



## **Key Leaseholder Scheme**

### **Minutes of the meeting – 4 November 2010, 7pm.**

#### **Attendance**

##### Officers

Nesan Thevanesan, Head of Home Ownership Team; Les Brown, Surveyor Post Inspections and Variations; Nick Claxton, Senior Home Ownership Officer and Paul Cox, Senior Home Ownership Officer, who took the minutes.

##### Leaseholders

Anne Goodhew, Claire Lichie, Nichole Carpenter, Ian Lush, Robert Towerzey, Alena Breckova and Margit Danielle-Dessent

##### Apologies

Mary Rawitzer

Nick Claxton opened meeting and introductions were made.

#### **Appointment of the Chair/Vice Chair**

The election unopposed of Ian Lush to the Chair of the Key Leaseholders was ratified. As there were no other candidates the group approved the appointment of Nick Claxton as Vice-Chair.

Alena Breckova was congratulated on becoming a HFH board member.

#### **Minutes of the meeting 27<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2010 were agreed and deemed to be a true record.

Ian Lush stated that the issue of insurance highlighted a lack of consistency when dealing with claims. He stated that insurance matters will be on the agenda for the next meeting with Trudie Eagle, Risk and Insurance Manager in attendance.

The progress of the Action Points from the previous meeting was then discussed.

### **Action Point**

**Nesan Thevanesan agreed to meet Alena Breckova on site to discuss these particular issues and the outcome of the meeting would be reported back to the group.**

Nesan Thevanesan confirmed that he had met with Alena Breckova and the matters arising from that meeting are currently being investigated.

Nesan Thevanesan advised that the Home Ownership Team is presently drafting a newsletter specifically aimed at leaseholders who are sub-letting their properties. The first issue will encourage leaseholders to register their sublets with the Home Ownership Team and explain their responsibilities as a landlord. He also stated that sub-lessees are being presented with a pack by their Tenancy Management Officer to advise them of the rules and regulations that they must observe at all times.

Robert Towerzey questioned why a subletting charge formed part of his management fee. Nesan Thevanesan explained that the new subletting policy enabled the Home Ownership Team not only to maintain records of the tenants of the leaseholder and their contact numbers but also to monitor the occupancy of leasehold properties so that any issues can be resolved as quickly as possible.

At this juncture, Ian Lush stated that individual service charge issues should be raised at the Leasehold Panel meetings and the Key Leaseholder forum is not a platform for such matters.

### **Action Point**

**Gethin Segel agreed to confirm the cost of an equilibrium ball valve.**

Nick Claxton agreed to pursue the issue of the equilibrium ball valve and report back to the group accordingly.

### **Action Point**

**Nesan Thevanesan agreed to provide a breakdown of the call centre charge.**

Nesan Thevanesan produced and distributed a breakdown of the overhead charges relating to the communal repairs charge in respect of year 09/10.

### **Action Point**

**Paul Cox agreed to circulate the new SORS as soon as he received the necessary authority to do so.**

Paul Cox advised that he had still not received the appropriate authority to release the new SORS. He apologised for the delay and assured the group that they would be distributed before the next meeting. The leaseholders present were dissatisfied with the length of time it had taken to deal with this action point.

Nesan Thevanesan explained the role of the Leasehold Champion and his vision to have one in every department throughout the organisation. He advised that the Home Ownership Team have been holding regular workshops with tenancy management to train front line staff on various leasehold matters.

Anne Goodhew mentioned a recent incident in which a Tenancy Management Officer had been very disrespectful towards a leaseholder. Nesan Thevanesan requested Mrs Goodhew to provide him with the name of the officer concerned after the meeting so that he could undertake his own investigation.

Alena Breckova advised the group that she found the times of estate walkabouts very inconvenient. Paul Cox stated that evening walkabouts are often arranged throughout the summer months to accommodate leaseholders who are working during the day.

Nesan Thevanesan explained that various out of hours meetings are organised by the Home Ownership Team but more often than not the turnout is poor despite a high level of interest.

Les Brown mentioned that a forum was organised for the Ferry Lane Estate. The meetings were well attended initially because of prominent advertising but eventually interest waned.

Nesan Thevanesan reported that the Home Ownership Team had received over 6,500 queries of which 97% were responded to within the corporate timeframe of 10 working days. He explained that all queries are logged by the Home Ownership Team.

Les Brown explained his role as a Leasehold Champion. He advised that of the 10 queries he had been involved with to date, 3 had resulted in refunds to leaseholders. He explained that in some cases, pre-inspections are now carried out. He also informed the group that all follow on jobs are linked to the initial repair so that all charges are consolidated. All council tenants are asked to return a satisfaction questionnaire following completion of the job.

### **Action Point**

**Nesan Thevanesan agreed to provide an example of a Query Report and identify recurring issues.**

## **Progress of the Key Leaseholder group**

Ian Lush gave a brief progress report about the Key Leaseholder group. He explained the repairs report procedure and its impact on leaseholders.

Nick Claxton advised that one of the next phases to be introduced relating to the point of contact is currently under review. He will update the group of the progress being made in this regard at the next meeting. He went on to inform the group that the Key Leaseholder Scheme now has 30 core members and a total of approximately 500 leaseholders are receiving repairs reports. He also advised that the repairs reports covering the period from April to August will be distributed towards the end of November.

Nick Claxton informed the group that a Communal Repairs Sub-Group has been set up to specifically address leaseholders needs and issues in this respect.

Les Brown stated that job descriptions must be improved to allow jobs to be post-inspected. He gave Ramsey Court as an example of a recurring problem that had not been resolved. However, as result of his intervention in his capacity as a Leasehold Champion the source of the problem has now been identified and is being remedied accordingly.

Nichole Carpenter stated that it appears that there is no common sense approach to repairs. She cited her own block (Veryan Court) where numerous patch repairs have been carried out to the roof in advance of the decent homes works which will include a complete renewal of the roof. She claimed that this could have been avoided if an adequate planned preventative maintenance programme had been in operation.

## **Catering at Key Leaseholder meetings**

The issue of catering at future Key Leaseholder meetings was then discussed. It was agreed that offering an allowance of £1.75 for a sandwich bought by leaseholders and the provision of biscuits was sufficient.

## **Post inspections**

Les Brown then gave a presentation about his role as a post inspection surveyor. He advised that post inspections had been in operation for 2 years. He stated that 10% of communal repairs are post inspected although, at present 13% is currently being achieved. All jobs over £500.00 should be post inspected. He advised that his colleague solely post inspects communal repairs averaging between 40 and 50 jobs per day. The jobs that are post inspected are randomly chosen. He stated that repairs to communal areas are relatively easy to inspect but access becomes an issue when dealing with internal jobs to council tenanted properties.

Les Brown then went on to explain that he sees himself as a trouble shooter. In the main, he responds to residents' complaints. Primarily, his job is to ensure that jobs are completed to reasonable standard. He advised that only 1 or 2 jobs out of the 40 or 50 jobs that are post inspected each day do not meet the requisite standard. When deciding whether a job has been completed satisfactorily, he applies a 'fit for purpose' methodology.

Alena Breckova advised that she would raise the issue of the standard of workmanship with the HFH board.

### **Key Leaseholders and Major Works**

Nesan Thevanesan advised that as part of the customer journey mapping, the whole Section 20 process from the issuing of notices to agreeing payment terms would be monitored. It is his intention for all Key Leaseholders in each block to be canvassed about each stage of the procedure.

The subject of sinking funds was briefly discussed. Nesan Thevanesan advised the group that the council's leases do not provide for a sinking fund to be set up but he was willing to discuss the matter further at future panel meetings.

Ian Lush stated that the presentation of Section 20 correspondence was the key to understanding its content and implications.

It was thought by the group that the information does not explain the council's obligation to consult sufficiently.

Nesan Thevanesan briefly explained the nature of Long Term Agreements and the Section 20 procedure generally.

**The following Actions Points remain outstanding from the previous meeting:**

- 1. Query regarding equilibrium ball valve**
- 2. Distribution of new SOR'S**

In closing, Nick Claxton advised that the next meeting would take place on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9.20pm.

**Minutes agreed as a true record.**