework contractors but a lot of the ones used will tender again.	
7.9	HC commented an impact on works could be because there used to be a whole department of surveyors but now there are just four.	
7.10	PS feels there is a lack of supervision on contractor's works.	
7.11	HC feels tenants weren't consulted on frameworks; JV reported that they were.	
7.12	DSO stated that issues have been raised on the quality of what works been done and this has been taken up on a senior level. Residents do have an impact on framework contractors.	
7.13	ES asked who would have a copy of the framework agreement contract. DS stated that property services would.	
7.14	HC feels that tenants said they didn't want tenders due to sub contractors. But this happens now on every job.	
7.15	Regarding possible development sites, HC feels concerned that green spaces are being looked at to see if they will be built on which a concern to tenants.	
7.16	DSO stated that if LBI was considering doing anything like this there would be full consultation with tenants potentially still under LBI ownership.	
7.17	ES asked whether Islington Council can give compulsory purchase orders on properties that have been derelict for some time. JV stated that this is currently done.	
7.18	DU asks why S106 money doesn't always stay locally. JV stated that in Bunhill it	

	does.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Disposal of Land Managed by HFI</b>	
	No comments were made.	
<b>8</b>	<b>HFI and Consultative Panel Update</b>	
8.1	JV stated that she was upset the fact that Pleydell TMO won an award wasn't mentioned in the update.	
8.2	BW asked whether the use of the hawk to scare pigeons away on estates is ongoing. DS reported he's trying to find more funding for this; it could potentially be suggested through the Tenants Compact.	
8.3	HC stated that she hopes that funding for the training courses stated in the update is not coming out of the HRA budget.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Forward Plan</b>	
	No comments were made.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Petition regarding caretaking</b>	
10.1	DS talked through the petition received from residents at Sanders House.	
10.2	DS reported that he hasn't been able to calculate a compensation package that can be provided through the normal policy as yet, and has asked his colleagues to find out what they should be refunding.	
10.3	DS is currently thinking that a percentage reduction in the charges may be made.	
10.4	JV asked why the problems on the estate weren't picked up by staff earlier before a petition was created. DS agreed and has raised this with the manager concerned to make sure it doesn't happen again.	
10.5	HC asked if the change in staff levels will affect caretaking standards. DS stated that there is no change with the officers although there may be a change in the number of inspections carried out, as HFI have been criticised by the audit commission on spending too much time on inspections rather than fixing the problems found from them.	
10.6	IF asked if there could be a rebate on St Luke's as the same thing happened there for 8-10 weeks. DS suggested that she request a report from Keiron Duncan.	
10.7	DS reported that tenants should ask for caretaking reports if there are concerns.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Anti Social Behaviour Report</b>	
11.1	DS referred to the distributed ASB report, stating that all cases on it were live.	
11.2	There are 100 cases listed which is a high figure, however most of them are low level crimes and the Central Area Housing Office are taking positive actions.	
11.3	Last week saw two notices being served on dog owners on Percival estate. Four of five possession cases are also going to court.	
11.4	The Central Street Office is trying to do as much as they can with ASB; if evidence is	

	provided perpetrators can be taken to court.	
11.5	One eviction has recently taken place as a result of ASB.	
11.6	ES asked whether leaseholders sub letting their flats to tenants causing ASB can be fought. DS reported the office can still enforce, although it is a bit more difficult.	
11.7	JV reported that the noise on Grayson house isn't on the list but is still ongoing.	
11.8	HC said these lists are very useful, in order for tenants to realise that something can be done about ASB.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Any Other Business:</b>	
12.1	TL asked JV to provide more information on the story that the building on Mora Street will be used as a drug rehabilitation centre.	
12.2	JV reported that she doesn't know what exactly the building will be used for, but knows there has been an application to change it.	
12.3	TL asked when the Council are going to pick up Christmas trees, as there are 15 on the estate. DS reported that they need to contact LBI about this.	
12.4	IF stated that at Newland court there was the camera on entrance to the block was not working from April last year to the Friday just gone, and asked if she was entitled to a rebate. DS reported that under the current policy procedure she wasn't, as a partial service was still operating.	
12.5	HC suggested IF write to HFI and challenge the policy.	
<b>13</b>	<b>Date of next Meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2009</b>	