

# NOTES OF THE CENTRAL STREET AREA HOUSING PANEL

Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2009– Brunswick Estate Meeting Room – 7pm

**Present:**

Helen Cagnoni ( <b>HC</b> )	Greenwood, Wilmington, Farrington TRA (Chair)
Shirley Lefevre ( <b>SL</b> )	Pleydell Estate TMO
Terry Lefevre ( <b>TL</b> )	Pleydell Estate TMO
Francois Smit ( <b>FS</b> )	Margery Street TRA
Dennis Kleinburg ( <b>DK</b> )	Whitbread Estate TRA
Blanche Woodbridge ( <b>BW</b> )	King Square
Adrian Hall ( <b>AH</b> )	Peregrine House TRA
Maureen Smith ( <b>MS</b> )	Brunswick TMO
Danny Unstead ( <b>DU</b> )	Pleydell TRA
Elaine Smalley ( <b>ES</b> )	Lagonier House TRA
Barbara Coventry ( <b>BC</b> )	Popham
Jamie Fry ( <b>JFry</b> )	Cyrus House TRA
Una O'Halloran ( <b>UH</b> )	Pleydell TRA
Irene Frances ( <b>IF</b> )	St Lukes TRA
Cllr Jyote Vaja ( <b>JV</b> )	Bunhill ward Councillor
Jon Farrant ( <b>JF</b> )	Head of Operations, HFI
David Salenius ( <b>DS</b> )	Area Housing Manager, HFI
Miranda Griffith ( <b>MG</b> )	Community & Service Development Officer, HFI

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
1.1	<b>Apologies received from:</b> No apologies were received.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Notes of Meeting and Matters Arising</b>	
2.1	HC announced to the panel that she is resigning from her position as Chair due to the discontinuation of FITA being funded by HFI, and as a consequence she will not be arranging an AGM for the TRA. Vice Chair, Una O'Halloran, will now be taking her place.	
2.2	The panel thanked HC for her hard work over the years, and welcomed Una as Chair.	
2.3	DS advised that regarding item 2.6, ISHA have advised that works will be completed within the next few days on Pleydell estate. The panel thanked him.	
2.4	FS pointed out that his apologies hadn't been noted down at the last meeting.	
2.5	HC mentioned that since the last Area Housing Panel where rent increases were discussed, the government have announced they will be halving from the proposed 6.2% to 3.1% rent increase.	

3	<b>Consultative panels – meeting date and venue, May 2009</b>	
3.1	It was agreed that MG would arrange a meeting date for May that does not conflict with Council meetings between the 11 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> , and send out the date to the panel.	
4	<b>Implementation of Estate Services Efficiencies</b>	
4.1	JF presented the report which sets out recommendations being progressed within the Estate Services Efficiency Review (ESER) which was completed in autumn 2008.	
4.2	The view of the panel is sought in taking forward the recommendations.	
4.3	BW asked for information on the team working care takers pilot scheme on King Square.	
4.4	JF confirmed that two pilots are currently being run on this team working approach, whereby instead of caretakers working on their own on an estate, HFI are seeing if a team working approach on certain functions is more effective.	
4.5	After four weeks of this pilot study, residents on the estates will be sent a questionnaire to seek their views on how well it has worked.	
4.6	FS asked if the Unions were in agreement with this pilot. JF confirmed they were happy for caretakers to participate in the pilot and interested in the results.	
4.7	BW asked whether all blocks get caretaking services on the weekend. JF reported that about 80% of blocks do.	
4.8	BW and TL said that tower blocks are the worst affected by rubbish over the weekends.	
4.9	AH pointed out it would be useful for HFI to check with residents what they feel is needed before carrying out the pilot study.	
4.10	JF reported that during the review process, several focus groups took place and the results from these showed that the current service has a lack of flexibility and response, which is what the pilot addresses.	
4.11	AH asserted that dedicated caretakers have a large bank of knowledge, and asked how many are resident on estates.	
4.12	JF reported that about half of the boroughs caretakers are resident on the estate. However what people perceive as the advantages of resident caretakers aren't always matched in reality, as there is no obligation for them to work after 4pm like any other caretaker.	
4.13	HC asked whether money will be saved as a result of the service being	

	reduced. JF replied that no reduction in the caretaking service should occur, as there will be no cuts in the number of caretaking posts.	
4.14	FS said he had been trying to set out a Service Level Agreement for caretakers for years. There is also a problem that contractors and residents don't know how to contact non-resident caretakers.	
4.15	JF responded that a system is in place with HFI direct who hold keys and should be communicating with the contractors, however if this is not occurring the process needs to be revisited.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Review of Tenant and Resident Association Constitution</b>	
5.1	JF presented the above, and asked residents for their opinions regarding a change to biennial AGM's, including a code of conduct onto the constitution, and a changed wording on relativity levels of tenants and leaseholders on TRA's.	
5.2	HC feels that the HFI constitution infringes individual TRA's rights.	
5.3	AH stated that the dissolution clause written at the end of the constitution is set out very badly and should be re-written. He also pointed out that residents are often sub-letting so neither tenants or leaseholders officially. Therefore they should just be called Residents Associations.	
5.4	JF pointed out that 'tenant' is a legal reference and is specific to tenancies; a sub-tenant relationship is between those individuals and the tenant, not them and HFI.	
5.5	DK asked what the implication on biennial AGM's would have on receiving the grant from HFI, and if they would apply on a two year basis now.	
5.6	JF replied the report doesn't suggest a change in the way the grant is administrated, and will flag this as a concern.	
5.7	FS referred to the quorum and asked whether HFI would consider reducing it, as in reality it's very hard to get a TRA running. If there are only about five people on a TRA who do a lot of good work, they shouldn't be penalised that more people aren't willing to come out.	
5.8	JF agreed it is hard to reach the quorum, however there is a need to represent the estate and not jus themselves. A balance is needed.	
5.9	FS also requested that it would be useful if TRA's could send their accounts to a central body to be audited.	
5.10	FS asked how many officers support TRA's. JF responded that one person per office does, the Community & Service Development Officer.	
5.11	JFry asked if there was a move for local people who live in the area to fulfil this role. JF said he would encourage an arrangement for an informal process for people at the TRA's ground roots to fulfil such community roles.	

5.12	BC agrees with FS that the quorum is too high, and suggested a ballot residents signed stating they agreed with the TRA's aims could be easier than getting people to the meetings.	
5.13	JF stated that could be something that could be thought about.	
5.14	JFry is concerned that without FITA there's no independent body to provide advice on how to approach HFI about issues.	
5.15	JF replied that FITA's role was based around HFI's service level agreement, as well as providing a level of independence. HFI is aware of this and is looking at ways this need could be met.	
5.16	MS stated that more people attend FITA meetings than HFI meetings.	
5.17	Results of votes were as follows:	
5.18	On changing the wording relating to leaseholder/tenant ratio:	
	For: 4	
	Against: 7	
5.19	On changing AGMs to biennial:	
	For: 2	
	Against: 7	
5.20	On including a code of conduct:	
	For: 4	
	Against: 6	
<b>6</b>	<b>HFI and Consultative Panel Update</b>	
6.1	<p>HC asked what budget the following items were coming out of:</p> <p>Item 4 - 3.1 'New training courses'</p> <p>p.25 - 1.2 Box 3 - Estate parking service ...maintenance marking/numbering spaces</p> <p>p.32 - 6.3 - PSL Scheme</p> <p>6.4 - HFI ...corporate real estate management of HRA assets</p> <p>6.5 - ...reduction in CO2 emissions</p> <p>p.138/9 - Cavity wall insulation</p> <p>P.139 - Solar Panel scheme</p>	
6.2	HC feels that none of the above should be coming out of the HRA budget. JF will seek guidance on this.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Business Plan Objectives 2009/14</b>	
7.1	HC asked why tenants weren't consulted on item 3.8 of final costed proposals to the Finance Committee, and feels this should be consultation not information.	
7.2	FS agreed it was a concern that tenants were not consulted on the business plan.	
7.3	JF will flag up these issues with senior management.	
7.4	HC asked why HFI are spending money on a business care management system. JF asserted that this will save money in the long term, and its about the way callers into HFI are managed to reduce bureaucracy.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Demystifying HFI's Finances – the HRA made simple</b>	
8.1	FS stated that he has been asking for a training day on the HRA budget for some time now; this is needed as the report provided in consultation papers aren't clear enough.	
8.2	MG will raise this with the Service Development Team, who arrange training for tenants	<b>MG</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>2008/09 Capital Programme – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter monitoring</b>	
9.1	AS invited questions and/or comments arising from the report.	
9.2	HC is interested to see there is a solar panel fund, and wonders if the climate change fund could be used for such works.	
9.3	AS will get some information on the criteria for this fund and what it can fund.	<b>AS</b>
9.4	DK asked if the window renewal for Whitbread is still going ahead. AS informed him this work is programmed in for the 23 <sup>rd</sup> of March.	
9.5	IF questioned the comment on page 61 saying 'scheme removed at request of TRA' regarding reducing the height of perimeter hedging, as the TRA didn't know anything about this. AS will check up on this.	<b>AS</b>
9.6	ES asked whether if insulation is not approved for a whole block, if individual properties can be insulated, in the cases of old/vulnerable tenants.	<b>AS</b>
9.7	ES will provide AS with details of the case above and AS will contact ES directly about this.	<b>AS</b>
9.8	VW pointed out that the painting of the floor at Rahere as mentioned on pg 57 hasn't yet been completed. AS will check this.	
9.9	Jfry pointed out that there has been a catalogue of problems in Cyrus House with contractors, and feels that HFI aren't good at communicating with more vulnerable tenants.	

9.10	HC asked if it was normal for part of a block/some tenants to get replacements of radiators etc at different times to the rest of the block. AS reported that not all replacements are uniform for a block, as boilers etc can break down at different times.	
9.11	JV wanted it noted that Cllrs have not been informed about these major works, and haven't been invited to public meetings or steering group meetings. AS will note this and feed it back to projects.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Anti Social Behaviour Update</b>	
10.1	DS referred to the distributed report which shows active cases within the Central Street area being dealt with by the ASB team, and asked for any comments from the panel.	
10.2	JFry reported a situation occurring on Cyrus House where the case has been closed yet the problem is still ongoing. DS asked for JFry to forward the details to him and he will look into it.	<b>DS</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Petition: Cluse Court</b>	
11.1	DS referred to the distributed petition and report from Cluse Court.	
11.2	16 residents on Cluse Court signed a petition against continuing problems with damp and condensation on the estate.	
11.3	DS reported that property services view is that residents need more advice on how to reduce condensation, and are also looking into the option of insulating the roof.	
11.4	HC commented that on other estates, ventilation systems have been very noisy leading tenants to prefer not to use them. DS will take this back.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
12.1	IF reported that none of the communal ventilators are working on St Lukes, which has been brought up on estate inspections. DS will report this to property services.	<b>DS</b>
12.2	TL reported that the road at Galway Street opposite the TMO office is collapsing.	
12.3	A lady from Brunswick TMO complained about the treatment she'd had when visiting Central Street customer services staff. DS will talk to the lady after the meeting to identify when the incident took place to report it back to customer services.	
12.4	ES and SL agreed that they had had similar experiences in the past.	
<b>13</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting: TBC</b>	

