

# **Norwich Leaseholders Forum Meeting**

**07 December 2004**

**Norwich City Hall**

## **Agenda**

- 1. Election of Chair for the Evening**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Minutes of Previous meeting**
- 4. Update on CityCare Contract**
- 5. Options Appraisal Briefing**
- 6. Dates for next years meetings**
- 7. Agenda Items for next meeting**
- 8. Date and time of next meeting**

# **Chairs Minutes of the Leasehold Forum Meeting 15 September 2004**

Apologies from Joyce Divers, Jonathon Smith and Richard Essex

## **?? Citycare Contract**

Much unhappiness expressed again on cost and quality of works

The following reports on cost issues to be emailed to Pauline Walton within 15 days and published to meeting attendees with the minutes

- Mr Thompson's case to be explained by Hereward Cooke and Charles Thurston
- Mr Leggett's roofing repairs specification to be given a commercial costing by Roy Blower (in his private capacity as roofing contractor)
- The £40 service charge "management costs" to be explained by Charles Thurston

Charles Thurston outlined legal changes in recent years and explained that leaseholders can no longer demand two or three quotes when a council has signed a long-term, high value contract. It is no longer a legal requirement for two or three estimates to be provided. However, our experience shows that where significant overcharging can be clearly demonstrated, the council will reduce the cost, so keep fighting.

## **?? Current Court Cases**

Poplar Housing vs Leaseholders is due to conclude in the next month - this is an issue of non-consultation where leaseholders are demanding the right to pay a maximum of £250 each for works costs due to lack of consultation.

Hackney Council vs leaseholders is regarding costs assigned to leaseholders for work required to reorganise which was on-charged to leaseholders.

The Leaseholders Association are concerned that over the last year leaseholder complaints have risen from 10% to 40%.

## **?? Costs, Planning and Payment**

In planning its compulsory works, the council is committing leaseholders to paying sums of money which in some cases cause significant hardship and distress. It is understood that the council cannot legally offer interest free loans and that long term repayment seems to be out of the question. We would like to discuss how these situations can be avoided.

It was agreed that major works can now be paid in twelve monthly instalments or in two six-monthly instalments. If council staff do not advise to this effect then please inform Hereward Cooke.

## ?? **Strategic Housing Options**

In the meantime, the council is now discussing the long-term plans for housing in Norwich. Charles outlined the four options:

- Stock retention
- Arms length management organisation (handover management completely whilst retaining ownership)
- Private Finance Initiative
- Stock Transfer to housing association

These options will be presented and discussed at the next meeting, *and it was noted that Leaseholders will not be allowed to vote. This will be a clear point of interest during that discussion.*

## ?? **OPERA Survey**

This is a survey to establish the quality of housing required by tenants (eg frequency and quality of refurbishments). The survey will take place between October 2004 and December 2004. Results to be presented at a later meeting?

## ?? **Good News**

Window cleaning in Russet Grove has improved substantially following complaints.

One maintenance complaint was reported as having been handled promptly, pleasantly and cheaply.

More of these please, because we can make a difference on quality when we complain through the right channels.

## ?? **Other Actions**

- Richard Essex from Normandy Tower will be a second leaseholder representative to attend the Tenant Participation meetings
- Charles Thurston to arrange for leaseholders to be sent regular copies of Tenant Talk.
- Statistics from Citycare Helpdesk to be included in the minutes (please include update on 67 Lovelace Road)
- Charles Thurston to follow up incomplete action on Citycare Helpdesk complaint at 67 Lovelace Road

CALL HEReward COOKE on 624827 TO COMPLAIN ABOUT POOR SERVICE FROM CITYCARE HELPDESK OR COUNCIL