

Major Works - FAQ's

Who do I contact for further information?

- **Leaseholders** - Rebekah Brydon, Major Works Officer, Leasehold Team.
Email Rebekah at MajorWorks@Stevenage.gov.uk or telephone on 01438 242666

Why have I received so many letters all at once?

- We are currently looking to re-tender these contracts to ensure best value for money for our residents. In these circumstances, we are required by law to consult with our leaseholders, which involves sending notices to you.

Why don't the in-house repairs team cover these works?

- We consider it necessary to enter into these agreements to support the in-house services provided by Stevenage Borough Council in the delivery of housing repairs. This will primarily be to:
 - Support the Council's direct delivery teams during busier periods;
 - Deliver larger repair works where the Council does not have sufficient capacity or outsourcing of the works provides better value; and
 - Provide greater flexibility to meet customer demand.

How do you select the contractors?

- Contracts are awarded on a competitive tendering basis, whereby contractors are invited to bid for the contract. The tender submissions are then assessed by a panel on the basis of cost and quality.

What happens if the contractor doesn't perform well?

- Our intention is to select contractors who can demonstrate a strong track record of delivering works of this nature and work closely in partnership to ensure high standards of workmanship and customer care. Contractor's performance requirements are detailed in their contracts and will be managed using robust mechanisms which are also set out in their contract.

What is Section 20?

- Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 sets out how a landlord must consult with leaseholders, where the landlord intends to carry out '**Major Works**', or enter into a '**Qualifying Long Term Agreement**'.
- **Major Works** are any works which will cost the leaseholder **over £250**.

- A '**Qualifying Long Term Agreement**' or QLTA, is an agreement entered into by the landlord with a wholly independent organisation or contractor for a period of more than **12 months**. Landlords must consult where the amount payable by *any one* contributing leaseholder **exceeds £100** in any one year.
- For more information, please go to The Leasehold Advisory Service website- <http://www.lease-advice.org/topics/?topic=section-20-consultation> or contact the Major Works Officer at SBC.

Can I recommend a contractor?

- For some contracts leaseholders are able to nominate contractors. When and how leaseholders can do this is detailed in the Section 20 legislation.
- While the opinions and views of leaseholders are invited and will be considered, leaseholders **do not** have the right to nominate a contractor for these contracts.
- For this contract, the works will be of such a high value, that EU procurement rules apply and the proposed contract must be advertised by public notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). This means leaseholders cannot nominate a contractor.

How will I be billed for the repairs works?

- The way in which you are billed for these types of works will remain the same as it is now. These contracts are for works which you have always benefitted from; they are not new elements being added to your service charge.

As a leaseholder, am I paying for the tenanted flats?

- No. Leaseholders pay for their share of the costs directly through their service charges whereas tenant's contributions are paid from their rent.

I am claiming benefits; do I still need to pay?

- The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) may be able to assist people receiving job seekers allowance, universal tax credits or pension credit with their Service Charges. Please seek independent advice.