

**South West Edinburgh Area Board  
7pm, Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Meggetland Function Suite**

**In Attendance**

Maud Wylie (Chair)	Hailesland Park Neighbourhood Council
Hellen McDonough	Longstone Community Council
Judy Wightman	Ratho Community Council
Norman Tinlin	Fairmilehead Community Council
Cllr Alastair Paisley	Ward 2 – Pentland Hills

**Officials**

Scott Neill	CEC
Debbie Herbertson	CEC
Rachel Somerville (minutes)	CEC

**Observers**

David Simpson	Resident, Murrayburn
Justine Bradd	Edinburgh Tenants Federation
Harry Sutherland	Edinburgh Tenants Federation
Sandy Cruikshank	Edinburgh Tenants Federation

**Apologies**

Cllr Jason Rust	Colinton/Fairmilehead Ward
Cllr Andrew Burns	Fountainbridge/Craiglockart Ward
Cllr Elaine Aitken	Colinton/ Fairmilehead Ward
Cllr Ronald Cairns	Pentlands Ward
Cllr Eric Barry	Colinton/ Fairmilehead Ward
Cllr Ricky Henderson	Pentland Hills Ward
Mike Avery	CEC
Eddie Thorpe	Resident, Hailesland Park
Anne Denholm	Dumbryden Neighbourhood Council
Maureen Jarvis	Oxgangs Central Residents Association
Lyn Bryan	Dumbryden Neighbourhood Council

<p><b>1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Board Members and SN read out apologies received as above.</p>	
<p><b><u>2. Minute of Previous Meeting/Matters Arising/Action List</u></b></p> <p>Amendment to page 1: Monitoring of stair cleaning is monitored centrally and not in the South West.</p> <p>Minutes were approved by NT and seconded by JW.</p> <p>Cllr Henderson has suggested stair cleaning as a measurable performance standard to be monitored.</p>	

<p>Cllr Paisley noted that the stairs in Clovenstone &amp; Harvesters were particularly bad, and the paladin bins were piled high with rubbish in mid-January, having not been picked up since 21<sup>st</sup> December.</p> <p>DH confirmed that waste services had promised to clear this, but had difficulties manoeuvring the lorries in the estates. The SW Housing Officers have now reported that the backlog has been cleared. HMc noted that to tell individuals to take it to the dump themselves was not helpful to those who could not drive or were infirm.</p> <p>DH met with Cllr Henderson to look at stair cleaning and service agreements. A suggestion was made that housing officers could take photos of any sub-standard stairs and refer them to stair cleaning. DH advised that the housing officers will currently refer on any issues that they come across while on visits as a matter of course.</p> <p>JW queried whether the stair cleaning number was displayed within a stair at present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AP1. - DH was aware of the rotas being displayed, but not of the number itself.</b></li> </ul> <p>JB queried why there were two representatives from Wester Hailes Community Council listed in attendance at the last meeting. DH stated that it was agreed that, within the AB, individuals would be a tenants representative first and the Community Centre second. In this case, Anne Denholm should represent Dumbyden Community Council, and Lyn Bryan as an observer as she is AD's substitute.</p> <p>DH reported back on the council's position on private landlords and boundary fences. The council can encourage the landlord to repair the fence, but unless it causes a health and safety issue a statutory notice cannot be served. NT disagreed, and said they can't force them to replace the fence but to fix it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AP2 - DH agreed to investigate this further.</b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>3. Tenant Led Inspections - Presentation</u></b></p> <p>Questions on the presentation.</p> <p>Were the inspection only carried out on empty homes? Yes, this time. Will you look at tenanted houses in the future? If tenants were willing to allow inspections, however it would be difficult. They have considered looking at debt prevention in the future, but again that depends on the tenants and how happy they are to discuss.</p> <p>Cllr Paisley drew attention to Table 1 on the inspection report, and the average cost to re-let a property. Taking into account this cost, and the rent a property earns a year, approximately 34 weeks rent is spent on this alone. Cllr Paisley queried how this compared to Prospect and Dunedin Canmore? Can they do it faster and cheaper? JB explained that only Dunedin</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>
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Canmore were on board at the moment, and other housing associations had requested involvement but ETF did not have the capacity to include them.

HS explained that Dunedin Canmore received properties back in a better state of repair and so costs and re-let times were lower. CEC have let properties where graffiti on the wall was still visible, and peeled off wallpaper. Even with decorating vouchers, it is difficult to get this to a liveable standard. ETF suggest completing a standard level of decoration and properties would be let easier.

ETF felt that the Housing Associations handed properties over in a better decorative order and so they were returned in a similar state.

DH confirmed that currently décor is not included in the let-able standard. People who live in a property for an extended period of time increase the cost of the re-let.

HS noted that Dunedin Canmore will decorate if a heavy smoker has inhabited the property, while CEC will not.

DH explained that £50 of vouchers were given for a 3 bed property in the South West. Cllr Paisley suggested using £50 on materials and the criminal justice team to redecorate. DH explained that when necessary, tenants were referred on to support agencies. If a termination letter is received, a housing officer will attempt to attend the property and evaluate what repairs will be required, however people will prevent this occurring if they wish.

The system will record if a property has been left in a mess, however there is currently not a policy of recharging individuals for damage. Those who are evicted can represent as homeless and there is then a requirement to house them.

Cllr Paisley suggests levying a service charge, while HS suggests using HRA for what it was intended for.

MW noted that the majority of houses are in a good state of repair and it is the minority that are unsuitable.

JW was very impressed with the report and was interested to hear about sharing good practice. HS advised that ETF are doing presentations, publishing online and in a handbook.

**4. Housing Issues & Communications**

Please see appended report – Housing Management Performance Update – Jan 2010.

**Review of Community Walkabouts**

Additional Information:

<p>13 terminations in the week up to Christmas.</p> <p>£130,000 was taken during the rent free fortnight at Christmas. The department is hoping for a similar uptake in March for the second rent free fortnight.</p> <p>It was noted it would be interesting to do a comparison on amounts versus percentages.</p> <p>Cllr Paisley enquired whether the missed target was written off at the end of the year or if it remains as a deficit at the start of the next financial year? DH confirmed this was a rolling balance that remained for the next year.</p> <p>There is a focus on early intervention and income maximisation as well as referring tenants onto agencies that can assist. There is also a service where an officer will do a home visit to assist with filling out forms etc. Unfortunately, some will not accept help. There is an early intervention project running with CHAI where a leaflet will be delivered to tenants offering them assistance.</p> <p>SC queried what format this leaflet would take – whether it would be an easy read version for those with poor reading skills. DH advised that CHAI was taking the lead on the project. Tenants can come and receive face to face advice and support at the local office should they be unable to read a letter received. They can also visit offices out with the area, should there be a stigma attached.</p> <p>NT queried where the majority of homelessness cases presented. DH advised that Cockburn Street was the main homelessness centre, after which the South West is the second busiest. An individual will be taken wherever they present themselves.</p> <p><b>Review of Community Walkabouts</b></p> <p>JW thinks that the walkabouts themselves are great, and comments that other areas that do not have them are jealous.</p> <p>NT sates they do not get feedback on what is addressed or whether it is passed on. DH advised that before now, the walkabout information was not getting updated on the database but now Housing Officers have been trained and updating themselves.</p> <p>JW would be happy with feedback on the walkabouts even if its just to say it will done when funds become available.</p> <p>MW queried whether the Hailesland Walkabout, cancelled because of the snow, will be rescheduled, or will they have to wait until later in the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AP3 - Debbie Confirmed that it will be rescheduled.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>SWNO</b></p>
<p><b>5. AOCB</b></p>	

<p>HMc queried whether 1 – 26 Kinsknowe Place was still sheltered housing or is it mixed. A member of the community reported to HMc that a couple were moved from Parkhead to these homes, and they do not require sheltered housing. A further question was asked as to why the pavements in this area were given priority should they not be sheltered.</p> <p>DH advised that on a rare occasion would someone be put into sheltered housing as a temporary measure but it is unlikely. DH feels that it is the community member's personal assessment of the couple who have moved in, rather than fact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AP4- DH will confirm at the next meeting if the homes here are still sheltered homes.</b></li> </ul> <p>JB wanted to update the group on how the North Sighthill regeneration is going. The Masterplan is going out to consultation then onto the planning application stage. The North Sighthill residents group went to the new Craigmillar homes to see the new sizes. The group are fighting for a community centre on site.</p> <p>DH will report on timescales for the low rise decant once it has been agreed at committee level. Glen Almond Court is now 50% empty, and within agreed timescales.</p> <p>Cllr Paisley drew attention to the pressure on all departments as budgets are set. There are massive cuts proposed, with 700 staff cuts. All parties are looking at what services to protect.</p> <p>Currie Youth Club is likely to have a 100% cut of its funding of £5,800.</p> <p>MW expressed concern at The Broomhouse Centre having its funding cut by City of Edinburgh Council. Cllr Paisley advised the group that The Broomhouse Centre has a healthy balance sheet, with lottery money guaranteed for 3 years.</p> <p>NEP Project 2009 – 10 update</p> <p>DH ran through the current projects (appended) and their status. All agreed that the list of projects could be progressed down as they were ranked.</p> <p>SN advised the group that he was looking at holding the meetings in the South West Office Foyer.</p>	<p><b>DH</b></p>
<p><b>6. Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>9<sup>th</sup> March 2010 – South West Neighbourhood Office</p>	