

Notes of Lyon Street Area Housing Panel 12th March 2007

Present:

Cllr Lisa Spall	(LS)	Chair and Caledonian Ward Councillor
Gloria Johnson	(GJ)	Caledonian, 1 in 1000
Bill Millett M.B.E.	(BM)	Mackwest TRA
Kathy Martin	(KM)	Papworth Gardens 1 in 1000
Mary Barnard	(MB)	Fairdene Court TRA
Sadie Lambert	(SL)	Lion Court 1 in 1000 (LH)
Pat Croci	(PC)	Papworth Gardens, 1 in 1000 (LH)
Bert Gafney	(BG)	Caledonian Estate TRA
Irene Spence	(IS)	Mersey Estate TRA
Brian Potter	(BP)	Pleasant Place TRA
Louise Geraghty	(LG)	Field Court TRA
Cllr Edwards	(BE)	Holloway Ward
Cllr Chaterjee	(NC)	Holloway Ward
Cllr Coupland	(JC)	St Mary's Ward
Jessie White	(JW)	Resident Board Director & Vice Chair (HFI)
Theresa Coyle	(TC)	Resident Board Director (HFI)
John Gilbert	(JG)	Board Director (HFI)
David Selo	(DS)	Director of Resources (HFI)
Gary Bates	(GB)	Senior Area Housing Manager (HFI)
John Eustace	(JE)	Area Housing Manager (HFI)
Lyn Edwards	(LE)	Area Programme Manager (HFI)
Lee McDermott	(LM)	Community & Service Development Officer (HFI)

Apologies:

Liz Callopy	Sturmer Way, 1 in 1000
Maxine Johnson	Boston & Nailour TRA
Richard Beal	Keighley & Staveley TRA

ITEM	Matter raised	Action
1.0	Introductions	
1.1	<p>Gloria Johnson opened the meeting and welcomed colleagues from St Mary's Ward, who joined the Lyon Street Panel for the first time.</p> <p>All attendees then made their introductions.</p>	
1.2	<p>JE advised the panel of the passing of Ernestine Davies and asked the panel to participate in a minute's silence in respect of this.</p>	
1.3	<p>BP advised the panel that arrangements for the funeral had been made for the 16th March and that transportation was being provided to and from the Islington Crematorium in Finchley.</p> <p>Information on this is available through LM at Lyon Street or FITA.</p>	
2.0	Elections of Chair for meeting (4.1 in report 1)	
2.1	<p>GJ stood down as chair for the purposes of this meeting and DS temporarily assumed the chair.</p>	
2.2	<p>DS asked the panel for nominations for chair and both GJ and BP were nominated. BM suggested that the meeting would be better served by a by a councillor sitting as Chair. LS was nominated to the role of chair for the meeting and this was agreed by the panel.</p>	
3.0	Previous notes and matters arising	
3.1	<p><u>Previous notes</u> The panel agreed the previous notes to be a true and accurate record.</p>	
3.2	<p>BP commented that 7.2 on the notes relating to 'three star aspirations' would mean that any new builds would be funded out of the Housing Revenue Account yet remain the property of HFI when completed. DS advised that this was not the case at all and there were no plans to build at this time and certainly no decisions about the ownership of any such development.</p>	
3.3	<p>On point 7.3 of the notes, which related to how decisions regarding what Decent Homes (DH) works were made. BP advised that there would be no money to complete the DH works in the borough and other ALMOS have actually delayed works at the Governments request. DS advised that this was not the case and that no such agreement had been made by HFI/ LBI.</p>	

	Decision Items	
4.0	Report One: Consultative Panels – Elections, meeting dates & venues:	
4.1	One or Two Panels:	
4.1.1	JE advised the panel that the Lyon Street Panel had voted previously to remain as one area panel but as this decision was made in the absence of St Mary’s Ward it was being put to the panel again.	
4.1.2	BP advised that he felt that there should be two panels as the Lyon Street Panel was too far for people to attend and suggested that there be a separate panel and meetings for St Mary’s Ward at the Town Hall. BP also felt that one panel would be too big to be effective.	
4.1.3	JE advised that HFI would be happy to facilitate two meetings if that was what the panel decided. JE pointed out that St Mary’s Ward currently only had five recognised TRAs/ TMO seats on the panel and that the requirement for quorum at area housing panel meeting was also five, which would mean all members would have to attend every meeting.	
4.1.4	BP advised the panel, in his capacity as chair of FITA, that he would guarantee new TRAs in St Mary’s Ward as his organisation was currently working on this.	
4.1.5	BM expressed his concerns that this would lead to very poor communication between the current Lyon Street Panel and St Mary’s Ward.	
4.1.6	This item was then put to vote and the panel voted in favour of retaining one panel with seven votes for and two against.	
4.2	Meeting dates, times and location 2007/08:	
4.2.1	<p>JE advised the panel that He and LM had consulted the Council and HFI diaries for the period and suggested the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 8th May at 7.00 PM • Monday 16th July at 7.00 PM • Monday 10th September at 7.00 PM • Monday 12th November at 7.00 PM • Monday 21st January 2008 at 7.00 PM • Monday 17th March 2008 at 7.00 PM • <p>Westbourne Community Centre was suggested as the venue for the meetings.</p>	

4.2.2	BP advised that the venue was not accessible for all the TRA/ TMOS in St Mary's Ward and that some members had to get four buses to attend. BP attributed the poor turnout from St Mary's Ward to the fact that the venue was too far. BP and JC advised that they would not attend the meetings at Westbourne CC and BP went on to advise that he would be writing to the other TRAs in his area to that effect.	LM/JE
4.2.3	JE asked the panel to decide on this matter and the overwhelming majority voted in favour of the meetings remaining at Westbourne CC. JE advised that Westbourne CC would therefore be the venue for the panel meetings and that He and LM would look into ways in which we could assist representatives from St Mary's Ward in getting to the meeting and also look into the possibility of a more central venue.	
Consultation Items		
5.0	Additional Report: Governance Arrangements	
5.1	DS advised the panel that this report was for consultation and it related to the organisations governance arrangements, which were currently under review. He advised that the panel was being asked to comment on four key areas of the governance arrangements.	
5.2	BP expressed his concerns over the short amount of time that this item had been given and advised the panel that he had e-mailed Anne Lucas (AL) to complain at what he saw as a lack of time to consider the item properly. DS advised the panel that AL had replied to BP and indicated that the board were prepared to accept any written comments on this item up to 6 th April 2007.	
53	Options for the future of sub boards; There was general discussion on this item. There were no specific comments made regarding this item and but option two was favoured other options 1 and 3.	
5.4	Potential introductions of allowances for Board Directors; DS advised that this item was introduced under guidance from the DCLG, which advised ALMOS and Housing Associations to consider paying allowances to Board Directors.	
5.5	BP told the panel that he felt this decision had already been made and that the listing of the item was no more than rubber-stamping their decision to pay themselves. BP went on to advise that this was an inappropriate use of funds when we had just closed two Area Offices. He went on to make the recommendation that the predicted sixty thousand Pounds that is estimated it would cost should be given to TRAs and other tenant organisations.	

5.6	<p>TC advised the panel that she would be a director that would benefit from this allowance, if it was agreed, and that she would respect whatever decision was made regarding the allowances but she wanted to point out that all board directors work incredibly long hours, attend over seventy meetings a year and were not paid in any way for their work. Five thousand Pounds was not going to make them rich and relative to the amount of work that was done was good value.</p>	
5.7	<p>JG addressed the panel and said that he was a Council nominated board director and would not benefit from the allowance in any way but he felt that for the amount of work that individual directors carried out this was only a nominal amount and if we had to pay for directors it would cost a great deal more. He went on to advise that there was a lot more work involved in the posts than was first envisaged.</p>	
5.8	<p>LS explained to the panel that she had carried out voluntary work in a number of areas over the years but felt that the introduction of the allowances was justified as recompense for the amount of work that is carried out by board directors..</p>	
5.9	<p>SL advised that she was astonished at the amount of money that was spent out of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) on non-housing related matters.</p>	
5.10	<p>BM commented that if this was introduced it would go up year on year and mean that there was less money available for housing improvements.</p>	
5.11	<p>LS asked the panel if they were prepared to vote on this item. BP said he was only happy to do so as long as the outcome was not to be considered a decision of the panel and wanted that fact made clear in the minutes. LS advised that it would be a straw pole to gauge opinion. Six members voted in favour of paying allowed to board members and five voted against.</p>	
6.0	<p>Reducing the size of the Board, but still having more residents directors than Council or independent directors;</p> <p>There was general discussion on this item. There were no specific comments made but the panel felt that the present number allowed for greater representation and recommended it remain unchanged.</p>	
7.0	<p>Changing the election procedure for resident directors.</p> <p>The panel discussed the options given and concluded that the third option would be the best option with the two areas: north and south.</p>	

<p>8.0</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p>	<p>Report 2: Draft HFI Resident Involvement strategy:</p> <p>DS took the panel through the report, which was broadly accepted by the panel.</p> <p>LS advised that the introduction of a ‘good neighbour’ award similar to the Civic Award.</p> <p>BP objected very strongly to item 4.9 on this report and added that he found any kind of review of FITA offensive. He advised the panel that the funds allocated to FITA in respect of tenants was minimal compared to neighbouring boroughs that spent much more on tenant involvement.</p> <p>JW advised that she had been affiliated to FITA for a number of years and had previously asked LBI for increased funding for the organisation through rent increases.</p> <p>TC then addressed the panel and told them that she had also been affiliated with FITA for a number of years and had sat as director for the organisation in the past. She went on to advise that she felt that FITA’s relationship with HFI was not the best and people were confused about FITA and wanted an open debate on the subject. TC went on to say that at the recent FITA conference not one person who spoke at the meeting was a tenant from Islington.</p> <p>BP advised that the meeting was an open one and all were welcome to make comments. He advised at the last meeting there were 38 TRA’s in attendance and they told him what they wanted.</p>	
<p>9.0</p>	<p>HFI Information Items</p>	
<p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p>	<p>Report 3 – Decisions at Board Meeting 15th January 2007 This report is for information only. Panel noted report</p> <p>Report 4 – Homes for Islington Update This report is for information only. Panel noted report</p> <p>Report 5 – Forward Plan for Consultative Panels This report is for information only. Panel noted report.</p> <p>Report 6 – 2006/07 Capital Programme. LE told the panel that this report was not complete in relation to the Lyon Street Area as there were a number of items that needed to be transferred over. LE advised that this would be available at the next</p>	

	meeting of the panel.	
9.4.1	LE also advised the panel that there were a number of concerns regarding the work of the electrical contractor on some of the DH works and that these were currently being addressed directly with the contractor. KM advised that there had been a number of issues with their work during the works at her property but that they always resolved the problems effectively.	
9.4.2	BM asked that anyone who had issues to attend the steering group and direct their complaints directly to the contractor.	
9.4.3	LG asked LE why there was still a delay in the programmed door entry and fencing work at Field Court. LG went on to advise that this matter had been on-going in excess of two years and that residents had been victims of crime resulting from this.	
9.4.3	LE advised that the programme was one which she inherited and was not satisfied with the specifications of the works. LE advised that the programme had been amended and that the panel agreed at the last Tenant Compact meeting to allocate funding to cover the shortfall in the budget. These works should be complete within four months.	
9.4.4	TC asked that this matter be given priority and that there were lessons regarding communication with residents to learn from this issue.	
10.	AOB	
	LM advised the panel that there had been feedback provided on the January 2007 consultation regarding the rent increased. LM circulated this report to the panel.	
	Date of next Meeting: 14th May 2007 at Westbourne CC	