**Draft Minutes**

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL - Leaseholder Meeting**

22 February 2017  
6.30pm - Shimkent Room, Daneshill House

Present: Stevenage Borough Council, Laura Hodgskin (LH) – Service Manager Leasehold & Lettings, Emma Goff (EG) – Senior Leasehold Advisor, Rebekah Brydon (RB) - Major Works Officer

Chair: Diane Green (DG)  
Minutes: Emma Goff (EG) – Senior Leasehold Advisor

Leaseholders: Salima Sharif, David Weemys, Alan Dean, Jane Paul, Donna Holton, Jean Sebastian, Joan O’Connor, Vickie Large, Karin Endersby, Susan Mellor, Robert Tregaskis, Rebecca Lawson, Lisa Kelvey, Iain Chambers

<table>
<thead>
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<th>ITEM</th>
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<td>1. Welcome and apologies;</td>
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Round the table introductions included LH introducing Rebekah Brydon, the new Major Works Officer who will start in post on Monday  
Apologies received from: Jon Thurlow, Brad Glenister, Lynsey Gammage, Mathew Blackham, Peter Robins, Bryan Locksley, Ms Prowle |
| 2. Neighbourhood Wardens |  
John Marshall and Dave Armitage introduced themselves as two of the three new wardens (Sue Amey unfortunately was not able to attend) both John and Dave, have police backgrounds, and Sue has previously worked in Pest Control at SBC, and as dangerous dogs officer.  
They explained that their role is in the early stages of development, they will soon be out and about in the community and their aim is to improve residents’ quality-of-life. They will be proactively identifying issues and making improvements relating to ASB, fly tipping and neighbourhood problems. They will be long term problem solving, and not just a stop gap. They will not replace the police. If residents have ASB issues they should still continue to report to the police. The wardens will be liaising with SBC officers, local Councillors and the |
police, to solve problems in the community, not just the housing department.

They will cover 6 areas – John Marshall covers Shephall and Bandley Hill, Dave Armitage covers Pin Green and Bedwell and Sue Amey covers St Nicholas and Martins Wood.

If they help, they would be grateful for your feedback, if successful it may be possible to expand to another 3 wards.

Their hours are currently 9 to 5 but may be flexible in the future. They are looking to get accreditation so that they can carry out on-the-spot fines.

Questions raised included; What if you live in an area not covered, the wardens answer was please call anyway, as they may be able to help or make a referral.

Contact leaflets were handed out and leaseholders were encouraged to email or phone and speak to them.

Contact via neighbourhood.warden@stevenage.gov.uk

3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 2 November 2016

DG went through the previous meeting minutes.

Actions included: Jon Thurlow, would give this group a 6-monthly update from HMB, however apologies were received from Jon, who was unable to attend tonight’s meeting.

For the leaseholders who did not attend the last meeting where Jon gave an overview of HMB, LH recapped on the briefing that JT had given at the previous meeting, detailing what HMB’s role is. The board monitors decisions and looks at the strategic direction of SBC. It’s an opportunity for SBC to be transparent and open to scrutiny.

Jon’s email address - leaseholders are asked to email leasehold@stevenage.gov.uk with any questions and the team will forward them on.

Ensure that the minutes of HMB were put on the website. LH explained that HMB agreed to publish their tracker, rather than the minutes on the website. They felt customers would gain more information from the tracker as it follows items right through to completion.

JT to update at next meeting
The tracker will be updated monthly, when the corresponding minutes are agreed at the following meeting.

Caretaking – Paul Seaby, Service Manager to give group feedback on the caretaking review in summer.

Minutes were agreed.

## 4. Number of Meetings

The group were asked for their views on how frequent meetings should be in 2017/18. In 2016/17 there were 3, in previous years there has been 4, however going forward there will also be specific meetings for the major refurbishment contract

Leaseholders suggested four, as there are likely to be issues outside of the major refurbishment contract.

Discussions led to questions around the major refurbishment contract

**Q** – How many major works meetings will there be?
**A** - Although not known yet, there are likely to be at least two.

**Q** – When will meetings kick off?
**A** – Likely to be late summer early autumn

**Q** – How many blocks have been surveyed?
**A** – There are 550 blocks and a sample of 125 (to take into account the different archetypes) have been surveyed. When SBC go out to tender they will have a good basis for tenders.

**Q** – When will it start?
**A** – Once agreed, the first stage of the Section 20 Consultation is likely to start in March/April, following which the procurement process will take approximately 12 months. It is hoped that works will start on site in the financial year 2018/19

**Q** – If putting my property up for sale what will show up on a search
**A** – Legal searches highlight things such as planning notices.

The process in respect of the sale of a lease normally includes the buyers Solicitor making a pre-sale enquiry to the council about the lease and the service charges, including questions about what works are likely to be carried out in the next five years. The Leasehold Team provide a pre-sale ‘pack’ in response to this, which includes a list of the type of communal works likely to be carried out in the next 5 years.

When the formal ‘section 20 consultation’ process begins, and Notices have been served on leaseholders, there is an obligation to pass on the details of any notices to solicitors when an enquiry is
received.

Q – A leaseholder who recently purchased their home was advised that her service charges are likely to go up by her solicitor.
A - The solicitor will have been provided with a list of the type of works that are likely. Major works are still service charges, but are where the works are likely to cost over £250 per unit. This then triggers the requirement for the Council to carry out formal consultation (known as Section 20) with the effected leaseholders, prior to the works being carried out. Only necessary & reasonable works will be undertaken. This councils’ Major Refurbishment Contract will involve a lengthy thorough procurement exercise which will take approximately a year; this reflects how much detail there will be. There is a thorough communications plan in place for the length of the project, ensuring leaseholders will be kept up to date.

Q – A leaseholder mentioned that she was never told of works to the lift in her block before it was done. Leaseholders appealed and £300 was taken off the bill.
A – The reason for any reduction will be set down in the tribunal case and each case is individual, however if works are deemed urgent then legislation allows the council to apply to the First Tier Property Tribunal for dispensation of the Section 20 consultation requirements, for example an urgent lift or roof repair requiring urgent attention.

5. Agenda Items for 2017/18 Meetings

In groups, the leaseholder’s brainstormed ideas for what they would like on the agenda for 2017/18 meetings.

The four high priority areas agreed for this years’ meetings were:

1) Major refurbishment contract update
2) Caretaking service review update
3) Updates from the Neighbourhood Wardens (and general ASB management)
4) Updates from HMB

Meeting suggestions included:

- Major works payment options x 3
- Caretaking update x 3
- HMB updates
- Update from neighbourhood wardens – fly-tipping x 3
- Asb x 1
- Pets x 1
- Open floor 15 minutes x 1
• Repairs team meet and greet
• Repairs – discrepancies about repairs carried out including what new repairs are required x 1
• Parking issues - enforcement x 3
• Complaints resolutions/KPI’s - Performance – how may calls – service failures complaints – things not being followed up x 2
• Customer scrutiny panel issues feedback x 1
• Refuse – clarity on what bins are for and how do the Council communicate this to customers in flat blocks, frequency of collections etc x 2
• How many convictions for fly-tipping and asb x 1

Where meeting agendas allow, the council will of course seek to include the other items suggested by leaseholders wherever possible.

6. Any other business

A leaseholder from a block in Archer Road wanted to compliment the grounds maintenance team on a great job at her block.

Lisa Kelvey – asked about the costing of a light bulb, it was £45 – this led to a discussion about how the Council use a national schedule of rates to charge for repairs.

Lisa Kelvey There are lots of parking issues, people are parking where they like, using Harrow Court to go into town, and although there was recent consultation on parking, there are possibly other remedies not just wardens and permits. Lisa gave her feedback via the consultation but never heard back. She pointed out that there is a barrier at Harrow Court - why, are people not given passes to get in, this does not need a warden etc.

5. Date of next meeting – 14 June 2017 – Shimkent Room 6.30 to 8.00pm
Then subsequent meetings – 6 September and 13 December 2017 and 28 March 2018 in the Civil Suite.