

LEASEHOLDER UPDATE

Report of the Director of Housing & Customer Service

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides the Local Housing Boards with feedback provided in response to items raised at the Leaseholder Open Meeting on 8 October 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Housing Board notes the content of this report.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 At the Local Housing Board South meeting held on 9 October 2008 the leaseholder Board Member outlined issues of concern that had been raised at the Leaseholder Open Meeting held on 8 October 2008.
- 3.2 The Local Housing Board South heard that an initial meeting to discuss the issues had already been held with officers and agreement made that the Director of Housing & Customer Service would attend the next meeting on 12 November 2008 to respond to the issues raised and provide feedback to the Local Housing Boards.
- 3.3 The issues raised by leaseholders included the following:
- standards of contract cleaning
 - blocked/damaged guttering
 - leaseholders liability towards fire/vandal/contractors damage
 - repair to knee rail/low level fencing
 - inaccuracies in invoicing
 - time priorities for minor repairs
 - specific case issues of anti-social behaviour.
- 3.4 The Directors provided a written response to the leaseholder Board Member on 3 November 2008 and attended the meeting on 12 November 2008 and advised of the following actions:
- Contract cleaning – leaseholders were advised of the current position in relation to the retendering of contract cleaning. We acknowledged that current standards were falling below tenants and leaseholders expectations but that this was a key point to be addressed within the new contract from April 2009.

- Blocked and damaged guttering – we advised that monthly surveys are now taking place and this will identify all blocks of flats that suffer from blocked guttering. Financial restraints mean that this type of work is not carried out as often as we would like, but we are looking into new working practices which avoid the need for scaffolding and provide a much more affordable solution.
- Knee rail/low level fencing – we have taken feedback from tenants and leaseholders and there are mixed views on their preferences for this type of fencing. We do not, therefore, intend to be prescriptive and will continue to liaise on a block by block basis. Orders had been raised for the damaged fencing at Leaper Street with a completion date by the end of November 2008.
- Leaseholders liability – leaseholders were advised that they were not liable for the cost of repairing fire damage or damage caused by our contractors. The former being recoverable from insurance and the later from the contractor causing damage. It is inevitable that residents will have to bear the cost of some vandal damage as it is not always possible to identify and charge perpetrators.
- Inaccuracies in invoicing – Errors made have been acknowledged and apologies made to the leaseholders involved. The process is currently manual and through this some incorrect figures were applied to invoices in Rivermead House. Leaseholders were assured that if they felt invoices were incorrect they should contact the Leaseholder Manager who would 'hold' the accounts whilst checks were carried out. We are very hopeful that improvements through the upgraded Academy Computer System will greatly improve the administration process and result in greater accuracy.
- Priorities for Minor Repairs – leaseholders identified that replacement of light bulbs in communal areas were taking up to three weeks to be attended to. We immediately amended our systems to reflect the urgency of this work. Other ongoing repair inspections are continuing in liaison with the individual leaseholders.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Issues – two cases reported we not previously known to Derby Homes and we have commenced discussions with the complainants. A further case had been ongoing for some time. The Director of Housing & Customer Service spoke directly with the leaseholders concerned to advise of the current position and we are continuing to monitor the situation.

3.5 A member of the Executive team will continue to attend the Leaseholder meetings to provide support and advice. We will ensure that matters are carried forward and resolved through the established mechanisms.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report

- Financial and Business Plan Implications
- Consultation
- Legal and Confidentiality
- Personnel
- Environmental
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Health & Safety

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or the Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org - Tel 01332 711010

Author: Maria Murphy, Director of Housing & Customer Service, Tel: 01332 711012 Email: maria.murphy@derbyhomes.org

Background Information: None.

Supporting Information: None.