



World's End Residents' Association

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Minutes of the WERA Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 4th of December 2007 at 7pm in the WERA Clubroom, 16 Blantyre Street

Present:	Margaret Grayling (Chair) Joy Laven Caroline Fairchild Joanne Mcdermott Marye Kenton Robert Taylor Katy Parry Jones	Jules Montero (Secretary) Eryl Humphrey Jones Nigel Palmer Lucy Bowdler Monica Boholst Barbara Ofori Boateng
In Attendance:	Helen Evans (RBKC TMO) Gary Riley (RBKC TMO) Police Sgt. Tim Otway	Ian Twyford (RBKC TMO) Cllr. Maighread Simmonds
Apologies:	John Rendall (Treasurer) Maggie Byrne	Jose Rioseco

1. Apologies

The above apologies were accepted.

2. Helen Evans, CEO, RBKC TMO

MG welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves.

HE introduced herself and described her recent appointment as interim CEO of the TMO. HE told the meeting she was also the CEO of Brent Housing Partnership (Brent's ALMO) and would be CEO of RBKC TMO until the Council's ongoing Housing Stock Options review was completed.

HE proceeded to describe the Housing Stock Options review, noting that it had come about as a result of the forecast shortfall in the Council's HRA account. The review would allow the Council to consider how best to manage and improve its housing stock in future. HE briefly described some of the options available including transferring the housing stock to another social landlord (a housing association or a RSL created by the Council, possibly from the TMO) which would require tenants to vote in favour of any proposal, a Private Finance Initiative (PFI), changes to ALMO funding, estate renewal, or maintaining the status quo. HE noted that PFI had a troubled track record as a means to fund capital programmes or estate regeneration, and that it was unlikely to be the preferred option. HE also noted that the review involved complex financial modelling and that the Council hoped to identify ways to make significant cost savings. HE stated that changes in the way social housing was managed had been an ongoing process since the 1980s and was not party political – a change in central government would not alter things. HE stated that the review was expected to take a year to complete and the end result could well be something "very different" to the current TMO.

HE noted that the TMO's current priorities were to improve its governance, improve its relationship with leaseholders, complete the capital works programme, and to improve the repairs service.

JM asked whether stock transfer was viable for large estates like World's End given that there were no housing association properties of a similar size in the borough. IT agreed that this was the case but noted that some housing associations did manage large housing estates outside the borough. HE added that what happened on a large estate such as World's End could well be very different to what

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happened to smaller housing estates – the review might well propose different options for different properties. JM asked whether the rights of secure tenants would be protected following a stock transfer. IT stated that he believed they would be.

Housing Management Restructure

IT described proposed changes to the TMO's housing management service. IT stated that following a lengthy review, feedback from residents and having taken on board concerns from many Residents Associations, a reorganisation of the housing management service had been proposed. JL noted that she had attended a consultation meeting several months before at which two other residents were present and that she believed that the proposals had already been finalised by that time.

The proposals included:

- The creation of a number of new positions, in particular "Neighbourhood Managers" and "Neighbourhood Officers".
- The appointment of a "Senior Neighbourhood Officer", whose primary responsibility would be the World's End Estate.
- The World's End Estate to maintain its current staff of two caretakers.
- The estate's caretakers would report to the "Senior Neighbourhood Officer" (for World's End), who would in turn report to the "Neighbourhood Manager" for the south of the borough, who would in turn report to the "Head of Neighbourhood Management" (borough-wide), who would in turn report to the "Director of Housing Management" (borough-wide).
- Rent collection/management to be managed centrally by a "Rent Income team". This would allow officers to concentrate on dealing with other housing management issues, such as anti-social behaviour, as well as familiarise themselves with contract/service management and monitoring (e.g. cleaning, repairs, ground maintenance etc.).

IT noted that many of the staff for the local area would be working from the Blantyre Centre. The centre was expected to accommodate a total of six TMO staff, excluding the estate's caretakers. It was hoped this would permit the centre to open more consistently and for longer periods.

JM asked whether the Senior Neighbourhood Officer or the estate's Caretakers would be able to deal with issues surrounding the monitoring of contractors working on the estate. IT stated that the TMO did envision a greater role for its staff in the monitoring of these contracts and that it planned to provide its housing management staff with suitable training.

MK asked why the Council/TMO no longer employed staff directly. HE stated that employing staff for estate services (cleaning, repairs etc) directly was more expensive than employing contractors. In addition, the Council was obliged to competitively tender all work and this would often result in the work being carried out by a contractor rather than directly employed staff in any case.

MG noted that there were a number of issues with regards to the performance of contractors outside working hours, particularly weekends. Others noted that a complete change of work ethic was required on the part of many contractors – many appeared to do as little as they could get away with.

Councillor Simmonds stated that she hoped the TMO would deal with a number of outstanding issues, citing one particular issue – that of rubbish dumping onto fourth floor lift lobby roofs Tower – had been outstanding for over six years. GR stated that such incidents were investigated and that action would be taken if the culprit could be identified. IT stated that he believed the new structure would help clarify which member of TMO staff was responsible for investigating and dealing with such issues.

IT noted that the proposals had not yet been approved by the TMO board. They would consider the proposals at the next scheduled board meeting to be held on Thursday, 6th of December. IT was unable to provide WERA with any documentation on the proposals until they had been approved by the board, but would be happy to do so once they had been approved. IT stated that the TMO hoped to have completed the reorganisation by April 2008.

Estate Manager's Update

GR apologised for not having the monthly report ready and said he would send it through once it had

been completed.

GR stated that Jimmy Rowe had been promoted to Caretaking Supervisor on a temporary basis.

GR stated that question of Christmas Lights on the Piazza was being dealt with by Ian Buckingham at the Council, now that the Piazza was no longer the TMO's responsibility.

GR summarised the Blantyre Centre's opening hours over the Christmas and New Year holiday period. A notice would be posted on the estate's communal noticeboards and the office's door.

GR stated that an interim security patrol of the car park was now in place.

GR noted that there were problems with the door entry system on some blocks – there was a delay between the button being pressed and the buzzer sounding in the concierge. This lengthened the amount of time it took to grant people access. It was noted that residents had reported the security guard sleeping on a number of occasions. It was also noted that people were often "breaking in" to the estate after the guard had failed, for whatever reason, to let them in. *[It has also previously been noted at the World's End ARB that the security guard in the concierge works a single 16-hour shift, which is arguably wholly inappropriate, reflects badly on the TMO and inevitably results in a poor service.]*

It was noted that a number of residents had complained that the security guard in the concierge had refused to open the concierge door to residents who had rung the office's door bell at weekends.

MG told the guests (HE, IT, GR) that they were welcome to remain for the rest of the meeting or could leave if they wished to. HE, IT and GR then left the meeting.

3. Security Refurbishment

A document proposing an extensive repair of the current security/door-entry system was tabled.

JM stated that John Hirsch and David Steppel of the TMO's technical services department had attended the World's End ARB meeting held on the 28th of November and declared that they were no longer able to maintain the existing security system. Without extensive repairs the system would simply cease to function. As they did not know when the security proposals managed by Peter Tozer were likely to get underway they proposed an extensive repair of the current system.

JM had requested further information as to the nature and extent of the proposed repair work. This had now been supplied by John Hirsch (the document tabled). It was noted that the repair appeared to involve replacing the existing door entry control system, fob panels on each block entrance and the issuing of new fobs. John Hirsch and Dave Steppel had given assurances that the TMO would be able to maintain and repair the new door entry equipment to be installed and that the equipment could be re-used and built upon by any subsequent security works. It was noted that the system they intended to use was the "PAC" system in use in the estate's car park. The proposals did not appear to include the replacement or upgrade of any of the estate's CCTV and would not affect the estate's lifts. The works were estimated to cost £36,000.

A discussion took place.

Several Committee members stated that they believed that the existing door entry system was flawed. It had been the first phase of a multi-phase scheme and, as the only phase of the scheme that had actually been completed, was simply ineffective and unmanageable without the subsequent phases in place. It was impossible for the estate staff or concierge to properly check whether those visiting the estate had a valid reason for doing so. Any assurances from the TMO in this regard were worthless.

It was noted that the Council/TMO had failed to properly manage the existing system's fobs from day one. It was essential that the distribution of new fobs to residents be managed properly and that the TMO keep tight control of the fobs in use/circulation thereafter.

Several Committee members stated that they had doubts as to whether repairing the existing security system was cost-effective. The system appeared to provide very little actual security and they questioned whether spending any money on it was appropriate. It was noted that the cost of the proposed work was relatively small in comparison with the estate's repair budget.

It was noted that, if nothing else, the door entry system provided a "barrier" of sorts, slowing entry into the estate and allowing the CCTV cameras to capture footage of those entering or leaving. It was therefore essential that the CCTV system worked properly. Several Committee members suggested

that works should include the upgrade of the existing CCTV, the incorporation of the CCTV system in the estate's lifts, and the provision of additional CCTV system in high-risk areas (e.g. the car park). JM stated that he had asked John Hirsch and David Steppel to consider including CCTV in these works.

A vote was then taken on whether the proposed repairs should proceed. The meeting voted unanimously for the works to proceed. JM would inform John Hirsch and David Steppel.

JM

4. Urgent Items / Updates

Planning – Farmer's Market

JM stated that a planning application for a Farmer's Market on the World's End Piazza had been submitted the previous week. JM noted that the Council's planning department would send notices to approximately 10% of households in the vicinity of the Piazza. Cllr. Simmonds explained that a planning officer would have been appointed to deal with the application and yellow planning notices would be put up in the Piazza. If there were no objections, the application would be approved. If there were objections, a decision would be taken by the planning officer as to whether to approve the application or refer it to the Council's planning committee. JM proposed that WERA post copies of the planning notice on all of the estate's noticeboards and that copies of the notice also be delivered to all households immediately adjacent to the Piazza (Dartrey Tower, Greaves Tower, parts of Dartrey, Middle Dartrey and Upper Dartrey Walks). This was agreed.

Planning – Flashpoint

JM tabled a letter from the Council's planning department stating that the planning application for the expansion of Flashpoint had been approved.

Tree Protection Orders

JM tabled a letter from the Council's horticulture department received in response to the letter from WERA asking that Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) be placed on the estate's trees. The letter explained that TPOs were normally served/placed on trees on private property by the local authority and that it was not appropriate for the Council to serve/place TPOs on the trees on World's End, as it would effectively be serving a notice on itself. The letter went on to explain that the department had sought reassurances from the TMO that the estate's trees were being properly looked after and maintained, and noted that it did appreciate the impact of the loss of mature trees from World's End Place/Piazza.

5. Any Other Business

Sgt. Otway provided the meeting with an update on recent police activity in and around the estate and the progress of relevant court cases, including that arising from the recent dog attack on the Piazza.

Cllr. Simmonds explained that £35,000 in funding was still available from the West Chelsea Initiative and asked those present to put forward proposals or ideas that would benefit from funding by the WCI. A number of proposals were suggested: pigeon control measures for the estate, a youth mural on the Piazza, disabled access improvements for the Over50s/Sheltered Clubroom, a number of environmental improvements for the Piazza. Cllr. Simmonds noted that Francis Alexander at the Chelsea Theatre had suggested the WCI funds be used to hold a "World's End Day" on the Piazza. MG noted that the Salvation Army might also be interested in applying for funding. JM said he would email Cllr. Simmonds with details and ask the other relevant groups to do the same.

JM

It was noted that the planters that had been put forward by the architect of the Piazza had been rejected by the Piazza Committee. They were far too small and likely to attract litter.

6. Date of Next Meeting

JM stated that no further meetings were planned prior to the Christmas holidays. The next meeting would therefore take place on the third Tuesday of January, the 15th, at 7pm in the WERA Clubroom.

The meeting then closed

..... Chair