

**Residents' Forum
Minutes**

Date: Monday 7 February 2011
Venue: The Grange, 1 Central Road, Morden
Start time: 7pm

Present:

Name	Initial	Address/Residents Association/Post
Kathy Adams	KA	Aberconway Road, Morden
Michael Adams	MA	Aberconway Road , Morden
Ken Barton	KB	Bordesley Road, Morden
Judith Cortez	JC	Delamere Road, Morden
Nick Gratwick	NG	Brangwyn Crescent
Vince Grech	VG	High Path RA
Selina Hollands	SH	Carters Estate RA
Ron Holt	RHo	Melsa Road, Morden
Marion Hyde	MH	Sadler Close RA
Patricia Jennings	PJ	Malmesbury Road, Morden
M Kelly	MK	Dunmore House, Raynes Park
Yvonne Leigh	YL	Swains Road, Tooting
Pat Lindup	PL	Blanchland Road, Morden
Brian Matthews	BM	Four Acres & Edinburgh Court RA
N Nahavandi	NN	Sycamore Close, Wimbledon
Alex Newman	AN	Ramsey House, High Path
Christine Pember	CP	Ramsey House High Path
Tony Perkins	TP	Portland/Lewis Road RA
Moses Salisu	MS	Harlands Estate RA
Lesley Sorrell (Vice Chair)	LS	Morden Rd
Nicholas Peter-Thomas	NPT	Birch Walk, Mitcham
Janet Watkins	JW	All Saints RA
In attendance:		
Pauline Ford	PF	Managing Director
Steve McCloskey	SMc	Performance and Quality Officer
Doreen Jones	DJ	Consultation Officer (minutes)
Theo Scott	TS	Consultation & Communications Manager
Glen Jackson	GJ	Repairs Partnering Contract Manager (Interim)

Apologies:	
Jacky Mason	Carters Estate RA
Carol Shadwell	Carters Estate RA
Tina King	Marham Gardens
Jim Carter	Harlands Estate RA

Item	Details	Action
1	Welcome & Introductions	
1.1	LS opened the meeting and introductions were made.	
2	Minutes and matters arising from 10 January 2011	
2.1	P3.7 KA - confirmed that the notice board has been installed.	
2.2	P5.1 PF- confirmed that expressions of interest have been received from residents for the tenant Board member vacancy. Residents were reminded that there will be an open day for interested tenants to be held on Saturday 12 February providing more information on the role.	
2.3	P6.3 PF - said that since the last meeting there are now 11 estate surgeries across the borough for residents to attend. A copy of the locations and dates will be sent out with the minutes A breakdown of the weekly rent increases will also be included with the minutes.	
2.4	P8.1 VG - Can we employ a dog warden? LS - The council employ a dog warden. PF – We pay £3k budget to the council for the services provided by the dog warden, who works part time. It is beyond our power or remit to take any action more than we currently do.	
3.	Update - Service Improvement Group, Repairs	
3.1	GJ introduced himself as the interim Repairs Partnering Contract Manager and leads on the Service Improvement Group for responsive repairs. The group look at the different services within repairs such as planned maintenance, gas safety and the handy person scheme.	
3.2	A sub group focusing on the role of Resident Inspectors has been formed. Residents volunteered to act as Inspectors. Their role will be to inspect and get feedback from other residents on their experience with the repairs service. The group have developed the questionnaire for feedback. TPAS delivered training for the role in December 2010 and February 2011. Residents will attend the inspection in pairs, MPH officer will not attend, we want residents to feel comfortable in sharing their experiences which they may not do if an officer is present. All outcomes will be taken back to the main Repairs Group	
3.3	A Planned Maintenance sub group has also been formed this will look at the codes of customer contact and how we communicate with our residents. This group will review how we inform residents on adhoc service issues such as lifts out of order or entry doors not working. A policy will be drafted and the sub-group will review this.	
3.4	In April the group will review the handy person services, a new service delivered as one of the transfer promises.	
3.5	The three sub groups will meet regularly to review services to ensure the services we provide are relevant and what residents want.	
3.6	Q – Have the homes to be inspected been identified? GJ – No, this will not happen until we are ready to roll out the Resident Inspection role.	
4.	Digital Switchover 2012	
4.1	MPH currently provides communal television aerial systems to around 2,000 homes. The communal systems are not suitable for digital television, which will replace the analogue signal in 2012. The existing systems must be renewed if reception is to be maintained after switchover.	
4.2	MPH has a preference for installing new 9-wire Dual-feed Integrated Reception Systems (IRS). This involves a new aerial for each block (to receive existing analogue and Freeview digital signal) together with a communal satellite dish/dishes (to receive Sky Digital Freesat, Sky+	

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	and BBC Freesat). New cable would be installed within each flat. This means that individual external dishes would no longer be required. A maintenance and repair contract would be needed and current estimates for this is around £12 per dwelling annually. MPH does not own the existing communal TV systems, they are currently provided by two contractors under rental agreements.	
4.3	It is proposed that a working group is started, if you are interested in joining this group please contact Doreen Jones at getinvolvedmerton@circleanglia.org or telephone her on 0300 500 3000.	
4.4	NG – If residents have a set top box, they will not need to have the system. SMc – The advice that we have been given is that the current systems are not reliable enough to guarantee a satisfactory digital service. It is our intention to look at the blocks where we currently provide a communal aerial, street properties will not be included as part of the programme.	
4.5	NG – if you speak to the people at Sky they will be able to do the majority of the setting up and this will transfer the risk from residents and MPH. SMc – This work has been in the pipeline for a while and we have been in discussions with Sky and will continue to do so.	
4.6	MH – Currently using a communal aerial for a digital set top box which works fine, why would I want to have to pay for something else? SMc – The aim is to remove and replace the existing equipment. MH – If I have to pay then I will continue to have my aerial on the roof, can residents opt out? PF – We can't say yet, we don't want to spend money unnecessarily, however if we have to we will see what is needed.	
4.7	AN – Has an indoor aerial and a set-top box, this works fine? SMc – In London we have good systems in place both digital and analogue, we are considering our options if the systems we have are not reliable in the future. As a landlord we would not be responsible if we did not take the time to research what is available and what would be best for residents needs.	
4.8	BM – Currently in a small block would you introduce the new system? SMc – We are not currently providing communal service to all blocks so we will have to look at these individually. If we can offer a good communal service we would rather residents opt in, however where small blocks have their own arrangements we will be happy to have a discussion with them.	
5.	Promises Update	
5.1	We have completed 48 promises, the Board looks at the promises quarterly and these are submitted to the TSA regularly. LS – One of the promises says that a full survey for each home is carried out; I do not recall a survey at my address being completed. PF – We have carried out 97% survey of our stock; this is actual surveys and not cloned data.	
5.2	MS – One of the properties in my area is in a terrible condition, yet they are not down to have work done in the first year. PF – We are looking at those properties where all the components need work, e.g., kitchens, bathroom, rewiring, etc – these will be done first it may be that whilst one of the components are in a poor condition that not all are. The contractors are re-surveying homes to ensure that we don't do any work that is not necessary.	

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5.3	NPT - I sit on one of the core groups and it has been said by the company doing the asbestos surveys that the contractors are not doing a good job. KB – Who checks the works? PF – there have been some issues with the work by the contractors being signed off. We will not pass work off until we are satisfied that it meets the MPH standard	
6.	Review of Resident Involvement Framework - Scrutiny & Co-regulation	
6.1	TS explained that the role of our regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has been to ensure landlords involve residents in having a say to influence decisions and improve the services they provide. Our current resident involvement strategy is reflective of our expectations at the time of transfer, however our strategy no longer meets the objectives of the TSA specifically in terms of co-regulation and scrutiny. We need to review the strategy looking at what we have learnt since transfer, what we were aiming to achieve and how we will evolve the strategy to meet the co-regulation agenda. MS – What remit will be covered when looking at service improvement? TS – We will look at all our services, especially those that are customer facing.	
6.2	We acknowledge that the current structure involves many meetings, however these meetings are more about us providing information and asking for resident’s feedback, there is no level of scrutiny by residents of our services and this is something the TSA are keen for landlords to introduce.	
6.3	We need to set up a Resident Scrutiny Panel with the key principle of it being independent from other governance and management structures. The panel will not be controlled by officers and will have its own remit with the power to challenge our services and make recommendations to the Board. MS – Will it be similar to the Ombudsman? PF – No, the Ombudsman is a statutory body, this panel will look at our services and challenge officers on how we deliver them.	
6.4	<p>The success of the panel will be judged by the number of recommendations implemented and accepted – this will lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents driving service improvements • Improved satisfaction with the services provided • Increased resident involvement opportunities • Contractor replacement based on tenant-led assessment of performance. 	
6.5	The next step would be to set up a working group, this group will agree how best to set up our scrutiny panel and at the same time consider proposals to review our current Resident Involvement Strategy, agree a work plan and set key milestones.	
6.6	VG – You said that there are too many meeting, yet we are now discussing setting up more meetings. It sounds like a meeting to scrutinise another meeting and this is not necessary. TS - We recognise that there are a lot of meetings, what the working group will be asked to do is to review our current resident involvement framework making sure that it is still fit for purpose, and if not change it. The outcome of this may be that some meetings may go and we may gain others. We need to look at where we are currently to ensure that we are meeting customers needs and delivering the TSA standards.	

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6.7	LS – Can the current groups not scrutinise what they are doing? PF – there is an expectation from the regulator on co-regulation and currently from the view point of a landlord, we are not being challenged by residents. We need our structure to clearly show residents role in scrutiny and co-regulation and that this links directly to the Board and not through officers. LS – How many scrutiny groups would there be? PF – Just one that will review all services as part of a regulatory structure. The TSA wants every landlord to implement this, we do not have a choice.	
7.	Election of Chair	
7.1	TS - This was deferred from last year when Geoffrey Bowring resigned as Chair for the Forum. It was proposed that LS, with the Forum members agreement continued as Chair until the Resident Involvement framework review is completed. The Forum agreed with this decision.	
7.2	LS – Asked whether the Forum needed to be held monthly? Residents said they were happy with the current frequency of the meetings.	
8.	Any Other Business	
8.1	PF – Ann Moyies has stepped down as Chair of the Board, elections have taken place and Jenny Mills, an independent member is the new Chair. Ann remains a member of the Board and will continue to work with MPH. VG – Why is a tenant not the Chair? This election was limited to existing board members, excluding councillors. There is no requirement that a tenant/leaseholder has to be Chair. Jenny lives in the borough and has been involved on the Board, it was set up as the shadow Board before the transfer.	
8.2	VG – Does not agree that resident associations should have to door knock to get the maximum amount of money available through the administration grant criteria - the rate for this is £1.50 per membership form completed. When the new financial arrangement for the administration grant for residents associations was introduced some years back this was never agreed by residents. TS – Historically, the admin grant was based on the number of residents in the RA area, irrespective of residents becoming members or not. The current system introduced a tiered system that allows the grant to be increased by the percentage of residents who complete membership forms. This was seen as fairer and ensured that residents were in support of the RA acting on their behalf.	
	Date of next meeting: Monday 7 March 2011 Time: 6.30pm for 7pm start Venue: The Grange, 1 Central Road, Morden	