



## Leaseholders Panel Meeting Minutes

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**Meeting No:** 2  
**Year:** 2016/17  
**Date/Time:** 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 7:00PM  
**Venue:** 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW  
**Ref:** LPQM\_02

**Attendees:** Ansy Fields (AFF)  
Alan Smith (AS)  
Aaron French (AF)  
Nathan Thompson (NT)

**Apologies:** Jane Elphick (JE)  
Julie Allen (JA)

**Distributed by:** Nathan Thompson      Eastbourne Homes Ltd.

**Copied to:** Tony Sayers      Eastbourne Homes Ltd.  
Jeff Hardman      Independent Chair

Item	Actions
<b>1. Chair</b>	
1.1. JA notified EHL of her resignation as the Chair of the Leaseholders Panel due to personal reasons. She is therefore unable continue for her term.	
1.2. NT advised that a replacement has been sourced by EHL. Jeff Hardman (JH), a Barrister for Arden Chambers, has expressed an interest in becoming the new Chair.	
1.3. On reviewing his CV, the Panel agreed to the appointment of JH as the new Chair and asked for an interim meeting to be held prior to the next quarter in order for the Panel to meet JH and address any issues that require the input of the Chair. A provisional date has been set for the <b>19<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 7:00PM</b> subject to NT confirming JH's availability.	NT
<b>2. MEMBER VACANCIES</b>	
2.1. Since the last Panel meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2016 Linda Fuller (LF) resigned as a member due to other obligations that limited her commitment to the Panel.	
2.2. It was agreed prior to JA's resignation that the Chair and a member of the EHL Board would conduct the interviews for the replacement.	
2.3. Expressions of interest were submitted to the leaseholders as a whole in March 2016 with a deadline of the 8 <sup>th</sup> April 2016. One interest has been received for the vacant position.	
2.4. The Panel agreed that they would prefer that JH interviewed the applicant once appointed as Chair. NT agreed he would discuss this with JH following his appointment and arrange the interview. In the meantime the applicant will be contacted to provide an update following their application.	NT
2.5. AS advised that he is in the processes of transferring the ownership of his leasehold property to his daughter therefore he too would be resigning in the	

near future. AS agreed to continue to be a member of the Panel until either:

- a) The property has been officially transferred,  
or
- b) A replacement member has been sourced.

2.6. The Panel agreed for expressions of interests to be issued to the leaseholders at large once the current vacancy has been filled in anticipation of the resignation from AS. The letter used to fill the vacancy left by LF will be adapted to be issued by NT at that time.

NT

### **3. PREVIOUS MINUTES (LPQM\_01)**

3.1. NT reviewed the action points from the last Panel's meeting minutes. Out of the 12 actions only 4 are still outstanding as follows:

- The creation of the answer machine facility. NT confirmed that there are some problems with licensing at EBC but that the matter has been escalated to Jason Laroche (Head of IT) to pursue.
- To provide a short summary of the most relevant actions completed in the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2014-2016 for the Panel to review before being published to leaseholders.
- Investigate the possibility of holding annual 'Leaseholder Surgeries' to replace the annual forum held in the past. NT advised that details of this proposal will be included within the report to be submitted on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 to the Service & Performance Committee.
- The creation of the Annual Work Plan (AWP) as required in the Terms of Reference. It was agreed that this would be pursued once the new Chair is in place.

NT

NT

NT

Panel

#### **4. OPEN HOUSE ARTICLE**

- 4.1. AFF has drafted an article to be included within the next issue of Open House magazine for the original deadline of the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016.
- 4.2. NT advised that the last issue of Open House magazine had been sent later than originally intended due to some last minute editing requirements.
- 4.3. AFF asked to revise the wording and information in the article to reflect the delay in the next issue. Once revised AFF will send to other Panel members for approval before being sent to NT to include in the issue.

AFF

#### **5. SERVICE & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

- 5.1. NT advised that the deadline for a report to be submitted to the Service & Performance Committee is the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. This report is to include details regarding the Panel's suggestion of holding annual Leaseholder Surgeries, which will include the involvement of various departments within EHL and EBC.
- 5.2. JA was due to draft the report for prior approval from the Panel members however this was not completed before her resignation.
- 5.3. Due to the lack of time NT offered to draft the report and send to the Panel on **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016** for prior approval in order to ensure the deadline is met. The Panel was agreeable to this.

NT

#### **6. LEASEHOLDERS FOCUS GROUPS**

- 6.1. The first Focus Group was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at the EBC Town Hall. 25no. leaseholders attended and the discussions were overseen by a representative appointed by the Panel.
- 6.2. During the Focus Group a new representative was not appointed by the attendees.

6.3. A report was received by AFF from the representative of the group and the following items were brought to the Panel's attention:

6.3.1. Fixed management fees – The group enquired into the current status of the recommendation made by Housing Quality Networks (HQN) in the last SIP to convert the current 15% management fee levied by EHL on service charges to a fixed annual fee.

NT explained that as per item 6.2 of the last meeting minutes (LPQM\_02) the work surrounding the management fee is one of the two items to be transferred to the new SIP for 2016/17, to be created between EHL and the Panel. AFF agreed to include an update on this within the revised Open House magazine article.

AFF

6.3.2. Block reserve funds – The group do not want to change the arrangements from the current position, which involves each lessee holding an informal 'major works fund' paying £125 p.a. through their service charges, to a block reserve fund reflective of the works required to each individual building over a long term plan. The group also explained that they were uncertain how the current funds held were updated to leaseholders.

NT explained that the current 'major works funds' are accounted for separately and statements are issued regularly (at least annually) to all leaseholders, which shows all transactions and any interest accrued. NT also explained that the works regarding funds will be investigated as part of the new SIP to be created and implemented.

6.3.3. Major works estimates – The group were concerned about the budget estimates used when EHL proposes major works to a block and how in the past they have not been 100% accurate. The group would like more precise estimates used when major works are consulted on.

NT explained that EHL takes this on board and in the future the consultation for major works

projects will be completed well in advance of the date the service charge estimates are issued and will therefore allow more time for the budget estimates to be reviewed to ensure better accuracy.

- 6.4. AFF wanted the frustration of the Panel noted regarding the appointment of the representative for the first Focus Group. At the time the representative was suggested EHL tried to intervene without properly consulting with the Panel before making a decision. The Panel feels that for the Panel to work EHL should consult and discuss any concerns with the Panel before making any actual decisions otherwise this undermines the Panel's position and purpose.
- 6.5. The Panel is also concerned about the position of NT when trying to act in the Panel's best interests as a non-voting member, whilst also an employee for EHL therefore needing to answer to superiors, which may intervene with this. NT explained that he is supported by his superiors at EHL and overall senior management at EHL is supportive of this Panel, their role and future actions they wish to take. NT explained that the issues surrounding the representative at the Focus Group was a specific matter. NT agreed to discuss the Panel's concerns with Tony Sayers (Acting Head of Property Services). NT
- 6.6. AFF requested that a part of the report to be submitted to the Service & Performance Committee includes these concerns to ensure the same is not repeated in the future. The Panel will include a paragraph on this matter once NT has drafted the overall content about the Leaseholder Surgeries. Panel

## **7. RESERVE FUNDS**

- 7.1. Following item 6.3.3 in these minutes the Panel further discussed the operation of the proposed block reserve funds. Overall the Panel agreed with the proposal to implement block reserve funds.
- 7.2. AFF felt the fairest way of implementing the funds would to include all estimated future works to the longest lifecycle of one the building elements (i.e. 40 years) and average out the costs over the whole

period. This would ensure the contributions per year are fairly constant and would not differ substantially between different owners of a property. The costs would then have to be reviewed on a regular basis to allow for cost increases and be reflective of the condition of the building at the time of inspection.

- 7.3. AS felt that at the time the funds are in place that all leaseholders should be supplied with a copy of any forecasts.
- 7.4. AFF suggested that whichever way the funds are implemented EHL should ensure compassion for the leaseholders is fundamental to their approach.
- 7.5. NT explained that no fixed decisions had yet been made about the implementation of block reserve funds and it will be fully investigated and consulted on with the Panel as part of the new SIP.

## **8. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP)**

- 8.1. NT confirmed that all actions but one within the SIP for 2014-2016 had been completed apart from the following two items, which were agreed to be transferred to the new SIP due to the amount of work required in their investigation/implementation:

- Fixed management fees.
- Block reserve funds.

- 8.2. The last outstanding action is the creation of an updated 'Leaseholders Handbook'. The handbook has been drafted by NT and a copy has been sent to all Panel members. NT asked for the Panel to provide their comments (if any) and to be received by **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016**. Subject to any comments made the handbook will then be published to all leaseholders.

Panel

## **9. COMMUNICATIONS**

- 9.1. AF confirmed that little communication had been received via the Panel's group email to date. A lot of the communication was regarding the last Focus Group.

9.2. There was a particular email received from a leaseholder who wanted to discuss various matters via telephone as they could not attend the last Focus Group. AF agreed to contact the lessee to note any enquires/comments (within the Panel's remit) to then be discussed at the next meeting if required. AF

**10. NEXT PANEL**

10.1. The next panel meeting is provisionally scheduled to be held on **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016 for 7:00PM** at 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW, subject to the availability of JH. NT