

## **North Lambeth Area Forum, 27 September 2005**

**Held on Tuesday 19 July 2005 at Pedlar's Acre Hall, 1 Opal Street, SE11 4HQ**

### ***Attendance***

#### **Residents**

S Lucas, Munro House  
A Early, Matheson Lang  
E Jarvis, Ashmole TA  
A Sanders, Lambeth Towers and Lambeth Road TA  
I Bateman, Ashmole TRA  
E Tanner, Cotton Gardens  
Jean McCarthy, Denby Court  
Gordon Smith, Vassall Gardens  
G Harvey, Brittany Point  
M Landalls, Calais Gate and Coligny Court  
S Chinamaya, Tanswell TRA  
Steve James, Dolland House  
Rita Fitzgerald, Dolland House  
Barry McCalla, Brittany Point  
Ray Puckey, Munro House

#### **Officers**

Judith Franklin, Area Housing Manager, North Lambeth Area Office  
Ray Fallon, Area Operations Manager, North Lambeth Area Office  
Liam Kelly, Resident Participation Officer, North Lambeth Area Office  
Paul Beale, Local Service Team Manager, North Lambeth Area Office  
Heenal Rajani, Executive Support Officer, North Lambeth Area Office  
Scott Scarrow, Maintenance Team Manager, Housing Property Services  
Peter Fish, Housing Property Services  
Mischa Eligoloff, Area Community Strategy Officer, North Lambeth Town Centre  
T Brady, Axis Europe  
Tony Geoghan, Axis Europe

## ***1 Welcome and introductions***

Before the meeting got underway Councillor Fitchett talked about Lambeth winning the APSE award for the most improved housing service. This is Testament to residents who took part in consultation over reframing helping it become the success it is now recognised to be. Additionally, tomorrow we are shortlisted for the European caller centre of the year award.

## ***2 Minutes of the last meeting***

### **2.1 Digital TV (Item 2.1)**

Irene Bateman asked if NTL and Lambeth have got together to discuss the problems. Fitchett said it's on the agenda for his executive member meeting this Friday. He will keep people informed.

### **2.2 Window-cleaning (Item 2.3)**

Ray Puckey asked about progress on this. Some people said that their windows still had not been done. Steve (Tanswell) asked if his estate was included. Glenna asked about Brittany Point and Elkington Point. Pauline Taylor replied that Brittany Point and Elkington Point aren't even on the contract. Judith added that we are trying to follow up more with the contractor now to ensure that work is done.

Bert asked when the meeting to agree the new contract would take place. Judith said she didn't remember exactly. Ray Fallon said the contract was up for renewal on 5 October.

Councillor Fitchett said that if people were charged for things (like window-cleaning at Brittany Point and Elkington Point) which did not happen they should be reimbursed for it. Steve (Dolland) said their windows hadn't been cleaned for 16 years. Councillor Fitchett suggested that people could receive text messages when window cleaning was going to occur. Judith said we could put information on window-cleaning schedules on noticeboards.

Irene asked Pauline to ensure that window-cleaners didn't come at 7am.

### **2.3 Parking (Item 2.4)**

Steve (Tanswell) said that some people on Tanswell had five vehicles parked there all with visitors permits. Bays have numbers on now but that doesn't help. Judith said she would arrange a time to go on a walkabout with Steve to see these vehicles.

### **2.4 Responsive repairs (Item 2.5)**

Bert asked about getting jobs done by handymen. Judith said that the process has been put in place for caretakers to carry out minor repairs. This will go live from 10 October, by which time all training will have been carried out and everything will be ready to go. Judith explained that people will still have to report repairs through the LSC so we can keep track of all jobs.

### **2.5 North Lambeth Area Office report (Item 3.0)**

Bert asked what the difficulty letting sheltered housing was. Judith said that people are healthier longer now, and prefer to stay in their family home. People don't see themselves as getting old and needing the sort of facilities that sheltered housing offers. This is an issue across the country.

### **2.6 Responsive repairs (Item 5.0)**

Steve (Tanswell) said he had close friends who work for Axis who confirm the presence of the incentive scheme he mentioned last time. The Axis senior supervisor, Tony Geoghan, said that no bonus scheme exists – workers receive a Christmas bonus and an annual pay rise at the end of the financial year. A new team has been set up to investigate complaints against contractors so log a call with the LSC and you will get a full response.

Sarah Vincent said that Ian McIntosh was trying to get people to go to the repairs panel. Marjorie said she had been to the panel and it was a good experience.

Amanda Saunders (Lambeth Towers) said when she reported repairs a contractor would visit an hour or two later when she was at work not at home. Councillor Fitchett said they should call first. Peter Fish said he would investigate.

## **3 North Lambeth Area Office Report**

Judith provided an update on some of the figures: we are making steady progress on rent arrears but not doing as well as we'd like. Just over 40% of tenants are in arrears, which is actually much lower than in other areas in the borough. Our void turnaround time has gone up a bit and is now over target. We currently have two squatters and ten unauthorised occupiers.

Rita asked about crack houses (p13) – we last closed one in June. Do we still have a problem? What statistics are available? Judith said the problem comes and goes. It's not as bad as it was a year ago. Judith said she'd get hold of some statistics.

Councillor McKenna asked about garages. Judith said that at Myatts Field South we have just two people on the waiting list and large numbers of vacant garages. At Paulett Road we have spent a lot of money renovating the garages but there is still no demand. Councillor McKenna said that North Lambeth needed to do a proper report on this for the next forum. The forum should also make a formal request to Councillor Fitchett to do a review across the borough. Illegal lettings are another problem. Judith said she would bring some sort of figures or progress report to the next meeting, broken down by estate, but she won't be able to get costings by then.

## **4 Responsive repairs**

Peter Fish spoke to the report. There has been a problem with duplication of orders but this is being reduced: there has been a training issue with the LSC

staff. Rita asked how many orders were duplicated and Peter replied that it was about 150.

We've been so successful at getting repairs done that we've almost exhausted our budget. So we'll have to look at ways of managing this over the next few months.

Sarah repeated that people should come along to the repairs panel and meetings with contractors. Rita added that this meant the monthly meetings during the day with contractors which officers attended: all residents are welcome to attend.

## ***5 Planned maintenance***

Scot Scarrow said that his table showed the progress of various cyclical repairs in this area. This is external painting and windows. Scott didn't know details of any of the projects. Ray Puckey suggested we drop this item and ask Jacqui to come back with a full report next month.

The other part of Planned Maintenance is the engineering side: gas servicing, lifts, heating and access control. We have a new gas servicing team in place now which has been put in place over the last year. We now look at gas servicing centrally across the borough which is one of the reasons why the gas contractors have been also to service so many homes this year – they have visited over 80% already. They've also got back to us with lists of properties they've missed.

Seven heating projects are currently on the go: four replacement boilers plus in-dwelling works at Fairford, Hurley and Ebenezer Houses. Section 20's have been issued for the lift replacement at Cottingham Road. Completion expected around next March/April.

Rita asked for detailed reports in time in future, especially costings. Previous area forums have asked questions about the cost of windows. Rita asked for this to be taken to Councillor Fitchett. She also asked for an updated roadmap.

Bert said that it wasn't right for gas servicing contractors to cold call. Scot clarified that they issued letters initially and they will try people if they are in the vicinity. Ray Puckey asked Scott to get a paper from Jacqui for the next meeting outlining the process for appointments and whether this has changed.

## ***6 attendance at patch drop-in sessions***

Judith presented her report. It's notable that more people turn up to the session at the area office than any other. On the other hand we do get a lot of callers to the area office, the Vauxhall Local Office and to a lesser extent the Minet Library. We have a duty system where people can drop in and see a housing officer; they can also make an appointment to see their own housing officer. The downside of patch sessions is that housing officers are tied up

sitting around not able to get on with their own work. We've sent out leaflets to promote the sessions but they've had little effect.

Rita clarified that people will still be able to drop into the area office and the local housing offices. Ray Puckey said he thought we should close all the patch sessions. Everyone agreed. Judith said we'd put notices on the doors to inform people of this.

## **7 Environmental improvement schemes**

Ray Fallon spoke to his report. Three schemes didn't get completed last year – the three at the bottom of the table. They will now need to be funded out of this year's budget. Rita clarified that we didn't lose the money – it was spent on other schemes. We just need the forum to agree that the £67,000 for these schemes should come from this year's Environmental Improvement Category 1 budget.

Tim (Vauxhall) asked about getting a community flat done up at Sullivan House. Sarah had sent him an email saying that community projects wouldn't be considered for the Housing Opportunities Fund but the table says it is work in progress, so what's going to happen? Judith said we need to clarify this and she will come back on it.

Everyone agreed Ray's proposals.

## **8 A.O.B.**

### **8.1 Jonathan Street**

Tim is also involved with the Vauxhall Gardens Community Centre. Old people come for bingo on Wednesday night and are greatly affected by drug-dealing and alcoholics. A lot of renovation work was done in the area which was a waste. Something needs to be done.

Judith said she's aware that this is a difficult issue. Paul McCann and his Community Safety Team are doing their best. Maybe we could make some alterations to the planters, like putting a hairpin railing around them to stop alcoholics sitting around on them.

Rita asked if we could put pressure on to get this area made a safer neighbourhoods area. We could ask Anthony Millinship. Maybe Tim and Rita need to take it to Kate Hoey in the forum's name.

### **8.2 Motorbikes**

Irene said that on her last walkabout with Teresa she saw a motorbike on a balcony. What is our policy about keeping it with petrol in? Judith said this should be dealt with under conditions of tenancy and that it is not acceptable.

### **8.3 Concierge service**

It was asked what kind of concierge service is run on Ethelred Estate? Brittany Point is supposed to be the centre of the system with one person

always there but that doesn't happen in practice. The standard of customer service is also poor. Ray Fallon said he'd pass this onto the manager, Keith Miller, to investigate. It was suggested that we set up a tenants' meeting about the concierge, since many people are concerned about it and unsure about what to expect from the service.