

**Leaseholder Focus Group Meeting  
15<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

**Committee Room 6, Civic Centre, Southend-on-Sea**

**NOTES OF MEETING**

Present

Jan Tate	JT	Leasehold Officer
Patricia Allen	PA	Leaseholder
Ian Ward	IW	Leaseholder
Mike Smith	MS	Leaseholder
Michael Bryant	MB	Housing Attributes Manager
Graham Hart	GH	Fire Safety Manager

**1 Welcome**

JT Welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2 Apologies**

No apologies were received at the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**3 Meet the Team: Michael Bryant Housing Attributes Manager**

MB introduced himself and provided an overview of his team who sit within the Property Services Group.

MB oversees a team of 5 people who manage servicing contracts e.g. Gas & Electrical servicing

In addition the team manage the procurement of works and services for South Essex Homes this includes major works e.g. Roof Renewal and services e.g. Asbestos surveying

MB explained procurement had to adhere to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Councils own contract procedure rules

**Southend Council Contract Procedure Rules**

The Council is accountable to the public for the way it spends public funds. Professional procurement activities contribute to the efficiency, effective & economic delivery of services to the public

For goods and services at varying levels a number of criteria must be met:

£1-£999.99 1 written or verbal quotation ( a local provider if possible)

£1,000-£9,999.99 Minimum of 1 Written quote ( a local provider if possible)

£10,000-£24,999.99 Minimum of 3 Written quotes (2 local providers if possible)

£25,000-£74,999.99 Specification or tender document must be supplied  
Advertised on contract finder; a government website advertising  
public sector contracts

£75,000.00+ As with the £25,000-£74,999.00 level plus a detailed appraisal; approval  
to aware; complete signed Contract

### **Public Contract Regulations 2015**

Applies to all works and services above £25,000.00. As such a Specification or tender  
document must be prepared. Advertised on Contract finder and adhere to the Treaty  
of Rome. This notes the tender process should be open to competition, be  
transparent and treating everyone fairly

### **Advertising in the European Union**

For services exceeding £181,302 and for works exceeding £4,551,413 contracts must  
also be advertised in the European Union. The Official Journal of the European Union  
can be found online

MS asked whether the Council and South Essex Homes had preferred suppliers. MB  
noted they did previously but it was quite bureaucratic managing these e.g. ensuring  
criteria such as Public Liability Insurance is up-to-date. Tenders do specify our  
requirements and request these documents as part of the bidding process

MS clarified what steps have been taken to ensure contractors complete works to a  
high standard. MB noted contracts are now assessed on 50% cost and 50% quality  
which is designed to limit these risks. Previously assessment was done on a 80%  
cost and 20% quality basis

#### **4 Meet the Team: Graham Hart, Fire Safety Manager**

GH introduced himself to the group and explained he had recently been appointed the  
Fire Safety Manager for South Essex Homes. The new role will cover a number of  
issues to ensure South Essex Home's properties are as safe as possible in the event of  
any fire risk. This includes major works e.g. fire doors, a rigorous assessment and  
compliance programme together with initiatives to assist residents within their homes  
and in the communal areas e.g. Fire Safety Workshops

GH invited members to join a recently formed Fire Safety Focus Group and noted  
details of meetings would be in the next edition of Insight

IW noted he was due to be charged for the recent door works GH & JT stressed the  
requirement to ensure resident safety and the doors were the best on the market

IW & MS both mentioned potential issues in respect of their front doors. GH advised he  
would visit to assess

GH

IW noted the front entrance door was missing lower fixings. JT to investigate

JT

#### **5 Minutes of last meeting & Matters Arising**

-Members agreed the Minutes of the last meeting were a true record.

-Following Anita McGinley advising she would be happy to provide members with an

update on Community Safety. Members requested if she could attend February's meeting. JT to arrange

JT

-JT advised members an internal consultation had been conducted in regards to the Allocations Policy. JT to supply any additional updates in future meetings

JT

-JT advised Service Charges had recently been completed

## 6 **Communications, Policy and Procedures**

### **Reserve Fund**

-JT advised he was hoping to have a Reserve Fund Policy draft for review at the next meeting

-Once agreed letters would be sent in December/ January in time for next years estimates

-In respect of outstanding queries. JT had received clarity from the Group Manager at the Council for Financial Planning and Control

The Councils Investment strategy including statement of accounts is available on the following webpage

[http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/377/our\\_budget\\_and\\_financial\\_processes](http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/377/our_budget_and_financial_processes)

-In the event a local authority ran out of money; unlike a company, it cannot become bankrupt as the government would intervene

### **Contract and Repairs**

-JT provided an update on the Insurance Renewal. The tender is currently being advertised and both the council and South Essex Homes supplied further information in respect of the buildings following further queries from prospective suppliers. This included further information on construction, fire alarms, the compartmentation works and claims history

### **Leasehold Event 2020**

Discussion took place in regards to future focus group meetings. Members were happy with current format i.e. a mixture of evening and afternoon meetings

Drop in events would continue in December with a further review following these

Members will discuss a future leasehold specific event at the next meeting

All

## **Insight**

The next edition will shortly be published. Leasehold matters consisted of a thank you to Stephanie Frost who had recently moved away.

The main article featured advice on preventing blocked drains

An advertisement was included for December's drop in event together with a range of online forms which can be completed on line. This included a permission for pets form and the sub-letting notification form

General articles within the Newsletter included Crimestoppers as suggested by members

Future articles would involve the re-publication of the ready reckoner

JT

## **7     Gas Safety**

JT noted 520 of 619 certificates had been received

JT noted James Williams had prepare 136 1<sup>st</sup> reminder letters and 140 2<sup>nd</sup> reminder letters since the last meeting

## **8     Member Updates**

### **South Essex Homes**

JT advised members that a staff briefing was taking place next week on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019

JT noted a new employee benefit provider had started. This included the provider operating cycle to work schemes and car leasing. This was following a consultation on terms and condition undertaken by Senior Management earlier in the year

### **General**

JT noted the Citizens Advice Bureau were setting up a free Energy Switching Service at their Southend Offices on Church Road

A specialist would assist persons switching energy supplies whilst providing energy saving tips and providing advice on fuel poverty

Appointments will take place on Tuesdays and an appointment can be booked by calling 01702 456352 or visiting the offices between 10am-3.30pm Monday to Friday

MS advised he was involved in the campaign to ensure affordable housing is on offer at the Fossets Farm development and was meeting with James Dudderidge MP and other representatives of the campaign on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2019

## **Better Queensway**

MS noted that the next residents briefing will be held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and was looking forward to seeing the draft plans in respect of the development

The briefing would be a further chance to meet members of Swan Housing Association and discuss any developments in respect of the settlements for Leaseholders

### 9 **Open Questions**

Non-received

### 10 **Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 2pm-4pm Civic Centre Committee Room 6**



