



Leasehold Panel

Minutes of the meeting, 10 April 2008.

1. Attendance. Mrs Anne Goodhew, Mrs Florence Joslyn, Mrs Mehethebel Shaw, Mr Michael Ruggins, Mrs Yvonne Thompson, Mrs Delsie Grandson, Mr Charles Connolly, Mr John Johnston, Ms Sue Brown (Chair, Haringey Leaseholders' Association), Miss Millie Mboizi, Ms Shelly Williams, Ms Molly Ejon, Mrs F Edwards, Ms Shirley Perlman, Ms Elizabeth Owen, Mr Ron Dalliday, Ms Lucille Parris, Ms E Marshall, Mr Taylor, Mr John Ruskin and Mr Ismet Polat.

Officers. Mr Nesan Thevanesan, Home Ownership Manager, Mr Peter Docherty, Associate, Rider Levett Bucknall, Mr Gowan Turnbull, Mechanical Engineering Manager, Homes for Haringey, Mr Eddie Hickey, Director, T A Horn Ltd and Mr Bruce Nicholas, Leasehold Project Officer, who took the minutes.

Chair: Mrs Anne Goodhew. (Mr Martin-Clark sent his apologies).

2. Minutes of the last meeting (17 March 2008).

It was noted that Mrs M Shaw had described incorrectly as Mr M Shaw.

Ms Brown stated that it had not been recorded that a complaint had been made at the last Panel meeting in relation to poor customer relations policies of the Legal Department. Mr Thevanesan responded that this matter should be pursued in writing either with John Suddaby, Head of Legal Services or through the Complaints Procedure.

In response to a request from Mr Martin-Clark the following amendment has been agreed to the record relating to the minutes of the meeting of the 10 March: "Mr Martin-Clark in the Chair decided to accept a motion from Ms Brown (Chair of HLA) to give the HLA a mandate to look at the functioning of the panel in order to avoid a repetition of what happened with the windows where top-priority concerns of leaseholders were given bottom-listing in the panel's agenda for the year. This was agreed by the Panel without a discussion."

3. Matters arising.

Action points addressed.

At the last meeting Panel Members had requested some information regarding the fees in relation to the proposed long term agreement for consultants. Mr Thevanesan reported that on the basis of similar work in the past the charges were likely to be in the region of 3% to 4.9%, recharged as a percentage of the cost of the work carried out on site.

Mr Thevanesan explained that the EMT Report on payment options for major works and leaseholders' windows would be submitted to the executive meeting on the 23 April. Ms Brown requested that a copy of the report should be provided to the next meeting of the Panel. Mr Thevanesan responded that copies could be made available following its submission to the Board.

Ms Brown emphasised that the Panel considered that leaseholders in the first year of the programme should be given the option to install their own windows. Mr Thevanesan replied that under the proposed policy it was not planned that for them to have this option, since it would raise major logistical problems for the contractors. However he undertook to take up the Panel's views on this subject.

Mr Connolly stated that the Panel felt that there had been an undue delay in getting the new policies agreed. Mr Thevanesan said that he accepted it had taken longer than originally envisaged, but a number of issues had been raised by senior officers in relation to the report. In response to their observations it had been necessary to provide some quite detailed information on the financial implications and to obtain further legal advice. He said he wanted to assure the Panel that everything was being done to progress matters to a successful conclusion.

Action point outstanding

Mr Thevanesan reported that he would arrange an engineer to speak at the next meeting on the subject of the digital changeover, as the Panel had requested.

4. Gas maintenance service, to be available to leaseholders on request.

Gowan Turnbull, Mechanical Engineering Manager, Homes for Haringey and Eddie Hickey, Director, T A Horn Ltd.

Mr Turnbull circulated a paper with the agenda. He explained that the paper included some preliminary proposals from Homes for Haringey's contractors. Mr Hickey than answered some questions. The main points arising from the discussion were as follows:

- o The scheme will be non profit making
- o The rates for services, the terms and conditions, etc will be very competitive

- o Only high quality spare parts used
- o Many of the engineers live locally
- o Any unsafe appliance will have to be disconnected
- o They will only be available for the Council's leaseholders
- o Homes for Haringey's contractors, who will provide the services are subject to rigorous monitoring and internal audit inspections.

He explained that there will be two options for leaseholders:

- o 1 star service

Carry out a service to a published standard to the main appliance and issue a Gas Safety Certificate - £75. Each extra appliance would be charged at £25 per appliance

- o 3 star cover

This will provide breakdown cover during normal working hours [8am 'till 6pm Monday to Friday]. The contractor would only agree to accept a property after customers had paid to carry out an initial service to assess the system and agree that it is to an acceptable standard.

The system must be under 7 years old. The charge will be £200 per year. It will not cover the cost if the boiler needs to be replaced. It also does not include the cost of the service; £75. Payment will be required in full at the start of each years cover.

Mr Turnbull said he would provide the Panel with firm details of the terms and conditions and how the scheme would operate, in the near future. Mr Thevanesan concluded by saying it was expected that the scheme would commence operation by the end of the summer.

Ms Brown asked whether it would be possible for a boiler older than 7 years to be included under the scheme. She pointed out that a lot of boilers were much older than 7 years. Mr Turnbull said he would review this condition and see whether it would be possible to make it more flexible. Mr Hickey said he thought that T A Horn would not feel it was necessary to place an age condition on the boiler for it to be included under the two star scheme. As a further point the Panel said it would be desirable if the option could be offered of having servicing and emergency call outs over the weekend.

5. Apportionment of preliminary costs for refurbishment works to a building, speaker from Compliance Team. Peter Docherty, Associate, Rider Levett Bucknall.

Mr Docherty gave a short presentation. He explained that the main types of work will be as follows:

- External communal work
- Internal Communal Work
- Work inside tenants' flats.

He said that the nature and scope of work will be determined by a detailed survey.

Mr Docherty then took the Panel through a worked example to show how there would be a strict separation of costs between the main different categories of work:

- Internal works to tenants' flats – kitchens, bathrooms, electrical wiring and so on
- Communal works
 - Internal areas – entrance lobbies, corridors, stairways, mains electrics, etc
 - Exterior of the building – roofs, windows, balconies, pointing of brickwork, etc.

He said that preliminary costs will be charged as part of these costs. Consultancy Fees will be added to works costs and may be shown separately.

He gave some examples of contract preliminary costs:

- Office based management - clerk of works, resident liaison officer, etc
- Site based personnel – site manager, etc
- Security Provision
- Accommodation
- Temporary Services
- Scaffolding & Plant - *Scaffolding is sometimes shown as a Direct Works Cost.*

He explained that the preliminary costs will be allocated in accordance with the apportionment of the value of works. This means that leaseholders will only pay towards the part of the preliminary costs attributable to the work in communal areas and to the structure and the outside of the building.

Mr Docherty then used the previous example to show how the preliminary costs would be apportioned on the basis of the costs of each category of work. He concluded by giving some examples of the key roles in Decent Homes projects:

- Strategic Client Representative (HFH)
- Client Representative
- Site Manager (Contractor)
- Resident Liaison Officer (Contractor)
- Quantity Surveyor (Client)
- Quantity Surveyor (Contractor)

He said that the Home Ownership Team, Housing Management and Resident Participation will also have important roles to play.

Members of the Panel expressed the view that it would be a good idea if leaseholders could receive some details of the preliminary costs as part of the breakdown with their final invoice containing the actual costs incurred.

6. Proposal for a Workshop/Forum on the Decent Homes Programme – to discuss possible arrangements. Following a discussion it was agreed to:

- Hold the Leaseholders' Forum on the 5 July
- If possible hold a workshop in May/June for those in the first year of the Decent Homes Programme – it would be an evening event.

7. Board succession planning – consideration of a paper on the views expressed during consultation – written report from Angela Bosnjak-Szekeres, Governance Manager.

The Panel considered that it was not appropriate for the Residents Consultative Forum to have the lead role in determining the candidates for the new leaseholder Board Member, if an unplanned vacancy should arise. It was agreed that the RCF should not be involved in the selection of leaseholder representatives since the majority of those attending were tenants.

- Action point. Mr Thevanesan agreed to forward their views to Angela Bosnjak-Szekeres, Governance Manager.

8. Activist survey 08/09 – to seek the Panel's views on the questions to be included in the next questionnaire – unfortunately the draft version that was circulated at the meeting was not the latest one, so the matter has had to be deferred.

9. Leaseholder satisfaction survey – report on proposal. Mr Thevanesan said that Homes for Haringey is required to carry out a regular survey to find out leaseholders' views about the service and provide a measure of satisfaction. He explained that the Home Ownership Team could either use the same company as was used for tenants' surveys or enter into a partnership with Islington. There would be significant advantages in working with Islington since the costs of designing a questionnaire specifically for leaseholders could be shared between the two boroughs.

Mr Thevanesan confirmed that a copy of the questionnaire would be provided to the Panel for their comments. Following a brief discussion it was agreed that it would be a good idea to work in partnership with Islington on this matter.

10. Any other business.

- Action point. Mr Ruggins reported that the Core Group had asked all representatives to make arrangements for the nomination of a deputy to take their place if they could not attend. Mr Thevanesan agreed to include this in a mail out to Panel Members.

Ms Brown referred to the fact that it had been agreed that leaseholders were not going to be asked to pay towards replacing public notices with their modernised equivalents. Mr Thevanesan agreed that if a charge had been made for this, then leaseholders could receive a refund.

- Action point. Mr Ruggins raised the subject of a small minority of leaseholders who sublet their properties but fail to observe their responsibilities as a landlord. Mr Thevanesan said that HfH's policies were being continually improved to address these matters and he would report back on a regular basis to report on developments.
- Action point. Mr Connolly reported that during a recent estate inspection, the attendees had been informed that no estate repairs would be undertaken pending the Decent Homes Programme. Mr Thevanesan agreed to report back on this.

Mrs Goodhew concluded by thanking Mr Docherty for his very interesting presentation and Mr Turnbull and Mr Hickey for their very informative reports.

9 May 2008

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