

Minutes of the Leaseholders Council Meeting on Thursday, 18 May 2006 in the Council Chamber, Lambeth Town Hall

Delegates

Brixton Area

Irena Kowalewska
Joan Francomb
Hermia Henry-Esezobor

Patch

Effra
Effra
Fernview

Clapham & Stockwell

Chris Vaughan (Vice Chair)
Beryl Jones
Peter Maloney
Valerie Anderson

Patch

Clapham Common
Clapham High Street
HMS
Springfield

North Lambeth

Barry McCalla (Chair)
Phoebe Ejimbe (Secretary)
Don Cook
Tracey Gregory (Secretary)

Patch

Kennington
Ashmole
Brahmah Green
Minet

Streatham

Nina Roberts

Patch

Rookery

Elected Members

Cllr. John Kazantzis
Cllr Jeremy Clyne
Cllr. Helen O'Malley

Cabinet Member for Housing

Officers

Chris Lee
Tom Bremner
David Evans
David Thompson
Ashley Parrette
Marilyn Proctor
Hassina Poyser

Interim Executive Director of Housing
Interim Div. Director Housing Management
Asst. Director Public Protection
Interim Div. Director (Property)
Home Ownership Services Manager
Resident Participation Manager
Resident Participation Officer

Guests:

Gary McFarlane
S Reider

Morrison
Morrison

Observers:

Ella Lewis
Nora-Anne Sheely
Kathleen Derrig
A Halloran
Josie Hefferman
Rose Ikolodo
S Court
Yvette Anthony
Ingrid Allman
Peter D'Costa
Margaret Dickinson
Beatrice Bermuda
John Webb
C McFarlane
K McFarlane
L Turvey
Violet Bailey
Cynthia Blake
Douglas Gough
Tiamare Masho
Lynne Pressnell
Alec Mills

Apologies:

Derrick Anderson (Chief Executive – LBL)
Paul Wilson (Metropolitan Police)
Hazel Evens
Stuart Mayes
Jean Kerrigan
Rod Brown
Carlos Brito
Fathia Abdi
Ron Francis
Pauline Francis
Mary Millgate

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Councillors and Officers to introduce themselves.

Cllr Kazantzis (the Cabinet Member for Housing) said he looked forward to working with and supporting Leaseholders Council on all housing issues. A

delegate enquired if there would be a Leaseholders Champion in the new administration; Cllr Kazantzis confirmed there would.

2. Update on Repairs Pilot Scheme - Morrison

Gary McFarlane of Morrison gave an update on the Repairs Pilot Scheme which ran from September 2005 to March 2006. He said that approximately 400 repairs had been carried out and feedback was positive. Quotations were often requested and eighty per cent of the repairs had been for difficult works that could not be carried out by the leaseholder themselves.

Morrison attended at least two patch meetings per month and GM asked for continued feedback. Delegates asked if Morrison would be contacting Housing Associations that had taken over LBL stock, to provide a service. He said that Morrison was looking into it. Delegates also asked AP about consulting other Councils (Redbridge and Havering) to enquire how they fund their services to leaseholders.

A delegate suggested that LBL should introduce an award scheme for the three contractors who service Lambeth properties. TB said that this could be considered. Delegates enquired about Morrison's charges and GM said that their charges were competitive. He also said that Morrison was not the only provider and that leaseholders were entitled to get quotes from other contractors for works required.

3. Cleaning Contract

TB and DE gave a presentation on proposals for the procurement of a new cleaning contract which would lead to one contract for the cleaning and recycling of public highways and Council estate roads. The main reasons for this change were:

- Raising standards in line with the Mayor's Capital Standards Programme
- Consistent standards across the realm
- Potential economies of scale

This would result in better value for money and should therefore provide a cheaper service for leaseholders. Baseline is a 'Zone 3' standard (twice weekly pick up and sweep). This can be increased to 'Zone 1' – but at additional cost. Internal building cleaning would continue to be provided by the current contractor.

Invitations and tenders are currently out and are due back in June, allowing room for changes to the programme if necessary. Joint evaluation of tenders and negotiations would take place between July and September, with

recommendations to go out in October. There would be further consultation with leaseholders in the autumn and the contract would be awarded in December to start in April 2007.

TB and DE also pointed out that in the future there was the possibility of looking at better value and improved estate contracts – e.g. combining cleaning, grounds maintenance, window cleaning, graffiti and pressurised water. They said that there would be further talks with leaseholders on this for a potential launch in October 2007. Some delegates stated that they were happy with the standard of cleaning on their estates and did not want a change.

TB confirmed that the new proposals covered hard areas only and not internal cleansing,

A delegate stated that the majority of leaseholders were prepared to pay more for a decent service, but resented paying for a poor or non-existent one. Leaseholders present agreed.

Cllr Kazantzis commented that he understood that the issues raised by delegates were valid and said that it was important that leaseholders were given 'value for money'.

4. Housing Capital – Major Works Programme – David Thompson

David Thompson gave an update on the Housing Capital and Major works programme. He said that the Programme (of over £70 million) details the start and completion for 71 schemes. This was based on LBL Road Map. Bathrooms, kitchens and heating replacements were included. There was also a £10 million programme for external work funded from the Housing Opportunity Fund.

A delegate asked why St Matthews was not included and no redecoration had taken place for more than twenty years.

A delegate said that start dates in the report were incorrect and that no Section 20's had been issued on her estate (Notre Dame) for lift replacement. She said Section 20s had been issued three years ago and therefore were out of date. Another delegate said that leaseholders should be given a set time (five years) to plan for payments for planned works.

Cllr Clyne said he was concerned that at times leaseholders were paying twice for window replacements. Where leaseholders have already replaced their windows, they are charged again when the Council replaces windows on an estate. AP agreed that there should be a dialogue with leaseholders on this issue. He also said that although leaseholders pay a charge it was a lower cost in these instances, but delegates stated that sometimes they had paid the full cost.

A delegate from the Willard estate queried why scaffolding was being removed after window replacement works had been completed when it would be required when the roof works commence?

DT said he would return with another update on the Road Map in July and he agreed to respond to all individual enquiries within 10 days.

5. 2006 Final Accounts – Ashley Parrette

AP gave a presentation on the Final Accounts. This included day to day service charges, repairs information, and the format of the accounts. The repairs information took into account certified summaries by the end of September 2005, which were finalised five months earlier than in 2004. Issues that were raised included the number of enquiries and location of orders. AP confirmed last year orders were checked, some by those who raised the orders. This year orders were checked earlier and more thoroughly. In the future there would be monthly checks which will be reviewed regularly by Home Ownership Services and by patch representatives. The benefits were that details could be corrected earlier and work could be challenged. The format of the accounts had been improved and following work with leaseholders executive the 2006 format will be better.

Delegates pointed out that there were problems with last year's accounts. AP said that this would improve. Concerns were raised about duplicating charges – when one repair could be charged for several times.

6. Complaints and Members Enquiries – Ashley Parrette

AP gave a presentation and explained the complaints procedure, pointing out the difference between formal complaints, members' enquiries, general enquiries and disputes. He explained that the process aimed to improve the services provided, making it easier to complain. Complaints could be in writing, telephone, face to face, by email and on the website. The stages and time frames for complaints responses were detailed.

Delegates expressed concern about complaints that were ignored and that the time frame had increased from 10 to 15 days. AP explained that complaints are being dealt with more effectively and Chris Lee confirmed that 15 days had been Council procedure for some time. Further concerns were raised regarding the number of unresolved complaints and it was said that the graphs in the pack provided did not include these. A delegate complained that he had been charged for CCTV although there is no CCTV on his estate and that he had complained about this.

Leaseholders requested information leaflets be made available for patch meetings. A delegate pointed out that figures were previously provided to show

at what stage complaints were resolved. AP suggested that this be discussed at the next Leaseholders Executive meeting.

The Chair pointed out that leaseholders and officers should work together to resolve all issues.

7. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed; there were no matters arising.

8. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

Action Points

- Ashley Parrette to consult Redbridge and Havering Council regarding the way they fund their services to leaseholders.
- David Thompson said that he would return to Leaseholders Council in July to give an update on the Road Map.
- David Thompson will respond to individual queries within ten days.