

Upper St (North) Area Housing Panel Minutes
Of meeting held 15/1/09 at Andover Community Centre

Item		
<p>1</p> <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p>	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Present</p> <p>Panel Members Robert Burbidge = Six Acres and Chair Richard Schunneman – Andover TRA Tracey Owen – Clifton/Haden TRA Tony Brown – Bennet Court TRA Fabiona Bellobono – Hood Court TRA</p> <p>Councillors Cllr Sidnell Cllr Kelly</p> <p>Guests Des Smith – HFI Director Theresa Coyle – HFI Director and Andover Centre Manager Paul Delappe – resident and petitioner</p> <p>Staff Jo Knight – Head of Service Pritpal Chhoker – Area Housing Manager Peter Rushbrook – Estate Services Manager Jenny Greenfield – Senior Project Manager Alistair Gale – Project Officer Chris Donovan – CSDO</p> <p>Apologies Andrew Ross – Aubert Court TRA Phil Stevens – Beechcroft/Jack Walker TRA Cllr Greening</p>	
	<p>AOB matters to be added to agenda TO of Clifton/Haden wished to add an unidentified matter</p>	
<p>2</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>Minutes of Previous meeting and matters arising</p> <p>Page 3 Matter arising from the minutes will henceforth be tabled first to remove confusion.</p> <p>Page 4 Andover lights and tasks outstanding – It was noted that Andover quarterly estate inspection had been cancelled due to the sudden unavoidable personal reasons relating to the relevant staff member. It was agreed that in future another officer would substitute. TRA has had a productive meeting with estate services managers and is satisfied that matters are moving in right direction There is now a tick list of outstanding matters on which to base inspections</p> <p>PC Proposal for a Tollington Estates sub panel – this is in process of being organised with reps from Clifton/Haden, Six Acres and Andover TRAs. They will focus on accountability and the rolling repairs tick list. Cllr Sidnell has expressed interest in joining. Mandy Miller is organising but has broken foot and will be off for three weeks – it will be an urgent matter for her return with deadline of mid feb for first meeting</p>	<p>PR</p> <p>MM</p>

2.3	<p>Panel send good wishes to Mandy</p> <p>Bike Sheds - PC to check apologies sent to TRA – he gave his personal apology. There are seven people interested in taking up offer of bike storage at Clifton/Haden. These are being contacted and lettings arranged.</p> <p>Recycling on Clifton/Haden - Tony Abbott is looking into this. It was suggested that collectors are given a master fob. JK requested that this is escalated - PR to action.</p> <p>Page 5 Dog fouling -It has been agreed that caretakers will attempt to track owners of dogs so that they can be informed of regulations.</p> <p>JK has responsibility for antisocial out of hours team who issue dog notices. The first three have been issued. The £80 fine is reduced to £40 if paid within specified time limit.</p> <p>A discussion was held about desirability of providing specified dog exercise areas, the necessity and practicality or otherwise of providing bins for faeces – who would empty etc. PC undertook to forward the point that if HFI allow residents to keep dogs they have some responsibility for enabling their proper exercise and providing facilities for responsible disposal of waste.</p> <p>PC to confirm if tenancy agreement now reads that one suitable dog or two may be kept.</p>	<p>PC</p> <p>PR</p> <p>PC</p> <p>PC/ CD</p>
3	<p>Central Consultation Paper – Rents and Charges JK Government sets the general rules about rent increases but there is room for local variation</p> <p>Rents Option 1 sets the rent increase at the lowest level we are allowed to fix Option 2 is at the higher end, creating a fund for energy efficiency works</p> <p>RS During the credit crunch it is important that increases are kept as low as possible – even small increases affect families on low wages profoundly.</p> <p>HFI is a stand alone business and should be looking to market its expertise, facilities and knowledge to generate income and keep rent increases down.</p> <p>TC does not support any of the options given- as savings have to be made to satisfy government policies services decrease as charges increase – her opinion is that residents should be due a refund for reduced services. Chair added a third option of ‘none of the above’</p> <p>Cllr S Congratulated HFI on starting to market its expertise – caretaking on Bentham rented out to Circle Anglia, architects and some other small beginnings – it is a start on which HFI should build.</p> <p>JK Housing investigation is another example from her team – this is a field in which we have built up expertise that other organisations like Guinness Trust are interested in buying into.</p> <p>DS Pointed out increase was double inflation rate</p> <p>The matter moved to the vote and Option 1 (lowest increase) won all 6 votes</p> <p>New Build 3.7 request for an opinion on charging more for new build not discussed.</p>	

	<p>Communal Heating/Hot Water The third vote requested was on subsidy for communal heating systems. There is only 1 block in the Upper St North area with this type of heating. There are a number of blocks across the borough with differing times that system works – this paper is an attempt to standardise.</p> <p>Current position on charges is that systems are subsidised by other residents. It was agreed last year that this should be gradually phased out over three years. Proposal is that this should be ended now.</p> <p>JG – pointed out that the only block with communal heating in Upper St North is double glazed.</p> <p>It was established that heating/hot water charge is not included in housing benefit (although there is an allowance in all H/B for heating and hot water)</p> <p>Heating and hot water is not metered – there is a flat charge and therefore light users like single people subsidise heavy users like families.</p> <p>A vote was taken and 5 members voted for withdrawing subsidy immediately , one abstained on the grounds insufficient information was available to vote</p>	
4	<p>Bicycle and Motor Bike parking Noted that information on Clifton/Haden is incorrect.</p> <p>JK Paper asks for opinion on whether to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free bike storage • Provide charged for bike storage • Provide rented motor bike spaces by dividing car parking spaces – this would require a corollary of a tow away service for b/bikes parked outside spaces. <p>It was emphasised that under none of these would HFI be liable for loss or damage.</p> <p>Cllr S There is no commitment given to consult residents of estate about positioning of bike sheds</p> <p>RS Emphasised increasing need to support green transport options – there should be money for such projects from the top up of £3m climate change fund for which bike sheds would be a perfect project.</p> <p>FB Bikes are not all good news – rash of bicycle borne muggers recently – bikes and m/bikes also have far higher accident and fatality rates.</p> <p>RS Motor scooters and motor bikes were often used by families on lower incomes as less expensive by introducing parking and tow away charges (which could exceed value of a cheaper motor scooter) low income families are disproportionately affected.</p> <p>TC locking bays would be needed as a motorbike can be legitimately parked but moved – she was assured that locking posts would be supplied.</p> <p>Vote was taken feeling of meeting was that bike storage should remain a local issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 votes for bays to be provided for motor bikes, with a tow away service for illegally parked bikes • 1 vote for bays to be provided but no tow away 	
5	<p>Tenants Compact and estate security Decision taken to hold meeting in February dedicated to tenants compact. CD to arrange date with Chair – taking Councillors timetable into account</p>	CD

	Estate security can be dealt with at ordinary panel meeting.	
6	<p>Financial Inclusion TC Papers pairing with one proposing large rent increases was infelicitous.</p> <p>Credit union is a worthwhile benefit to residents – to be invited to address next panel</p> <p>Cllr S The higher charges for residents on pre-payment meetings are an unfair burden on poorer residents – HFI should make it a measurable target to get rid of them.</p>	CD
	<p>Six Acres Petition Chair declared an interest and stood down for the item - Pritpal Chhoker taking the chair.</p> <p>Petition is from 60 residents of Six Acres estate, claiming compensation for caretaking services allegedly not provided to contracted standard during refurbishment of estate.</p> <p>Reply by Sean McLaughlin included in pack – refusing request with detailed reasons.</p> <p>HFI recommend panel close petition.</p> <p>Mr Delappe explained the basis of the petition and stated that the petitioners did not accept Sean McLaughlin's reply. He further stated that petitioners would take legal advice.</p> <p>It was explained that this is current policy of both LBI and HFI to send response only to lead petitioner.</p> <p>Mr Delappe stated that he had tried to book community centre but had been refused. This was then clarified as he had tried to book centre but they had not got back to him. TC promised to look into this.</p> <p>RS If Health and Safety laws are alleged to have been broken then it must be investigated but residents must realise the project is considerable and there is some trade off between current inconvenience and future improvement.</p> <p>PB If things have gone wrong then compensation should be considered, ,otherwise not.</p> <p>Mr Delappe stated that he preferred top follow the legal claim route.</p> <p>Meeting felt that in the light of this and the response from Sean McLaughlin the petition was closed at this stage – leaving the way free for Mr Delappe to pursue legal route.</p>	
	<p>Local Paper – Tenants Compact 08/09 PC explained background and emphasised money must be allocated or lost</p> <p>AG suggested that panel over allocated rather than run risk of underspend.</p> <p>Andover garages – withdrawn by TRA Hood Court Security – agreed Clifton/Haden door closers – agreed Bike storage on Tawney Court – agreed Andover trees to absorb any underspend.</p> <p>TC Requested rules for Tenants' Compact spend be made very clear at Feb meeting.</p>	
	<p>AOB Cllrs S –Who pays for parking by LBI/HFI staff using Andover parking? It was clarified that employees be 'bounced' from parking if a waiting list of residents occurs</p>	CD