

Your Home, Your Say

Leaseholder Annual Meeting

Minutes 14th November 2023

Present:	<p>Leaseholders: Diane Best, Stan Best, Haidee Carpenter, Colin Hazel, Martin Barrass, Martin Johnson, Yolanda Chi, Adam Paszkowski, Raffaella Pappalardo, Mia Liu, Blanca Torres Diaz, Maria Cavalho, Lena Barnes, Sarah Matthews, Juliet Matthews</p> <p>Officers: Will Beavitt (item 2), Richard Woolman (2), Colin Stirling (2), Jenny Disbrey (2), Jamie Lambert, Vishnu Guvvala, Jess Dearden (Resident Involvement Item), Samantha Shimmon (Assistant Director Housing & Homelessness), Megan Barker (Home Ownership Item 7), Carol Amos (Home Ownership & Minutes)</p>
Apologies:	Michael Goshen – Goshen Cleaning Services, Mr Ongan
Copies:	<p>City Homes</p> <p>Leaseholders - webpage</p> <p>Via Teams – copy of recording available to view</p>

	Agenda item	Action
1.0	Welcome	
1.1	Stan Best welcomed everyone to the meeting held via Teams.	
1.1	Jess Dearden introduced herself, she is the Resident Involvement Officer for the Council.	
1.2	<p>The meeting is being recorded - which will be available on the Council's website on the Leaseholders Meetings as soon as possible link here:</p> <p>Leaseholder forum meetings - Cambridge City Council</p>	
2.0	Contracted Services – an update on Grounds Maintenance, Street cleaning, Window Cleaning and Building Cleaning Services	
2.1	Will Beavitt, Senior Estates Officer, introduced this item. At last year's meeting he had given a presentation about the work of the estates team with caretakers, and their involvement in community programmes, shrub planting, wildflower meadows and the meeting before that he had introduced Jamie Lambert – who is the officer responsible for ensuring fire safety in the blocks.	
2.2	So this meeting, he thought it would be helpful to introduce the contractors working on the estates - Michael from Goshen Building Cleaning, Richard Woolman from Streets and Open Spaces and Colin Stirling/Jenny Disbrey from Hi-	

	<p>Spec window cleaning to explain how they organise the work and staffing provision etc.</p>	
2.3	<p>Richard Woolman is a Team Leader for Streets and Open Spaces. In Grounds Maintenance, there are 5 teams of 2 people – 5 of these are skilled gardeners and are very passionate about what they do and take a pride in the areas they are responsible for. Within the areas they are responsible for the housing land, residential areas and sheltered schemes, parks and Highways.</p> <p>Each team covers a couple of Wards and just work in those areas. They have a yearly schedule, so between October and January, these gardeners will be out leaf clearing etc. In January they will start shrub clearing and hedge cutting. April, they will do the first weed control application. From this year, there has been no weed treating to Highways areas, hard standing areas in housing are treated in April and August. They also carry out the first grass cut. Between April and August it is bird-breeding season – so they are unable to cut trees or hedges. Over this time, they will be maintaining shrub beds. In September they deal with the hedges. In addition, there are also grass-cutting staff (4 teams) – cutting parks, play areas, residential areas etc. As there is more work than staff available, the work is supported by 4 temporary staff over the summer.</p>	
2.4	<p>Some of the challenges and changes during 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No weed control on Highways land (not housing) • Reduction in grass cutting schedule – from 12 to 6 cuts – which has had a huge effect on the workloads • This year has been fantastic for plant growth – sun/rain • Bio-diversity work on some land – which has changed how the teams work <p>The teams are looking at resolutions to assist with these areas going forward including the machinery available, number of cuts etc.</p>	
2.5	<p>In terms of Street Cleaning – there is a mechanical street cleaner that goes round all residential areas sweeping areas. The team are looking to resolve issues going forward.</p>	
2.6	<p>Any questions:</p> <p>Martin Barass: <i>Will the reduction in maintenance lead to a reduction in the service charge?</i> Richard explained the reduction in the service was due to changes to Highways land, not residential areas – so the service charge will not change. He explained there has been some pressure on staff – which has taken them longer to get round to areas. The team currently have a freeze on new staff whilst the council are going through a review at the moment – looking at staffing in comparison to role.</p>	
2.7	<p>Adam Paszkowski: <i>Is his team responsible for grass cutting in residential areas? The grass has only been cut twice this</i></p>	

	<p><i>year, was very long and grass was not collected.</i> The council do not under the current contract have the ability to collect grass cuttings – this would add a lot to the service charge. It is felt to be more environmentally friendly to leave to mulch back into the soil. Will said he would check into that area at Dennis Road to see if it was missed.</p>	WB/RW
2.8	<p>Thank you to Richard for attending. For contacts for Streets and Open Spaces – the following are the links to web reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly tipping: https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTFLYTIPPING/launch • Graffiti: https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTGRAFFITI/launch • Dangerous waste (Needles, broken glass, vomit / faeces, urine): https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/DANGEROUSWASTE/launch • Litter bin issues (including dangerous waste next to a litter bin): https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTAPROBLEMWITHALITTERBIN/launch • Grounds maintenance https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/REPORTPROBLEMHEDGESGRASSBRANCHES/launch 	All for info
2.9	<p>Colin Stirling introduced himself from the communal window cleaning company. They clean the windows for the council’s corporate buildings but mainly for the residential areas. There are 3 cleans each year -January/April/September – and each cycle take approx. 4 – 6 weeks. They are only responsible for the <u>communal windows</u> – not residents windows. The work is mainly completed by a Team of 2, who are directly employed by Hi-Spec and supported by an additional 3 staff. They use a water-fed pole system for higher floors. This year, they have been very organised and he feels they have done a better job than last year.</p> <p>Questions</p>	
2.10	<p>Blanca: <i>I live in Cockerell Road and I cannot recall anyone cleaning the communal windows.</i> Colin confirmed the work was completed on 3.10.2023.</p>	
2.11	<p>Juliet: <i>I live in St David’s House and cannot recall windows being cleaned.</i> Confirmed it is just the communal windows.</p> <p>Thank you to Colin and Jenny coming to the meeting.</p>	

2.12	<p>Will Beavitt explained about Building Cleaning – as due to technical issues Michael from Goshen Cleaning was unable to join the meeting. The city is split North and South and there are 2 electric vans in the North, 2 in the South and 1 van that covers any areas. Each van has 2 cleaners.</p>	
2.13	<p>A reminder the contact details for reporting issues with Building Cleaning are as follows: Email: Goshen Support cs@goshenmultiservices.com Telephone: 0800 0371958</p>	
2.14	<p>Questions: Martin Barass: 4 Questions - <i>What time are they meant to start, damage to paintwork due to brushes etc, cleaning of the bin store and cleaning of the recycling area?</i> Will said they do start early – normally 7.30am (Martin said it is sometimes 7am which is too early), need to report if damage to the area, can report if bin store missed as it should be included in the contract, cleaners should have a key – but Will can check; the recycling area is not cleaned by Goshen – it is cleaned twice yearly.</p>	WB
2.15	<p>Heidi Carpenter: <i>Cleaning is a huge chunk of the service charge. Lives on Davy Road with 7 staircases – starts at one end and uses the same bucket for all staircases.</i> Will said he will take this up with them and monitor.</p>	WB/MG
2.16	<p>Diane Best wanted to clarify the agreed way of cleaning staircases was – cleaning should start at the top and work down – rather than the other way round.</p>	
2.17	<p><i>Question in chat – are cycle racks parks of the cleaning contractor?</i> Will said if within a metre of the block – litter will be for Building cleaning – hard standing areas would be Streets and Open Spaces</p> <p>Sorry Michael was unable to be able to join and Will Beavitt will come back to leaseholders with any responses to queries.</p> <p>Thank you to Will and team for attending.</p>	WB
3.0	<p>Diane Best – Housing Scrutiny Committee updates</p>	
3.1	<p>Diane gave a brief overview of what has been happening at the HSC. Meeting is always held in January, March, June and September – although there is an additional meeting next week in preparation for the January budget meeting. In the January meeting, leasehold fees and charges are set.</p>	

3.2	<p>The elected reps are able to speak and vote on Part 1 of the meeting (which is the Landlord section) but can only put forward comments for Part 2 – which is the Strategic Section which deals with things like redevelopment sites.</p>	
3.3	<p>This year, the agenda items that are relevant to leaseholders have been a regular update on the development and delivery of the new Council homes this year and in particular, we have received updates on redevelopment areas e.g. Hanover and Princess Courts Options appraisal.</p> <p>The September meeting, we had an update on the options appraisal at Ekin Road and development update for Fanshawe Rd.</p> <p>We also get a compliance report about gas safety and electrical safety in tenants homes, but they are now including an updated report for damp, mould and condensation and at the June HSC meeting I was very pleased that I was able to specifically influence one of the points in that policy so that it was also made relevant to leaseholders. There is now a dedicated phone and email communication channel should any leaseholders start to get problems with damp, mould and condensation in their homes.</p>	
3.4	<p>The other things that I do in representing leaseholders include attending the residents and officers Asset Management Group, so I can keep updated with the planned maintenance. I also attend the monthly estate liaison meetings, which gives us an opportunity to discuss the contracts that you've just been hearing about with the contractors and with other resident representatives.</p> <p>I also go to the Housing Development Agency monthly working group meetings to ensure that the consultations that are sent to tenants and leaseholders in the redeployment redevelopment areas are appropriately worded and as clear as they can be.</p>	
3.5	<p>During the year, leaseholders have contacted me through the dedicated HSC. The main issues have been planned maintenance issues, issues of redevelopment sites and the effect that this is having on leaseholders selling their leases and to a certain extent, the contracted services that you heard about earlier in this meeting.</p> <p>I am always pleased to receive a communication from leaseholders through the dedicated email address and I'm very pleased now if there are any questions.</p>	
3.6	<p>If anyone has any questions, you can always contact Diane via the HSC email, which is Hsc.residents@gmail.com</p>	

<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>Resident Involvement Update – Jess Dearden Jess Introduced herself, she is the Resident Engagement & Policy Officer and she joined resident involvement in February 2023 and gave an overview of the service. See slide presentation.</p> <p>Main points:</p> <p>The service aims to deliver effective Resident involvement and working with the HSC to identify resident’s feedback. We are one of the only Council’s with residents on our committee.</p> <p>We also produce the Open-Door magazine to tenants and leaseholders.</p> <p>There are upcoming elections to the HSC in 2024 and applications for candidates are open from 1st November to 31st January 2024. There are 5 Tenants and 1 Leaseholder representatives.</p> <p>Jess is also working on the Annual Survey and the various liaison groups who meet to look at services e.g. Resident inspectors, HSC Reps, Redevelopment meetings and Roam/Voids meetings.</p> <p>Website: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement</p> <p><i>If you have any specific questions after the meeting you can email Jess here:</i> Resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk</p> <p><i>Social Media pages (Facebook and Twitter) are here:</i> Cambridge City Council Resident Involvement - Home Facebook CamCitCo Resident Involvement (@CamCitCoRI) / Twitter</p>	
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>Leaseholder Questions</p> <p>Adam Paszkowski: <i>At the end of Dennis Road/Leonard Close there are lots of saplings growing in the brickwork and footings which will cause issues in the future – approximately 60. Tree team say they only deal with non-housing land. Will/Richard Woolman will check – may require additional resource/approval to do.</i></p> <p>Blanca: <i>The Planned work due to be carried out at Cockerell Road, she doesn’t think the work/invoice costs have been calculated correctly. Carol explained we would only provide a breakdown of the work once it is completed, as residents have received an estimated cost. If she has any further enquires, please email us at</i> leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk</p> <p><i>She also said she has found needles on the stairs and antisocial behaviour in the block. Carol said any instances of</i></p>	<p>RW/WB</p>

<p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p>	<p>drug-taking or ASB can be reported to: asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk</p> <p>Martin Barass: <i>A resident has enclosed an area of the communal grounds – is that allowed?</i> Essentially, no, the communal areas are shown on the plans and Leases cannot be changed or varied. The issue needs reporting to the Housing Officer for the area – who needs to advise the tenant to remove the fencing – if the area should be communal. housingofficer@cambridge.gov.uk</p> <p>Adam Paszkowski: <i>During the recent 7-year painting and repair programme, the leaseholder says the contractors painted over damp and mould he pointed out to the communal ceiling. Is the area inspected prior to and after the work?</i> Carol advised that there is a technical surveyor who manages the painting and repair cyclical programme – who would have carried out checks to a sample of blocks before/during and after the works. We can pass on any queries to the team. The work is guaranteed in accordance with the specification of paint etc.</p>	
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Home Ownership Services</p> <p>Megan Barker presented an item on the work of the Home Ownership team. The team are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to buy • Shared Ownership • Leasehold services – predominantly the collection of service charges. There are currently 1179 leaseholders. <p>A copy of the presentation is attached for information.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Martin Barass: <i>Lease extensions – are there likely to be any changes as a result of the recent Kings speech.</i> Megan said the changes talked about was not having to be a leaseholder for 2 years before you can extend your Lease and extending by a further 990 years rather than the current 90. The Commonhold reforms seem unlikely for Cambridge housing stock. We currently do not know the timescales of any changes, but if you are getting nearer to 80 years remaining on your Lease, you might wish to consider extending as properties become un-mortgageable with less than 80 years. The cost is made up of the Council's fees (currently £1750), plus your own legal fees, plus the Premium – which varies depending on your property. You can find information on Lease extensions on the Leasehold Advisory Service website – link here: Leasehold Extension - Getting Started - The Leasehold Advisory Service (lease-advice.org)</p>	

<p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p>Haidee Carpenter: <i>With the proposed major work, when will I find out if the cost of the work is limited to the estimate when I purchased the property under the Right to Buy?</i> Carol explained that we will be checking with our legal department as to whether the end of the 5-year period relates to any Section 20 Notice served within those 5 years or just to works that are invoiced. Works will not be invoiced until September 2024 – which would be out of the 5-year period. We will let residents know once this has been established.</p> <p>Martin Barass: <i>Is there any update on electric charging for vehicles in flats in Cambridge?</i> Will Beavitt said that CCC has partnered with a company called ‘Connected Kerb’. On the Council website, you can nominate areas to receive a charging station. This has been the only way the council is able to fund this as the new technology is very expensive. The company sets the pricing structures.</p> <p>Link to the website: Electric vehicle charging points - Cambridge City Council</p>	
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Stan said he found the meeting very interesting and thanked everyone for attending.</p> <p>The Minutes and recording will be available shortly on the Council’s Leaseholder webpage: Leaseholder meetings - Cambridge City Council</p> <p>Next meeting tbc on the Leaseholder Meetings webpage</p>	