



Homes for Haringey

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Leasehold Panel

Minutes of the meeting, 20th April 2009

1. Attendance: Mrs Anne Goodhew (Vice Chair), Ms Erikca Duncan, Ms Lesley Ramm, Mr Hazari Gupta, Mr Roger Kemp, Ms Maureen Clement, Ms Shirley Perlman, Ms Anne Crellin, Ms Millie Mboizi, Mrs M Shaw, Mrs Rita Batzias, Mr Charles Connolly, Mr Piers Johnson, Mr Frank Tunney, Mr B Hines, Ms Sylvia Morgan, Ms Lucilla Parris, Ms Annette Joslyn, Mr Nick Martin-Clark, Mr Martin Laheen, Ms Sue Brown, Mrs Yvonne Thompson, Ms Eileen Marshall, Mr R Dalliday (23).

Apologies: Mr Nesan Thevanesan, Head of Home Ownership.

Chair: the meeting was chaired by Mrs Anne Goodhew.

Officers: Joe Boake, Senior Resident Involvement Officer, Resident Involvement Team, Joy Walton, Performance and Business Planning Manager, Michael Bester, Major Works Lead Officer, Bruce Nicholas, Leasehold Project Officer, who took the minutes.

2. Statement from Mr Nick Martin-Clark: Mr Martin-Clark said he was very opposed to the fact that the letter of apology to him from Paul Bridge, Chief Executive and the letter in response from Sue Brown, as Chair of Haringey Leaseholders' Association had not been appended to the minutes of the last meeting. He considered that Mr Nicholas had acted inappropriately in not including them. Furthermore he believed that the Panel was not generally being conducted in a way that adequately represented leaseholders' opinions and interests. On account of these issues and personal family matters he had decided to resign the chair of the Leasehold Panel immediately. As a result of this he would have to leave the meeting early and he would also not be able to attend the next one. [He provided a letter of resignation, which is enclosed with these minutes.] Ms Brown spoke in support of his views on the running of the Panel.

Mr Nicholas referred to the letter of the 16 December 2008 from Jackie Thomas, Executive Director of Housing Management which had been sent to all members of the Leasehold Panel. He said Ms Thomas' letter had clearly explained that any matters relating to personal complaints could not be discussed at Panel meetings or attached to the minutes.

In addition where important items or documents were to be tabled for discussion, these must be notified in advance for inclusion on the agenda, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Panel. The purpose of the Panel was to operate in a bipartisan way, not simply as a body to represent leaseholders, which was the function of the HLA.

Before he left Mr Martin-Clark said he felt it was very important for the Panel to request a copy of the report to the Board on the subject of the conversion of communal aerials to digital reception. He expected that this would be presented to the next Board meeting which he understood from the Leasehold Member, Anton Shelupanov would be on the 19th May. He then left the meeting and Mrs Goodhew indicated that she would continue to chair meetings as Vice Chair until the Panel elected a new Chair.

3. Minutes of the last meetings -16 March 2009: Mrs Mboizi said that the minutes had not recorded the fact that she had attended the last meeting and this was noted. Ms Ramm asked in relation to the decent homes survey at Newlands House whether all leaseholders had been sent the satisfaction questionnaires. Mr Nicholas said he would ascertain the position.

- ❖ **Action point 1:** The following issues were raised regarding the satisfaction surveys of tenants and leaseholders across the borough (which are carried out every 2 or 3 years):
 - a. Panel Members requested to receive a report giving comparisons of the results for leaseholders and for tenants in relation to the results of the last surveys conducted at the end of 2008. They asked to know when this would be available.
 - b. They felt it was important that the Panel's views were taken into account in the compilation of the next questionnaire. (Mr Nicholas pointed out that Mr Simon Godfrey, Involvement, Communications & Equalities Manager had attended several meetings to consult with them on this subject but had not been given an opportunity on account of the pressure of other business.)

- ❖ **Action point 2:** The Panel raised the following matters in relation to the decent homes satisfaction surveys:
 - a. It did not appear to be appropriate that the satisfaction questionnaires should be distributed by the contractors who carried out the work. This could well lead to patchy distribution and other forms of bias. They requested reasons why the questionnaires were not being distributed independently of the contractors

- b. They requested to know how the statistics for resident satisfaction were being compiled from the questionnaire results
- c. They expressed the view that the satisfaction results for leaseholders and tenants should always be shown separately in as much as they had different concerns about the work carried out.
- d. They felt that the results should put more emphasis on the quality of the end result – value for money issues.

❖ **Action point 3:** With regard to the bi-monthly report on the Decent Homes Programme, the Panel requested that they should receive a copy of the briefing beforehand with the notice for the meeting.

Communal Repairs Project Group: Mr Piers Johnson stated that he had attended the first meeting as the representative of the Panel. He reported that a number of reviews were being carried out of the different functions of the repairs service. Following the results of these it was proposed that new arrangements could be put in place by the middle of June.

It was agreed in future that all action points would be numbered. With regard to the issue of the appending of the documents referred to by Mr Martin-Clark, Ms Brown stated that the HLA would be taking this matter up separately.

Decision: The Panel decided to record its own views by registering its strong objection to the non attachment of these documents and called for an early resolution of the problems relating to the conduct of the Panel. The minutes of the 16 March were then approved as a true record.

❖ **Action point 4:** it was agreed that a copy of the terms of reference would be circulated before the next meeting.

4. Action points arising from the meeting of the Leasehold Panel on the 16 March:

- a. Decent Homes Satisfaction Surveys
 - i. Failure to distribute major work satisfaction surveys to leaseholders at Newlands House was referred to Larry Ainsworth, Project Manager. Mr Ainsworth provided the following information: Satisfaction surveys have now been sent to the leaseholders at Newlands House and returned. They are currently being analysed for inclusion in the overall results.

- ii. A review is being undertaken to ascertain whether it will be feasible to split the survey results between leaseholders and tenants to provide a more accurate figure for leaseholders.
- iii. The Panel requested more information on the proposed future use of the satisfaction questionnaires for work carried out under the Decent Homes programme so as to enable a better coverage of leaseholder concerns. Catherine O'Reilly, Resident Involvement Officer (Major Works) provided a copy of the revised questionnaire (see attachment).

b. Communal Repairs Project Group: Mr Thevanesan advised the Panel that he had forwarded the Panel's nomination, Mr Piers Johnson's name to the Communal Repairs Project Group.

5. Annual Participation Questionnaire 2007/8 - Joe Boake, Senior Resident Involvement Officer, Resident Involvement Team: Mr Boake gave a talk on the results of the questions in relation to the operation of the Leasehold Panel and led a discussion to consider what improvements could be made to the ways in which it worked. He summarised the comments made by members of the Leasehold Panel in their answers to the questionnaire, as follows:

Best achievements in the past year:

- Windows – the option for leaseholders to install their own windows and doors. It was good that the Panel had been able to put leaseholders' case for this and that Homes for Haringey had adopted a new policy to give leaseholders more say in these matters
- Gas maintenance - the proposal to make this service available to leaseholders was a positive step forward
- Payment options for major works – Homes for Haringey had made these more flexible in response to leaseholders' concerns.

Comments for making the Panel more effective:

- Less paper – some of the reports were too long
- Shorter agendas with topics of relevance to leaseholders
- Information in good time for the meetings – in time to read properly
- Panel meetings should be advertised more widely to give more people a chance to attend.

Ms Brown stated that officers were too dictatorial in the running of the Panel. Mr Boake responded that this would be an issue that could be

considered in the review of the Terms of Reference, which was currently taking place.

❖ **Action point 5** - more information to be provided about the review.

Mr Connolly stated that the agenda tended to be too long and items should be prioritised more in terms of importance. Mr Boake said that the Panel could consider setting up sub groups to deal with certain topics, if it was found that the main meetings were becoming overcrowded.

6. Residents' Top 10 Indicators for monitoring HfH's services – Joy Walton, Performance and Business Planning Manager. Ms Walton stated that the top ten performance indicators (as agreed with Homes for Haringey's residents) were published on a regular basis in Homes Zone. Tenants had provided information which had resulted in the list which she had circulated beforehand (please see **Appendix 1**).

Panel Members felt they required more information in order to be able to comment on the list that had been drawn up. Ms Walton explained that the top ten indicators had been selected from a list of 130 performance indicators.

❖ **Action point 6:** Ms Walton agreed to provide a copy of the full list for Panel Members' information.

Some Panel Members felt it might be appropriate to have a separate list in respect of the top ten performance indicators for leaseholders. Mr Nicholas said that Mr Thevanesan had asked him to inform them that he would report to the Panel on a regular basis on home ownership performance statistics.

Decision: Mrs Goodhew said it was clearly the view of the Panel that further consideration of the matter would have to be deferred until Ms Walton had provided the information about the performance indicators and this was agreed.

7. Major works billing update and proposal for workshop to consider BMG survey results – Michael Bester, Major Works Lead Officer: Mr Bester presented a short paper (please see **Appendix 2** to these minutes). A Member of the Panel raised the question of the legal charge in respect of a loan for more than £5000. Mr Bester said that this would be in the region of £250. Panel Members felt that this very much detracted from the description of the loan as being 'interest

free'. Mr Connolly said that he considered there had been a failure to consult the Panel on this matter.

❖ **Action point 7:** The Panel decided that the following issues should be addressed:

- Why had the Panel not been consulted about this matter, before it had been decided?
- How had the amount of £5000 been arrived at? – the Panel felt that it was too low.

8. Proposal to replace leaseholder pages in Homes Zone with dedicated insert for leaseholders. Bruce Nicholas, Leasehold Project

Officer: Mr Nicholas started by saying that Homes Zone, the magazine for all residents was published 4 times a year. At present there were two pages (pages 18 and 19) wholly dedicated to matters of relevance to leaseholders. However this did not generally provide enough space for the necessary articles.

It was therefore proposed to have a four page insert for leaseholders, which would be detachable from the main magazine. In addition to providing more space it would mean that the leaseholder section would achieve greater prominence and have more impact.

The overall increase in cost per issue including design, printing and so on would result in an additional cost of approximately 35 pence per issue or £1.40 per leaseholder each year. The increased space would mean that the subjects covered could be extended beyond the normal scope, which generally had to stick fairly closely to service charge related issues.

Decision: The Panel accepted the proposal, on the basis that it would be consulted on a quarterly basis with a view to making some recommendations about the contents of the insert.

❖ **Action point 8:** Mr Nicholas agreed to find out the deadlines for articles for issues of Homes Zone to include the subject on the forward agenda

9. Nominations to a Working Group on the Satisfaction Survey results:

Mr Bester said that two leaseholder nominees were required. He explained that a working group was being set up to consider the results of the satisfaction survey (carried out by BMG on behalf of Homes for Haringey) and to recommend ways of addressing the main concerns

expressed by leaseholders. Mr Connolly said it would not be possible to make nominations without some more information.

- ❖ **Action point 9:** The Panel requested the following:
 - Information about the matters to be considered by the working group
 - When and how often the meetings would be held.

Ms Brown deplored the fact that it was proposed that the meetings would be held during the day, thus excluding people at work.

10. Digital TV conversion: The Panel noted a short written update (**Appendix 3** to these minutes) provided on the basis of information supplied by Mr Michael O’Driscoll, Electrical Services Manager. A member of the Panel stated that the suggestion had been made at the HLA general meeting on the 20 March that the Council expected the cost of digital conversion would be in the region of £350 per property. However it appeared that most leaseholders so far had received estimates for more than double that amount.

Mr Connolly said it was of considerable concern that despite the fact it had been agreed that the Leasehold Panel should be consulted on the report to the Board, it appeared (from the information provided by Mr Martin-Clark) this would not now take place. It was all the more unacceptable in as much as Mr Les Armstrong, Head of Engineering Design had confirmed the principle that the Panel would be fully consulted in his talk to the meeting on the 14 January this year.

Ms Crellin said it was clear there had been no meaningful consultation with leaseholders so far. Furthermore an essential part of the process of consultation should be to agree that people who had already had estimates or bills for digital conversion would have their charges reviewed. Mr Ruggins said this was absolutely correct, if there was to be proper consultation, Homes for Haringey should commit to backdating any policy decisions to cover leaseholders who had already had new digital systems installed.

- ❖ **Action point 10:** The Panel requested that they should receive a copy of the report to the Board in sufficient time to be able to put their case to the Board in time for its meeting on the 19th May. Mrs Goodhew undertook to put this request to Homes for Haringey as a matter of urgency.

11. Highways maintenance and street lighting contracts – for noting - written briefing, Mike Tobin, Highways Procurement Project Manager: This is included as **Appendix 4** to these minutes. It was noted that Mr Tobin had agreed to attend the next meeting on the 13 May to give a report on this subject. Ms Brown said she understood the Council was proposing a programme of replacement in relation to lighting in the borough which she believed would have an impact on leaseholders' service charges.

12. Annual team plan for the Home Ownership Team – for noting: The plan, which had been tabled on a number of occasions previously was noted.

Mrs Goodhew thanked the speakers for their helpful reports and Panel Members for their useful contributions. She then closed the meeting.



Appendix 1 of the minutes of the 20 April 2009

Residents' Top 10 2009 – 2010

Indicator	Target	Area
% of communal repairs completed within timescales	90%	Repairs
Percentage of customers seen within 15 minutes at the customer service centres	70.0%	Contact
Percentage of non-urgent repairs where an appointment was made and kept	97.0%	Repairs
Percentage of non-urgent repairs completed right first time	79%	Repairs
Percentage of repairs completed within target number of days	95.0%	Repairs
Percentage of residents satisfied with the quality of the repair	95.0%	Repairs
Percentage of lift repairs attended to within four hours	95%	Repairs
Overall percentage of estates graded excellent or good by Estate Service Managers	95%	Estates
Percentage of stage one Anti Social Behaviour tasks completed within timescales	70%	ASB
Percentage of stage one (and pre stage one) complaints answered within ten working days	90%	Feedback

From the status survey, the most important items were:

Repairs and maintenance	76%
Overall quality of home	56%
Keeping tenants informed	38%
Dealing with anti social behaviour	36%
Taking tenants views into account	30%
Value for money from rent	30%
Neighbourhood as Place to live	26%



Appendix 2 of the minutes - Leasehold Panel (20 April 2009)

Major Works Billing Update

Invoices for all properties in Decent Homes Year One were sent out on 30 March 2009.

Breakdown by Amount

Invoice	Properties
Less than £1000	62
£1000 - £2,499	17
£2,500 - £4,999	27
£5,000 - £7,499	25
£7,500 - £9,999	66
£10,000 - £14,999	76
£15,000 - £19,999	48
£20,000 - £30,000	22
TOTAL	343

Breakdown by Area

Area	Properties
Hornsey	52
North Tottenham	66
South Tottenham	155
Wood Green	70
TOTAL	343

Drop-in Sessions

As well as the booklet *Paying for major works invoices* (Hard copy was sent out with each invoice and is also available online) and telephone support, HOT arranged drop-in sessions for each area. These were held in the Civic Centre, the Eastfield Road Community Centre and the Eric Allin Community Centre. The sessions held in the Civic Centre were much better attended than those in the other venues.



Appendix 3 of the minutes - Leasehold Panel 20 April 2009

Update on the policy concerning TV aerials – digital conversion

Decent Homes Programme

TV aerial systems will continue to be installed under the DHP to take advantage of the scaffolding erected for the work.

Proposed services (under review)

The following services are being provided under the conversion process at present, but are under review on account of the relatively high costs that have been incurred for this work so far:

- Terrestrial analogue
- Freeview
- Digital satellite from the BBC, Sky and other broadcasters from the Astra2 satellite
- Digital satellite – Hotbird – many free to view channels, often in foreign languages
- Turksat
- Sky Plus (requires additional cabling)
- VHF and DAB radio transmissions

Tendering of services

Tenders are going to be invited in the next two to three weeks, which will include all the services listed above. However the invitations to tender will not commit Homes for Haringey to installing any particular services. At present the decision as to what services will be installed in future is being kept open. The final decision will very much depend on the costs quoted in the tender returns.

Report on digital conversion

No report has been prepared on this subject, for example for submission to the Board.

Opt-out for leaseholders

The general view at present is that it will not be appropriate to allow leaseholders to opt out.



Appendix 4 of the minutes - Leasehold Panel 20 April 2009

Highways and lighting notices – progress report

This relates to two contracts which Haringey Council is letting in relation to the maintenance of highways and pathways and street and estate lighting.

Nature of the contracts

They are standard long term agreements to which the normal statutory procedure applies.

Street lighting: The Council intends to appoint one contractor to provide a wide range of street lighting works. These will mainly be on the public highways in the borough but the contract will also cover work on the Council's housing estates where such work is required. This will enable cost savings in order to achieve economies of scale.

Highways: The Council intends to appoint one contractor to provide a wide range of road, footway and landscaping works. These works will mainly be on the public highways but the contract will also cover work on the Council's housing estates where such work is required.

Section 20 notices

First notice – notice of intention: The notices of intention were sent to all leaseholders in the borough on the 15 August 2008. No observations were received by leaseholders in response.

Second notice – notice of proposal: Tenders have now been received and assessed. The recommendations have been submitted to the Council's Procurement Committee, which will consider them on the 28 April. Their decisions will then form the basis of the two proposals.

The notices of the proposals will then be sent to leaseholders on or around the 29/30 April. Leaseholders will have the statutory 30 day period to make observations if they wish in relation to the proposals

Civic Centre.
Wood Green,
London N22.

20/4/09

Dear Fellow Leasehold Panel Member,

Owing to the repeated pressures to which I have been subject over the minutes and what I feel is a lack of respect for me as a resident chair I am resigning from the post of Leasehold Panel chair at the end of tonight's meeting.

The principle that all documents presented to and discussed by the panel in the course of a meeting should be included in the minutes of that meeting whether it was Homes for Haringey or a leaseholder who presented those documents is an important one. It cannot be right that Homes for Haringey alone gets to decide what is and what is not legitimate leaseholder business. Homes for Haringey officers are there to serve the panel not to run it.

To me this is yet another indication of the fact that Homes for Haringey have yet to fully accept leaseholders as partners. The panel at present serves as much to stifle the voice of leaseholders as it does to allow them to be heard. I feel my efforts to redress the balance in favour of giving leaseholders a genuine say have been unsuccessful given the lack of respect for residents that informs the culture of the organisation as a whole.

I can no longer keep up what has been a very unequal and difficult struggle. With regret I have to leave it to other panel members to decide whether they wish to take up the challenge. My thanks to all who have participated.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Martin-Clark