

Your Home, Your Say

Leaseholder Annual Meeting

Minutes 14th November 2024

Present:	<p>Leaseholders: Diane Best, Stan Best, Martin Barrass, Martin Johnson, Adam Paszkowski, Lena Barnes, Juliet Matthews, Katherine Hiby, Alexander Harris, Surender Vashist, Matt Emmerson, Shayne Mitchell, Balint Kovacs, Sally Hayden, Eric Osman, Vajira Dommanige, Carol Chapman, Emma Metcalf, Stan Wilson, Christine Wortley, Marco Bruno,</p> <p>Officers: Carol Amos (Home Ownership), Megan Barker (Home Ownership), Lorna Winn (Home Ownership & Minutes), Samantha Shimmon (Assistant Director Housing & Homelessness), Will Beavitt (Estate Services), Vishnu Guvvala (Estate Services)</p>
Apologies:	Richard Woolman (Streets and Open Spaces), Kate Grigg (Resident Involvement)
Copies:	<p>City Homes</p> <p>Leaseholders - webpage</p> <p>Via Teams – copy of recording available to view</p>

	Agenda item	Action
1.0	Welcome	
1.1	Stan Best welcomed everyone to the meeting held via Teams. Diane Best introduced herself as the elected Leaseholder Representative on the Housing Scrutiny Committee.	
1.1	The meeting is being recorded - which will be available on the Council's website on the Leaseholders Meetings as soon as possible link here:	
1.2	Leaseholder forum meetings - Cambridge City Council	
2.0	Fire Safety in Communal Areas Policy – Presentation by Samantha Shimmon	
2.1	Samantha Shimmon introduced herself as the Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness and explained that the Council have reviewed its Fire Safety Policy, the revised policy was presented to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in September 2024 and approved.	
2.2	The revised policy was developed after the tragedy at Grenfell and the subsequent enquiry. Witness statements of some of the survivors of Grenfell were shared by Samantha to help understand why we have reviewed our policy.	

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p>	<p>The Legislation we have to adhere to is set out in the Regulatory Reform Order 2005 and The Building Safety Act 2022, our previous policy did not meet all the regulations. Emergency routes must be clear at all times.</p> <p>The new policy in place has two categories – significant risk and other items. We must ensure that there are no trip hazards or items left in the communal area, not even door mats. Any significant risk items will be removed within 24 hours, and other items within 5 working days. We are working with residents to install things like bike racks to keep areas clear. Any questions:</p> <p>It seems there is a one size fits all approach to this policy, even though not all buildings are the same. Not all blocks pose the same risks so shouldn't each block be treated differently?</p> <p>The Legislation is very clear in how areas should be managed, which is why it is a blanket policy to ensure all communal areas meet the legislation.</p> <p>The asbestos boarding in the communal ceilings at Fison Road was removed in 2008, and incorrect panelling was installed. Building Regulation inspection confirmed the fire compartmentation was not up to standard. When will this be resolved?</p> <p>Will Beavitt advised that he has recently been informed that Foster will be carrying out works as they have requested a suitable storage site. So hopefully it should be completed soon. Carol Amos to request an update from the Planned Maintenance team and provide the leaseholder with an update</p>	<p>CA</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p>Grounds Maintenance – Update by Will Beavitt</p> <p>Will gave apologies that Richard Woolman could not attend the meeting</p> <p>Will introduced himself as the Senior Estates Services Officer, who mostly covers the south of the city, and his colleague Vishnu, Estate Services Officer who mostly covers the north of the city</p> <p>Will explained that their main roles are the management of the contracts on site including Building Cleaning, Caretaking, Communal Window Cleaning and Fire Safety of the estates</p> <p>In Richards absence, Will gave an outline of the Grounds Maintenance yearly programme that affects the Housing Estates. It starts with the first cut of estate and communal grass areas at Easter, there are 12 cuts a year, although that can be weather</p>	

<p>3.5</p>	<p>dependent, as this year we are continuing to cut into November due to the warmer weather, around September they will start pruning the estate hedges, then the clearing of leaves, sweeping of any hard standing areas and footpaths, and then finally the replanting of shrub beds if necessary.</p> <p>Will advised that if any Leaseholders have concerns over particular areas not being maintained, they can report this via the webforms to ensure each issue is logged as it helps to ensure the contract is being fulfilled.</p> <p>The following are the links to the various webforms for reporting issues to the Streets and Open Spaces team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly tipping: https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTFLYTIPPING/launch • Graffiti: https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTGRAFFITI/launch • Dangerous waste (Needles, broken glass, vomit / faeces, urine): https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/DANGEROUSWASTE/launch • Litter bin issues (including dangerous waste next to a litter bin): https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTAPROBLEMWITHALITTERBIN/launch • Grounds maintenance https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTPROBLEMHEDGESGRASSBRANCHES/launch <p>A reminder the contact details for reporting issues with Building Cleaning are as follows: Email: Goshen Support cs@goshenmultiservices.com</p> <p><i>Any questions:</i></p> <p>Q Do you manage the maintenance of trees? In particular, Bermuda Terrace?</p> <p>A Will advised that any trees around the estate, footpaths, parks etc are managed by the Council's Arboriculture Team and are on a 7 year cycle of maintenance. Any trees in communal gardens are managed by Housing and should be reported to the Estates team. The trees are Bermuda fall into the Public Realm so the tree team would be responsible for their maintenance.</p> <p>Q There is an issue with flytipping at Russell Court, who do I report it to?</p> <p>A We are aware of a continual problem around the estate. We are</p>	
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	<p>trying to obtain new bike stores for all the blocks to help remove some of the items left in communal area.</p> <p>Q There is vegetation spreading onto footpath from front gardens at Drayton Road, who is responsible for clearing it. There is also an issue around the park too</p> <p>A If they are private gardens, then the resident of that property would be responsible to ensure their garden is not encroaching onto the footpath. Will to visit the area to determine which properties are causing the issue</p> <p>Q Diane Best advised that she had received an increased amount of contact from Leaseholders reporting a reduction in satisfaction of the grounds maintenance service, can there be a good way to report this.</p> <p>A The best way to report issues is via the webforms that have been listed in these minutes, to ensure they are picked up by the correct team for action</p> <p>Q There has been a significant reduction in service at Fison Road</p> <p>A This will be passed back to Streets and Open Spaces</p> <p>Q The maintenance of trees at Fulbourn Old Drift has not been done for a long time, the trees are touching the building</p> <p>A We can pass this onto the tree team to visit</p> <p>Q Who is responsible for gutter clearance on blocks of flats?</p> <p>A The Council would be responsible. Some blocks which are particular affected by leaves are on an annual programme for gutter cleaning, others are completed during the cyclical decoration programme (every seven years). If there is a particular issue this should be reported to the Council's repairs team via the Customer Service Centre</p>	<p>WB</p> <p>WB</p> <p>WB</p>
4.0	Diane Best – Housing Scrutiny Committee updates	
4.1	Diane gave a brief overview of the role of the HSC. Meetings are held in January, March, June and September. The meeting in June this year was the first meeting of the new elected HSC reps who have just begun a 4 year cycle.	
4.2	The January meeting concentrates on the Budget Setting Reports which includes details of Service Charges and Administration Fees which affect Leaseholders – for instance the fees for obtaining a copy of your lease, or alteration permissions.	

<p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p>	<p>Each meeting there is a compliance report shared, detailing the level of current valid gas and electrical certificates on our housing stock. This report also included details relating to damp, mould and condensation issues within our properties. Diane advised that if any leaseholders needed to report issues with damp or mould, then there is a dedicated team who can be contacted either by calling the Customer Service Centre on 01223 457000 or you can e-mail them at condensation@cambridge.gov.uk</p> <p>Diane explained that the Executive Councillor for Housing makes the final decision on the agenda items discussed at HSC. Recently, they discussed the procurement of the Planned Maintenance Contract, which is currently delivered by Foster Property Maintenance Limited but comes to an end in September 2025. Leaseholders have already been served with the First Stage Notice for the consultation of this contract, and the next stage will provide the shortlist of companies who have tendered for the contract. The Fire Safety Policy was also discussed at HSC.</p> <p>The Garage charging policy has been reviewed and new charges approved – this may be of interest to any leaseholders who rent these spaces.</p> <p>Following extensive debate, the Executive Councillor made some very challenging decisions about the proposed redevelopment of both Ekin Road and Davy Road flats, for which some Leaseholders will be affected. These decisions are not easy to make.</p> <p>If anyone has any questions, you can always contact Diane via the HSC email, which is Hsc.residents@gmail.com</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Resident Involvement Update – Kate Grigg Unfortunately, Kate was unable to attend today’s meeting.</p> <p>For information on how to become involved as a resident, please visit our website</p> <p>https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement</p> <p>If you have any specific questions about Resident Involvement, you can contact Kate direct by e-mail Resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk</p>	
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 – Carol Amos</p> <p>This new Legislation received Royal Ascent on 24th May 2024, it was fast tracked by the Conservative party prior to the General</p>	

<p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p>	<p>Election. It covers both England and Wales</p> <p>The aims of the Legislation are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen leaseholder rights • Cheaper and easier to extend your lease • To increase the standard extension term to an additional 990 years, rather than the current 90 years • Change the qualifying criteria of extending your Lease • Ban the granting of new leasehold houses that incur ground rent and service charge fees. <p>It aims to improve transparency by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving more rights to leaseholders for information on their service charges • Stop the administration charge and commission on Building Insurance premiums • Ensuring that pre-sales enquiry are provided within a timely manner by the Landlord <p>At the current time, we have not been informed when these changes will come into effect. It is expected that the intention will be for them to be confirmed in 2025-2026. The Government have committed to publish draft legislation in 2024-2025 during parliamentary session.</p> <p>You should look to extend your Lease when your Lease term is near to 80 years remaining, this is because it becomes difficult to mortgage a property with less than 80 years remaining, and at the moment it is more expensive to extend your Lease once the remaining term is less than 80 years.</p> <p>At the current time, our advice would be to wait to extend your lease until it is clearer what benefits the new legislation will have for you as a Leaseholder, unless there is an urgency for you to do so now. You may wish to seek your own legal advice.</p> <p>You can still engage a solicitor to serve a Section 42 Notice on the Council, offering a price to extend your Lease. The current average cost to extend our lease is around £5,000, plus legal fees, and the Council's fees of £2,000.</p>	
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p>	<p>Leaseholder Questions</p> <p>How do I challenge my service charges?</p> <p>In the first instance when you receive a service charge demand, you should raise query with the Home Ownership Services team, we will provide the background information. If after receiving the explanation, you are still not satisfied you can apply to the First Tier Tribunal for a determination on the reasonableness of the service</p>	

	charge. We would advise seeking your own legal advice before applying to the Tribunal.	
7.2	Q Is there an update on the proposed structural and electrical works at Bermuda Terrace?	
	A We understand there is a newsletter being sent out to all residents shortly	
7.3	Q What will the new Lease Extension costs be?	
	A At the moment, we have not been given any guidance on the new costs.	
7.4	Q Is there an update on getting new bike storage at Fison Road?	
	A Will Beavitt advised that the procurement has been completed for a provider of the cycle stores, and they are hoping to deliver the project by April 2025.	
7.5	Q Will a hold be put on the invoice for the HHSRS works at Fison Road as they are not compliant with Building Regulations.	
	A We will need to check with the Planned Maintenance team as we have not been advised that the work should not be recharged. We will update the leaseholder via e-mail once we have an update.	CA
7.6	Q Will the Council considers how it can help leaseholders obtain EV charging points at their home?	
	A We have had a lot of requests recently, but the issue lies with the legal complexities due to many leaseholders parking in communal car parks, without allocated parking bays. We are able to provide permission where the leaseholder owns the land / garden that they park on as that is dealt with as an alteration request. At the moment that Council is only providing the connected kerb scheme, but the tariffs are set by the private company, and anyone can use them not just residents.	
7.7	Q When will the cavity wall insulation be upgraded at Drayton Road, we had a survey 2 years ago and was told insulation was needed but we haven't had the work completed yet?	
	A We will need to speak to the Energy Team that would arrange this work, it may have been put onto a programme of work. We will update the Leaseholder via e-mail.	CA
7.8	Q I just extended my Lease last year and only got an additional 90 years, will the new legislation give him the new extension length?	

<p>A</p> <p>7.9</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p> <p>7.10</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p> <p>7.11</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p> <p>7.12</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p> <p>7.13</p> <p>Q</p> <p>A</p>	<p>New legislation is not usually retrospective, so it is unlikely. Having already extended your lease, it will not affect the value of your property or the ability to sell.</p> <p>Is the Barnwell Road Development still going ahead?</p> <p>Yes, we believe it is – it is a very large project which includes community buildings.</p> <p>Are the Cockerell Road works finished?</p> <p>We understand that the main works have finished, the scaffolding has been removed and now it is at the snagging stage where the Council ensure that all the works have been completed as per the specification.</p> <p>The scaffolding was up for a long time at Cockerell Road, how will this affect the cost to Leaseholders?</p> <p>As part of the agreed costs, the Council only pay for the erection and dismantling of the scaffold, so you will not be adversely affected by the length of time it has been in situ.</p> <p>Are these meetings annual or bi-annual?</p> <p>Generally it is an annual meeting, unless there is a need for a specific additional meeting during the year which we could arrange to cover a particular topic.</p> <p>With the increasing affects of climate change, can air conditioning be considered for leasehold properties?</p> <p>We can take this question forward along with the query relating to EV charging</p>	<p>CA</p>
<p>8.0</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Stan said he found the meeting very interesting and thanked everyone for attending.</p> <p>The Minutes and recording will be available shortly on the Council's Leaseholder webpage: Leaseholder meetings - Cambridge City Council</p> <p>Next meeting tbc on the Leaseholder Meetings webpage</p>	