



**Minutes of the  
Residents Forum Meeting 16 March 2006  
Held at the Partners Offices, Colebrooke Place, N1 8HZ**

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**PRESENT:**

**Forum members:** Georgina Galliers (GG) **CHAIR**  
Muriel Duncan (MD) **VICE-CHAIR**  
Chris Radway (CR)  
Leigh Norgrove (LN)  
Sally Ingrey (SI)  
Helen Crawford (HC)

**Partners:** Susan French (SF)  
Tom Irvine (TI)  
Lawrence Wakeman (LW)  
Liz Voss (LV)  
David Westworth (DW)  
Natasha Wyeth (NW)  
Michelle Harrison (MH minutes)

**HFI:** Jane Mugridge (JM)  
Dean Sitton (DS)

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**APOLOGIES:**

**Forum members:** Dawreen Charles, David Yeend, Rosemary Hilton

<b>Agenda Item 6.</b>	<p><b>Annual Service Plan – Natasha Wyeth</b></p> <p>The Partners Annual service plan sets out our objectives for 2006-2007. We have identified 7 key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customer Care</li><li>• Resident Involvement</li><li>• Internal Communications</li><li>• Partners – One Organisation</li><li>• The Contract</li><li>• Relationships</li><li>• Diversity</li></ul> <p>The plan is at the moment in draft form and has been to HFI for comment. They are generally happy with the content. The forum has been asked for any comments before the final plan is produced.</p>
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NW asked for any members that would like to come to a workshop to work on taking the plan further. GG, MD and CR all kindly volunteered their time. NW will be in touch separately with convenient times and dates

LN – I would like to email you my comments as I am unable to come to any workshops.

NW took the forum through some of the highlighted areas that apply more to our Residents:

**Resident Involvement** – *reviewing opportunities for resident feedback*

GG – I have had good feedback from residents that I have spoken to about the repairs follow up phone calls.

SF – In our contract we have to carry out 10% repairs satisfaction. We do this by sending out a satisfaction card with every repairs appointment letter and if we do not receive the required 10% back (freepost) then we make up to that by making phone calls that ask the same questions.

TI – Customer service also make spot phone calls, at random, everyday. The works team also carry out satisfaction at the end of works.

CR – The social committee section of the plan is fine but I would like to see the date for this swapped with the complaints analysis, so the complaints would be ready by May and the social will be carried out in July?

SF – Could be possible but would have to look at our staffs' workloads to see if we could carry this out earlier.

CR – How will we know when this has been done?

TI – I look at the complaints stats everyday and we will aim to get a more detailed analysis to the forum. This will focus mainly on escalation rates – this may take a little time as we need to look at other authorities to perform a benchmarking exercise.

NW – Would the forum like to have presentations from all of the teams at various RF meetings to show the way they work and what they do?

**Forum voted – No** (remove from Annual Plan)

NW – We have an objective on the plan for the housing management team to bring down the time it takes to re let void properties. Does the forum think that this would be a good item in the plan?

CR – Is it in tenants and leaseholders interests to bring these timings down?

NW – Yes, as it makes more properties available

HC – I would like to have this in the plan as the flat next door to my property was left for ages and had squatters in it. I think

	<p>that it would help stop this if they were let quicker.  LN – I think that have less time in there for the works would reduce the quality. I know of a new resident that has told me of the bad workmanship that has happened at their property.</p> <p><b>Forum voted - No</b> (remove from Annual Plane but keep times and targets in performance updates)</p> <p>NW – Our repairs team would like to run a scheme where female operatives are specifically available for those who ask.  GG – Why has this come up now. This was mentioned ages ago?  NW – We have not had the resources to do this before but now we would like to put in the plan so we can make sure that it is now actioned.</p> <p><b>Forum voted – Yes</b> (keep in Annual Plan)</p> <p>(NW left the meeting at this point)</p>	
<p><b>1.</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>TI – If the forum agrees, from now on we will have a table attached to the minutes which will be the “action tracker”. This will enable the forum to keep track of the actions and outcomes from previous meetings.</p> <p><b>Forum agreed minutes</b>  No matters arising</p>	
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Performance – Susan French</b></p> <p>At most meetings we mention the HFI performance basket. This is a sort of league table for all the Islington area offices’ KPI’s to be measured by. The basket produces a score for each office, each month, based on that offices particular performance. The scores range from 0-10. Partners are monitored slightly different because of our contract and because we do not manage any estates. Our average score since April 2005 has been 8.49 this is regarded as good (score over 9 being excellent).</p> <p>CR – Would like to see more information on leaseholders on the performance at a glance sheet.</p> <p>SF – At the previous meeting we included a whole section on leaseholder performance but will make a point of using some leaseholder stats in future.</p> <p>LN – I don’t think that Partners are 100% on complaints? I know that I still have a complaint unresolved?</p> <p>TI – Firstly, can we have more details on this and secondly; even though someone may not be satisfied with the outcome of</p>	

	<p>their complaint, we are monitored on whether we reply to that complaint on time – this is what we are running at 100% on.</p> <p>SF – This indicator is clearly defined in the contract as response time for all correspondence to be 10 working days. If the resident was not happy with response then they would escalate to the next stage of the procedure (stage1,2,3 and then Ombudsman).</p> <p>JM – Clarified this procedure, as all the area offices use the same, to SI and the forum.</p> <p>CR – I don't think that the indicators that are brought to this meeting are of any use to the forum.</p> <p>JR – Will look at the information that comes to the forum with Partners and possibly revise content.</p> <p>GG – LN and CR to give information on what performance issues they would like to be covered in the next meeting.</p>	
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>HFI Comment on Partners Performance – Jane Mugridge</b></p> <p>Complaints have come down by 48% which is very good. Works team complaints group meet monthly to discuss and implement changes to help prevent complaints.</p> <p>By the end of January 06 1136 spot checks on works in progress have been carried out (by LV) and this focuses on monitoring the Code of Conduct. 26 items (2%) was found to be no compliant with the code.</p> <p>GG – I have never heard of or has spot checks?</p> <p>LV – I get a regularly updated list of works that are in the process of being carried out and conduct checks by visiting properties at random, talking to the residents and looking at the works that are actually being carried out on site.</p> <p>CR – I do not doubt that these checks are being carried out but I would like to express my scepticism at the 98% compliance with the code of conduct.</p> <p>MD – We all seem to be forgetting that the works team have come such a long way since the start of the contract. None of us can say that it isn't getting better and that we cannot see the improvements.</p> <p>JM – HFI would like to endorse Partners Annual Service Plan. By in large we are very happy with it. The only area that we would like to see changes in is the works periods, essentially the time that is spent in residents homes.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Leaseholders: Issues, Comments and Questions – David Westworth</b></p> <p>CR – Consultation process: clarity on what consultation is to be carried out before the section 20's. Not happy with what is in the letter that has been received.</p>	

<p>Working document/flow chart "A leaseholders guide to the major works process" was given to the forum and then taken through by DW. This document will be taken to the next leasehold focus group for discussion on the way forward.</p> <p>CR – This is exactly the explanation I wanted</p> <p>DW – Need to encourage more residents onto the leaseholders focus group or will not work</p> <p>LN – Who finances the purchase of tools and outside implements for external areas, specifically garden areas? These areas do not seem to come up anywhere in the works programme?</p> <p>DW – In street properties we wouldn't conduct routine grounds maintenance. Garden areas are generally the responsibility of a certain tenant or leaseholder in the dwelling.</p> <p>LN – Who's responsibility for the walls and pathways in these areas?</p> <p>DW – This would be the repairs team in the event of a Health and Safety issue but otherwise would fall under the remit of the works team during the refurbishment.</p> <p><b>LW – Boundary walls are not part of refurbishment (if not a H&amp;S issue) but there is talk of this coming into the programme.</b></p> <p>SF – Whatever works were to be carried out in any of these areas would be charged proportionally to any leaseholders in the dwelling. Gardening tends to be expensive and with most authorities this is left to the tenants and leaseholders. Most standing charge/rent monies collected are put back into the fabric of the buildings rather than the external areas.</p> <p>DW – If residents are not looking after their garden areas (H&amp;S reasons, overgrown etc? there is an enforcement route that may be taken to address these situations.</p> <p>LN – What would happen if I took the initiative to concrete over the area?</p> <p>DW – You would not be able to do this as you have already said that the area in question is not part of your demise. But will check if this is actually correct for you.</p> <p>SF – Would almost certainly be cheaper for residents to carryout gardening works themselves rather than having a grounds maintenance contract implemented and recharging through the service charges and rents.</p> <p>DW – Some residents work very well together in keeping these areas tidy and unfortunately some do not. Will have to look at this on an individual basis.</p> <p>SF – We are conducting Communal Area Risk Assessments at the moment and anything, anything that is dangerous or can be replaced/repared within the contract will be seen to.</p> <p><b>CR – Leasehold guide – initial contact</b></p> <p><b>LW – not quite there yet, are currently working at 3</b></p>
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5.	<p><b>HFI Inspection of Works Report – Dean Sitton</b></p> <p>Leading on from the Consul reports on works from Dec 2004 and June 2005 HFI have carried out 23 inspections of properties who have had works done. Some of the questions put to the tenants included: H&amp;S, overall satisfaction with the works carried out, standards of workmanship. These properties were given scores by Dean and also the residents themselves. The report was given to the forum and discussed.</p> <p>GG – There is not enough information on where these properties are? Even the zone colours would be helpful to give an idea.</p> <p>DS - Obviously I cannot give exact addresses but I will take on Board what has been said and keep in mind if and when another report is produced.</p> <p><b>SI – Being a technical inspector you seem to have concentrated on the fabric of the building mainly, not so much on security and communication. Did you have a report that was the same for all or were questions asked on an ad hoc basis?</b></p> <p>DS – The report was somewhat condensed to make it more accessible and not every Q&amp;A was included.</p> <p>JM – Questions are consistent throughout all reports.</p> <p>SI – It seems very interesting that Dean Sittons scores were almost always lower that that of the residents?</p> <p>HC – What did you do when you saw any defects? Were they reported? And what happened if you spotted any defects that the residents themselves had not?</p> <p>DS – I always told the tenants my findings and then also fed information back to the works teams.</p> <p><b>CR – I noticed that property no: 10 in the report was the lowest scoring of all. This was the only leasehold property visited. What happened there?</b></p> <p><b>DS – There were problems with the roof joists and cracked windows – though these were works in progress.</b></p> <p>CR – Could one of these reports be produced solely for leasehold properties or at least to include them on a more equal basis?</p> <p>JM – We are looking to continue these visits into leasehold properties.</p> <p><b>SF – Lots of leaseholder properties were actually put through certification in Dec and Jan and therefore missed the timeframe of the report.</b></p> <p>JM – We anticipate the next report being produced in the next quarter.</p> <p>CR – Can this be done earlier than that?</p> <p>JM – Could suggest a 3 month time period, but this is due to staff being available to carry out visits. Dean Sitton has now left</p>	

<p>5.1</p>	<p>this department and we are currently looking for a replacement. Will update at the next RF on this.</p> <p>GG – There seems to be a repetition of sealant problems in properties. I have had experience with this myself and know that when you clean along it, it just comes clean off! Is this going to be rectified?</p> <p>LW – We have learned from this and have now changed the way that we are applying the sealant to sinks. We are now applying a silicone base instead of just a seal.</p> <p><b>Reasonable Works Periods – Dean Sitton</b></p> <p>I have been monitoring 2 properties through the void works: one had damp and one did not. The one with damp works took 6 weeks to complete and the one without 5 weeks. 99% have hit the shorter targets we are setting. The damp property also still had the tenant in situ which made things more difficult and the damp was extensive.</p> <p>CR – Can we have a commitment that we will have a report on leaseholders only and not a mixed report, soon?</p> <p>JM – We will do this but will not be for at least another three months. We will have to look at our resources.</p> <p>CR - Can we have a report on this for the next meeting and then the final report for the meeting after?</p> <p>JM – If the recruitment for the technical officer goes well and we can recruit early then yes.</p> <p>GG – Why is it that you want everything separated and tailor made for leaseholders? The only difference is the internal works. Why can we not have combined reports?</p> <p>HC – I think that leaseholders are asking for this as generally all information and feedback is collected from tenants</p> <p>SF – As I have said previously – up to when the report was done we did not have any leaseholder works that had started that is why only one was included in the HFI report.</p> <p>SI – Disruption comes out of the report as a very big issue. 50% have said that the disruption was a lot worse than they first thought.</p> <p>SF – We do try to make that clear in our literature and in the residents video/DVD. If any of the forum has any ideas on how we can make the amount of disruption clearer to residents who are about to have the works carried out they would be welcomed.</p> <p>GG – I have found that organisation is the key to limiting the disruption.</p> <p>HC – Maybe you could publish some photos of properties mid works?</p> <p>SI – I feel that the video didn't make clear enough as Partners didn't want to scare people</p> <p>SF – In the video I think that we were quite explicit on how bad the works were going to be.</p>
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6.	<b>Brought forward to the start of the meeting</b>	
7.	<p><b>HFI Consultative Panel reports – Jane Mugridge</b></p> <p><b>Item 1 PFI2 Update (blue paper) by Chris Worby</b> Summary of progress – final negotiation stages. Autumn 2006 is target for start of service. Formal consultation is taking place with regular public meetings</p> <p><b>Item 4 Location for HFI Sub Board meetings (yellow paper)</b> Choice of venues given – all are DDA compliant with good transport links. Forum comments wanted on whether to change venue or keep as is at Stephenson Hall. <b><i>Forum voted for change to Business Design Centre, Upper Street</i></b></p> <p><b>Item 4.1 Feedback for Sub Board meetings to be open to public (yellow paper)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. General principle of holding such meetings – <b><u>Forum:</u> Yes</b></li> <li>ii. Two meetings per year – <b><u>Forum:</u> Needs to be more than two meetings per year – needs to be reviewed</b></li> <li>iii. Hold meetings on a Saturday morning – <b><u>Forum:</u> No</b></li> <li>iv. Should meetings be alternated between the north and south of the borough <b><u>Forum:</u> No stay at the Business Design Centre</b></li> <li>v. Should the meetings be advertised in the local press and HFI newsletter <b><u>Forum:</u> Yes but could also be advertised in local schools, doctors surgeries, hospitals and libraries</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Item 7. Major works - assistance to Leaseholders</b></p> <p>To assist leaseholder payments – details of communication, consultation, options to extend payments. All options will be offered to Partners leaseholders along with HFI's. DW – we have only recently seen these proposals and think that it is very good news for leaseholders. We now need to go back and have formal consultation with HFI on the issues. CR – HFI are responsible for ensuring Partners leaseholders will not have to cover any extra costs for implementing these changes. HC – Will these changes be available to leaseholders who have</p>	

	<p>already started paying their bills?</p> <p>DW – We will look at how we are going to apply these changes to our leaseholders but they will apply to all.</p> <p>HC – Has the interest period been decided? Is it been extended to 5 years? What would be the exceptional circumstances on putting charges onto properties?</p> <p><b>NO answer?</b></p> <p><b>CR – HFI leaseholders are not capped at £10k as Partners leaseholders are. Not too happy with this until we know what the interest period will be. More pressure needs to be put onto LBI to improve this</b></p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>GG – If necessary we will make time on the agenda for more discussion on specific leasehold issues</p> <p>CR – The reason why I would like more attention paid to the leaseholders in the programme is because as we are being charge up to £10k for this I think you will agree that we have a bigger stake in this than tenants.</p> <p>DW – The Partners Leasehold Focus Group is not working as well as it should be. Will be trying to re-launch and re-invigorate in the near future, though this can only happen if we have more leaseholders wanting to join.</p> <p>GG – 6:35 will be the start time for next meeting and we will then see if this time works better for everyone.</p>	

***Next Meeting: 18 May 6:35 at Colebrooke Place***