

Upper St North Area Housing Panel – 14/5/07

Emmanuel Church, Hornsey Road

Present	<p><b>Voting Members present</b> Clifton-Haden TRA – Glen Hurst Andover TRA – Marion Spall Bennett Court TRA – Tony Brown Vaudeville Court TRA – Maria Lopez Six Acres TRA – Robert Burbidge</p> <p><b>Councillors</b> Cllr Sidnell – Finsbury Park</p> <p><b>Guests</b> Theresa Coyle – Board Member Christine Coyle - observer</p> <p><b>Staff</b> Pritpal Chhoker – Area Housing Manager Upper St Office Stan Goulding – Estate Services Upper St AHO Jenny Greenfield – Capital Projects Manager Chris Donovan – Community and Service Development</p>	
Voting members not present	Stephens Ink Drakely and Tawney	
Apologies	<p>Cllr Sidnell pointed out that meeting clashed with Labour Group and other Labour councillors had therefore been unable to attend. Objected that officers had set dates.</p> <p>It was pointed out that members (page 3 of minutes) had set dates.</p> <p>CD promised to circulate dates of the year’s meetings.</p> <p>Cllr Sidnell pointed out that they are set out in the front of the report booklet.</p> <p><i>Ed note</i></p> <p><i>Eamon McGoldrick, HFI chief exec had been listed to attend but had exchanged with John Phillips, Director of Property Services.</i></p>	

	<p><i>John Phillips had suffered a car break-in and was unable to attend. He subsequently asked minutes to record his apologies,</i></p>	
Order of meeting	<p>Current chair – member for Six Acres – retains chair to go through minutes of last meeting.</p> <p>Pritpal Chhoker, as senior HFI officer present takes chair for elections.</p> <p>Newly elected chair takes up role for remainder of meeting.</p> <p>On this occasion there are no local reports as office area is new and no figures are available. CD requested guidance from panel as to what reports they require for future.</p> <p>Chair recognised all guests and observers as being welcome to address panel.</p>	
Minutes of previous meeting 15/3/07	<p>General – It was pointed out that the Isledon panel preferred their minutes depersonalised</p> <p>These minutes therefore prepared within the following guidelines.</p> <p><b>Voting members</b> comments – anonymous  <b>Non-voting members</b>, i.e. Councillors – named as it is in constituents interest  <b>Staff</b> – named.  <b>Guests</b> – named as relevant to reason for attending (eg HFI directors, speaking under corporate responsibility guidelines or a FITA director giving FITA’s viewpoint)</p> <p><b>Page 1</b></p> <p>Corrections to the list of attendees</p> <p>Marion Spall was present as a voting member for Andover not as an observer.</p> <p>Barry Law was present as a voting member for Hathersage not as an observer.</p> <p>Cllrs Smith and Watt were present as non-voting members of</p>	*

	<p>the panel, not as observers</p> <p>Conrad Gutwin of HFI staff was only present for pre-meet.</p> <p>Apologies were given by Cllr Sidnell on behalf of Cllrs Kelly and O’Sullivan but not recorded.</p> <p><b>Page 3</b></p> <p>It was proposed that future meetings start at 6:30 as was traditional in Isledon Road panel.</p> <p>Unanimous vote in favour</p> <p><b>Page 6</b></p> <p>Member commented that the surgeries at Downham Road – has not been busy despite posters up around the area, Could leaflets go out to all households.</p> <p>TC – HFI need to make their mind up about whether they are serious about surgeries. Rumour has it that they have computers which cannot communicate with HFI records</p> <p>PC Confirmed that laptops communicate with HFI mainframes via CITRIX and have access to tenancy, rent and repair records. Two printers are being purchased to enable print outs to be given where relevant.</p> <p>Cllr S asked for confirmation that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 2 members of staff were always at surgeries</li> <li>2) that all surgeries have taken place</li> <li>3) That no other members of public are present during interviews – ie interviews are private.</li> </ol> <p>PC confirmed all points</p> <p>Minutes as amended were accepted as true record.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*</p>
<p>Elections</p>	<p>Outgoing chair stood down and PC took chair for elections.</p> <p>Voting cards were distributed to named voting members.</p> <p>No 1 in a 1000 members were present and no eligible</p>	

	<p>applications had been received. CD reminded panel that they can co-opt.</p> <p>Chair – Robert Burbidge nominated and seconded. No other nominations. RB elected.</p> <p>Vice Chair – Marion Spall nominated and seconded. No other nominations. MS elected.</p> <p>Associate Director – Marion Spall nominated and seconded. No other nominations. MS elected</p>	
	<p>Robert Burbidge, elected member for Six Acres then resumed chair and PC introduced reports</p>	
<p>Respect Standard</p>	<p>This report is a consultation report built around six strands, which are outlined, on page 3.</p> <p>The proposals on which panel are being consulted are on page 5.</p> <p><b>1) Good neighbourhood agreements</b></p> <p>No comments</p> <p><b>2) Restructure of services for antisocial behaviour</b></p> <p>Discussion about increasing centralisation – thought to be a bad thing as it reduces link with residents. No dissenting voices.</p> <p>Reminiscence about the days of residential caretakers and the role they played in reducing antisocial behaviour.</p> <p><b>3) Expand out of hour’s service from 6 days a week to seven.</b></p> <p>No dissension but some concern about what work Out of Hours teams do. Some members were sceptical about the reported coverage.</p> <p>A discussion was held about how the team was tasked and</p>	

	<p>areas targeted.</p> <p>Full report on activities in area requested for next panel with details of how areas targeted and proposals for next period.</p> <p><b>4) Fixed penalty Notices</b></p> <p>No comments</p> <p><b>5) Funding for access to sports.</b></p> <p>TC reported that Access to Sports programme on Andover had won a national award and congratulated all those involved</p> <p><b>6) Investment in equipment</b></p> <p>Discussion about use and effectiveness of mosquito alarms, their human rights implications and whether they would merely move a problem a few yards up a street.</p> <p>Question asked if the alarms would be moved around. PC believed so.</p> <p>How are they set off?</p> <p>PC By motion sensor</p> <p>One member would prefer to see money being used for diversionary activities than this type of measure.</p> <p>Another believed this was evidence of HFI taking the cheap option – funding more police would be more effective.</p> <p>General consensus was against.</p> <p>Cllr S welcomed report in general but felt it could go a lot further. Questioned how proposals would be monitored.</p> <p>PC There would be an action plan developed and monitored against targets. Reports would be made to panels and board from time to time</p> <p>Cllr S suggested that ‘from time to time’ was insufficient. The panel required full ASB reports at every meeting. Panel assented</p>	<p>*</p> <p>*</p>
--	--	-------------------

	<p>It was observed that the smaller panel could spend more time monitoring such local activity.</p> <p>Concern was expressed at a report that noise associated with the Young Peoples Services youth group on the Andover was proving a nuisance.</p> <p>One member asked for clear guidance on how to report antisocial behaviour - to whom should reports be made about different levels</p> <p>General agreement that there was confusion</p> <p>CD reported that a leaflet is being drawn up for some estates - will bring examples to next panel.</p> <p>A request was made for a full schedule of estate inspections so that TRA reps can accompany. Reports were made of communal repairs marked as completed when they were not.</p> <p>PC asked for details at the end of meeting to check into this</p> <p>Cllr S At each inspection a check should be made for issues carried forward.</p> <p>TC suggested associate directors first job could be to link up with managed properties sub-board and look at KPIs and report back to panel</p>	<p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p>
<p>Review of Tenant Compact</p>	<p>PC – a consultation report. Panel is asked to note and feedback on how it should be handled in future</p> <p>Paper also provides for changes to TRA consultation and includes proposal for distribution of Compact funds</p> <p>JG pointed out that new Upper St area has 50% more properties than Lyon St.</p> <p>Cllr S enquired if, should the proportional method for distributing fund between panels be adopted the same principle would be used to divide money between the two Upper St panels.</p> <p>JG Agreed that this would be logical.</p>	

	<p>TC Queried the title of Tenants Compact</p> <p>CD gave point of information that leasehold is a form of tenure and leaseholders also tenants and are thus included in Tenants Compact (and the Tenants portion of Tenants and Residents Association – the Residents portion of title refers to untenured members of a household who may be members of a TRA)</p> <p>This was questioned</p> <p><i>Ed. note – confirmed with legal, governance team and OED that this is case</i></p> <p>A vote was taken on the two options for distributing Compact funds</p> <p>Option A Split the budget evenly between four area office – no votes</p> <p>Option B Split the budget in proportion to numbers of properties – unanimous approval.</p> <p>Resident Involvement Strategy</p> <p>No comments</p> <p><b>TRA constitution and membership</b></p> <p>Report that in some areas covered by TRAs leaseholders have formed separate leasehold associations but they seemed concerned only with bills and re-charges, leaving the TRA to cover other issues.</p> <p>On the Andover the chairs of the two organisations attend each other’s meetings to ensure good information exchange.</p> <p>Comment made that voting members are there to represent all their members, of any or no tenure.</p> <p>TC This is what should happen but there are occasions when issues arise where secure tenants and leaseholders are on different sides – capital works improvements resulting in large bills to leaseholders is the most obvious. Spa Green estate was extreme example with £40,000 plus bills. Must</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>emphasise that this was extreme, average bills are around £4000. Had leaseholders been in the majority on TRA committee consultation may have swung other way on much needed improvements.</p> <p>Should also emphasise that secure tenants also pay for improvements but in smaller regular amounts through their rent.</p> <p>Accepts that charges are not always correct but they are open to scrutiny and challenge.</p> <p>Member wanted breakdown of costs for Bennett Court, believes bill far too high for redecorating a stairwell – as a contractor he could do it for half cost and still make a decent profit.</p> <p>PC pointed out that our contractors must abide by Health and Safety rules and pay standard rates, all of which increase costs. Member accepted that but had taken it into account in his calculations.</p> <p>JG Breakdown of costs available through Home Ownership (now at Isledon Road office)</p> <p>PC Where a price seems wrong it can be challenged and we will seek additional quotes to confirm</p> <p>Cllr S HFI have got better at dealing with leaseholder issues and interests – still some way to go but improved.</p> <p>A discussion was held about relative representation of leaseholders and secure tenants. Issue of FITA being funded from rents but representing leaseholders was raised.</p> <p>PC In future FITA will represent secure tenants and the new leaseholder association, funded by leaseholders, will represent leaseholders.</p> <p>TC Will the re-negotiated Tenants Compact come back to panels for comment before being put to Board?</p> <p>Cllr S It is Government legislation that we must have a compact. Will vote in line with panel's recommendation when the issue comes up at Council.</p>	
--	---	--

	<p><b>Vote</b></p> <p>Option A minority of leaseholders on committees as at present No votes</p> <p>Option B Committee membership to reflect ratio of secure tenants/leaseholders</p> <p>CD pointed out that this proportion will need to be known by FITA before an AGM. Will check how this would be done</p> <p>Unanimous</p> <p>There was no option C - no restriction.</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>Complaints.</p>	<p>PC An information item about complaints handling.</p> <p>There has been an increase in stage 1 complaints but this is not necessarily a bad thing. The important statistic is that progression to stage 2 has decreased dramatically, which indicates that complaints are being handled thoroughly and resolved at stage 1.</p> <p>Member asked for an explanation of complaints escalation</p> <p>PC The first time HFI is notified of a problem it counts as correspondence.</p> <p>If it had been mishandled or not resolved and we are notified that is a stage 1. Our reply will include information about how to progress the complaint if necessary.</p> <p>If resident is not satisfied with the stage 1 answer a more senior officer can review the process and decision. That is a stage 2 and the reply will contain information about progressing to stage 3.</p> <p>Stage 3 is the central LBI complaints department reviewing the case. The reply will include information about taking to stage 4.</p> <p>Stage 4 is an Ombudsman's investigation. The Ombudsman will not normally take cases until they have been through the previous stages.</p>	

	<p>At any stage the complaint may be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.</p> <p>Cllr S Partners stage 2 complaints are rising fast – this shows the difference between keeping a service in house under tight control,</p> <p>In the past Isledon Road panel had an analysis on previous periods complaints. Suggest this be continued.</p> <p>Panel assented.</p> <p>Panel members commented that trends look impressive but questioned why the period was set as April 04 to March 07</p> <p>PC This covers life of ALMO</p> <p>TC Does not see rise in stage 1 as necessarily a problem but is concerned about number of complaints which reached Ombudsman stage – surely they should have been resolved before then.</p> <p>PC Covers all aspects of Housing, not just HFI,</p> <p>Cllr S Councillors will sometimes recommend a complaint to the ombudsman where there is an intractable problem, for example with a procedure or policy. There is no cost to complainant and it may be preferable to legal action.</p> <p>CD To give a perspective, last year the Upper St office had 4 Ombudsman’s investigations, none of which were upheld.</p> <p>TC That is good but there is an issue that there must have been ways to prevent these reaching that stage, accepting that there was no fault better communication and explanation may have prevented escalation.</p>	*
Decisions of Board	Noted	
HFI update	Noted	
Forward Plan for reports	Noted	
Capital Programme	Cllr S In anticipation of 3* HFI and LBI are discussing the first new builds for 20+ years.	

	<p>Members were concerned they would be eco-friendly and were assured this would be taken into account.</p> <p>Cllr S Would not support HFI ownership of new build.</p> <p>Question asked about who would construct?</p> <p>PC HFI would supervise</p> <p>J.G. Report is a bit confusing; broadly speaking any new projects are dealt with by her team.</p> <p>Conrad Giwa deals with tenants compact projects Collette Clail deals with Capital projects</p> <p>Is Vaudeville Court due new windows?</p> <p>JG No, it is only scheduled for internal works</p> <p>Cllr S How does one find a clerk of works?</p> <p>JG Clerks of Works work by project, not area. Telephone Albert Neal Property Services 020 7527 3977.</p> <p>Has been out and around estates building up programme for Decent Homes work up to 2011.</p> <p>Where there is a TRA she likes to attend a meeting to explain, prefers to just attend first ½ hour if possible.</p> <p>The capital programme for Upper St is huge, consisting of 1/3 of allocation for borough as well as Tollington and Andover projects.</p> <p>TC commented that the large numbers of small Tenants Compact programmes sit uneasily in a section dealing with large-scale projects.</p> <p>JG Nonetheless, that is where they are at present. If panel members would check lists and let her know of any inconsistencies – lists have been put together by several officers from different sources and errors may have crept in.</p> <p>For next panel will produce a local progress report</p>	*
Local	PC There are none this meeting but guidance sought over	

<p>Reports</p>	<p>reports panel would be interested in for future meets.</p> <p>ASB as previously discussed  Complaints as previously discussed  Progress on Compact and Capital projects  New initiatives  Basket of PIs  Community Engagement  Schedule of Estate inspections</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>AOB</p>	<p>How can windows be added to Vaudeville Court programme.</p> <p>JG Get in touch with her on 020 7527 5342.</p>	