

Leaseholder Forum
Housing Forum



MINUTES

Meeting	Date	Time	Location
Leaseholder forum	15/10/2024	18:00	Zoom

Attendees

Residents

Councillors

Staff

Abbas Sharif
Anne Lumber
B (B)
Ben Hanrath (BH)
Beth
Charles Ross
Charlotte (C)
Chris
Colin
Colin Sheppard
David
Dean
Dina
Jan Heaton
Joanna
Jocelyn (JN)
Liz T (LT)
Lyn Porter (LP)
Mai Muteve
Maryan O
Marek P
Mel
Mirka Novakova
Ross Dallimore
Sami Pearce
Selina Q
Stephen
Steve Carlin
Teresa (T)
Tim De La Rew
Win Kennedy

Yassin Mohamud

Andy Grogan (AG)
David Maggs
Francesca Carroll
James Bannerman
Julie McKay (JM)
Jack Gingell
Barbara Reid
Ilona Marciniak
Henry Murray

Apologies

Minutes

Henry Murray

Agenda items

1. Welcome, housekeeping and introductions
2. Action points and updates since the previous forum (July 2024)
3. Green agenda & sustainability – Andrew Grogan, asset management officer (energy)
4. Housing Management Board update – Ben Hanrath
5. Variable service charges – Julie Mckay
6. Service charge queries – James Bannerman
7. Leasehold reform – updates

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes
1	Welcome, housekeeping and introductions
2	Action Points and updates since the previous forum (July 2024)
3	Green Agenda & sustainability – Andre Grogan, Asset Management Officer Question from chat: Allowing flats to install solar panels? AG: Advised they don't currently have a solar panel programme. Explained that a solar programme would be difficult to implement in certain places in Bristol. JM: Advised that any requests to install solar panels would need to go through leaseholder team. Advised that roof falls outside of residents' responsibility AG: Advised that solar isn't a 'fabric first' aspect of 'green agenda' but expressed desire for it to be part of programme in the future. Question from chat: [Resident] A year ago I requested information but have not heard back if the building I live in has reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). AG: Advised no BCC properties have RAAC. LT: Explained their fire escape contains panels of straw and would be difficult to open in the event of a fire.

JM: asked for this issue to be sent in an email so fire safety team can investigate.

Question from chat:

Would be useful to know what percentage of BCC housing those 1500 and 170 figures equate to, i.e. how much is left to get done without this funding!

AG: Advised that 50% of leaseholders in a bloc to leverage funding. Advised they are looking to maximise the number of properties that they can work on.

Question from chat:

Hi, leaseholder at Juniper Court. I am keen to move away from gas and I'm happy to know there's funding, but what will the cost and disruption be to individual owners?

AG: Advised they can't answer about funding. Explained the varying levels of disruption depending on the type of work being done. Confirmed there would be disruption.

Question from chat:

Why do leaseholders have to pay to reclad blocks when it was the council's decision to put the risky ones on?

JM: Advised that if cladding needs to come off due to building safety reasons, then there is protection under Building Safety Act for leaseholders that will prevent the passing on of these costs. However, if it is being installed as an improvement, these costs can only be passed on if your lease has a clause that will improvements. Advise that it will vary depending on lease. Advised for leaseholders to email in if they want any more help with this.

Chat question: If leaseholders are no longer means tested does this mean they are not liable for paying for the work?

AG: Explained that leaseholder properties can't be left out from improvement as they are part of an overall agenda for a building. Advised they are getting all the funding they can.

JM: Explained the differences between previous means testing and now, where there is no longer a cap of how much funding can go towards improving properties.

Question chat:

Is there appetite from the council to allow leaseholders to have heat pumps fitted to serve their flats on the exterior walls of council blocks? The council owns the outer walls so it would be up to them to provide permission.

AG: Advised they don't have a perfect answer to this question but explained that BCC is looking to decarbonise. Expressed belief that it's not a straightforward answer as it will vary depending on lease. Advised it's never a one size fits all solution.

Cllr Yassin Mohamud: Thanked speakers for information. Asked if information mentioned could be provided to leaseholders after the meeting. Advised a lot of leaseholders don't have access to all the information provided.

Question from chat:

when you are talking of leaseholders are you including flats and houses

AG: advised that there are no leasehold houses but confirmed flats are included

Question:

I am unable to get permission for improvement to replace old, not reliable boiler to new one. Multiple requests with no answer. Is it because of BCC policy to remove gas heating from the city?

AG: Advised there isn't any policy to stop installing boilers. Advised on complete decarbonisation by 2050, which means stopping to install new boilers by 2033.

4 Housing Management Board (HMB) update (Ben Hanrath)

Gave update on recent informal HMB meeting.

- **BCC self-referral to regulator**
- **Estimates around major works**
- **Leaseholder advisory service`**
- **Trial of a block-specific strategy for work updates allowing leaseholders and tenants to get very**

specific information about work on their blocks.

TDLR: Expressed agreement with Ben's summary. Expressed disappointment with Council for not sending apologies out sooner about rating from regulator.

JN: Asked about online building updates being available to low rise properties.

DM: Advised it is only for high-rise blocks.

JM: Advised on possibility for a resident portal being available next year via new IT system.

5 Service Charge – Presentation on variable service charges (Julie)

Question from chat:

If a tenant in my block damages a communal area does the whole block pay? My neighbour has installed a patio that doesn't allow water to drain. If it causes damage who is liable?

JM: Advised that they would charge based on what the lease states per individual. Advise on building insurance and other means that leaseholders already pay towards works in communal areas.

LT: Advised on disparity between estimate and final cost. Detailed specific amounts for communal heating and gas. Expressed confusion about where large final amount comes from.

JM: Asked if individual questions can be sent to their email address. Advised that if there seems to be an issue then they can look at it in more detail.

LT: Asked about communal costs, citing example of someone smashing a window in a communal area.

JM: Advised if they don't know who has damaged a communal area, then it would be a service charge cost. Advised that if it were vandalism they would look to see if it could be claimed on insurance.

CE: Raised point about more incidents being a reason behind

increase insurance costs. Cited anti-social behaviour as a growing problem.

JM: Advised that increase of incidents and anti-social behaviour is not just a Bristol issue, but a national issue. Explained different developments in the world of insurance as contributors to insurance rises.

Chat question:

Does that mean that in a block of ten flats with 5 tenants and 5 leaseholders, the cost for major works is basically split between the 5 leaseholders, or is it split 10 ways with BCC paying 50%?

JM: Advised that leaseholders will only ever be charged their share and not subsidise tenants.

B: Asked about introducing a cleaning charge as a formal service charge in their building.

JM: Advised there is a way to do this, and they will contact directly.

T: Explained that they found it hard to tell if they were in credit or in debit. Asked if they could see this clearly displayed in letters from the council.

JM: Advised they can look at this. Explained difference between service charge account and estimates. Acknowledged a valid point that they will take away directly.

C: Asked for a simpler way of seeing if they are in credit or debit. Raised issue of dirt brought into their communal area.

CE: Expressed an opinion that online meetings are often dominated by Council officers. Expressed desire for more in-person meetings.

JM: Advised there are internal discussions about more tailored meetings.

LP: Expressed encouragement that their service charges showed up earlier this year which they find more helpful.

Jocelyn: Asked if specific details about repairs could be detailed on the service charges.

JM: Advised they do have this information to provide either way.

JN: Expressed positive feedback on gardening and cleaners in their block.

6 Service Charge queries – (James)

JB: Advised that details of repairs aren't included in paper service charges as it would mean a lot of paper for certain blocks. Advised that all details around repairs can be provided.

7 Leaseholder Reform – Updates

No major updates, awaiting details of new legislation.

LP

: Advised that land registry officer take 2 years to get back to you for lease extension.

C: Asked about specific issue relating to their bins.

JM: Asked for a direct email to send in. Advised on environmental and neighbourhood improvement funds that are available.

T: Asked about scaffolding on their block that has been up for too long.

IL: Advised that scaffolding on Northfield is being left up until a decision has been made regarding windows needing replacement or not.

DM: Advised that as soon as BCC decides what to do with windows that scaffolding would come down quite quickly.

JM: Advised that any charges they make to leaseholders have to be reasonable, and if this scaffolding was left up for stated reasons it would not be chargeable to residents.

8 Future 'hot topic' ideas for the Leaseholder Forum in April 2024

**Agenda
Item**

Discussion Points/ Outcomes

JM: Raised council buy-backs, insurance, and section 20 topic they had down for future topics.

Question from chat:

What are BCC plans about outbuildings? Garages, etc?

JN: Asked about the resell process.

JB: Advised if anyone would like information on buy-back process before next forum it can be passed onto them directly if they email james.bannerman@bristol.gov.uk

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AOB

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Date of next meeting 8th April 2025 and close.