

**Area Housing Panel Upper St North – Minutes of meeting 24/7/08**

Present	<p>Members  Robert Burbidge – Chair and Six Acres  Richard Schunneman – Andover TRA  Tony Brown – Bennett Court TRA  Fabiona Bellobono – Hood Court TRA</p> <p>Guest  Patrick Schunneman – Park View TRA</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Jon Farrant – Senior Area Housing Manager  Mandy Miller – Housing Services Manager  Chris Donovan – CSDO  Stan Goulding - Estate Service  Alistair Gale – Project Team  Siobhán O’Donnell – Out of Hours ASB team  Jaci Barnes – Property Services</p> <p>Adam Borrie – Chair of HFI board</p>	
Apologies	<p>Tracey Owen – Clifton Haden TRA  Des Smith – Clifton Haden TRA</p>	
Mins of previous meeting	<p>P4 – Greenspace Contracts</p> <p>JF – Specifications of the two contracts (parks and estates) have been rationalised. That of the estates has been upgraded to match parks. The estate contract will be divided into four – roughly aligned with area committees. Not yet decided if all four contracts will be awarded to same contractor. Currently out to tender.</p> <p>The contract will be output based – judged by results</p> <p>Bidders have been interviewed and summaries will go to Board in September. Winner will be announced in October and the contract will come into force in January.</p>	

	<p><b>Dog Control Orders</b></p> <p>Andover are having problems with dogs.</p> <p>SO'D noted this. HFI out of hours ASB team have agreed to be responsible for enforcing orders. They have received training and are awaiting their warrant cards –SO'D is chasing LBI up for them.</p> <p>ASB team have been contacting caretakers to get an idea of main trouble spots. Feedback from TRAs is welcomed and will be useful when planning patrols.</p> <p>Estate services and the tree officers will also feed information about trouble spots to team.</p> <p>Their focus at first will be on promoting responsible dog ownership – although they will issue fixed penalties they will be taking it softly at first.</p> <p>Signage has started going up around the estates.</p> <p>Will patrol in pairs, wearing high vis jackets. Team is comprised of 5 pairs of patrolling officers – but leave/shifts mean that there will usually be three team out at a time. There are 300 estates in HFI area – not all of them have serious problems with dogs and the teams will target known problem areas.</p> <p>Core hours are 4pm to 1am but they will be conducting specific campaigns outside those hours.</p> <p>Team based in Holloway police station.</p> <p>Current advice from police is not to use filming as it causes confrontation – although where CCTV is in place the evidence can be used.</p> <p>Filming and professional witnesses are not ruled out for extreme cases.</p> <p>Panel will receive reports on progress</p> <p>RB Playground in front of Stonyfield is not on the current list of exclusion zones but is heavily used as a dog pen, owners locking dogs in whilst they have a gossip outside. SO'D noted</p>	
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	<p>P7</p> <p>2nd line should read</p> <p>RS Balfour Beaty have done an excellent job.</p> <p>RS has received the caretaker manual he requested. He is concerned that self checking and scoring our caretaker work does not give a true picture – the Andover gets a variable service but scores consistently well.</p> <p>JF explained the inspection regime.</p> <p>CD stated that he has produced a guide to the inspection regime and after it has been checked by Pritpal will be sitting down with TRAs to go over how the system should work, establish if it does and take suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>TV aerial still not removed. SG stated that it has been booked for Friday of next week.</p>	
<p>Business Plan</p>	<p>Presented by Adam Borrie – Chair of HFI board.</p> <p>Paper partly consultation and partly information about what Board have been up to and direction they are intending to take</p> <p>Came out of a discussion with FITA over HFI accountability</p> <p>Business plan should for the basis of the contract between HFI and residents.</p> <p>Effort has been put into rationalising order of costing and consultation – at moment we cost pans and then consult, alter plans as a result of the consultation and then re-cost. This makes little sense</p> <p>Attempts have been made to redress the balance between property based and people based services – this balance needs to be regularly checked.</p> <p>HFI are trying to influence LBI to drop the annual budget/total spend cycle in favour of a three year cycle. It is envisaged</p>	

	<p>that the extra flexibility will enable us to get more outcome for less money.</p> <p>As the Decent Homes programme completes HFI will have more control over what the money is spent on.</p> <p>Reform of the HRA is in the wind. Currently rents are paid over to the govt who then make an annual grant. At present we pay over more in rents than they return in grants.</p> <p>ALMOs are looking to move out of this arrangement and keep the rents to invest in their managed stock. Consultation and planning for this needs to start now.</p> <p>AB and board want to build momentum away from old paternalistic way of delivering housing service towards a dialogue with residents over priorities.</p> <p>They believe we have the staff who will embrace this change</p> <p>FB HFI have the fine words and the protocols in place but they are not always followed and the reality is different</p> <p>AB Agrees that this does sometimes happen and effort must be put into establishing a clear vision and customer centred ethos. It is on the front line of service delivery that the reputation of HFI is made – for good or ill.</p> <p>RS HFI comes out of a local government organisation – with the advantages and faults of that origin. There is great concern about not breaking the rules. . Breaking out from the old paternalistic attitude is difficult – HFI have made a quantum leap from the old Council outlook but a great deal still needs to be done.</p> <p>FB Staff need simple guidelines and support in implementing them.</p> <p>AB Wants to get back to simplicity in what we say – get rid of the jargon. When staff can go out and solve a problem everyone is happier. Need to make people who are delivering the service part of the decision making process for designing the process for service delivery. Decision-making should not only be by managers who are remote from the front line.</p> <p>FB TRAs, need more practical support in order that they can</p>	
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	<p>adequately represent residents – even getting a laptop is difficult.</p> <p>RS Pointed out that there were a great number of staff present, who had to attend the Upper St South panel last week to say the same things. Suggested that as North panel was small it could be combined with Upper St South.</p> <p>JF Residents had requested two panels and HFI was willing to attend but could see a number of benefits for residents in this.</p> <p>CD is going around the TRAs who do not regularly attend to see why and ensure that they were aware of the importance of the meetings and the support (child care/ taxi's etc) available.</p> <p>He is also attempting to rouse interest in new TRAs to increase the size of the panel and will be contacting reps with local knowledge to attempt to identify areas where this will be possible. Currently working on possibility of Stephens Ink and Harvist.</p> <p>RB suggested that these efforts are given a couple of meetings to take effect but that panel considers possibility of joining up with South, possibly as an experiment for a few meetings before finalising.</p> <p>FB Believes that over emphasis on targets and performance indicators can reduce service</p> <p>AB agrees – will be consulting about what we measure, how and why. Less interested in whether we answer 100% of correspondence in 10 days than in the quality of the response. Believes that determination to turn around a void in 23 days can result in a sub-standard flat being let when a couple more days work could have resulted in a proper job being done. PIs should be a measure and guide, not an end in themselves.</p> <p>We have improved our performance but now need to make a jump from concentrating on targets and percentages to concentrating on people and reality.</p>	
Repairs Policy	Jaqui Barnes presented paper.	

	<p>When the policy was being re-written it was considered how best to involve residents. The Residents Involvement register has 650 members. 30 of them were involved in a panel reviewing the policy.</p> <p>One of the first things they looked at was the Right to Repair. Although this is a statutory duty the current system involving the repairs pledge is very clumsy and rarely invoked.</p> <p>Also looked at the urgency of various types of repair and the weighting awarded on cost (a 24 hours response attracts a high premium etc)</p> <p>Intention of policy is to get more repairs done on first visit.</p> <p>Vulnerability is another emotive issue. Currently we ask people to self declare if they are vulnerable. People who declare themselves so get extra repairs done free and higher priorities. This can be abused – it has been agreed to tighten system</p> <p>Recharge is another emotive issue where current system is so bureaucratic it is seldom used. It was agreed that where system is abused every attempt should be made to recharge.</p> <p>There is currently a system for £15 compensation to be automatically paid when a contractor misses an appointment. It has been decided that a similar amount should be charged against tenants who fail to stay in for appointments or refuse to allow legitimate access in an emergency. At the moment there are more recorded incidents of tenant failure than contractor failure.</p> <p>Probably allow one failed appointment a year without charge.</p> <p>FB £15 may not be a great deal for someone working but be a weeks food for someone on benefits. Can different rates be charges.</p> <p>JB Takes the point but would be difficult to administer</p> <p>CD Had been asked to raise point that these days in many households all adults are at work. Would it be possible for repairs to be offered evenings or weekends for a charge?</p> <p>LB Will raise this.</p>
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	<p>RS Feels that HFI is ripe for developing an in-house repairs service which could also create local employment and take work for other councils/social housing</p> <p>AB Wants contracts awarded on a record of quality work rather than just on price. Also wants whether sub-contracting should be allowed considered.</p> <p>A discussion was held about the desirability of penalising people who exaggerate the urgency of repairs in order to faster service.</p>	
<p>Central Information reports 3 to 9 and local reports</p>	<p>Noted</p>	
<p>AOB</p>	<p>Clifton Haden had asked about shutters for rubbish areas.</p> <p>SG This is on supplementary list of projects. This was put around for consideration for the surplus money in Tenants Compact account.</p> <p>It was decided not to vote on these projects this meeting but to take them away for consideration.</p> <p>Clifton Haden report graffiti attacks – estate services are aware and planning action</p> <p>SO'D During school holidays there will be patrols in the early part of the day (outside the team's normal hours)</p> <p>The out of hours team is always willing (and anxious) to attend TRA meetings.</p>	