

## Minutes of Leaseholder Focus Group

6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Room 5:01, Civic Centre, 2-4pm

Present:

Katy Baker KB Leasehold Services & Right to Buy Officer  
 James Williams JW Specialist Income Management Officer  
 Mr M Smith, MS Leaseholder  
 Mr N Ives, NI Leaseholder  
 Ms H Moore, HM Leaseholder  
 Mrs L Farmer, LF Leaseholder  
 Mr K Jursa, KJ Leaseholder  
 Mrs J Eggett, JE Leaseholder  
 Ms Y Doyle, YD Leaseholder

		Action
1	<b><u>Welcome</u></b>	
1.1	KB welcomed attendees	
2	<b><u>Apologies</u></b>	
2.1	Keith Ducker and John Clarke	
3	<b>Terms of Reference</b> <b>Housekeeping complete</b>	
4	<b><u>Pets Policy</u></b>	
	KB outlined the pet's policy and advised that although the lease forbids pets, it had been agreed that leaseholders could have pets on the same terms as tenants – if they are compliant with the pet's policy. MS said he understood that the pet's policy meant that anyone in a high rise should not have a pet. He said there are several dogs in Malvern, and cat litter is being thrown from the windows of one flat. MS Said the pet policy is not enforced. KB said it is, but it is difficult to enforce.	Advise Tenancy - checks required
5	KB Advised that a new S20 has recently gone out advising that asbestos removal work will be undertaken. In the event that Leaseholders wish to undertake any works in their flats, they must be mindful of the potential presence of asbestos and take appropriate measures to ensure that any works are undertaken safely. JW advised that asbestos is not considered unsafe unless it is disturbed. KB Advised that communal repairs are the responsibility of South Essex Homes.	
6	KB outlined regulations in respect of Gas Safety Certificates – that it is a	

	contractual obligation for leaseholders to provide a GSC but if they rent out the flat, it is a legal obligation. <b>HM</b> asked how long a certificate lasts and how to get one. <b>JW</b> advised that they last a year. We cannot advise which gas engineer to use but a list of local gas engineers that can provide a GSC can be found online under Gas Safe Register. <b>NI</b> advised that there are two types of GSC – a homeowner’s certificate and a Landlords Certificate. <b>JW</b> said we are happy to provide advice to leaseholders if they have any queries about Gas Safety Certificates.	
7	<b>KB</b> Advised that Service charge statements would be provided shortly. <b>JC</b> said there was confusion about who to speak to in respect of service charges – Penny Howse (City Council accounts receivable team) tells people to query matters with South Essex Homes, whilst South Essex Homes say to put queries to Penny Howse. <b>JW</b> explained that the setting of service charges is down to South Essex homes, whilst any arrangements in respect of paying the charges is for the city Councils accounts receivable team. <b>HM</b> said she has never had a service charge breakdown. <b>JC</b> asked if Service charge schedules could be more detailed. <b>NI</b> said if there is a credit on the actuals, no refund is issued. <b>JC</b> said Jan Tate (former Leasehold Officer) had said caretaking is charged for the time they are on site, but <b>JC</b> said being on site doesn’t mean they are actually working. <b>MS</b> asked if The Council would take any Actuals shortfalls in one go or if they will take in instalments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide HM with Service charges breakdown</li> <li>• Make schedules detailed.</li> <li>• Ask Accounts</li> </ul>
8	<b>LFG - KB</b> asked how we might improve LFGs? <b>KB</b> advised we have considered guest speakers and inviting a surveyor, Fire Safety Officer, Caretaking to attend. <b>JC</b> said he felt quarterly was too far apart and asked if they could be bi-monthly? He said we should put the outcomes of LFGs on the website.	
9	<b>Any other business</b>	
9.1	<b>HM</b> complained about repairs – said nothing ever gets followed up. She said she had reported a cover missing from a stack pipe and it had not been replaced. She said a condenser boiler had been installed at her property by South Essex Homes and bits were dropping off it, she had reported it, but nothing was done. She said her windows leak. <b>JW</b> advised Leaseholders responsible for glass and South Essex Homes are responsible for frames, so it could be reported as a repair. <b>JC</b> said if you call Customer Services, you say you are a leaseholder and you get told to write in. He said there were repairs that have been outstanding for 2 years. <b>HM</b> said cleaners are useless. <b>JE</b> said she thought the cleaners were good. <b>HM</b> said the lifts are often out of order. <b>JC</b> said if you ask for a communal repair out of hours, you get told they will not do a communal repair out of hours. He said the contact centre does not have details of names of leaseholders out of hours. <b>JW</b> advised there is a list of leaseholders and contact details which is available 24/7. <b>KB</b> also advised it is a contractual obligation for leaseholders to update us with their tenant details. <b>NI</b> said contractors refused to deal with Leaseholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Check repair raised.</li> <li>*CS Training</li> </ul>
9.1	<b>JE</b> said they had problems with children from Belfairs School trespassing and not closing gates. <b>JC</b> suggested a spring closer on the gates. <b>JW</b> suggested raise with Youth Engagement Team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with YET</li> </ul>
9.1	<b>JC</b> complained that window cleaning standards are abysmal and asked if anyone ever inspected what contractors were supposed to be doing? He said he opposed the current contractors whom he said are not fulfilling the terms of their contract. He said we get estimates and go for the cheapest, but we do not seem to ask if the estimates are reasonable. <b>NI</b> asked if S20 notices could be easier to understand. <b>JC</b> said they ought to be sent recorded, or at least by FCP. <b>JW</b> advised if they were sent recorded, they would cost leaseholders more, but they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise inspections and contract compliance measures.</li> </ul>

	<p>are sent by FCP. HM asked how the Reserve Fund worked. <b>JW</b> explained it assisted leaseholders to budget for any expensive major repair's programmes. He advised leaseholders can opt out of the RF programme. <b>JC</b> said not everyone got the RF Letters advising of the option to opt out. <b>HM</b> said she wanted to opt out. <b>NI</b> raised an issue of some spotlights which he said are tungsten and cost a lot to run – he asked if they could be changed for efficient LEDs?</p>	
10	<p><b>Date and Time of next Meeting – Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024, Committee Room 3, 5:00pm – 7:00pm</b></p>	