

**MINUTES
OUTER WEST AREA PANEL MEETING
5.30pm at Westfield Chambers
Wednesday 10th August 2011**

Attendees:

Area Panel Members

Kevin Sharp (Chair)
Brian Falkingham (Vice Chair)
Margaret Rimington
Jean Gray
Corinne Brown (Board Member)

Officers:

Sharon Guy	- Area Performance Manager Wortley/Pudsey
Lee Wright	- Customer Involvement Manager
MariePierre Dupont	- Neighbourhood Planner
Rebecca Mell	- Investment Planning Manager
Mary Kerr	- Administration Officer (Minutes)

Guests:

Kevin Bradbury	- Policy and Marketing Manager
Mick Parker	- Neighbourhood Performance Manager

Action

1.0 Apologies for Absence:

1.1 Councillor Lewis, L Appleby

2.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 8th June 2011:

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were **agreed** as a true record.

3.0 Matters Arising:

3.1 Arising from Item 5.1

Involving Diverse Tenants

ST informed KS forum meeting attendees had been approached regarding attending an area panel meeting as an observer. There was no interest shown.

Landlord Accreditation (Tenant Participation Advisory Service)

LW said pieces of evidence are still being collated, this will need to be completed by 15 August. Once received all the evidence will be gone through and feedback will be given.

An update regarding this will be given at the next meeting.

LW

Arising from item 6.1

A list of the works carried out from the surplus funding was given to panel members.

The list of works were carried out as follows:

Painting of railing at Stonecliffe Grove

Barriers placed at Victoria Grove
 Barriers placed at Westdale Grove
 Bollards and lining done New Street Grove

Arising from item 7.1

It was mentioned the 2 hour appointment slots have not been made available yet due to problems occurring within the IT systems.

4.0 Almo Business Centre Leeds (ABCL) Update

- 4.1 KB gave an in-depth overview of what is happening regarding the ABCL and explained the reasons for setting up the ABCL, as well as the purpose, principles and progress so far.

It was stated there would be no reduction in services to customers as a result of the setting up of the ABCL.

It was mentioned that the BITMO are not involved at present but they could have an option to 'purchase services' at a later date if they wish.

KS enquired if the setting up of this has had any influence on the re-structure of WNWhL (currently being undertaken).

KB said that the two were completely separate, although setting up the ABCL may lead to individual ALMOS looking at their resources.

ABCL staff will come under the management of WNWhL even though the ABCL will be run as a separate business unit. This will mean that staff will TUPE, from Leeds City Council and the other ALMOS, into WNWhL.

Some teams have already TUPEd into the ABCL and moved to new offices. After the moves, restructuring of those teams will take place.

Marketing and Communications Teams, Finance Teams, Human Resources Teams and part of Asset Management Teams are all part of phase 1. Performance will be part of phase 2 and Customer Services Teams will be considered in Phase 3.

The moving into the ABCL would consist of back office functions only.

The ABCL is being set up to streamline processes and improve performance which will in turn deliver financial savings.

Front Line offices are not part of consideration for scope within the ABCL, and no housing offices will be closed as a result of setting up the ABCL.

5.0 Customer Involvement

5.1 Update

LW went over the report and the following points were noted.

Customer Involvement Policy

The Customer Involvement Policy is now due for the annual review. The updated policy will be presented to the Board Sub Committee in September 2011.

In reviewing this policy customers, staff and other stakeholders will be consulted in August. An Equality Impact Assessment will also be undertaken.

Panel members were asked if they felt any areas could be improved on.

LW mentioned that the new service standards are to be included in the performance measures.

KS mentioned there needs to be training for tenants on how to read performance figures and on equality and diversity.

LW mentioned training requirements and training needs forms had been sent out to Panel Members - but only a low response was received back.

MR enquired when as she had not received this.

LW said he will re-send to those Panel members who had not responded.

The Network Executive Committee want to see mandatory training for front line staff on customer involvement.

KS agrees with this stating it is a good idea.

Diverse Community Fund

A couple of applications have been received however none are for the Outer West Area.

Although this is promoted through the various means, only a few responses have been received.

Involving Diverse Tenants

A Polish forum was arranged for May which 7 customers attended.

Arabic and Polish forums will be organised again in November.

A Tigrinya Forum took place in July which 4 customers attended.

An Urdu Forum will take place in August.

Farsi and Kurdish Forums will be arranged for September and March.

Tenant Scrutiny

Work continues on developing a Tenant Scrutiny Body.

The Pilot Tenant Scrutiny Body is currently meeting regularly and is undertaking a scrutiny project on 'Advice On Moving Homes'.

The full Scrutiny Body will be in place in October and publicity for recruitment is currently taking place.

An article in the last issue of 'The Buzz' resulted in over twenty customers expressing an interest in taking part in Scrutiny and briefing sessions will take place on 23rd and 24th August.

Updates will be brought to the Area Panel as the process develops.

CB enquired if you are on the Scrutiny Panel does that mean you cannot be Chair of the Area Panels.

KS feels he does not see why you cannot. If you are chair of an area panel and the panel is put under scrutiny you could declare an interest and leave the room.

LW

5.2 Tenancy and Estate Management

SG presented this report and the following points were noted for May and June.

May

SG asked BF if the problems paying rent over the phone have been sorted. If there were still problems there was a number given for the Customer Accounts team staff.

BF said yes it seems to be working fine now.

BF commented contact centre had improved as a colleague had contacted the centre and the call was answered within a minute. Customer was informed would be phoned back and was within 5 minutes by the contact centre.

The Housing Office surveys were only carried out four weeks ago. It is felt over time the problems can be analysed and this result could improve.

A lot of dissatisfaction was aimed at Housing offices due to the problems with the repair failures and the contact centre.

Actions were put into place to assist with the repair problems. This was done at the housing offices where repair query surgeries were held.

KS questioned the frequency of the surgeries as believe they were only a pilot scheme to assist getting over the initial backlog.

SG said as far as she is aware should be a weekly surgery. This will be looked into.

SG

June

Estate grading is below target. This unfortunately is due to two members of staff being on long term sickness.

Staff are due back in two weeks so it is hoped improvement can be achieved once fully staffed.

SG has been asked to review Estate gradings and Inspections. More tenants are required for estate gradings and inspections. If panel members are aware of interested people please could they advise the Housing office so a follow up can be carried out. Once the review has been finalised a launch will be done via the website encouraging tenants to join.

5.3 Area Panel Budget Update

Panel members were informed that a total of £779.69 had to be paid out from the budget towards the publication of the Nutting Grove gating order.

June Bids

AP14 -2011 – Line parking bays in the main car park of Greenside

MPD said that problems have arisen with this bid. The condition of the car park is not very good therefore resurfacing would need to be carried out before the lines can be marked. The cost of resurfacing would be approx £4000.

Area panel members indicated that they would not fund resurfacing because this would be a repair and they have refused similar work in the past.

MPD mentioned the Area Panel is under spent on the capital funding but on target with the revenue.

5.3 Area Panel Bid Evaluation

MPD went over the report briefly and queried whether panel members would like this reported on in future.

It was noted that more details on the bids that received low satisfaction or high satisfaction would be beneficial. Panel members felt that this would enable them to see what projects were not received well and which were very successful and the reasons for this. This may help them with future decision making.

5.4 Area Panel Bids

August Bids

- AP01 -2011 – Funding for a Target Hardening Scheme

The value of this bid is £10,000.00.

While it was believed that funding had been granted for this scheme through the Community Safety Budget. It has emerged since that no funding had been paid by WNWH towards this scheme.

If total amount is granted the area panel will be left with very little revenue funding.

A suggestion made was that £2,500 could be given initially and a report could be requested to be provided for the next meeting giving a briefing of which area it was used in and if it was successful.

This bid was **approved** to the amount of **£2,500.00** only.

Area Panel after the review may consider additional funding at a later date.

- AP23 -2011 – Funding for a community initiative at Rycroft Green

The value of this bid is £735.00.

BF and JG declared an interest and left the room.

This project proposes to build some raised flower beds with a path between them in the community to enable elderly residents with mobility problems to access them.

It is proposed that scented plants will be placed in the planters to create a sensory garden that can also be enjoyed by residents with sight problems.

Maintenance of the flower planters will be undertaken by the residents.
This bid was **approved**.

- AP22 -2011 – Funding to provide a foot path for Greenside Tenants
The value of this bid is £3000.00.
A map was provided showing the location for the proposed foot path.
It was mentioned this seems a lot of money for only 3 yards of path.
The panel members refused this bid as they felt the cost of this path was not value for money considering there is already an adequate path that could be used.
This bid was **refused**.
- AP33 -2011 – Funding to restrict access to the land at the back of 1 – 17 Swinnow Green
The value of this bid is £1000.00.
A map and photographs were provided showing the location for the proposed placement of the bollards or fencing.
This bid requests for a preventative measure to stop joy riders cutting through by using the back gardens to hide and escape when being chased by the police.
It was also stated how hazardous this could be for the residents as they hang their washing out in the back gardens, the joy riders when cutting through may not see them.
A survey letter was sent to all residents of the maisonette flats. 62% responded positively to the proposals. The majority of the residents opted for bird mouth fencing with some plants around the fencing.
It was noted that this would possibly be about 10 to 15 feet of fencing.
This bid was **approved**.
- AP35 -2011 – Funding for handrails to a foot path on Wellstone Garth
The value of this bid is £1100.00.
A map was provided showing the location for the proposed railings.
22 survey letters were sent to the residents living on each side to the foot path.
Of the letters sent 7 responded with five being in favour of the bid and two were against it. It was noted that the two opposed to the works were living further up where there are already handrails in place. The five in favour were elderly tenants who find it extremely difficult in the winter months.
The handrails will be put on the side where they will not block the pathway.
This bid was **approved**.
- AP38 -2011 – Funding to provide fencing to the back of the garages on Wellstone Rise
The value of this bid is £550.00.
The bid was submitted by a tenant who would like a fence to be placed between the gable end of the Wellstone Way garages and tenants gardens.
The space approximately 1.5 metres wide is used as a hiding place either for goods, drug taking or people, which cause the tenants to feel uncomfortable.
The local PCSO has confirmed that this small piece of land is used for anti social behaviour.
This bid was **approved**.
- AP40 -2011 – Funding to provide handrails on Low Moorside Close
The value of this bid is £2,500.00.
MPD went over this bid and gave a brief overview of the residents' requests and the reasons for them.

KS enquired why this type of work was not done through the adaptations as mostly elderly residents.

MPD said that adaptations only do work on individual properties and not community based areas.

Panel members felt this bid would only support three or four residents and not the community.

MPD said no it would also benefit residents living further up.

MPD mentioned she could look and see if this could be done in partnership with Groundwork.

MPD will get more in-depth information on this bid regarding speaking with the adaptations team, approaching Groundwork and provide some photographs.

This bid was **deferred** until further sufficient information could be provided.

MPD

Total value spent this meeting £5,885.00.

6.0 Revenue and Capital Expenditure

6.1 Capital Programme Update 11/12

RM went over this report and the following points were noted.

The total current programme for 2011/12 stands at £19.2 million. Currently £10 million has been committed, this includes carry over schemes from 10/11.

Actual spend to date amounts to £0.5 million. The spend is lower than anticipated due to new contractor arrangements and the delay in appointing PMS as contract managers. This has caused delays in contracts starting on site however decent homes improvement works are planned to start in August.

RM mentioned that training workshops are being held regarding stock condition surveys.

A scheme of kitchen only replacements to 329 properties with adapted properties is currently being planned. Additional schemes of fire door replacements are also being worked up.

RM mentioned that additional funding of £2.3 million had been received for Sheltered Housing projects which have been allocated to the next financial year 2012/13.

2011/12 Decency Update

The percentage of stock decent for the Outer West area on 22nd July was 98.64%, this is against the ALMO average percentage of 97.52%.

7.0 Any Other Business

7.1 Contact Centre Update

MP mentioned there are serious concerns regarding the performance from the contact centre throughout 2010/11, and into 2011/12.

Assurances have been given that performance would improve from the Contact Centre and the Regional Director for Morrison. It was envisaged that repairs will hopefully run more smoothly in future.

It was mentioned that when the new contractor went into mobilisation, the contact centre were not prepared for the volume of calls that would be created by this.

In the previous contract follow up repair calls went directly to the contractor but in the new contract this is not the case. Customers now need to go through the contact centre to check up on repairs.

This along with the IT systems not collaborating fully had caused major problems.

Work is being carried out regarding the issues and it is hoped these will be resolved.

It is hoped by October ICT systems should be fully integrated. With the repairs issues being sorted it is likely the Contact Centre performance will improve.

West North West Homes, Aire Valley Homes and Leeds City Council have all put extra funding in to put additional resources in place at the Contact Centre. It was stated customers have been apologised to and repair surgeries have been put in place at the housing offices until the issues have been resolved.

KS enquired if an update could be given to the Area Panel members at the December meeting.

MP replied feedback of the results will be given in the December meeting.

MP

8.0 Date, Time and Location of next meeting

8.1 **Date:** 5th October 2011

Time: 5.30pm (5.00pm – Refreshments)

Venue: Westfield Chambers Board Room

Signed.....

Date.....