



**Minutes of Leasehold Panel meeting, 7.00 pm, Civic Centre,
Tuesday, 20 March 2007**

1. Attendance: Ms S E Brown (Secretary of the HLA), Mr J De Freitas, Ms M Gill, Ms A Goodhew, Mr M Laheen, Mr M Nicolaou, Ms E Owen, Mr M Ruggins (Acting Chair, HLA), and Mr A Samuel

Apologies. Ms C Etheridge, Ms E Owen and Mr R Towerzey

Officers: Mr N Thevanesan, Home Ownership Manager, who chaired the meeting, Ms M McKay Neighbourhood Housing Manager, Mr A Anyia Concierge Manager, Ms J Sami, Team Leader, Estate Services, Ms P Badiani, Liaison Officer and Mr B Nicholas, Project Officer.

2. Concierge service. Monica McKay Neighbourhood Housing Manager and Albert Anyia Concierge Manager. Ms McKay explained that the concierge service was provided at a limited number of locations where a specific need for the service had been identified. It covered the whole of the Broad Water Farm Estate, the Edgecot Grove Estate, individual locations as follows: six high rise blocks in Wood Green, two in North Tottenham, two in South Tottenham and a large low rise block in Hornsey. The numbers of residents served are as follows: 1,036 in BWF, 508 in Wood Green and 808 in the rest, making a total of 2,352. A recent survey ascertained that 92% of tenants and 74% of leaseholders considered that the service provided was good or very good. The survey which was carried out by post received 314 responses (13.35%), which is good for a postal survey.

Ms McKay then provided some details of the aims and objectives of the service and the duties carried out by the concierge officers. The concierge service is designed to give residents more security in their homes by helping to control access to the blocks, providing a welcoming reception service and offering protection from vandalism, squatting and graffiti.

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The main duties of the concierge officers are to:

- let visitors into the block and control access;
- regularly watch the CCTV monitors and maintain the equipment, contacting the police when they see any vandalism, theft or antisocial behaviour;
- report repairs in shared areas and on behalf of residents;
- put emergency procedures in place if there is a fire, flood or lift breakdown;
- work with other services and agencies such as estate services staff and the police;
- record all incidents in the logbook, including visits by contractors, other visitors and repairs; and
- carry out customer-care checks by phone after repairs have been carried out.

Concierge officers are on duty between:

- 8am and midnight on Monday to Friday, with two meal breaks of 50 minutes each;
- 10am and 2am on Saturdays, with two meal breaks of 50 minutes each; and
- 12 noon and 8pm on Sundays, with one meal break of 50 minutes.

Contact details: the call centre or the local Customer Services Centre provide details of the local concierge schemes and their phone numbers.

Panel Members made a number of observations regarding the matters Ms McKay had raised. Mr Laheen suggested that estate notice boards should provide more information in a standard form of layout, where each service was clearly identified. A question was raised regarding the customer care surveys. Ms McKay responded that concierge officers phone all residents who have reported repairs to find out if they were completed satisfactorily – they make three attempts to contact every resident.

Ms Goodhew expressed the view that this did not always appear to take place. Ms McKay stated that reports resulting from the phone surveys were provided to the Estate Services Panel. In response to another point she said that there is a list of those having the main responsibilities on every block notice board. It was suggested that staff meal breaks should be advised to residents, so that they can be aware

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when officers are not likely to be present. Ms McKay replied that cover was generally provided.

Mr Ruggins commented on the wide variation in the charges for the concierge service. Mr Thevanesan responded that this was an inevitable consequence of the fact that under the terms of the lease the leaseholder had to pay a proportion of the cost of providing each service in relation to their building. Where the service was provided to a large number of residents (such as in Edgecot Grove) the charge per property receiving the service would inevitably be significantly lower than where the service related only to one high rise block (as in the case of the service in Wood Green).

Ms Brown referred to the fact that the cleaning service is charged on an area basis and asked why a similar arrangement could not be introduced for the concierge service. Mr Thevanesan responded that whereas the costs of the cleaning service could be standardised in terms of the cost per hour, the concierge service could not be treated in this way. Thus residents in smaller blocks of flats were obviously to some extent receiving a more personal service than residents in large blocks, for instance in Edgecot Grove. Leaseholders here would very probably object if they were in effect asked to subsidise other blocks. This would happen if costs were averaged out across the board and could be objected to on account of the terms of the lease.

3. Consultation regarding proposed extension of visitors parking scheme. Jennie Sami, Team Leader, Estate Services. Ms Sami distributed a short report (attached), a Council leaflet entitled 'proposed changes to permit charges' and a questionnaire which she collected at the end of the meeting. She commenced by saying that the pilot scheme had been introduced at the request of residents to ensure that they had priority in getting parking. A three month pilot scheme was introduced in Wood Green in September last year.

A questionnaire was delivered to every property that participated in the pilot scheme to find out whether people felt the scheme had been successful, whether they wanted it to continue and whether there were any modifications which were felt to be necessary. The majority of those who responded wanted the scheme to continue. It is now planned to extend it across the borough to all housing estates with estate controlled parking schemes.

The Council is currently undertaking a statutory consultation about proposed changes to permit charges in controlled parking zones. Any changes relating to visitors permits that result from this consultation will need to be reflected by Homes for Haringey's visitors parking permit

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scheme. No short term visitors' parking permits are currently available, except in the Wood green pilot area. There will be a maximum number which can be purchased in any year, including weekend permits. Residents permits will remain free of charge.

Ms Sami said that there have been no complaints about the charges for visitor parking. She also explained that HfH's charges will be brought into line with the Council's CPZ charges. This was partly because we have to use their computer software (on the grounds of cost). Once the Council has introduced any changes to the charges for controlled parking zones in May / June, it will take HfH approximately 3 months to implement the roll out of their own scheme. We will start in North and South Tottenham and then move on to Hornsey.

4. Mediation. Pari Badiani, Liaison Officer. Ms Badiani gave a report on the proposal for leaseholders to be able to take a disputed matter through LEASE's mediation service. This would generally be for disputed bills over £1000 and would be after the matter had been considered via the complaints procedure. In such cases where issues had not been resolved, Homes for Haringey would pay the £100 application fee to LEASE.

Mr Ruggins said it would be important to ensure that there would be proper controls to ensure that people did not automatically opt for mediation as a way of delaying the payment of their bills. The Panel agreed the proposal on this basis.

Action point: It was agreed that the necessary criteria for accepting applications for the mediation service and the appropriate administrative procedures should be notified to leaseholders, when they had been finalised.

5. Forward plan for items to be discussed by the Panel during 2007 – Mr Thevanesan put forward some suggestions for future items for discussion:

- o Leaseholders' Forum – 7 July at the Civic Centre
 - Draft agenda.
 - Meeting in the Debating Chamber 10 to 11.30am - Independent Chair – Jackie Dickins, HQN Consultant
 - Welcome - Jackie Thomas - Executive Director of Housing Management
 - Bob Watts - Executive Director of Building Services
 - Questions from the floor
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 - Workshops – 3 workshops from 12 to 1.30pm:

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- Peter Purdie - Estate management
 - Jacinta Walters/Catherine O'Reilly - Decent homes - Resident involvement and consultation strategy
 - Nesan Thevanesan – Service charges, annual accounts, information to leaseholders etc.
 - Citizens Advice Bureau – Presentation on benefit and debt advice
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- o Graphical repairs ordering system (via the web),
 - o Major repairs and Improvements relating to Decent Home standard works,
 - o Options for leaseholders to “buy in Services” from HfH/Council,
 - o 5 year Plan,
 - o Communication and consultation strategy particularly in respect of major works,
 - o Feedback/service charge dispute mediation.

These were agreed by the Panel

Mr Thevanesan thanked all those who had presented reports, which Panel Members had found very interesting.

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Visitors Parking Permits
Roll Out Consultation - Notes

- Estate Controlled parking Schemes introduced on a number of estates within the borough to control parking congestion & give residents priority parking
- Residents told the Council / HfH that they would like the introduction of visitors parking permits to enable their visitors to also utilise these parking spaces
- A 3 month pilot visitors parking permit scheme was introduced on 21 Wood green estates effective 4 September 2006
- All participating households, 1572 in total, were given a cover letter, information sheet, details of all participating estates and an application form.
- 3 types of permits were available (in line with the Council's CPZs)
 1. 2 hour scratch cards / standard 30p / concessionary 15p
 2. weekend / standard £5 / concessionary £2
 3. 2 week / standard £8 / concessionary £3
- Total of 656 x 2 hours permits; 5 x weekend permits and 3 x 2 week permits were purchased.
- A questionnaire, with translation facility offered, was delivered to all participating households.
- Responses were analysed:

	yes	no
Do you think the scheme has been successful?	86.5%	13.5%
Do you support the scheme continuing?	85%	15%
Has the scheme caused you any difficulty?	23.7%	76.3%

- The analysis showed that the pilot had been successful and it is continuing on the 21 Wood green estates in line with the majority of residents wishes.

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- We now propose to roll out Housing Estate visitors permits to all Housing Estates with estate controlled parking schemes during 2007, subject to receiving positive feedback following consultation with residents.
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- You may already be aware that the Council is currently conducting a consultation regarding proposed changes to permit charges – consultation period 1/3/07 – 11/4/07.
- This consultation relates to the CPZs and covers:
 - Changes to visitors permits
 - CPZ permit charges, introducing a sliding scale based on level of emission
- Any changes adopted regarding the visitors permits will also be adopted for the ECPS visitors permits.
- ECPS residents permits will, however, continue to be issued without charge.
- I will be consulting residents at various forums and will publicise the results.

Jennie Sami, Team Leader, Estate Services

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