

**MINUTES OF THE SOUTHWAY CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING  
HELD AT 10.00AM, TUESDAY 14 JULY 2009 AT  
ASPEN HOUSE, 825 WILMSLOW ROAD, DIDSBURY**

**Present**

Representatives from Burnage North T A x 2 (1 in the Chair)  
 Representatives from Parrs Wood T & R A  
 Representative from Old Moat T & R A  
 Representatives from West Didsbury Estate R A x 2  
 Representatives from Burnage South T A x 2  
 Tenant Board Members x 2  
 Leaseholder Representative  
 Owner Occupier Representatives x 2  
 Old Moat Ward Councillor  
 Withington Ward Councillor

**In Attendance**

Ray Smith, Director of Neighbourhood Services, Southway  
 Peter Mattimore, Project Delivery & Customer Care Team Leader, Southway  
 Carl Girvin, Rent Recovery Manager, Southway  
 Sue Johnson, Deputy Regeneration Manager, Southway  
 Maureen Ward, Customer Involvement Manager, Southway

**Apologies:**

Karen Mitchell, Chief Executive, Southway  
 Jane Gant, Director of Asset Management & Regeneration, Southway  
 Tina Murphy, Customer Involvement Officer, Southway

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	The chair of the group opened the meeting and welcomed all present.	
<b>1.2</b>	Introductions were made.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	Please see above.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting (09.06.09)</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 June 2009 were presented for consideration and approval.	
<b>3.2</b>	The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	(4.2 – Matters Arising – Community Benefit) Maureen Ward confirmed that George Carter will attend the next meeting to provide information about the Community Benefit Programme.	<b>George Carter</b>
<b>4.2</b>	(4.5 & 4.5.1 – Matters Arising – Concessionary Gardening) Ray	

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	Smith advised the meeting that Tom Isherwood had thoroughly checked the concessionary gardening list and removed the addresses which were brought to the notice of the May meeting.	
4.3	(4.5.2 – Matters Arising – Overgrown Hedges) Ray reported that the issue raised by a member of the group at the last meeting has been resolved. The group member stated that he was very happy with the work that had been carried out.	
4.4	(4.5.4 – Matters Arising – Tree Survey) Ray informed the group that he had managed to establish that MCC commissioned a tree survey with Red Rose Forest in 2004/05. The survey was actually carried out by a company called Arial. MCC have been asked for a copy of the full report but to date no response has been received.	Ray Smith
4.4.1	Ray was asked if he had any idea how many trees there are in the Southway area. Ray explained that it is not known.	
4.4.2	Ray informed the group that there are a number of organisations in the market who can carry out a survey for Southway. The purpose of the survey is to give an idea of the condition of the trees and what the priorities will be for remedial work.	
4.5	(5.8 – Home Improvement Programme) Peter Mattimore confirmed that the problem with the temperature control of some showers was limited to one batch and the issue is now resolved.	
4.5.1	A representative from Parrs Wood T & R A explained that she knew someone who still seems to be experiencing problems. It was agreed that the specific details would be passed to Peter at the end of the meeting for him to investigate.	Peter Mattimore
4.6	(6.8 – Rent Payment) This is a main agenda item.	
4.6.1	Ray advised that a Communication Strategy for the implementation of All Pay has been developed and will be put into place over the next few months.	
4.7	(8.3 – New Leaflet) Ray informed the group that the necessary changes had been made to the ‘Moving Home’ leaflet and it had now gone to print.	
4.8	(9.4 – Feedback from Voice Panel) Maureen confirmed that an extra meeting of the Consultative Group had taken place on 30 June to discuss the Spick and Span proposals. Spick and Span is also a main agenda item.	
4.9	(10.4.1 – Minutes for Website) Maureen informed the group that further minutes had gone onto the website and that she would be sending last month’s amended minutes for approval with the minutes of this meeting.	Maureen Ward
4.10	A member of the group asked if any further information was	

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	available regarding MRA/a new structure. The member was also interested to know who from Manchester City Council Karen Mitchell had been meeting with. It was agreed that some information would be brought to the next meeting.	Karen Mitchell
5	<p><b>New Leaflets</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b> <u>Extra Services Leaflet</u></p> <p><b>5.1.1</b> Ray explained the purpose of the leaflet, which is to give information about additional services available to customers who require them. For example, the provision of information in large print or on cd.</p> <p><b>5.1.2</b> A representative from Burnage said he thought the illustrations within the leaflet are good.</p> <p><b>5.1.3</b> The group approved the leaflet.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> <u>Be A Good Neighbour Leaflet</u></p> <p><b>5.2.1</b> Ray explained that the leaflet sets out, without being too paternalistic, how customers can be good neighbours. The leaflet attempts to make people think about their actions and what affect they may have on others living nearby.</p> <p><b>5.2.2</b> Ray ran through the leaflet and there was a discussion about pets. Ray explained that customers can keep pets without seeking permission. It is about reasonableness. It was confirmed that chickens can be kept providing they are in a secure coup.</p> <p><b>5.2.3</b> It was stated by a member of the group that Southway also needs to be a good neighbour and reported that the communal garden and passageways at Ashdale Drive have not been maintained. Ray agreed to have this looked at.</p> <p><b>5.2.4</b> An overgrown passageway between Wrenbury Avenue and Princess Road was brought to the attention of the meeting. Ray agreed to have this one looked at as well.</p> <p><b>5.2.5</b> Ray informed the meeting that the 'Spick and Span' project was addressing the issues of overgrown hedges. A discussion developed about the need for Southway to set an example to its customers by making overgrown hedges a top priority.</p> <p><b>5.2.6</b> A Councillor said he endorsed this initiative and wanted to point out that some of the worst problems in the Old Moat area are with properties not owned by Southway.</p> <p><b>5.2.7</b> A member of the group asked if a copy of the leaflet would be sent to every tenant. Ray Smith explained that it would be too costly to do that. The leaflet will be available in reception and on the website. Supplies can also be left in libraries. An article about being a good neighbour can feature in the autumn issue of Southway Stories.</p>	<p>Ray Smith</p> <p>Ray Smith</p> <p>Maureen Ward</p>

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5.2.8	A discussion then took place about wheelie bins and the need to take them in as soon as possible after they've been emptied.	
5.2.9	The group approved the leaflet.	
6	<p><b>Promises Tracking</b></p> <p>6.1 Peter Mattimore explained that he was attending the meeting on behalf of John McKenna who was on leave.</p> <p>6.2 Peter provided all members of the group with a copy of the Promises Tracking document and then went through the paper in detail.</p> <p>6.3 A discussion was held about apprentices. Southway is on track in terms of how many have been appointed from the Southway area.</p> <p><i>Peter Mattimore left the meeting.</i></p>	
7	<p><b>Rent Collection, Arrears, Former Tenants and Sundry Debt Recovery Policy</b></p> <p>7.1 Carl Girvin provided the group with a draft Rent Collection and Sundry Debt Recovery policy and asked that members of the group take it away to read and bring any comments to the next meeting.</p> <p>7.2 Carl advised the meeting that there is currently a review of the way the Rent Recovery Team works taking place and the importance of a robust policy.</p> <p>7.3 Carl was asked about the 'Hierarchy of Debt' section of the policy. Carl explained that current debt is the most important and collection of that will be targeted first.</p> <p>7.4 Carl was also asked how tenants entitled to Housing Benefit receive it. Carl explained that tenants are given the choice of it being paid to them or it being paid directly to Southway. Carl added that the majority of Southway customers in receipt of Housing Benefit do choose to have it paid directly to the company.</p> <p>7.5 Ray gave apologies for the policy not being available prior to the meeting and confirmed that any issues can be raised at the next meeting when members have had an opportunity to read it. Any comments from the group would then be reported to September Board.</p>	
8	<p><b>Update on Allpay</b></p> <p>8.1 Carl advised that Southway went out to market for a new way to collect rent. Allpay offers the best solution and can offer direct debit as a payment method.</p>	

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8.2	Carl advised the group that a publicity timetable has been produced to ensure that information about the new system is relayed to customers at appropriate times.	
8.3	The major change for tenants is the change from Payzone to PayPoint as a payment method. There will be a cut off point so that if a tenant does attempt to pay at a Payzone the payment will not be accepted.	
8.4	Leaflets and postcards will be produced and an article will go into Southway Stories to ensure all customers are notified of the change.	
8.5	In October there will be a re-launch of all payment cards. Tenants will have a separate card for each debt, for example rent, former rent arrears and rechargeable repairs. Carl explained that it was necessary to have different cards in order to distribute payments to the correct budget.	
8.6	The Southway website will be updated mid-September.  <i>Carl Girvin left the meeting.</i>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Impact Assessment Report</b>	
9.1	A copy of a draft Impact Assessment Report was circulated prior to the meeting.	
9.2	Maureen explained that each method of consultation had been detailed and assessed in terms of impact on service delivery and value for money.	
9.3	Maureen informed the group that it would be going to Board for approval next week and asked if anyone had any comments.	
9.4	A member of the group stated that a lot of detail had gone into it.	
9.5	The group said they were happy with the content and layout and agreed that Maureen could add a sentence to her covering report to Board that the Consultative Group had seen the document and were happy with it.	Maureen Ward
<b>10</b>	<b>Tenant Services Authority (TSA)</b>	
10.1	<u>Driving Up Performance</u>	
10.1.1	Maureen referred to the Driving Up Performance paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting. A few members of the group stated that they had not received it.	
10.1.2	Maureen explained that the document set out a suite of recommended Performance Indicators (PI's) that Southway would like to adopt and use to report performance in Southway's Annual Report which was due to be produced.	

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10.1.3	After a brief discussion it was agreed that the group should have some further time to read and consider the paper and bring their views to the next meeting.	All
10.1.4	Maureen advised the group to contact her should they require any information.	
10.2	<u>National Conversation – Phase 2</u>	
10.2.1	Maureen explained that following phase 1 of the TSA's consultation exercise a number of proposed standards had been developed and now a further consultation period had started to give landlords and customers an opportunity to discuss them and give feedback.	
10.2.2	Maureen informed the group that Willow Park Housing Trust is holding an event to have the discussions on Wednesday 29 July and Southway customers were invited to attend. Maureen said she would be contacting group members to ask if they required a place over the next few days.	Maureen Ward
11	<b>Update on Spick and Span</b>	All
11.1	Sue Johnson joined the meeting to provide an overview of where the Spick and Span Project was up to.	
11.2	Sue circulated papers detailing all the proposals and ran through the ideas for each area.	
11.3	A brief discussion took place about children being involved in litter picks. Most members of the group thought that as long as safety precautions were taken children should be able to get involved. Sue said this can be discussed with schools.	
11.4	Sue informed the meeting that residents involved in the discussions have made it clear that local businesses should be involved in the proposals. They may be able to offer financial support as well.	
11.5	Sue said that if anyone had any questions about the proposals they could contact her.  <i>Sue Johnson left the meeting.</i>	
12	<b>Board Update (May Meeting)</b>	
12.1	A Board Update was circulated for members of the group to read.	
12.2	No questions were raised.	
13	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
13.1	<u>Access to Gardens</u>	
13.1.1	A query was raised by a member of the group who had	

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	discovered two workmen digging in her garden to access drains. There was concern because they did not knock on her door and let her know that they required access. Ray agreed to raise this with Devon Poyser.	Ray Smith
<b>13.2</b>	<u>Pantry Windows</u>	
<b>13.2.1</b>	Concerns were also raised about newly fitted pantry windows that are being taken out due to the installation of new boilers in the pantries. Ray agreed to raise this with the Asset Management Team.	Ray Smith
<b>13.3</b>	<u>Overgrown Tree</u>	
<b>13.3.1</b>	A representative from the Old Moat area reported an overgrown tree that is causing damage to the fence of a neighbouring property. Ray agreed to arrange for someone to inspect it.	Ray Smith
<b>13.4</b>	<u>Flooring</u>	
<b>13.4.1</b>	A member of the group asked why tenants are being offered tiles as flooring but are being given lino. It was explained that there had been some issues around the use of tiles.	
<b>13.4.2</b>	It was felt that tenants should be made aware of this as it seems the paperwork and pictures tenants make their choices from is still showing tiles. Ray agreed to have this investigated. He noted that the next edition of Southway Stories carried an article on what customers can expect from the Home Improvement Programme.	Ray Smith
<b>13.5</b>	<u>Aspen House Visitor Passes</u>	
<b>13.5.1</b>	Two members of the group felt that a lot of time was spent each month writing out visitor passes for members of this group and asked if the passes could be kept so that in future members would just have to sign in.	
<b>13.5.2</b>	It was noted that the passes are dated so it may not be possible in terms of complying with building health and safety regulations. Ray agreed to talk to Natalie Lewis about this.	Ray Smith
<b>13.6</b>	<u>Void Properties</u>	
<b>13.6.1</b>	A representative from Burnage asked for details of timescales for work starting on an empty property and it being re-let after the work was completed. He referred to a property in his area that had been left empty for some time before work had started.	
<b>13.6.2</b>	The address was passed to Ray Smith and Ray agreed to look into the matter.	Ray Smith
<b>13.7</b>	<u>Fallen Tree/Branch</u>	
<b>13.7.1</b>	A member of the group reported a large branch that had fallen into a tenant's garden. It has been reported but nothing has	

