



Leaseholders Panel Meeting Minutes

Meeting No: 7
Year: 2017/18
Date/Time: 31st August 2017 – 7:00PM
Venue: 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW
Ref: LPQM_07

Attendees: Jane Elphick (JE)
Ansy Fields (AFF)
Nathan Thompson (NT)

Apologies: Philip Lervy (PL)

Absent: Roy Blackmore (RB)
John Lavender (JL)
Aaron French (AF)

Distributed by: Nathan Thompson Eastbourne Homes Ltd.

Copied to: Tony Sayers Eastbourne Homes Ltd.

Item	Actions
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1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1. PL sent his apologies prior to the meeting
- 1.2. No attendance from: RB, JL or AF.

2. UPDATE: CHAIR VACANCY

- 2.1. Since the last official meeting in March 2017 Jeff Hardman resigned as Chair due to other commitments. Since then the role has been vacant.
- 2.2. NT confirmed that a replacement Chair has not yet been sourced. Eastbourne Homes Ltd (EHL) is very conscious that to have an independent Chair must mean that they, or their firm, have no current connection with EHL.
- 2.3. NT confirmed that the Leasehold Excellence Network (LEN), a part of Housing Quality Networks (HQN), had been approached to ask if any members would be interested in the role. To date there has been no interest.
- 2.4. AFF and JE are concerned about continuing with the Panel without a Chair in place. Both understand the potential benefits of an independent Chair however if one cannot be sourced feel EHL should consider relaxing this requirement, at least in the interim.
- 2.5. NT agreed that the current arrangement without a Chair is not working. NT also felt that without a Chair he automatically, and unintentionally, fills that role. NT does not feel that this is good practice.
- 2.6. AFF agreed with NT that the Panel should not feel led by EHL otherwise it will not successfully fulfill its purpose.
- 2.7. The Panel agreed that a letter would be sent to EHL requesting that an existing Panel member is considered as interim Chair by vote until a permanent independent replacement can be found. NT to draft and submit with the members' prior approval.

NT

3. FUTURE OF THE PANEL

- 3.1. NT explained the current process of Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council merging services.
- 3.2. In the medium term EHL have appointed an independent specialist called 'TPAS', tenant engagement experts, to review all Eastbourne panels. The intention will be to mirror the structure in Lewes where there is a single panel covering all areas, tenures and resident matters. It is understood that this structure works very successfully.
- 3.3. In the short term the Leaseholders Panel will remain as is, for all the time there is interest.
- 3.4. NT explained that the EHL Property Services Team is also in the process of a corporate restructure and this may lead to some further changes that may affect the Panel. All new roles are planned to be in place by the 1st October 2017.
- 3.5. All attending members are concerned about the current interest in the Panel itself. There remains still one vacant member's position that has not been filled and attendance has generally been poor over the previous meetings. Without sufficient numbers decisions cannot be made at the meeting and experience shows that virtual decisions with non-attending meetings are also not being made.
- 3.6. AFF and JE recommend all members are notified of the current difficulties with making decisions due to poor attendance and reminded that virtual engagement is essential if members cannot attend for justified reasons. NT will email all members.
- 3.7. All attending agreed if any members are not committed to the Panel then they should resign.
- 3.8. NT also wondered if EHL's attendance at the meeting is unintentionally prohibiting conversation and decisions. With NT in attendance it is natural that responses on the behalf of EHL are potentially made

NT

at the meeting meaning further discussion and investigation does not happen.

3.9. AFF and JE agreed that this could be a factor and may even deter leaseholders from applying for vacant positions. Both agreed it was worth exploring what the meetings are like without NT in attendance.

3.10. Instead of a new Secretary being appointed it was suggested each member takes a turn at each meeting if the above was agreed.

3.11. As part of the letter to EHL requesting for the Chair position to be considered the Panel will also request that, as a trial at least, NT resigns as Secretary and attends every other meeting only or when invited.

NT

4. ANNUAL WORK PLAN

4.1. The Annual Work Plan for 2017/18 was presented to the Panel. A copy will be published on the website subject to the approval from the EHL Service & Performance Committee.

NT

5. RIVERBOURNE HOUSE

5.1. The Panel noted that the representative from Riverbourne House who attended a past Panel meeting had still not been properly responded to.

5.2. NT confirmed he had sent a summary from EHL's perspective in relation to the handout previously provided by the representative and circulated to the members virtually. A draft list of questions to EHL had also been summarised and sent at the same time. To date only AFF had responded to the email.

5.3. AFF was concerned that the matter was still ongoing and the representative had not received a response after so long.

5.4. NT agreed but advised he was not comfortable in writing the full response on the behalf of the Panel without input from the voting members. It was the voting members who chose to invite the representative and therefore they should be engaged in the process.

- 5.5. AFF and JE agreed. To move things forward it was agreed NT would draft: a) a response to the representative, and b) a letter of questions to EHL, both to be sent to the other Panel members to comment upon before being issued ASAP. NT

6. AOB

- 6.1. NT confirmed that the consultation with the Panel on the implementation of block reserve funds had ended. A report was due to be sent to the EHL Board for approval before being put into action. NT

- 6.2. NT advised a strategy of resident consultation would be rolled out leading up to the 'go-live' date of the 1st April 2018. NT

- 6.3. AFF suggested as part of the consultation it is made clear to residents that although the forecasts are estimated costs, the reserve fund contributions will be actual costs within the service charges.

- 6.4. NT confirmed that the Major Works Payment Policy introduced by EBC in 2016 will apply to the reserve fund contributions as part of the service charge. AFF asked this is also made clear in any consultation. NT

- 6.5. JE provided a brief update on the last Leaseholder Surgery in July. JE confirmed it was successful but again was not greatly attended. Two issues were presented to the Panel from residents, both of which were personal matters; therefore NT confirmed he would pass them onto the relevant departments within EHL to follow-up. NT

7. NEXT MEETING

- 7.1. The next panel meeting is to be confirmed, due around November 2017. The location and structure will be determined subject to the response from EHL regarding the Chair's position and EHL's presence at future meetings. NT