

NOTES OF THE CENTRAL STREET AREA HOUSING PANEL

Wednesday 16th September 2009

Present:

Helen Cagnoni (HC)	1 in 1000 representative
Francois Smit (FS)	Margery Street TRA
Martin Rutherford (MR)	Popham 1 TRA
Irene Frances (IF)	St Lukes TRA
Blanche Woodbridge (BW)	King Square TRA
Frances Sullivan (FS)	King Square TRA
Danny Unstead (DU)	Pleydell TRA
Sarah Kingston (SK)	St Lukes TRA
Jan Cross (JC)	Estate services coordinator
Catherine Curzon (CC)	Consultation Officer, HFI
David Salenius (DS)	Area Housing Manager, HFI
Simon James (SJ)	Head of Service Development, HFI
Miranda Griffith (MG)	Community & Service Development Officer, HFI

1	APOLOGIES	
1.1	<u>Apologies received from:</u> Shirley and Terry Leferve Dennis Kleinburg	
2	NOTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING	
2.1	MR stated that under item 5.16 that Lena Shah had sent letters to residents saying that existing conduits couldn't be used for works. CC commented there may have been a misunderstanding and will talk to Lena and feed back to MR.	CC
2.2	All other updates on action points were acknowledged.	
2.3	Regarding item 6.7 that requested that Simon James (Head of Service Development) attend the meeting to talk about TRAs and consultation, Simon introduced himself to the panel.	
2.4	SJ has worked in a number of boroughs and the general level of activity of TRAs has gone down through change of lifestyles and breakdown in community.	
2.5	SJ however feels that there are many excellent vibrant TRAs in the borough, and that people still want TRAs.	
2.6	SJ explained that there is still a belief within HFI that TRAs are the best and most efficient way of consulting the community. There are also 800 tenants on the resident involvement register, but this isn't going to replace the TRAs. There's also the disability panel consisted of 12 HFI tenants which bring up points.	
2.7	Discussions are occurring about how to extend TRA and resident involvement; some of the messages received are that people are interested in getting something sorted on the estate but doesn't want to form a TRA.	
2.8	Community events are felt to be a good way of getting people involved, and HFI is	

funding some of these.

- 2.9 'Islington's Got Talent' has received support and funding from HFI and happened on an area basis.
- 2.10 Training schemes are available for TRAs, there is a good budget for this but there is a low level of interest. Money has also been made available for training schemes helping residents trying to go back to work.
- 2.11 Use of IT; one estate in Finsbury Park uses the concierge system to advertise information on the TRA and relay messages, as well as vote on what's needed on the estate.
- 2.12 A newsletter in October/November from HFI will be going out on the various events taking place in the borough and job opportunities, as well as the latest housing laws.
- 2.13 Feedback received from tenants has been that setting up a TRA can be overly onerous and is there a way of making it simpler. There are talks about people using the credit union to make it easier to open bank accounts.
- 2.14 There is a review on the resident involvement strategy going into the board next year.
- 2.15 MR fed back to the panel that problem on estates good side effect is they often foster a good community action of people coming together.
- 2.16 FS emphasised you get involvement through major works etc. FS feels that there should also be emphasis on steering groups to comment on services such as cyclical repairs to act as a support group, where there are estates without a TRA to comment.
- 2.17 FS feels there is not much support available for TRAs with only one CSDO for the whole area using just a third of their time of TRAs.
- 2.18 FS stated that a lot of estates don't have a TRA. Someone should go round and set up a working group to operate such things. He asked if there is there a strategy to develop it and keep these things going.
- 2.19 SJ agreed there needs to be a more coordinated approach to setting up TRAs.
- 2.20 FS feels that HFI needs to be more proactive.
- 2.21 HC feels that the loss of FITA was very bad for TRAs, and that there's a lack of community centres on estates for TRAs to meet in. Tenants also feel that they are not responded to.
- 2.22 HC asked how what the average ages of people on the register are on. SJ says it is a broad range, and seems to be slightly more representative than TRA membership.
- 2.23 SJ commented that a survey was carried out in the 4 area offices of who wanted to join a TRA, and that the levels were very low.
- 2.24 DU feels that HFIs criteria in reaching 15 people for a quorum in order to be recognised are too high and very frustrating.
- 2.26 UH feels that HFI penalises TRA's about having a lack of diversity which is unfair, as anyone's opinion still counts.

3	Feedback from July 2009 Panels	
3.1	FS referred to papers that state that double glazing will be fitted under climate change criteria; however Charles Rowan TRA who asked for this was tuned down.	
3.2	JC thinks the reason for this is it might be listed.	
3.3	HC asked whether there's money from the trust to fund double glazing and the cavity wall. DS assured the panel that Mike Reese is writing up a programme which will be put through a panel in the near future, which will explain what is being funded.	
4	HFI Equality and Diversity Strategy Review	
4.1	SJ referred to the report and said that the main changes proposed refer to the section on procurement. There is also a new section recommending that an individual's socio economic background be considered within the equality and diversity policy.	
4.2	There is also an equality framework for local authorities who show excellence in equality and diversity, and organisations are encouraged to apply for this.	
4.3	HC asked about equalities mapping and asked what percentage of tenants don't answer questions on the ethnic background section, as reports never show the negative answers. Most people don't feel there is any difference in them or other ethnicities in this day and age so don't feel they should have to answer.	
4.4	SJ said that HFI holds information on most of these areas now.	
4.5	SJ said that information can be given on the overall profile of an estate for a funding bid.	
4.6	HC asked whether copies of the review of the strategy could be seen. MG will arrange this to be forwarded to HC.	MG
5	Business Plan 2010-15	
5.1	SJ presented the plan and referred to item 3.4, where Islington Council have asked for 4% of annual savings to be made from the HFI management fee, which amounts to £1.7m.	
5.2	There was much consultation around this which was quite positive. The repairs service though good, with more complicated repairs weren't so effective.	
5.3	HC pointed out the fact that 91% of people didn't want further information on how to get involved in a TRA, which is a very negative finding.	
5.4	HC pointed out that £1.7m cuts per year is a huge amount and tenants have no input in them. SJ informed the next business plan will come to the next panel which will have more information on where the cuts are coming from. The priority is not to cut front line services.	
5.5	The panel would like to see what cuts are being made and would like to be consulted.	
5.6	HC pointed out that people are going to be charged on repairs more. The state of people's homes that can't afford these services will get worse.	

5.7	SJ asserted that intention is to preserve front line services, and the savings are hoped to be made in more central areas of the organisation.	
6	Cyclical Maintenance Programme	
6.1	It was noted by the panel that there are several errors in the report.	
6.2	SJ pointed out the idea of the report is for the panel to note the improvements that are proposed for the next 7 years.	
6.3	FS would like to see suggested years that these works are going ahead. HC commented that under Greenwood House it says it only has 9 units out of the 22 that are getting works. The report doesn't give any information.	
6.4	HC commented that having two programmes going on is a waste of money rather than it being done in one go.	
6.5	Comments that more explanation is needed about the report will be taken back to the author.	
7	R&M Re-procurement Update	
7.1	SJ updated the panel that there will be 4 new partnering contracts to deliver its property related services.	
7.2	One of the main points coming from the board is there should be a shorter amount of contract time running for 4 years, so that HFI are not tied to a poorly performing contractor. There will also be room for specialist contractors.	
7.3	There is talk of smaller firms to be able to go for tender, and a feeling that the response time system should be simplified.	
7.4	MR feels there is not currently good value for money with Kiers at the moment; quotes don't seem to match up with other market prices.	
7.5	SJ responded that one option is to use small local firms or social enterprises, or specific tasks within HFI.	
7.6	HC feels that smaller subcontractors would have to be thoroughly checked for health and safety purposes and CRB checks which could be problematic.	
7.7	HC pointed out that under item 5.3 under the recommendation that Council insurance schemes should be promoted to cover accidents including flooding, that the building being insured doesn't mean them meet all claims, and that Council insurance is the same in that you have to pay up to a certain amount for claims.	
8	Capital Programme 2009/10 Monitoring Qtr 1	
8.1	SJ advised that the report states progress on all local schemes in 2009/10.	
8.2	There were no questions on this paper.	
9	Homes for Islington – Consultative Panel Update	
9.1	SJ presented the report, pointing out that HFI is seeking more residents to join the Board of Directors.	
9.2	No questions were asked on this paper.	

10	Forward Plan	
	The panel noted the report. No further questions were asked.	
11	Local Petitions: St Helena House and Popham	
11.1	DS reported that two petitions had been received two petitions at the Central Street Area Housing Office regarding anti-social behaviour of tenants; one on Margery street and one on Popham.	
11.2	DS reported that he had talked to the head petitioner from the one on Margery Street, and it seems since the petition was made problems seem to have died down, but the office will keep monitoring the situation.	
11.3	DS referred to the second petition that was received from Popham on the 8 th of August. A new case has been opened for the complaint, and action is being taken to get it sorted out as soon as possible.	
11.4	UH reported that an ASB case has been reported to the St Lukes TRA where the victim said that nothing has been done or is going to be done. DS will take details from UH and look into it.	DS
12	Any Other Business:	
12.1	HC mentioned that the 'Islington Now' magazine had events dates in it that had already passed, which is a waste of money and time.	
12.2	BW pointed out that Una's and Frances Sullivan's name was left off the last set of minute's attendance list. MG apologised for this oversight.	
12.3	BW reported that the heating has not yet been turned on at King Square and BW has heard that it's not going to come on till 8 th of October which is too late.	
12.4	JC reported that there is now a revised date and that dates of heating being turned on are all based on the weather and not fixed to certain amounts of weeks or months.	
12.5	HC mentioned that the Central Safety Panel does not currently have a representative from the South of the borough. Some panel members believe that Troy Gallagher attends this.	
12.6	MR reported that lights are being left on 24 hours on Terling walk on Popham. JC to look into.	
13	Date of next Meeting: 18th November 2009	