



Leasehold Panel

Minutes of the meeting, 28 January 2008.

1. Attendance. Mr C Connolly, Mrs M Shaw, Mr M Ruggins, Mrs M Irving, Mrs F Joslyn, Mrs R Batzias, Mrs S Adewumi, Mr G Ndiwe, Mr P Gunstensen, Mr M Laheen, Mrs D Grandson, Mrs I J Rose, Mr M Pentol, Ms S Brown (Chair of Haringey Leaseholders Association), Ms L A Parris, Mr S Buyukdogan, (HLA Treasurer), Mr O Yilmaz, Mr L Zilken, Mr K Kennedy and Mr N Martin-Clark, who chaired the meeting

Officers. Mr N Thevanesan, Home Ownership Manager, Ms T Eagle, Risk and Insurance Manager, Haringey Council, Mr W Reid, Head of Tenancy Management West and Mr B Nicholas, Leasehold Project Officer, who took the minutes.

Apologies. Mrs A Goodhew, Ms A Amankwah and Ms C Etheridge.

Chair: Mr Nick Martin-Clark.

2. Minutes of the last meeting (6 December)

Ms Batzias stated that she had been present at the last meeting and had not sent her apologies, as recorded in the minutes. The minutes were then agreed as being a true record.

3. Matters arising (Action Points).

Some notes are appended to these minutes which provide information in relation to the action points arising from the Minutes of the 6 December

Mr Martin-Clark expressed disappointment about the fact that only the statutory minimum of 30 days notice was going to be given to consult leaseholders about any works proposed to their building (under the Decent Homes Programme) – he said that the Panel had requested an additional 20 days, which he felt was not unreasonable.

- ❖ **Action point.** Mr Thevanesan said he would make further enquiries as to when it was proposed that information would be provided in relation to each project.

4. Short update on tendering of building insurance contract (EU procurement) – Trudie Eagle, Risk and Insurance Manager, Haringey Council. Ms Eagle reported that three applications had been received from insurance companies on the 20 December in response to the Council's invitation to tender. Following a careful appraisal of these documents the recommendation would be submitted to the Procurement Committee on the 26 February. She indicated that she anticipated that the insurance rate would be slightly lower than at present. Under the terms of the contract the rate will be fixed for 3 years. However this year there would be an increase of 4% in the sum insured in line with the national industry norm. The sum insured (for each property) will be increased each year in accordance with the national index for building insurance valuations.

In response to a question from the Chair Ms Eagle explained that the reason Panel members had not been involved in matters concerning the evaluation of the tender returns was that the issues that had arisen were largely of a procedural nature. The relatively low number of responses and other issues meant that the degree of choice was rather limited. Mr Martin-Clark expressed the view that representatives from the Panel should have some oversight of these matters. Ms Eagle explained that she had been quite frank with the Panel (it should be noted that not all her remarks have been recorded in these minutes for reasons of commercial confidentiality). However she agreed to take further advice as to whether it would be possible to permit Panel representatives direct involvement with regard to the issues concerned.

5. To explain the Respect and Standard for Housing Management Project; and to consult residents on our overall approach to tackling anti-social behaviour within the Respect Agenda. Winston Reid, Head of Tenancy Management West. Mr Reid commenced by explaining that he was the lead officer regarding Homes for Haringey's implementation of the government's Respect policy (website: www.respect.gov.uk). In 2006 HfH had signed up to the Government's Respect Standard for Housing Management. This policy was continuing to be developed. The Respect drive is a cross-Government strategy to tackle bad behaviour and nurture good - and so help create a modern culture of respect.

He referred to the report he had drafted, which had previously been circulated to Panel Members. It was his responsibility to consult with Homes for Haringey's

panels and resident groups to ensure that their views were taken into account with regard to its policies for combating anti-social behaviour. In relation to the scope of the project his report referred to 6 major commitments:

- a) Accountability, leadership, and commitment – Homes for Haringey was making a clear and visible commitment to take the issues of anti-social behaviour and Respect very seriously.
- b) Empowering and reassuring residents through involving residents them in decision making.
- c) Prevention and early intervention. Haringey Council's Anti Social Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT) plays a significant role in doing this.
- d) Tailored services for residents and provision of support for victims and witnesses. ASBAT does a lot of work regarding these matters.
- e) Protecting communities through swift enforcement
- f) Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour. Early preventative action such as parental classes, etc.

Mr Reid explained that his report (on page 3) referred to a number of objectives to develop safer and stronger communities starting with the necessity to consult and involve residents in these matters. The proposed outcomes included better management and performance monitoring of ASB and greater awareness of the organisation's efforts in addressing these issues. Tenancy management were particularly involved in dealing with low level ASB, such as children kicking balls against the outer walls of residents' flats.

Mr Reid said that a number of key issues would be addressed as part of the project plan:

- i. Consultation with residents including victims of ASB. There would be meetings with victims to see if they had experienced good outcomes.
- ii. Engaging with young people. Youth panels and a youth forum were planned. The Resident Involvement Team would work with young people on such matters.
- iii. Effective publicity on successes and initiatives in tackling ASB. This would relate particularly to people who took a stand against ASB. More publicity would be given to such matters to increase the understanding of the work the Council was undertaking to combat ASB.
- iv. Review of the procedures for tackling low level ASB. These have been in place for 5 years to take fully into account the additional powers that have been provided for dealing with ASB.
- v. Review the performance and customer satisfaction targets. If a resident reports ASB, the matter is referred either to the Council's Anti Social Behaviour Team (ASBAT) or Tenancy Management (if it is of a low level

nature). The standard response time with regard to such reports is 24 hours. Performance indicators are compiled partly on the basis of returns made via satisfaction questionnaires.

- vi. Influence the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings to meet the needs of our residents. Homes for Haringey will work closely with the Safer Neighbourhood Panels (chaired by the Police). All but one of these in Haringey are attended by the appropriate Tenancy Management Officers. They are open to anyone in the community to attend.
- vii. Develop Good Neighbour Agreements across our estates where appropriate. Mr Reid said this was a good way of preventing low level ASB. He explained that he was working with various bodies, such as the Council, the Police and so on to ensure that there was consistency of approach regarding these matters across the borough.
- viii. Further develop our work to support victims of ASB when giving evidence.
- ix. Working with perpetrators to change their behaviour. It was proposed to arrange classes for parents on more effective ways of parenting in the case of persistent delinquent behaviour.
- x. Well trained staff to deal with ASB and breach of tenancies. A method of penalising a tenant guilty of persistent ASB was to impose a demoted tenancy. This meant that the tenant lost security of tenure, the final step would be repossession. It was also necessary to have staff trained to support victims, since some people had complained that they did not feel that they had sufficient support and protection.

Mr Reid concluded his remarks by saying that he would be very interested in any comments Panel Members wished to make regarding current policies and possible ways of improving them. Ms Brown responded by saying that leaseholders who were subject to ASB quite often found that their properties were at risk. A neighbour of hers had had all his windows broken – she raised the question as to whether he would have had to pay for the damage if he had been a leaseholder. Mr Ruggins responded that such damage would be covered by the building insurance policy. He also expressed the view that there should be more support for people reporting incidents of ASB. Mr Reid agreed with this and said that this was one of the objectives of the current review he was undertaking.

Mr Buyukdogan enquired about the collection of statistics regarding these matters and Mr Reid responded that they were not collected on the basis of tenure. Mr Thevanesan stated that the Home Ownership Team had a policy of collecting as much information as possible about sublessees, to enable contact to be readily established if any problems arose. Ms (Lyn) asked whether Homes for Haringey could guarantee anonymity to a complainant. Mr Reid answered that every effort was made to do so and furthermore the court will hear secondary evidence (given on behalf of the complainant). In response to

some comments that were made he accepted that some mistakes had been made in the past but that staff were now much more aware of the issues.

The question was raised about the use of CCTV in combating ASB. Mr Reid said that it can have a role in prevention and detection in some cases. The ASBAT team takes control of the CCTV surveillance in certain areas after 7pm and they also have a specially equipped van for such purposes. A Member of the Panel enquired about reporting problems and Mr Reid said that one should phone the Call Centre on 0800 195 3404 or the dedicated phone line on 0845 671 1177.

6. Discussion on options for leaseholders installing their own windows. Mr Nicholas provided some explanations regarding the notes that were circulated on this subject during the meeting (copy attached) and Mr Thevanesan answered some questions. Panel Members were agreed that all leaseholders should be able to enter into some form of agreement such as a variation of the lease. This should cover all leaseholders who had installed their own windows or wished to do so.

It would mean that the leaseholders would then not have to pay towards the cost of the installation or maintenance of window in other flats in the building, though they would still be liable to pay towards communal areas. It was also agreed that this sort of policy should apply to leaseholders during the first year of the Decent Homes Programme. Mr Thevanesan responded that he would now draw up policy proposals which would have to be agreed by the Council. He was not in a position at the present time to be able to anticipate what the nature of their response might be. He would report back to the Panel on this subject as soon as possible.

From the Chair Mr Martin-Clark thanked Ms Eagle for her update and Mr Reid for his very interesting and informative report. He then declared the meeting to be closed to further business.

19 February 2008

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