

**MINUTES OF THE SOUTHWAY CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING
HELD AT 10.00AM, TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2008 AT
ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH HALL, MOORGATE AVENUE, WITHINGTON**

Present

Representatives from Burnage North Tenants Association x 2 (1 in the Chair)
 Representative from Parrs Wood Tenants & Residents Association (Vice Chair)
 Burnage Ward Councillor
 Representatives from Didsbury West Estate Residents Association x 2
 Old Moat Ward Councillor
 Owner Occupier Representative
 Leaseholder Representative
 Tenant Board Member
 Representatives from Burnage South Tenants & Residents Association

In Attendance

Ray Smith, Director of Neighbourhood Services, Southway
 Jane Gant, Director of Asset Management & Regeneration, Southway
 Devon Poyser, Regeneration Project Manager, Southway
 Maureen Ward, Customer Involvement Manager, Southway
 Tina Murphy, Tenant Liaison Officer, Southway

Apologies:

Representative from Parrs Wood Tenants & Residents Association
 Deputy Owner Occupier Representative
 Tenant Board Member
 Representative from Ladybarn Estate (Withington) Residents Association
 Karen Mitchell, Chief Executive, Southway

Item	Subject	Action
1	Welcome and Introductions	
1.1	The Chair of the group opened the meeting and welcomed all present.	
1.2	Introductions were made.	
1.3	The Chair thanked the Customer Involvement Team and all members of the group for their hard work and attendance throughout the year. The Chair also congratulated Southway on its first year of business. Members of the group thanked the Chair for his work.	
1.4	Ray Smith asked that the group record its sincere regrets and condolences for Councillor Neil Trafford who tragically passed away recently.	
2	Apologies	
2.1	Please see above.	

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3	Minutes of the Last Meeting (11.11.08)	
3.1	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2008 were presented for consideration and approval.	
3.2	The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.	
4	Matters Arising	
4.1.	(5.4 – Home Improvement Update) Devon Poyser advised that the validation of the contractor’s customer satisfaction results is taking slightly longer than expected. Results should be available in the New Year.	Devon Poyser
4.1.1	It was reported that a tenant had felt under pressure to complete the customer satisfaction questionnaire, despite having an outstanding issue with the work. Jane Gant stated that the questionnaire should not be filled in if the work is incomplete. Jane also said that she was aware there had been a few problems and inconsistencies with the methods used and this was part of the reason for the Southway validation work.	
4.2	(5.5 – Home Improvement Update) Devon explained that the DVD is the best way to inform the tenants of any work due to be carried out in their property. The DVD should be left with the tenant so they can refer to it when needed.	Devon Poyser
4.3	(5.7 & 5.8 – Home Improvement Update) Jane explained that the contractors are still looking at viable options for providing respite to customers during improvement works.	
4.4	(7.8 – Southway Connect) This is a main agenda item.	
4.5	(11.4 – National Housing Federation (NHF) Consultation Document) Maureen advised that members of the group were contacted for comments on the consultation document and that comments had been fed back to Karen Mitchell who would be submitting a response to the NHF.	
4.6	(13.3.1 – Any Other Business – Hillserve) Jane Gant advised that Hillserve had been contacted regarding various concerns raised by the group.	
4.6.1	Two members of the group reported that there are still issues with Hillserve. The speed of completion is causing problems. Jane agreed to discuss the issues with Hillserve again.	
4.7	(13.5 – Any Other Business – Home Improvement Programme) Jane advised that Southway had agreed to stay with Impact Manchester for the next financial year. The contractors have not yet been agreed. This matter will go back to Board in February for approval and will also be discussed at the next Customer Focus Group meeting.	

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4.7.1	Devon added that all contractor partners attend the Customer Focus Group meeting and tenant representatives can ask questions at this forum.	
4.8	Concerns were raised about it appearing that there is a lot of onus being put on the Resident Liaison Officer. It was hoped that Southway will appraise its methods used in collecting the customer satisfaction questionnaires.	
5	Improvement Programme Update	
5.1	Maureen Ward apologised to the Councillors who had not received a copy of the Home Improvement Programme Report.	
5.2	Devon referred to the report and advised that following a request, the report now included information regarding Impact Manchester targets and Community Benefits.	
5.3	A query was made as to whether all tenants receive a home diary. Devon advised that a diary is placed in each property undergoing work. The diaries provide a visual record of how the tenant is feeling during each stage of the work.	
5.4	It was stated by a member of the group that as the KPI target percentages increase it will get harder for the contractors to reach their targets. Jane explained that the figures shown on the KPI report are national targets and that Southway have set their targets higher at 93% and overall this is being achieved.	
5.6	Devon advised that Southway currently have 20 apprentices, with a target set to provide 34 places by the end of the five year programme. There are 2 trainees per every million pound spent. The apprentice's will train over a two year period to reach NVQ Level, with prospects to obtain permanent employment.	
6	Rent Free Weeks	
6.1	Ray advised that this item was being tabled following a suggestion from Southway's Debt Advisor. Ray explained that traditionally tenants have received two rent free weeks per year, one at Easter and one at Christmas. The suggestion made is to offer the two rent free weeks together at Christmas/New Year as this is the time when most people would benefit from not having to make rent payments.	
6.2	Ray asked the Consultative Group to consider the proposal, and ask other members of their associations' what they think. If the general feedback from this group and other tenant group representatives is in favour of the change a wider consultation exercise will need to be arranged.	
6.3	It was noted that one of the rent free weeks had already gone this year. Ray advised that this was the case, the first one was in April and the second one would be Christmas week. Ray	

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6.4	<p>added that if there was support for the change it could not be introduced until the 2010/11 rent year. This was because of the timescale needed to properly consult customers.</p> <p>It was agreed that this item would be on the agenda again in January and members of the group would feedback on what their colleagues thought about the idea.</p>	Group Members
7	<p>Southway Connect</p> <p>7.1 Ray advised that following the query made at a previous meeting about whether or not Southway was going to be providing a free phone number when Southway Connect goes live, he had taken it back to the Project Team and it was going to be considered.</p> <p>7.2 Ray said that the Project Team has been meeting regularly and workstreams have been developed and are working towards the delivery of Southway Connect. The first stage of implementation is to transfer the present 'as is' service, with some quick hit improvements. The second stage will be to introduce some service improvements and a performance management culture. The third and final stage, commencing when Southway's new IT system is in place (October 2009), will involve substantial service improvement and diversification.</p> <p>7.3 Ray informed the meeting that a position for a Contact Centre Manager has now been advertised and the closing date for applications is 12 December. Interviews and assessments are due to be held on 18 December and the successful applicant will be informed of the outcome on that day with a start date early in the new year.</p> <p>7.4 Ray advised that 17 application forms had been requested and 8 had been returned to date.</p> <p>7.5 Ray will provide a further update at the next meeting.</p>	
8	<p>Southway Stories</p> <p>8.1 Maureen advised that the next edition of Southway Stories was due to go out mid-February and asked that if anyone had any ideas for articles they let her know.</p> <p>8.2 Ray and Maureen informed the group of some of the articles that would be going in the newsletter. These are: information on rent cards, good news stories, home improvement information, rent increase, permissions for improvements and a reminder about tenancy agreements.</p>	
9	<p>Consultative Group Minutes</p> <p>9.1 Maureen informed the group that following a decision made at a previous meeting a tenant from Chorlton had made an enquiry about the Consultative Group minutes going on the website.</p>	

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9.2	Maureen went on to explain that after the meeting where the decision was made she had received a phone call from the Chair of the group informing her that several conversations had taken place outside of the meeting and a further decision had been taken not to publish the minutes on the website due to concerns about data protection and references to individual people and addresses. No Consultative Group minutes have been published on the website as a consequence.	
9.3	Maureen explained that the subject has been put on the agenda for further discussion and so that the final decision is recorded. Maureen suggested that by publishing the minutes the group was making it open and transparent and may even encourage involvement from other tenants.	
9.4	One member of the group said they would not be happy with her or anyone else's name or address being published on the website.	
9.5	It was suggested that a second version of future minutes be produced with all references to individuals and any confidential issue taken out.	
9.6	The group considered this and thought it was a good idea. It was agreed that Maureen would produce a second version of the minutes of this meeting for discussion and approval at the January meeting.	Maureen Ward
10	Board Update	
10.1	The Board Update will be provided at the next meeting.	
11	Schedule of Future Meetings	
11.1	Maureen provided a list of future meeting dates and advised that further information will follow regarding the venue.	Maureen Ward
12	Any Other Business	
12.1	<u>Manchester Residents Association (MRA)</u>	
12.1.1	A query was raised about the audit of MRA's accounts. Maureen advised that she was not aware of any outcome of the audit and explained that it was MCC that was dealing with the issue. Jane advised that Southway would attempt to obtain some information and feedback at the next meeting.	
12.1.2	Three members of the group stated that they had been looking into the matter and had some concerns.	
12.1.3	It was agreed that information would be sought and brought to the next meeting if possible.	

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12.2	<u>Website Payments</u>	Jane Gant
12.2.1	The leaseholder representative advised that leaseholders are unable to pay Southway over the Internet. Jane agreed to speak to IT and Finance.	
12.3	<u>Void Property</u>	Ray Smith
12.3.1	Ray Smith was informed that a property on Meltham Avenue is still unoccupied. Ray agreed to chase it up with Neighbourhood Services.	
12.4	<u>Litter/Rubbish</u>	
12.4.1	Concerns were raised about the excessive amount of litter around the Old Moat area. Ray explained that Old Moat can be added as an area for a litter pick and an article can go into Southway Stories.	Ray Smith
12.4.3	A problem with large articles of rubbish frequently being left outside a property on Kingsway was reported. Ray said he would look in to the matter.	
12.5	<u>Bogus Callers</u>	
12.5.1	Jane asked everyone to continue to raise awareness about bogus callers. All contractors have been advised to wear and show their identification at all times and letters have been sent to areas where the bogus callers have targeted.	
12.6	<u>Repairs Management System</u>	
12.6.1	Jane advised that the new Repairs Management System has been delayed until January but said this will not impact on customers.	
12.7	<u>Community Benefit</u>	Steve Fanning
12.7.1	Jane said she would invite Steve Fanning to the next meeting to talk about the Community Benefit Projects. Jane added that she would like the Consultative Group to give their views on the proposed projects before they go to Board.	
12.8	<u>Concessionary Decorating</u>	
12.8.1	An issue regarding concessionary decorating was raised, there were concerns that it was going to be scrapped. Jane advised that there have not been any changes to the scheme. Jane added that the concessionary decorating criteria may be looked at where elderly tenants need decorating done following a full rewire. This is just one option in the review that will be put to the Board in February for consideration.	
12.9	<u>Tenancy Agreements</u>	

Item	Subject	Action
12.9.1	Ray advised that so far 68% of tenancy agreements have been returned. There will be a new campaign in the new year to pull in as many as possible of the ones outstanding.	
12.10	<u>Leaflets</u>	
12.10.1	Ray thanked everyone for their contribution regarding the information leaflets brought to the last meeting and advised that they will shortly go to print. Ray added that he would be bringing a further set of leaflets to a meeting early in the new year.	
12.11	<u>Councillor Surgeries</u>	
12.11.1	The group were advised that the local surgery has moved to St Margaret's Church, 6 – 7 pm.	
13	Date of Next Meeting – 13 January 2009	
13.1	The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 13 January 2009 at St. Christopher's Church, Moorgate Avenue, Withington.	