Partners For Improvement in Islington

Minutes of the
Residents Forum Meeting 19th July 2007

PRESENT:

Forum members:	Susanne Lamido Richard Best Lisa Crowley Sally Ingrey Georgina Galliers Muriel Duncan Eugen Hockenjos Shirley Bryant Suzanne Bryant Mr M Holden
Partners:	Tom Irvine Ed Butler Ami-Anne Spring Doug Pope Phillipa Wooldridge Mike Edmunds Laurence Wakeman Liz Voss
HFI:	Anthony Jonas

APOLOGIES:

Forum members:	Rosemary Hilton Dave Gorman
Partners:	

Welcome, apologies and introductions

Ed Butler welcomed Forum members to the meeting and introductions were made.

1. Forum Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

EB explained that the format of the forum has changed since the recent nominations took place. Partners received 17 nominations to become resident representatives on the Forum(s). This number lends itself to one Forum rather than two. The Forum needs to agree a new terms of reference. We are organising a special meeting to be held in August to discuss how the Forum will operate in detail, along with the forum Code of Conduct.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

TI explained that the group needs to elect an interim Chair and Vice Chair until the above is clear. Members were advised if they would like to stand for Chair they may nominate themselves or others may nominate on their behalf, they may say a few words if they would like to. Election forms will be handed out on which members will need to mark X against who they would like to elect as interim Chair and Vice Chair.

SL said a few words in support of her Chair nomination.

GG said that as she has been Chair of the PFI 1 forum for a number of years, she is happy to let another member take on the interim role.

Election forms were handed out and filled in.

The Forum elected Susanne Lamido interim Chair and GG interim Vice Chair until the special meeting in August.

RB – I think that it would be a good idea to have members from both PFI1 and PFI2 standing as Chair and Vice Chair when it is decided at the special meeting.

ED – We can add this item, Charing Arrangements, to the agenda for the special meeting in August.

SL took over as interim chair with immediate effect.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

SL asks group if there are any questions.

RB Eamon McGoldrick has stated that HFI are responsible for

changing over TV aerials from analogue to digital in their properties, I would like to know who is responsible for doing this in Partners properties?

AJ The council are responsible for changing over aerials that are communal and serve more than one property, at a small cost. As Partners manage street properties there are very few communal aerials, the majority have individual aerials, in which case it is the responsibility of the resident.

GG This was brought up at one of the HFI meetings, theoretically if there are 3 properties in one block all served by the same aerial, then it is communal.

AJ I have given you all the information that I have on this.

RB I am very concerned about the elderly, sick or disabled who don't have enough money to pay for changing the aerial themselves. I had this done myself a few years ago and it costs several hundred pounds.

AJ It is my understanding that the Government has made provisions for vulnerable people.

The forum agreed the minutes of the 17/05/07 meeting are accurate.

4. Respect Agenda

DP gives brief overview of Respect agenda and explains that on Tuesday 17th July 2007 Partners signed up to this agenda. The Respect Agenda is a Nationwide initiative that Housing Organisations are singing up to, to ensure good practice around Anti Social Behaviour. The Agenda is made up of 6 commitment building blocks. If anyone would like a full copy of the Agenda then please contact DP.

DP runs through Respect Agenda paper.

LC Regarding point 3, will you be running checks on new tenants?

DP We do not allocate properties to tenants, this is done by LBI and transfers are done by HFI.

EH Our Landlord is LBI and continues to be LBI. I am very concerned for everybody that we have been handed over to a privatised company that is making its own profit.

DP My telephone number is on the paper, I am happy to answer any questions.

SL Can you define ASB, this is not only kids on the street is it.

PW The definition for ASB is 'Any behaviour that causes harassment, harm or distress'. We have a duty of care to our residents if you approach us regarding ASB.

MH The best way to deal with this in the first instance is to approach the person yourself, knock on their door and try to sort out the problem and if that doesn't work then escalate to Partners.

PW The definition of ASB is purposefully left open, this can range from noisy neighbours to fly tipping.

EH I am very unhappy that Partners staff are not included in the Respect Agenda. I have video footage of someone from Partners abusing my home. This is a two tiered system, Partners staff get away with murder and residents do not.

TI I am well aware that you are pursuing various complaints against Partners, Mr Hockenjos. And now the Forum is aware. As you are aware from the existing Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct, this Forum is not a place for the discussion of individual complaints.

RB The Agenda states that Partners manage ASB in line with LBI and HFI procedures. I am aware that these organisations have treated ASB rather leniently, will this be the same for Partners?

DP We have to adopt their procedures but we have no reason to act leniently.

5. HFI/LBI Consultative Panels Reports July 2007

AJ For those who are not familiar with HFI/LBI Consutaltive Panels, they are made up of the following;
5 Area Housing Offices Panels
1 Leasehold Panel
I TMO Panel
1 Partners Panel
HFI and LBI consult with all of the above panels on various issues including rent increases, board meetings etc.

SL Please can you make sure that all pages are numbered, it is very difficult to keep up when we don't know what page you are referring to. We need the pages at the beginning to be numbered with a stamp.

AJ I will ask the people that produce the paper to do this. Some of the information within the paper does not directly affect Partners

residents, for example the first item on Estate parking, and therefore I will only speak about the relevant items.

MD Page 2, item 3.7.1 about street parking does affect us.
AJ LBI have set this, it is not decided through HFI or Partners.

If we can turn to Page 9, item 4.1.1, HFI are offering training opportunities for Panels/Forum which you can get involved in, there is a £12,000 budget for this.

SL Can you explain what type of training you mean?

AJ It could include How to Chair Meetings or Minute taking courses.

SB I am uncomfortable with the money aspect of this.

SL Is this available for all groups and panels in Islington?

AJ Yes

EH Who will make the training choices?

AJ The residents will.

EH I would like residents to attend courses on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and how it relates to the Decent Homes Standard.

EB In addition to training offered by Homes For Islington, and providing there is a demand, it is cost effective and it is service related, Partners will also run training courses for Residents Forum members. Ideally we would need around 6+ people for us to run a course.

SL Please can I ask for people to think about this and bring ideas to the next meeting.

TI Ideally I think HFI would like your ideas on this tonight.

SL We have said before that we cannot make decisions straight away, we need time to think about it.

TI We will endeavour to make it more clear on future papers what items you are asked to make recommendations on, in order for us to discuss them in meetings.

EH I propose that the panels are trained in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and how it relates to the Decent Homes Standard.

SL All agreed.

GG I agree that we need more warning on decision making, its not fair on us or HFI.

TI - There are two issues here. Firstly, HFI are making available a £12,000 budget for training for all the panels. I believe HFI would like to hear your views at this meeting, as they have to take into account the views of a number of different panels. Secondly, Partners are also committed to providing the development support you need to make you effective in your role as a Forum. We will consult you further on this and develop a programme over time in consultation with you.

SL Please mark clearly any items that we need to look at for the meeting.

TI Your suggestions here are taken very seriously, if you see anything marked for consultation please review this before the meeting so that you can give your considered opinion at the meeting.

SL Please can you provide spare copies of the papers at meetings, for those who have not received them in the post.

GG I have also asked in the past for us to have paper and pens provided and that only happened twice.

TI That is a very good point. I will make sure this is done.

AJ Are there any questions on Page 11 Resident Involvement Awards?

SL I have suggested before that I think there should be an award for the best back garden.

TI We have taken this on board and are looking at running an article on this in the Residents Newsletter.

AJ Does anyone have any questions on Page 13 HFI 2006/2007 Performance Indicators?

EH BBC5 recently ran an item on how KPIs reported by a Housing Association near here are being manipulated and are not necessarily being met. I would like to propose that we have a lengthy discussion on how Partners manage KPIs.

TI Partners reports performance to Homes For Islington. Our performance information is regular auditing processes internally and

externally. The performance information we report is monitored and scrutinised closely by Homes For Islington which monitors Partners' contract on behalf of the Council. The Forum can trust the performance information reported by Partners.

6. Performance at a Glance

TI talked through the paper and forum members were invited to ask questions at the end of each section.

Section A – What's the progress on the Refurbishment Programme?

EH How have this number of properties been certified when 120 properties have had boilers defectively installed and not line with manufacturers guidelines?

TI I have never heard any suggestion of this before. I will ask the Works Contract Manager if we are aware of any such issue, but I'd be interested to know the basis of your allegation.

Section B - Performance on our Responsive Repairs Services

No questions.

Section C – How do we perform on Tenancy and Leasehold issues?

DP I would like to let you know that the re-let time for voids on PFI 1 and PFI 2 is 27 days.

SB How does the allocations process work with re-letting void properties?

TI Allocations are managed by LBI and transfers are managed by HFI. We do not have control over these processes, but we do have to work together with both HFI and LBI to ensure empty homes are re-let quickkly. The actual letting process, including viewing the property and tenancy sign-up is managed by Partners' tenancy officers.

DP Partners are responsible for accompanied viewings to properties, we then arrange the signing of tenancy.

RB There are many empty homes in Islington, what are we doing about this?

AJ I believe you are referring to properties other than Council-owned properties. This is not something that Homes For Islington or Partners can answer.

RB with regard to living in a property that is too small or too large for your needs, who do tenants have to contact about this and what do they have to do?

DP LBI run a scheme to encourage people to downsize if they are living in a property that is too big for their needs, they offer a financial incentive. However they can only encourage this, they cannot force people out of their homes.

TI I have recently been speaking with someone at Homes For Islington about this with a view to us running an article in our Residents Newsletter.

Section D – How do we fare on Communication with our residents?

SB Has the hold music changed on the phones lines yet?

TI Not yet. We are hoping this will happen soon but our phone services are provided by Hyde Housing Association so we need to go through them in order for it to be changed.

SB I would like to say that I recently had a repair done and I was very happy with the service.

RB Likewise.

TI Thank you for your feedback – I'll make sure this is passed on to the Repairs Team.

EH I sent my nomination form in and it was not responded to for 12 days. This was late, as your service standard indicates that all correspondence and complaints will be responded to within 10 working days.

TI Nominations were not treated as correspondence. We invited you to return a form. We initiated contact, and we kept to the published timetable.

EH You have clearly been selective in the information provided for your KPI's.

TI Does the rest of the forum agree that nominations should have been treated as correspondence?

With the exception of Eugen Hockenjos the Forum unanimously agreed that Partners were correct not to treat nominations as correspondence.

7. HFI Comment of Partners Performance

AJ Please refer to the separate sheet given on HFI Comment on Partners performance. HFI monitor Partners contract on behalf of LBI, part of this includes Partners performance which is fed back to forum members. For May 2007, all targets have been met and HFI are pleased with Partners' performance.

8. Works team Update

LV runs through paper and asks group if there are any questions?

SL When are we going to get an official update on the works programme? I know that there were problems with Section 20's going out to Leaseholders, but I want to know about these issues and I want an up to date programme.

TI The Partnership team have received a Works programme for PFI 2 however this needs to be validated. Ourselves and other organisations, such as FFT, need to confirm that the programme is achievable before we publish it. I know that all the relevant officers involved are aware that this is an important issue for residents, and are working hard to get the programme published as soon as possible.

SL Can we at least have an approximate date?

EB We can't give you a date, this would be unfair as we may not be able to stick to it.

LW The Section 20 issues are now resolved and some have been sent out, this means we can now move on with the programme.

SB What happens if a Leaseholder sub-lets their property, how do you contact them? Can this cause a delay?

LV This shouldn't cause a delay as they normally give us a forwarding address.

RB If a resident has not yet been informed about their refurbishment works, is it fair to say that it wont be happening this year?

LW Not necessarily, although we aim to send out notices 6 months in advance.

9. Partners Residents Fun Day Update

EB Partners are holding a residents fun day on 15th September 2007

from 12.00pm-3.00pm at the Peel Centre. All residents will be invited to the day, which will include various stands, survey forms, bouncy castle, clown, food and drink etc, it will be a mixture of information and fun. We will publicise the day in our Residents Newsletter over the next 2 months.

SL Would you like any suggestions?

TI Yes please.

SL I went to a fun day at Camden where they gave away freebies. They also had information on recycling, a bike clinic and fire health and safety.

AS Katrina Dalby is organising the event and I am helping her, along with other Partners staff members. So far we have arranged various stands, such as recycling from LBI, Dr. Bike, hopefully the Police and TFL. A fire Health and Safety stand would be very good so I will feed this back to Katrina. I would need to discuss this with my colleagues but I think it would be a good idea to have members of the resident's forum at the day, not only as guests but to help out if they would like to, we would really appreciate your help.

GG I would like to help out.

AS That's great I will let Katrina know. Also if anyone has any ideas then please let us know. You can contact any of us directly or use the enquiries@partnersislington.net e-mail address.

RB Will you be providing transport for the disabled?

AS Yes we will, Katrina is in the process of arranging this now.

GG I know that there is a bus that goes around Islington every 2-3 hours for disabled people.

AS I will let Katrina know, this may be run by the Council in which case we might be able to use it.

10. Any Other Business

EH I would like a full copy of the Works report.

AJ Yes, I will send this to you within the next few days.

SL Please can we start to communicate via e-mail now instead of sending us lots of letters?

TI What would you like to have communicated via e-mail, do you

mean the meeting papers?

SL You could send us meeting reminders and the minutes etc.

LC An executive summary would be good.

TI I will look in to this.

RB Can we have a date/time for the Special meeting in August please?

EB This will probably be the 3rd week in August but it will be confirmed.

SB Thank you to Susanne for Chairing the meeting tonight.

TI I would like to say a big thank you from Partners to everybody for coming this evening and for your willingness to get involved and represent your fellow residents as members of the Residents Forum. We would like to publicise your nominations in the Residents Newsletter and we would like to include a photo of you as well, if any one is happy for us to use your photo then please stay behind.

Thank you to Susanne Lamido for chairing this meeting