

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG)

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

Minutes of LAG Committee Meeting

Wednesday 14 January 2015, 6.00pm to 8:00pm
Hampshire Lodge

1. Present: Linda Shaw, James Corbett and Muriel Briault

Observers: Anthony Camps-Linney and David Croydon

Officers: Dave Arthur (BHCC), Pamela Cunningham, Reem Scott (BHCC) & Keely McDonald (BHCC)

Apologies: Apologies were offered for Beth Kent, Tony Worsfold and Dee Howland.

Introductions were given and the chair opened the meeting.

2. Tenancy Enforcement -Pamela Cunningham & Reem Scott

2.1 DA –explained to the group that Richard was unwell so Pamela and Reem were here to substitute for him and explain the new powers available to Tenancy Enforcement and answer questions from the group.

2.2 RS – the Tenancy Enforcement Team and Neighbourhood Team now deal with ASB. Tenancy Enforcement handle cases of high level ASB with the Neighbourhood Team being responsible for cases of low level ASB. However, in the first instance ASB should be reported to the Housing Customer Service Team (293030) who will forward it to the appropriate team. PC – both teams have daily duty officers who can be contacted in an emergency.

2.3 PC – Tenancy Enforcement deal with ASB on a case by case basis and are not patch based like the Neighbourhood Team. If a case of ASB is classified as being High Level a dedicated Tenancy Enforcement Officer will be allocated to the case and their contact details will be made available.

2.4 JC – asked what the success rate was for getting anti-social neighbours removed.

RS – ASB is dealt with on a case by case basis some are dealt with by mediation and others lead to eviction.

PC – stressed that it is the judge who makes the decision to evict and it will always be the last resort.

New Powers

2.5 PC –the new powers are being phased in from October 2014 and the onus is now on councils to do more. There are a lot more powers to resolve.

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2.6 LS – one of the main areas of concern has always been the need to fill in diary sheets.

PC – they are still important as a means of providing evidence when taking a case to court.

2.7 DA – asked what had been the changes to serving an injunction.

PC – the age requirement has been lowered (-now 10), some positive requirements added and there has to be an adequate person available to monitor the injunction.

2.7 LS –how does this effect tenants of leaseholders who commit ASB?

PC – it is the same but, a different person would need to apply for the injunction. Tenants are responsible for their visitors and action would be taken against the leaseholder for breaching the lease.

DA – in extreme cases where litigation was needed the council would apply for forfeiture. However, this is rarely used as the majority of ASB caused by tenants of leaseholders is low level and dealt with by the Neighbourhood Team through mediation.

2.8 LS – can an article giving a summary of the changes be printed in Homing-In?

PC – the changes were mentioned and it was stressed that it would take time for them to be in.

LS – is it possible for a summary of the changes to go out with the next leaseholder update?

DA – it could go out with March's issue in bullet points and be mentioned that there will be an update in future.

PC –the Community Safety Team has a crib sheet outlining the changes.

Action: RS will email DA a copy of the Community Safety Team's crib sheet for distribution to leaseholders.

PC – would you like Tenancy Enforcement to produce an information sheet?

LS – Yes-that would be useful.

2.9 PC –circulated copies of a hand out to those present outlining the changes being introduced under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Action: RS –will send TJ an electronic copy of the hand out to go out with the minutes.

2.10 PC – then gave an overview of the changes mentioning:

- Criminal Behaviour Orders –first being served by end of January
- Community Protection Notices – council officers can now apply for these
- Breaches of injunctions – burden of proof now lower

2.11 LS –thanked PC and RS for attending.

3. Annual General Meeting

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3.1 KM – mentioned the Strengthening Area Panel Task & Finish Group had amongst its recommendations suggested LAG elect a representative from each of the four areas to represent them at Area Panel meetings.

DA – we need to look at LAG's constitution for how representatives are elected to groups and whether they should be committee members or if any leaseholder can stand for election. Technically this means there are significantly more posts to elect to so it is important to set aside an appropriate amount of time on the AGM's agenda for holding the elections.

3.2 MB – asked where and when the AGM was going to be held?

KM – suggested the Clarendon Centre that was used to hold November's City Assembly and asked the group for their thoughts.

DA – we should be aiming to hold the AGM early in March.

After a general discussion it was agreed to look at holding the AGM on 7 March from 10.00am to 1.00pm at the Clarendon Centre.

Action: KM – will contact the Clarendon Centre to check the venues availability for 7 March and the cost for hiring the venue.

3.3 DA- asked the group for their views on the format for the AGM.

3.4 Having a section for questions was suggested.

LS – didn't think leaseholders found this helpful as the answers are generally non-specific. People want concrete information.

DA – thought it would be better to have information tables.

3.5 LS – it would be useful to have maps of the 3 year work programme available.

DA – there could be an information table especially for the 3 year work programme.

3.6 DA – do you want the AGM to be leaseholder led and then you report back to the council. Have officers present to conduct the elections but then leaseholders run the meeting.

3.7 After further discussion it was agreed the agenda would be:

- Information Tables 10.00am – 10.45am
- Leaseholder run plenary session 11.00am – 12.00noon
- Elections 12.00noon – 1.00pm

3.8 LS – it is important to supply information about the elections in advance.

DA – this can be done when we post invitations to leaseholders.

3.9 KM – provided copies of the lift replacement programme as requested at the previous meeting to those present.

LS – asked if there was an electronic copy available

Action: KM will email LS an electronic copy of the lift replacement programme.

3.10 LS – are there similar copies available for the window replacement and cladding programmes.

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Action: KM –will look into providing copies of the window replacement and cladding programmes.

3.11 DA –will speak to GH about what would be the best information to provide for the information tables at the AGM.

3.12 DC – asked if the costs for works done to date and any problems encountered could be displayed at the AGM.

Actions: LS –will discuss with DA what charges can be shown.

KM – will bring it up with the Property & Investment Team.

DA –felt consultation meetings provide leaseholders with a better source of information on the likely costs involved with major works than the AGM.

4. Minutes of previous meeting & matters arising

4.1 Page 1 Point 3.1 LS – has received copies of the RIO and Neighbourhood Officers job descriptions as requested.

4.2 Page 1 Point 3.2 DA – still had no information regarding the painting of the railings at Chates Farm Court.

4.3 Page 1 Point 3.3 MB – has still to hear from the Neighbourhood Team when the next estate inspections will be held.

4.4 Page 1 Point 3.4 LS, MB and TW attended November's City Assembly and they all felt the Clarendon Centre was a suitable venue.

4.5 Page 1 Point 4.2 TW went to the SAPTFG meeting and has sent LS a copy of the minutes from the meeting.

Action: TJ –will send a copy of these with the minutes from today's Lag meeting

4.6 Page 2 Point 5.1 DA – we have to act on legal advice on what information we provide under RTB but, not for a sell on.

MB- why is RTB political?

DA –the Conservatives introduced RTB and want to sell as many Local Authority properties as possible so raise the discount given. Labour when in power will generally lower the amount of discount to stop Local Authority properties being sold. There are rules governing what councils can spend the monies raised by the discounts on.

4.7 Page 3 Point 6.2 LS –has had the Ning training.

4.8 Page 3. Point 6.5 LS –will ask Mears for information flyers.

Minutes – were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

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5. Reports & feedback from LAG representatives on committees or consultative groups:

5.1 TW –had provided LS with a briefing note on the recommendations the SAPTFG had proposed for leaseholders. Those being:

- Leaseholders be represented at every Area Panel in future
- Subject to Housing Committee agreement
- If agreed then LAG have an indicative vote as to who represents them at Area Panel meetings.

And subjects relevant to leaseholders that are due for discussion at January's Area Panel meetings.

- Update on the new homes for neighbourhoods programme
- Level access showers
- High Rise security options
- Implications of ASB and Policing Act 2014
- EDB decision

5.2 MB –will be going to the first City Assembly sub-group meeting on 23 January at Sloane Court to begin arranging May's meeting and will report back at the next LAG committee meeting.

5.3 LS –as the other representatives are not at today's meeting there is nothing to report back from the Service Improvement Group's (SIG's).

6. Key Issues

6.1 DA –will add Tenancy Enforcement to LAG's key issues, delete Encouraging Participation and aim to complete this by the AGM.

Action: DA –will send committee members a copy of the Key Issues template for them to add any additional information.

6.2 DA –felt LAG needed to get to grips with the SIG's in the coming year and ensure all the posts available are filled at the AGM.

6. Update on reviewing the consultation arrangements for major works

6.1 DA –has spoken to Ben O'Kagbue and Glyn Huelin and the feeling is that it would be best to set up a working group from within LAG's committee to review the consultation arrangements for major works. The aim is to start this in April.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 There was no issues raised under AOB

8. Next Meeting.

8.1 Date for next LAG committee meeting to be confirmed.

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