



Leasehold Panel

Minutes – 28 July 2009

List of the documents appended to the Minutes

The following documents are referred to in the minutes of the meeting of the 28 July:

1. Appendix 1 – Progress report on the Decent Homes Programme
2. Appendix 2 – Statement by Mrs Anne Goodhew, on behalf of leaseholder to the meeting of the Council on the 20 July 2009
3. Appendix 3 – Reply from Mrs Goodhew to Councillor Bevan on issues he raised during the meeting of the Council on the 20 July
4. Appendix 4 – Email from Stephen Moore, News Editor of the Hornsey Journal to Councillor Bevan, Cabinet Member for Housing.

Leasehold Panel

Minutes of the meeting of the 28 July 2009

1. Attendance: Ms Maureen Clement, Ms A Misir, Mr R Dalliday, Mr Charles Connolly, Ms Marion Merrick, Ms Shirley Perlman, Mr Roger Kemp, Ms Lesley Ramm, Ms Sylvia Patterson, Mr F Edwards, Mrs M Shaw, Mrs Anne Goodhew, Mr Nick Martin-Clark, Ms Sue Brown, Ms Susannah Adewumi, Ms Elizabeth Owen, Ms Sylvia Morgan, Mrs Delsie Grandson, Mrs F Rose, Ms Millie Mboizi, Ms Rita Batzias, (21)

Apologies: Mr Pentol

Chair: the meeting was chaired by Mr Roger Kemp.

Officers: Mr Nesan Thevanesan, Head of Home Ownership, Mr Sean McKierman, Contract Manager, Kinetics Group, Mr Graham Jones, Procurement Manager, Environmental Resources, Haringey Council, Mr Larry Ainsworth, Strategic Client Representative, Asset Management, Homes for Haringey, Mr Nick Claxton, Senior Home Ownership Officer and Mr Bruce Nicholas, Leasehold Project Officer who took the minutes.

2. Gas safety checks - optional service to be made available to leaseholders - Sean McKierman, Contract Manager, Kinetics Group

Mr McKierman started by explaining that Kinetics is one of the Homes for Haringey's main contractors for gas maintenance and covers half the council flats and houses in the borough. Following a request from the Council they have agreed to provide an optional service to leaseholders to check their boilers and gas appliances - the details of the charges are given below. Although the service being offered at the moment is only to provide checks on gas safety, Mr McKierman said that Kinetics has the capacity to cover electrical work as well as all aspects of gas

maintenance. Their staff carry ID at all times. It has been decided to commence with a service to check leaseholders' gas appliances

Services will only be carried out **after the payment has been received by Kinetics**. In the first place the customer will have to make an appointment by phoning Kinetics on 0208 440 8811 and asking for the Haringey Leaseholders Section. An appointment will then be made and an invoice will be sent to the customer's address. The appointment will be confirmed once the payment has been received. There are two levels of service the customer can choose from:

Option 1 – service plus certificate

- Carry out a service to the Homes for Haringey published standard to the gas boiler and issue a Landlords Gas Safety Certificate – £65.
- Each additional appliance will be charged at £25.

Option 2 – visual inspection plus certificate

- Carry out a visual inspection of the gas boiler and issue a Landlords Gas Safety Certificate – £35.
- Each additional appliance will be charged at £10 per appliance.

This meets the legal requirements, but no inspection is carried out of the internal parts of the boiler or other appliances.

All prices exclude VAT. Kinetics makes the condition that it will take no responsibility for any mechanical failure before or after the inspections.

3. Key Leaseholder Scheme – update by Nick Claxton, Senior Home Ownership Officer

Mr Claxton requested any observations on the terms of reference, which had been circulated previously. He said that there had been a good response so far to the request for volunteers for the scheme and a further recruitment flier would be despatched shortly.

At present there are 33 volunteers. More are sought to cover blocks and estates. New forms have been produced, which are more streamlined and more user friendly. Mr Claxton asked for feedback on the design of the form to be sent to him by the 28 August 2009.

People who were interested would be able to volunteer for additional responsibilities in addition to the main one of reviewing the lists of day to day repairs charges to see if there were any issues that appeared to require further investigation. The launch of the new scheme was proposed to take place in November. Consideration was being given to providing some form of incentive to those who take part and suggestions from Panel Members would be welcome.

4. Re-tendering of Haringey's waste management contracts (including the external cleaning of council housing estates) - overview and objectives, timescales and consultation - Graham Jones, Procurement Manager, Environmental Resources, Haringey Council

Mr Jones started by saying that Haringey Council has now embarked on the process of re-tendering its contract for refuse collection, street cleaning, etc. It is a major contract which will also cover litter picking, recycling, the gritting of roads in winter and so on. The external cleaning of the Council's housing estates also constituted an important component of the contract. The present contract was awarded in 2001 (to Haringey Accord, now Haringey Enterprise) and did not include recycling at that time. The recycling requirements for local authorities were introduced subsequently and the work for this is currently being carried out by a section of Haringey Council. However it is proposed that the recycling work should be combined with the general refuse collection contract when the tender is re-let.

A dialogue with potential contractors has been commenced - in view of the size and importance of the contract it would not be appropriate to engage in a simple competitive tendering process. The old contract expires in April 2011 and it is proposed to award the new contract in the autumn of 2010 in order to give reasonable time for the introduction of the new arrangements. An extensive consultation exercise has started with Haringey's residents through a number of different forums. A questionnaire has been sent to all households with the Council's magazine, *Haringey People* in order to obtain their views about what they expect from the service and a large number of completed questionnaires has been returned.

Mr Jones explained that the Council had not entered into a detailed discussion with the potential contractors. This would occur after the shortlisting process had been completed in order to decide who to invite to tender for the contract. Borough wide consultation would also be conducted by such means as Area Assemblies, Homes for Haringey's

panels and so on. Leaseholders of course were an important element of those being consulted, since they would pay towards the service both as Council Tax payers and leaseholders. Satisfaction with the current service had shown an upward trend since 2001 and this was recorded on the Council's website. Most respondents were satisfied with the current service.

In future, recycling would comprise a very important part of the contract. The government target for local authorities with regard to recycling was 50 per cent by 2010, more than double the current level. It is important to the Council to increase recycling rates since financial penalties will be imposed for producing land fill waste under the EEC directives. The contractor will have to share some of the responsibility for meeting the targets the borough needs to achieve. Not only will they be responsible for collecting the recyclable materials, but they will also have to manage a variety of different schemes; there will be more collection points and more publicity to increase public awareness of the importance of the issues involved.

In answer to the question as to how the recyclable materials were being dealt with Mr Jones responded that they are sent to the North London Waste Authority. He was also asked about the present position on the re-tendering process. He said that the current dialogue was with six contractors and it was proposed to narrow it down to three by October.

5. Decent Homes update - Larry Ainsworth, Strategic Client Representative, Asset Management, Homes for Haringey

Mr Ainsworth presented a short report ([see Appendix 1](#)) which had been circulated with the minutes. There had been a very useful workshop (Decent Homes Partnering Workshop) held on the 14 July. The results of the discussions had provided the project team with a lot of information to assess the key challenges in the forthcoming years. They would be looking at reviewing schedules and rates with the contractors where appropriate. In addition further consideration would be given to rationalising supply lines to ensure the best use of suppliers based on the experience so far; similarly with subcontractors. More information would be provided to the Leasehold Panel as it became available and a Section 20 Notice would be issued early next year

Panel Members referred to the levels of resident satisfaction recorded in relation to work on the Decent Homes Programme. These recorded residents' satisfaction as Hornsey 94%, Wood Green 96%, South Tottenham

94% and North Tottenham 100%. They criticised the figures as not properly representing leaseholders' views. They considered that it should be made clear that the majority of the returns were from tenants commenting on the way in which the work had been completed inside their flats. Mr Ainsworth agreed that the figures were very limited in the information they provided. Panel Members said that this should be made quite clear whenever the figures were published. They also considered that the collection of the completed questionnaires by the contractors could result in the statistics being biased.

- **Action point 1.** Mr Thevanesan said he would seek clarification of the policy for the collection and the publication of the satisfaction survey statistics.

A question was raised about estate improvement works. Mr Ainsworth responded that as far as he was aware no detailed plans had been drawn up as yet. In respect of planned preventative maintenance (exterior decoration work) this was generally carried out by the Decent Homes contractors, but funded from the capital programme.

6. Report from the deputation to the Council meeting on the 20 July regarding digital conversion (TV reception) – report from Anne Goodhew, Vice Chair of the Leasehold Panel

Mrs Goodhew presented a statement (see Appendix 2) that she had made on behalf of the Panel and leaseholders generally to meeting of the Council on the 20 July. She referred to the main points:

- o Lack of resident consultation about the choice of the services to be provided. The whole question of the number of services to be provided should be discussed at a meeting of the Residents' Consultative Forum. The Government body (Digital UK) emphasised the importance of consultation with residents (on their website)
- o Opt out. Leaseholders should be given the choice of opting out if they did not want the new IRS services
- o Capping. Charges to leaseholders should be capped at a reasonable amount (£300).

In addition certain issues had arisen as a result of Councillor Bevan's statement at the meeting on the 20 July. Mrs Goodhew explained that she had written a letter (see Appendix 3) to Councillor Bevan about these, a copy of which had also been circulated. The main points were as follows:

- o The costs to leaseholders of the new IRS systems were quite considerable from £600 to over £1000 in some cases
- o Councillor Bevan had stated that from now on individual satellite dishes would not be allowed on council blocks of flats. However it was not clear how this policy was going to be implemented
- o Councillor Bevan had stated that leaseholders could pay for the new IRS system at 86 pence a week over 10 years, which amounted to a total of £447.20. It would probably be cheaper administratively to cap the amount at a one off payment of £300
- o Report on the switchover – the report prepared by Homes for Haringey at the request of the Council had now been submitted to a committee of the Council. There could be no reason for not releasing it to residents.

Mr Ainsworth was asked to comment on the funding of the Integrated Reception Systems (conversion to digital TV). He said that it was to be funded mainly outside the Decent Homes Programme and would largely be carried out by specialist contractors. However the majority of the work in the current year would be carried out under the Decent Homes Programme, since the new contracts for IRS had only been awarded recently. In view of the concerns of Panel Members on this subject Mrs Goodhew agreed to write to Ola Akinfe, Executive Director of Asset Management to seek further clarification on this matter:

- **Action Point 2.** Mrs Goodhew to ascertain to what extent the IRS would be carried out under the Decent Homes Programme.

Mr Martin-Clark said that he felt sure that the Panel strongly supported the issues Mrs Goodhew had raised. He could see no reason why the report (the 'Gateway Report') on the digital conversion prepared by Homes for Haringey could not now be made public. He also referred to an email (see Appendix 4) he had received from Stephen Moore, News Editor at the Hornsey Journal about the Gateway report. This had originally been sent to Homes for Haringey and Councillor Bevan. He quoted from the most important parts to the Panel.

Mr Martin-Clark explained that in the first place Mr Moore had referred to a letter from Sue Brown, Chair of the HLA which, Mr Moore had said called into question most of the points made by Cllr Bevan in his letter to the Journal (published the week before), asked that he apologise and withdraw the allegations, or resign. [Sue Brown's letter was also published in the Journal and is attached to these minutes, at the end of Mr Moore's

email]. Mr Moore had then referred to the Gateway Report which Homes for Haringey prepared for the Council on the subject of digital conversion. Although this remains confidential Mr Moore had managed to obtain a copy. In his email Mr Moore had asked a number of questions:

"Cllr Bevan and Rose, the Decent Homes Gateway Review Item 16a throws a very different light on this issue. I am sure you have a copy of it you can both refer to, but the main points I have picked up on are as follows:

** The bid for Decent Homes funding was based on bringing all stock up to the Stock Condition Survey Minimum Standard, but did not make allowances for "desirable" improvements such as converting flat roofs to pitched roofs, nor provision of digital TV.*

** Nevertheless, both of these "desirable" improvements were scheduled in the Year 1 programme, and have "now become standard items for delivery and inclusion" and HfH is being given "the clear instruction that these works are now to be carried out as standard when planning, procuring and delivering Decent Homes work across the remaining non-decent stock".*

** These items "are not funded under the programme" yet continue to be implemented "without recourse to the additional funding" required to carry it through for all stock.*

** The provision of the minimum standard for digital TV is given as around £150 per unit. For Haringey's choice, average costs in year 1 were £1,056 per unit.*

** A re-tendering process for the DTS installation is ongoing but, as Cllr Bevan said at Full Council, the costs for leaseholders will still average between £448 and £505.*

** The hole in funding needed to carry out the same works, to the same standard, right through the programme, is £26.12million, of which DTS systems account for £8.6million.*

** There is no money available from Supported Capital Expenditure or the MRA, whatever that is. Of the available options being considered, only one is seen as viable - re-tendering for the Decent Homes programme from 2010/11 onwards to plug the gap. If this doesn't happen and HfH "continue to carry out works that are not budgeted for in the early years of the programme, this will impact on our ability to fulfill our commitment to deliver the same standard across the borough for future years, and to*

bring all homes up to the standard in line with the funding conditions," which I assume means 'the Decent Homes standard'.

** One recommendation, if funding is not found, is to adopt the Stock Condition Survey Minimum Standard instead, leaving a third of leaseholders with a hugely expensive DTS system many didn't want, and the taxpayer funding the third of tenants who already have it installed, at £1,056 per unit.*

All this above directly contradicts reassurances given by HfH to the Journal."

The Panel decided that the full text of the email should be attached to the minutes. Ms Brown expressed the Panel's appreciation of Mrs Goodhew's work in representing their views to the Council.

7. Update from Sublet Group – Anne Goodhew, Vice Chair of the Leasehold Panel.

Mrs Goodhew referred to a report that had been circulated to the Panel with the agenda. She referred to the following matters:

- A new welcome pack for sublessees to provide them with information about their rights and their responsibilities to the other residents in the building
- Identifying unregistered properties – she said that the use of Council Tax records had been extremely useful in identifying properties which were probably being sublet but had not been registered.
- Contacting sublessees – although the possibility of inviting people to a 'workshop' had been considered, it was unlikely many would attend. In view of the high rate of turnover conducting a survey of sublessees on the telephone might be a good option
- Newsletter. Consideration was being given to the production of a separate newsletter but this would be quite expensive
- Administration charge to recover the additional cost of registration, welcome pack, etc. Two options were considered: an annual charge of £25 a year to leaseholders subletting their properties or an across the board charge to achieve a per capita recovery of £1.90 in relation to leaseholders and tenants.

The justification for tenants bearing some of the cost would be that they would also benefit from the registration of sublessees, who could then be contacted in the case of emergency (leakage of water, etc). The cost to tenants would be recovered through the housing revenue account and the cost to leaseholders would be recovered through the management fee. The Panel approved this option unanimously, that each leaseholder would pay in the region of £1.90 for this service as part of the management fee.

8. HOT administrative charge for leaseholders opting to install their own windows – Nesan Thevanesan, Head of Home Ownership.

Mr Thevanesan put the case that the most cost effective method of recovering the cost of this service would be to include it as part of the management fee paid by all leaseholders. He said that enforcement could involve taking cases to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal which might result in additional costs to other leaseholders apart from those who were the subject of the action.

Mr Martin-Clark expressed the view that it was desirable to minimise the possibility of taking action at the LVT, which resulted in unnecessary costs all round. Mr Kemp noted that where the case involved a failure to obtain planning permission any enforcement action by the Council's Planning Department would not incur costs to leaseholders.

Mr Thevanesan proposed an across the board charge to all leaseholders as part of the management fee instead of the current charge of £238 to applicants. A significant number of those present felt it was inequitable that the majority of leaseholders should have to bear the cost of administering the individual applications from people who wished to replace their own windows.

Mr Kemp said that where there had been a failure to seek Planning permission, Homes for Haringey have the option of referring this to the Planning Department who can then, where appropriate issue an Enforcement Notice under Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). This would result in no cost to either Homes for Haringey or leaseholders.

After some further discussion Mr Thevanesan's proposal was carried 9 votes to 7 with 5 abstentions. However it was then agreed that the policy should be reviewed in 12 months time.

- **Action point.** To review the charging policy in respect of individual applications for the replacement of windows and doors in 12 months time.

Mr Kemp then closed the meeting, there being no time for any further business. He thanked the speakers for their very interesting and helpful reports. Consideration of the minutes of the meeting of the 1 July was held over until the next meeting on the 9 September.



Appendix 1 - Leasehold Panel minutes 28 July 2009

Progress report on the Decent Homes Programme

Decent Homes Programme: Year 2 (2009/10)

The Year 2 programme is on site and we anticipate completing works to approximately 2,623 tenanted and 601 leasehold units.

The end of June position is detailed below at Table 1.

Decent Homes	Hornsey	Wood Green	South Tottenham	North Tottenham
Number of units with work in progress	43	57	119	42
Number of units with works complete	112	25	227	56
Resident satisfaction figures %	94%	96%	94%	100%
Progress update	on programme	on programme	on programme	on programme

- Actual spend at the end of June 2009 is £4.985m
- Resident satisfaction is running at 96%.

Table 2 No Access and Refusals

Table 2 sets out the current position with regards to number of no access and refusal cases

Constructor	Area	No access/refusals
Apollo	South Tottenham	15/15
Lovell	North Tottenham	11/0
Wates	Hornsey	37/0
Mulalley	Wood Green	0/15
Totals		93

Events

We are currently working with our contractor partners on implementation of the improvements identified at the 6th June Decent Homes End of Year Review event. The Decent Homes Partnering Workshop Held on 14th July 2009 was successful in so far as it focused the project team on the key challenges facing the project in the coming years and started the process of meeting these challenges

Environmental Programme (estate improvements)

The 2009/10 programme with a proposed budget of £1.5m will be funded from the £11.4m Decent Homes allocation. Schemes have been commissioned and are currently at feasibility stage.

Design and Engineering have been commissioned to survey all 90 estates across the borough in line with the agreed brief. This will include consultation with Tenancy Management, Estate Services and residents. The surveys are scheduled to complete by early autumn, and this will form the works programme for future years.

Energy Programmes

We are currently exploring opportunities for accessing funds for energy efficiency measures which will complement the Decent Homes programme. These include the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP), the Social Housing Energy Saving Programme (SHESP) and 'Retrofit for the Future'. We have submitted a bid for £1.415m of SHESP funding to insulate 1,886 hard to treat cavity walls and expect to hear the outcome by the end of July.

Funds are also available under the CESPS programme for energy suppliers to provide energy efficiency measures including solid wall insulation to domestic

Progress report on the Decent Homes Programme, 28/07/09

consumers, targeting the bottom 10% of national Super Output Area's index of Multiple Deprivation. British Gas are currently considering 2,000 Council homes of solid wall construction which we have identified in the eligible areas.

Planned Preventative Maintenance Programme

There are 15 works packages, 5 of which are currently on site and progressing well. 1 is at tender approval stage, 3 are awaited expiry of section 20 period, 6 are at tender report stage. The overall programme is due to complete by 31st October 2009 with a budget allocation of £3m.

**Larry Ainsworth, Strategic Client Representative
Asset Management**

Appendix 2 - Leasehold Panel minutes 28 July 2009

Statement by Mrs Anne Goodhew, on behalf of leaseholder to the meeting of the Council on the 20 July 2009

As leaseholders we have concerns about Haringey's policy on digital aerials or Integrated Reception Systems (IRS), about value for money, and about what we see as poor communication and a lack of consultation. May I remind you that communal aerial replacement involves 441 blocks in Haringey making just over 2,500 leaseholders who will be affected by your decisions.

Note: Our main points are printed in bold italic.

We would like to know why Haringey hasn't joined the London Area Procurement Network, a group of ALMOs which collaborate to improve efficiency and the value of services to tenants and local communities.

When we look at the installation of IRS in Newland House during their Decent Homes Programme, it is obvious that leaseholders have not had value for money. Their original quote was doubled to £800 in their final bill. Why? Who takes responsibility for this? **How will leaseholders be compensated for this mismanagement?** In year 2 there are leaseholder bills of nearly £1200 just to watch television. The mind boggles!

We are pleased therefore that IRS will no longer be installed during Decent Homes work as we had concerns about the funding. Paul Bridge assures us that there is specific money set aside for IRS but we've had no details. As there was a procurement exercise already in progress money will have been allocated for that but not for the installations done during DHP. **Surely all financial arrangements should be transparent.** There have been too many cases of contractors profiteering from public sector works in the past, and trust between the voting public and politicians has suffered severe setbacks recently.

Les Armstrong has kept the Leasehold Panel in touch about the borough's ongoing IRS procurement. He was talking in terms of £400 per flat and was obviously surprised about the £800 charges for Newland House and not aware of what was happening under Decent Homes. The Home Ownership Team only became aware of it in June 2008 as an item in Section 20 notices. These obviously interested parties were not consulted. **There should be better consultation with all parties including the Leasehold Panel.**

We were told some time ago that a report on Haringey's digital switchover was being prepared and we would have sight of it. Then we were told that no such report existed, then it did exist, then again it didn't! Now it does but it's confidential and we aren't allowed to know its full contents. ***We want to know if you really believe in resident involvement as the Audit Commission was given to understand.*** The Leasehold Panel thought so, but the withholding of this report has raised suspicions that after all the Council and Homes for Haringey may not be for us but against us. This is a deplorable state of affairs.

The government requires that you should replace any analogue communal aerials ready for the switchover in 2012 . It does not dictate a type or a standard. Why does Haringey have to go out on a limb and impose the Rolls Royce version? It is costly and could be outmoded in just a few years. No one can guarantee that it won't be. We boast about the vast number of ethnicities we have in our borough and it cannot have escaped your notice that there are so many that it will be impossible to satisfy all their needs even with the 13 wire system so the satellite dishes will return! ***We would like the whole question of satellite dishes to be thoroughly aired at a Residents' Consultative Forum.***

In the present financial climate it could be considered morally culpable to put undue pressure on so many of us who are already paying high service charges. The Decent Homes Programme was planned before the credit crunch – we still have to find the money for that and it may run into many thousands. To have to find additional money for an aerial which does much more than most of us will ever use, could be the straw that breaks the camel's back! ***An opt out clause is available to leaseholders elsewhere, why not in Haringey? We want a proper consultation on this, please.***

We hope that the ongoing procurement process will come in at a reasonable price and, if it does, it will only be because it has been properly costed unlike IRS within Decent Homes. ***We believe that the Council could and should alleviate our financial distress by negotiating a guarantee that leaseholders' payments will be capped at a set amount (say £300).***

A Council spokesperson told the Hornsey Journal that your policy is based on advice from the government quango 'Digital UK'. Digital UK state that television is seen as a basic human necessity and they have a special section on 'Talking to Residents'. I quote: 'Consultation with residents on the switchover to digital is a vital part of the process. Residents will want to fully understand their options including the potential costs before expressing their preference. Difficulties can be avoided if residents are consulted about their needs and wishes.' It would have been good if that had happened in Haringey!

**Anne Goodhew, Deputy Chair, HFH Leasehold Panel
20 July 2009**

Appendix 3 - Leasehold Panel minutes 28 July 2009

Reply to Councillor Bevan on issues he raised during the meeting of the Council on the 20 July

(Anne Goodhew, Deputy Chair of the Leasehold Panel,
27/07/09)

Fao Cllr John Bevan

In response to our deputation you made certain points which I was not permitted to answer. Some of them are very relevant to our case and I wish to respond to them here. I also wish to reiterate some points to which you did not respond.

Inclusion of IRS within Decent Homes:

- a.** You stated that this was advantageous to residents apparently in saving time, money and inconvenience. Let's take just one example, Newland House. The scaffolding was removed a week prior to the arrival of SCCI who used balconies and ladders throughout. Their costs were double those anticipated by HfH officers in their own procurement process, in which I have been personally involved as leaseholder representative, and then the original amount quoted to leaseholders by SCCI was doubled yet again. As for the inconvenience, SCCI were on site over several weeks in October and November and then in February and March before final completion in April, much longer than the one week you mentioned.
- b.** Your consultation with HfH panels and with your own officers was totally inadequate. You did not address this problem in your answer and we would remind you that the Audit Commission will ask to speak to leaseholders and it would be beneficial for this matter to be set straight before then.
- c.** You did not cover the question of compensation for leaseholders who have had to pay heavily for the mismanagement of HfH/Haringey Council.
- d.** We are still unclear about the financing of IRS within Decent Homes. Rumours abound and we are told they are untrue but we are not shown how the money was/is allocated. The actual figures must be known to you as the Executive Member. So why not be transparent about them?
- e.** If, as you stated, one third of the borough now has digital aerials, we would like to see details of the specifications and costs so that we can make comparisons and understand where and why differences occur.

Reference to Digital UK and available options:

- a. You may have been assured that you are on the right track with the 13 wire system but Digital UK would not support the costs incurred. The government's policy indicates the necessity of keeping costs down.
- b. Out of common courtesy you should explain why you will not consider an opt out for leaseholders.
- c. The necessity for all satellite dishes to be removed has not been put to all residents even though Digital UK advises consultation. We still recommend that you take this to the Residents' Consultative Forum.
- d. The dishes will be back in some cases immediately as even a 13 wire system cannot give access to East and West Turksat and there are other ethnic requirements which cannot be met.
- e. Future-proofing can only be as adequate as the present technology. I do not believe that your officers will be prepared to give you guarantees beyond 5 years.
- f. You have not received complaints about reception but they do exist. If you wish us to supply you with details we will do so.

HLA meeting: Although you referred to the meeting you attended on March 20th as a 'panel' meeting it was in fact a general meeting of Haringey Leaseholders Association to which many of us had been invited in order to stand up against the imposition of IRS as was being practised through DH. Most of those present were there to express their support for an opt out and I distinctly remember Paul Bridge agreeing to look into the possibility as feelings were obviously running high.

Payment option: You mentioned a payment option of 86p per week over 10 years. The Home Ownership Team has never put this forward as a possibility and I believe it would not be viable to administer just to get £447.20 from each leaseholder over that time period. You did not refer to our request for a capping of £300 but your officers may recommend it as a possible compromise solution to what will otherwise continue to be a can of worms!

Report on the switchover: The fact that we have been misled about this report, and are still without sight of it, is a severe blow to our relationship with HfH. The report did not go to the Cabinet on July 21st but apparently went to another committee/working party specifically relating to Decent Homes. Lack of transparency rears its head again and goes against the requirements of the Audit Commission.

Other aspects of this dispute may be best left at this time but as Deputy Chair of HfH Leasehold Panel I would hope to receive a more constructive response in the near future.

Anne Goodhew, Deputy Chair of the Leasehold Panel
On behalf of HfH Leasehold Panel, 27th July 2009

Appendix 4 - Leasehold Panel minutes 28 July 2009

Email from Stephen Moore, News Editor of the Hornsey Journal to Councillor Bevan, Cabinet Member for Housing (copy provided to Nick Martin-Clark)

From: Moore, Stephen
Sent: 27 July 2009 20:05
To: 'Winter Mark'; 'Brimacombe Monica'; 'john.bevan@haringey.gov.uk'; 'Obianwu Rose'
Subject: Press enquiry: Digital Aerial Systems
Importance: High

Dear Cllr Bevan, Mark, Rose and Monica,

I am copying you all in to make sure all of you are aware about this, and can address aspects that concern you. Please note, for guidance I have asked specific questions to specific people, but you may also wish to respond to some. Feel free to do so.

The letter below, received by us this morning, calls into question most points made by Cllr Bevan in his letter to the Journal (published last week), asks that he apologise and withdraw the allegations, or quit.

I have also seen photographs from the March HLA meeting where there is a large banner clearly against the proposed aerial system in its current form, which backs up the HLA's contention that instead of backing the programme, they voted for an opt-out clause - a clause that was not provided them.

Most importantly, I have also acquired a copy of the Decent Homes Gateway Review dated 1 June 2009, confidential agenda item 16a.

Cllr Bevan and Rose, the Decent Homes Gateway Review Item 16a throws a very different light on this issue.

I am sure you have a copy of it you can both refer to, but the main points I have picked up on are as follows:

- * The bid for Decent Homes funding was based on bringing all stock up to the Stock Condition Survey Minimum Standard, but did not make allowances for "desirable" improvements such as converting flat roofs to pitched roofs, nor provision of digital TV.

- * Nevertheless, both of these "desirable" improvements were scheduled in the Year 1 programme, and have "now become standard items for delivery and inclusion" and HfH is being given "the clear instruction that these works are now to be carried out as standard when planning, procuring and delivering Decent Homes work across the remaining non-decent stock".

- * These items "are not funded under the programme" yet continue to be implemented "without recourse to the additional funding" required to carry it through for all stock.

* The provision of the minimum standard for digital TV is given as around £150 per unit. For Haringey's choice, average costs in year 1 were £1,056 per unit.

* A re-tendering process for the DTS installation is ongoing but, as Cllr Bevan said at Full Council, the costs for leaseholders will still average between £448 and £505.

* The hole in funding needed to carry out the same works, to the same standard, right through the programme, is £26.12million, of which DTS systems account for £8.6million.

* There is no money available from Supported Capital Expenditure or the MRA, whatever that is. Of the available options being considered, only one is seen as viable - re-tendering for the Decent Homes programme from 2010/11 onwards to plug the gap. If this doesn't happen and HfH "continue to carry out works that are not budgeted for in the early years of the programme, this will impact on our ability to fulfil our commitment to deliver the same standard across the borough for future years, and to bring all homes up to the standard in line with the funding conditions, "which I assume means 'the Decent Homes standard'.

* One recommendation, if funding is not found, is to adopt the Stock Condition Survey Minimum Standard instead, leaving a third of leaseholders with a hugely expensive DTS system many didn't want, and the taxpayer funding the third of tenants who already have it installed, at £1,056 per unit.

All this above directly contradicts reassurances given by HfH to the Journal here:

"Q. Has any money been secured to fund this programme, has it been received yet, and has HfH been using Decent Homes funds to pay for the last year's worth of installing digital aerials?"

A. The funding for the work is coming from Supported Capital Expenditure. The programme will be delivered as part of the Capital Programme over the next three years.

The funding for the work is not coming from the decent homes programme.

Q. Can you state categorically that there is no danger whatsoever that work currently planned for the latter years of the Decent Homes programme, especially years 4 and 5, will need to be reduced or reassessed as a result of spending on the digital aerial programme?"

A. There will be no impact on the decent homes budget as a result of Homes for Haringey carrying out this work."

Cllr Bevan:

1. Isn't it you, rather than the HLA, who has been misleading people about the DTS programme, and the wider 'Full Haringey Standard' works programme?
2. Why have you and your department persisted in asking HfH that work be done that is not budgeted for in the Decent Homes programme - requests that

are putting the entire programme at grave risk, and could well result in the re-tendering of Decent Homes contracts to save £26.12m?

3. Can you guarantee that, if it is re-tendered, the same standards will be kept to for the remaining units in the programme?

4. Is it time to ditch the current DTS programme?

5. What is your response to Sue Brown's assertions?

6. Will you withdraw your claim that the HLA has misled people?

7. Will you apologise to the HLA for the letter?

8. You must have seen this coming. As the responsible cabinet member, why didn't you act to stop it getting to this stage?

9. Will you stand down over this fiasco?

10. If not, who is responsible for this abysmal state of affairs?

11. Where on earth is HfH going to find the estimated £500million shortfall, over the next 25 years, between predicted incomes and maintenance costs?

Who have you discussed this with so far? What are your contingency plans?

Who have you lobbied, and how hard?

Rose:

1. Why did you say the SCE budget is funding this programme when it is not?

2. Why did you say the Decent Homes programme of works is not at risk when it clearly is?

3. Can you guarantee that, if the Decent Homes contract is re-tendered, the same standards will be kept to for the remaining units in the programme?

4. What is the clause in the HfH constitution that prevents it from joining the LAPN?

5. Is it possible, in principle, to change the constitution to make joining the LAPN an option?

6. If so, why was this decision not taken, given the apparently far better value it offers leaseholders and taxpayers?

>>> LETTER TO THE JOURNAL FROM THE HLA CHAIR >>>

Dear Sirs

As Chair of Haringey Leaseholders' Association (HLA), I have to respond to the letter from Councillor John Bevan printed in last week's Journal under the heading "Leaseholders agreed to digital switchover".

In it Councillor Bevan states that he attended a meeting last year where 150 or so leaseholders voted to be part of the Council's digital switchover upgrade. In fact, this is a complete figment of Councillor Bevan's imagination.

The only meetings of that size for Haringey leaseholders over the last year have been HLA meetings. I understand that Councillor Bevan was referring to the HLA General Meeting held on 20 March this year where he was present.

A vote was taken at that meeting whereby leaseholders voted overwhelmingly that they wanted an opt-out from the digital aerial installation programme.

They most certainly did not vote to be part of it. The whole mood of the meeting was extremely angry so it is incredible that Councillor Bevan could possibly have thought that the leaseholders there voted to support his scheme.

The minutes of this meeting are available for anyone to read on the HLA website (www.haringeyleaseholders.org.uk). Is he being disingenuous?

As for Councillor Bevan's assertion that digital aerials will cost less than £500 each, well, what about the ones that have already cost much more than twice that? We are already aware of leaseholders who have received bills of over £1000. Councillor Bevan fails to explain why the aerials installed as part of the Decent Homes programme have ended up being so much dearer than planned when the whole idea was that it was supposed to be more cost-effective that way. What went wrong and who is going to take responsibility for it and repay those leaseholders who are seriously out of pocket because of the Council's mismanagement?

Councillor Bevan also states that leaseholders can pay back this money over 10 years at 86p a week.

No leaseholders in Haringey that we are aware of have been offered payment terms over a 10-year period.

All options given are for a much shorter period and include interest, which can hugely increase the final cost.

And this bill, of course, is on top of what leaseholders are already being charged for the rest of the Decent Homes work, which can be £18,000 or more.

Quite clearly it is Councillor Bevan who is misleading people and not the HLA. He should withdraw this allegation and apologise. In fact it might actually be time for him to stand down.

Yours faithfully

Sue Brown
Chair