

Heywood Area Panel Meeting

Heywood Magic Market 21st February 2008

MINUTES

Present: Attendance List attached.

Apologies: Debbie Hopwood (Principal Housing Officer, Middleton and Heywood), Nasreen Akhtar (Tenant Participation Officer, Heywood and Rochdale South).

1 Notes of Last Meeting

Doreen Travers (Chair) raised the issue of in house 'Chair' training requested by the Panel at the last meeting on 22 November 2007. Andy Wadsworth confirmed that RBH hopes to provide this training in the near future.

2 Report on Environmental Improvement Programme and Quick Win Schemes

Ian Adshead summarised the contents of the report on the development of the boroughwide Environmental Improvements Programme (EIP). This was circulated for the Panel's information prior to the meeting. Clarification was given on the following points:

Following assessment of estates across the borough, three 'priority estates' were identified in Heywood. These were confirmed as Back O'th Moss, Heap Bridge and Heady Hill. It is anticipated that approximately £70,000 will be made available to the Heywood Area Panel to fund improvement on these estates and at least five smaller locally identified issues (Quick Win Schemes) per Township over the 2008/9 period.

Consultation events held in January and May 2007 gained approval of all schemes being undertaken on the EIP. A Steering Group has now been formed, made up of representatives from each Township. The Group's temporary approval role on the Quick Win Schemes will transfer to the Area Panel at the next meeting.

Suggestions for or issues relating to the Quick Win Schemes can be raised with the Tenant Participation Unit, relevant Housing Offices or directly at the next Panel meeting. It is anticipated that this will be held at the end of May (date to be confirmed).

Concerns were raised by members of Angel Meadows TRA regarding the current state of properties requiring outstanding work on their estate. It was generally felt that the Quick Win Schemes should be directed toward reactive work on areas of immediate concern. It was noted that Ward Councillors now have a £24,000 budget to allow quick repairs and schemes up to £1000 can be approved by local Area Housing Managers. In addition, Estate Inspections have now been scheduled throughout the borough.

Action: Issues to be raised with Environmental Services representative, Nick Ripley at the next meeting of the Steering Group.

Lucy Salisbury addressed the issue of how Heywood's profile could be raised across the borough. In response, Andy Wadsworth stated that RBH and Ward Councillors have been primed regarding the handling of complaints and members of SHIP are also aware of meetings and events.

3 One Off Tenant Participation Grants

The Panel discussed the application made by Springfield Close Tenants and Residents Association, for £500 to purchase a wide screen television for the communal lounge.

Following a vote proposed by Doreen Travers, the application was unanimously approved.

4 Agenda Items for Next Meeting

It is anticipated that the next meeting will be held at the end of May. Agenda items will include:

- Approval of Quick Win Schemes
- Enforcement of Tenancy Agreements
- Presentation of a typical enforcement case by Jonathan Walton.

5 Respect Agenda

Jonathan Walton, Enforcement Manager presented a paper on the Respect Standard for Housing Management which forms part of the Government's proposals to tackle nuisance and anti-social behaviour. The standard comprises six core commitments which seek to empower and protect communities by early intervention and support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour. Services have now been improved with better access for tenants, eg online repair reporting, officers taking part in estate inspections.

Concerns were raised regarding the speed and effectiveness of enforcement. Introductory and Assured Shorthold Tenancies are now being used to resolve the significant problem of homeless families in addition to database monitoring. A Family Intervention Project is now

in place to manage particular cases in the long-term. Families must sign a contract to be responsible for themselves and visitors. If there is sufficient evidence of a breach of tenancy conditions the Enforcement Team will take action. In cases of serious intimidation professional witnesses can be employed. Assistance in these matters from existing tenants would be welcomed.

During the next financial year, main tenant complainants will be asked to evaluate service provision. A special interest group is to be set up to look specifically at tackling nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Representatives of TRA's are welcome to participate. Those interested can contact Jonathan Walton as follows:

Floor 2, The Old Post Office, Rochdale
Telephone: 01706 273802
E-mail: jonathan.walton@rbhousing.org.uk

6 RBH Estate Inspection Programme 2008/9

Andy Wadsworth reported that the last RBH Board meeting had agreed to introduce a formal Estate Inspection Programme. This would assist in the formulation of Quick Win Schemes. All estates and Sheltered Housing Schemes will be inspected four times per year. A mechanism will be put in place to ensure action is taken within 3 months. The dates (please see attached list) will be publicised within Tenant groups, Estate/Housing Offices and Tenants Talkback.

7 Rehousing Policy Changes

Andy Wadsworth reported the following changes:

- Families with children aged 10 years and above will now have the option of receiving an offer of housing in accommodation above the ground floor.
- Families with children of the same sex with a significant age difference should be housed in a 3-bedroomed property.

8 Terms of Reference – Update on Consultation

Andy Wadsworth reported that the Terms of Reference have yet to be agreed. These will be finalised at a meeting with RBH, RoFTRA and RMBC. All groups will then be informed.

9 Any Other Business

Mary Diedo-Rayner informed the Panel that RADAR keys are available to blue badge certificate holders requiring disabled toilet access. These can be obtained from the Customer Services Department, Floor 2, Municipal Offices, Rochdale. The keys are available Monday – Friday during normal business hours and cost £3.50 each.

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Attendance List

Doreen Travers (Back O'th Moss) – Chair
Margaret Sweatman (Pot Hall TRA) – Vice Chair
Dorothy Rigby (Springfield Close) – Secretary
Gill Crofts (Implementation Team)
Susan Norton (Implementation Team)
Lucy Salisbury (RoFTRA)
Norma Fisher (Angel Meadow Committee)
Bryn Hackley (Angel Meadow TRA)
Brian Davies (Councillor – North Heywood Ward)
Colin Lambert (Councillor – Heywood Ward)
Peter Travers (Back O'th Moss TRA)
Heather Stott (RBH)
Jonathan Walton (Enforcement Manager, RBH)
Andy Wadsworth (Policy & Performance Manager, RBH)
Ian Adshead (Head of Asset Management, RBH)
Eugene Wilson (Technical Director, RBH)
Angela Havens (RBH)
Janet Grainger (RBH)
Robert Tweedale (Isherwood Close)
Joseph Dyson (Isherwood Close)
Mary Diedo-Rayner (Back O'th Moss)

