

**MINUTES OF THE  
INNER WEST AREA PANEL MEETING  
held on  
Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011  
5.30 pm, at Westfield Chambers**

**Attendees:**

**Area Panel Members:**

Andrew Liptrot	AL
John Aubery	JA
Hugh Morgan Pugh	HMP
Harry Shields	HS
David Higgott	DH
Graham MacDonald	GMD
James Granger	JG
Jenny (Zeniada) Holt	JH
Jean Paxton	JP

**Officers:**

Akbar Khan – Area Performance Manager Bramley/Armley	AK
Mick Parker – Neighbourhood Performance Manager	MP
Marie-Pierre Dupont – Neighbourhood Planner	MPD
Rebecca Mell – Investment Planning Manager	RM
Evelyn Gaughan – Customer Involvement Support Officer	EG
Margaret Houchen – Minutes	MH

**Guest Speakers:**

Phil Charlton – Project Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods	PC
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**1.0 Apologies for Absence**

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Janet Harper, John Willshaw, Dave Lawrence, and Francesca Harris

1.2 A warm welcome was extended to everyone at the meeting by AL. Phil Charlton, guest speaker was also welcomed to the meeting.

1.3 For the benefit of the Panel, introductions were given.

**2.0 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

2.1 The minutes were accepted as true record of the meeting.

**3.0 Matters Arising**

3.1 Item 5.5.2 of previous minutes: Margaret Houchen confirmed that she has received four expressions of interest regarding a visit to the Contact Centre. The panel members who are interested in attending are, John Willshaw, John Aubery,

**Action**

James Granger and Jean Paxton.

MP to action.

**MP**

- 3.2 Panel Bid: AP05-2001: In answer to his question, AL was informed that Morrison FS did not assist with the leasing of a television.

#### **4.0 Solar PV Scheme**

- 4.1 Phil Charlton introduced himself and spoke of his role within the Sustainable Development Unit, of Leeds City Council. He provided a summary of the Background, Project Structure and Benefits, of the Briefing Note (previously circulated to Area Panel Members).

The Panel Members were asked if they had any questions.

- 4.1.1 JA asked where the panels are to be sited, and was advised that it will be on the roof of each property.
- 4.1.2 JG mentioned the 25 year ongoing maintenance of the systems by the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), but wondered who would be responsible for the cleaning and servicing of the solar panels. He was advised that this would also be down to the SPV.
- 4.1.3 JA enquired if tenants have a say in whether or not they wish to have these panels on their roof, and in addition, he asked if having solar panels would amount to free electricity being available at specific times. PC informed the meeting that as long as there is some sunshine or daylight, power will be generated by the solar panels. Furthermore, everyone who agrees to have the panels installed will have a representative come to the home, to discuss the best use of solar panels and of the energy saving issues. There is the potential, he added, for a household to save £100 per year on electricity.
- 4.1.4 In answer to DH's question, PC advised him that solar panels will not be installed on any roof that is in a poor condition.
- 4.1.5 JG asked if having a solar panels fitted to a property would have an impact on the bidding process. It was thought that it might be a possibility.
- 4.1.6 As GMD resides in part of the Wythers , which form part of the proposed areas for inclusion, he enquired of the timescale for the solar panels to be fitted. PC said that he hopes for this area to be completed by the end of March 2012. However, the orientation, condition of roof, state of network, and customer agreement to have the solar panels installed, are all factors that decisions will be based on.
- 4.1.7 MP enquired of the type of properties that will be considered for solar panels. He was informed by PC that the multi-storey flats will be used as a secondary option for power to the lifts, only if there has not been a full take up of all those properties for inclusion in the scheme.
- 4.1.8 AL was informed by PC that should they wish to do so; tenants can still switch electricity suppliers as before (prior to the fitting of solar panels).

- 4.1.9 PC confirmed that if a tenant uses more power than that generated by the solar panels on his/her home, then that tenant will be charged by the electricity supplier in the normal way.
- 4.1.10 GMD enquired of the situation with an electricity metre, when the solar panel energy is in use. PC said he believes that the metre actually stops, but that he could not be completely sure. He will, therefore, make enquiries and provide feedback. **PC**
- 4.1.11 DG made reference to electricity being more expensive through the day, and he asked how the solar panel energy will be affected by this. Both PC and AL replied that with any electricity bill, there are different rates and usage, and the first units used are charged at a different rate to those used as later on within the quarter. It is for this reason that agents attend the properties where tenants wish to have the solar panels installed, so that they can discuss best electricity usage with the tenant/s. However, PC added that the price paid for electricity, before the panels were ever installed, remains the same.
- 4.1.12 MP said he believes that there could be implications with the Right To Buy of freehold properties. PC agreed that in such circumstances it may be that the solar panel system will have to be removed, due to legal implications.
- 4.1.13 JG enquired of the backup, should any of the companies go bankrupt. PC advised that this is covered under the Roof Access Agreement.
- 4.1.14 HS asked who is actually funding this initiative. PC said that the government are the ones who are encouraging the Solar PV Scheme.
- 4.1.15 HMP asked if spot checks will be carried out to make sure that the panels are working. PC agreed that checks will be carried out, though these will not be spot checks as such.
- 4.1.16 In answer to his question, MP was informed that Rebecca Mell is on the Project Team for the Solar PV Scheme, and that Dean Evans and Stuart Roberts will be involved with the consultation events.
- 4.1.17 MP requested a full list from PC, of the proposed areas for inclusion for the whole ALMO. **PC**
- 4.1.18 EG requested that she please be made aware of any positives that the scheme is likely to bring to both customers and WNWhL.
- 4.1.19 JG asked why it is that the House of Commons is now questioning such a scheme. PC replied that the scheme is something the government wants on a domestic scale, and not large scales such as for farms, etc. What is more, the government is providing a limit of £430m for the funding of the solar panel scheme, and this will be allocated on a 'first come – first served' basis.
- 4.1.20 PC informed the meeting that a report will be going to the Board, very shortly.
- 4.1.21 RM to provide updates on progress to the Area Panels. **RM**

## **5.0 Customer Involvement**

### **5.1 Update**

5.1.1 A summary of the report was provided by EG, and she advised that the Customer Involvement Strategy is now completed, and has been approved by the Board. EG reported that WNWhL is to seek re-accreditation with TPAS.

5.1.2 EG made reference to paragraph 4.0 of the report as being positive, with WNWhL staff achieving 100% attendance at TRA meetings, when invited. JA enquired of the period that this report covers, as no member of staff attended the meeting in April 2011.

5.1.3 Work is still continuing on developing a Tenant Scrutiny Body, which is still in the early stages.

**The Panel noted the contents of the report.**

### **5.2 Local Performance Framework**

A summary of the report was provided by AK. He also advised of the new performance measures that have been added to the framework, and the removal of two measures.

5.2.1 The performance measure of visiting the tenant within 5 days to advise them what they need to do, when terminating their property, has been reworded and the 5 day timescale removed.

5.2.2 An explanation of the performance areas highlighted in red was given by AK. He mentioned that the drop in performance had been due in part to the loss of three officers to the Leeds Quest Team. However, he now has a full, so is expecting to see performance improve.

5.2.3 Bramley housing office is very much on track with performance. However, the increase in footfall has meant that it is taking longer to serve customers.

5.2.4 HS enquired of the source of figures for Armley for the walkabouts, as there have been no walkabouts for March through to June. Therefore, his view is that performance should be at 20% and not 100%, as reported.

AK to liaise with HS.

**AK**

5.2.5 JH enquired if everyone should be in receipt of a Tenancy Agreement, as she has never received one.

AK to action.

**AK**

5.2.6 When tenants become secure tenants, JP enquired if they are informed. She added that she has been in her current property for two years and has never been informed.

AK to action.

**AK**

5.2.7 MP confirmed that with the exceptions of a tenant has been given notice to quit, or an extension granted on their introductory tenancy, they are in effect secure tenants.

He asked AK to make tenants aware on the third visit, that they are effectively secure tenants.

There were no further questions arising from the report.

**The Panel noted the contents of the report.**

## **6.0 Revenue and Capital Expenditure**

### **6.1 Decency Update and Capital Investment 2010/11**

A summary of the report and appendices was provided by RM.

6.1.1 She advised that owing to the problems encountered with Morrison FS, some of the schemes will now start towards the end of July 2011, and not earlier, as hoped.

6.1.2 DH asked of the term 'decency' and of what it covers. RM explained and added that schemes that come under the decency heading include doors and windows, new kitchens and bathrooms.

6.1.3 JG enquired of the areas of work that come under the heading of adaptation work, of which RM explained.

6.1.4 AL made the request for RM for the adaptation scheme work information to be more detailed.

RM

There were no further questions.

**The Panel noted the contents and the updates of the report.**

## **6.2 Area Panel Bids**

6.2.1 AP21-2011: To install some bollards to prevent vehicular access to the grassy field in New Wortley

Total estimated cost: £1,600.00 ( to be funded from Revenue).

6.2.2 AL enquired of the amount of bollards required, and was advised that it will amount to 100.

6.2.3 HS felt that the bid is mainly to stop the Travellers from parking and causing a problem on the field. MPD agreed that this problem is being investigated in more detail.

6.2.4 In answer to AL's question, MPD informed him that 80% of the tenants living near the field are in fact Council tenants, and that the bollards will be of benefit to a lot of residents who live close by.

6.2.5 Whilst JG said that he does not agree with the bid in principle, he did feel that wooden bollards would not stop the Travellers. MPD advised him that concrete bollards pose more problems than wooden ones. In particular, snowy conditions and compensation claims of people being unaware and having bumped into them. She assured the Panel that the wooden bollards are stronger.

HS thought it to be a good bid and one that is worthwhile.

- 6.2.6 AK mentioned that a lot of Travellers go onto the British Gas field, and that British Gas would like to join with WNWhL, with a part-funding initiative.
- 6.2.7 MPD confirmed that the field is very large and will not stop the Travellers. However, Groundwork have been approached to see if there is anything else that can done to solve the problem.

**The bid was agreed by the Panel by a majority vote.**

## **7.0 Any Other Business**

### **7.1 Terms of Reference**

7.1.1 AL advised the Panel Members that the Terms of Reference have been provided for information.

7.1.2 The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed after the Board's AGM, later in the year, and AL said that this may mean changes regarding Board Directors being allowed to sit on specific Panels.

### **7.2 Area Panel Code of Conduct**

Provided to the Panel for information and AL requested for Panel members to bring any questions that they may have, to the next Panel Meeting.

### **7.3 Mears Conduct**

JG spoke of his concerns regarding the gas service provided by Mears. He added that they are failing appointments, and that some of the operatives are rude.

As requested by AL, RM agreed to take further details from JG, and to bring this to the attention of Paul Elliott.

**RM**

### **7.4 Average Length of a Tenancy**

In answer to an earlier question put forward by AL, MP said that he believes that six years is the average length of a tenancy of WNWhL.

## **8.0 Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting**

8.1 Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 5.30 pm, The Board Room, Westfield Chambers.

8.2 Future scheduled meetings: 10<sup>th</sup> October and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011 (to be held at the same time and venue).