

**MINUTES OF ISLINGTON LEASEHOLDERS FORUM MEETING  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

**WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 @ 7PM**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL**

**Present**

Brian Potter ( <b>Chair</b> ) (BP)	Upper Street
Phyllis Malin	Boleyn Road
Naresh Raval	Upper Street

**HFI Officers**

Doug Goldring (DG)	Director of Operations
Alex Evans	Home Ownership Services
Aiden Stapleton (AS)	Project Manager

**Partners Officers**

Claire Thorogood (CT)	Leasehold Manager
Nic Treble (NT)	Contract Manager – Works Team

**Guests**

Paul Convery (PC)	Councillor for Caledonian Ward
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**Apologies**

Richard Rosser	Boleyn Road
Chris Radway	PFI/Partners

**Observers**

A Kazakos	Dunoon House
D Stevens	President House
S Gibb	Bowerman Court
C Hallmaiden	Bowerman Court
J Wicher	Roth Walk
V Davies	Lorraine Mansions
I Mkparu	New North Road
F Ogonadi	New North Road
T Ozen	Staveley Close
R Tankard	Caroline Martin House
W Meetoa	Arthur Henderson House
J Harwood	Catherall Road
K Watts	Lofting Road
J Togher	Blenheim Court
M Willis	Holland Walk
H Barrett	Belfont Walk

S Dawson  
 T Doyle  
 J Gorden Smith  
 T Cooper  
 H Cagnoni  
 D Ferreira  
 S Pollaya  
 M O'Sullivan

Saxonbury Court  
 Hillrise Mansions  
 Ilex House  
 Coombe House  
 Wilmington Square  
 Newland Court  
 Steadman Court  
 Councillor

## Items Discussed

ITEM	MATTER RAISED	ACTION
1.0	<p><b>Introductions and Apologies</b></p> <p>Introductions made.</p>	
2.0	<p><b>Cllr Paul Convery</b></p> <p><b>PC</b> The Council wants to get leaseholders onside and to have a decent deal. The high major works bills are due to historic neglect. Councillors have scrutiny over council services, and I and other councillors have formed a scrutiny committee for major works carried out by HFI on behalf of the freeholder. It particularly focuses on value for money.</p> <p>We have heard from many leaseholders and tenants about the problems with cost and quality of the works.</p> <p>We think there is a problem with the way the works are managed, through framework contracts. The framework contractors are supposed to have met cost and quality standards. The committee is seeing if framework contracts are the best way of getting value for money. We're comparing this with other boroughs in and out of London. With the framework contract you get a lot of subcontracting, which leads to money leaking out of the system, and sloppy practice.</p> <p>HFI is not properly measuring satisfaction of leaseholders. It lumps together those who are in the middle with those that are satisfied.</p> <p>We think that as there is such a backlog of works to be done, quality has gone out the window. It is like the Satman loan in the 1980s, in that there was a lot of money suddenly available that was not well spent.</p> <p>The quality of work done by Apollo on the Bemerton Estate was very poor. We can't change what has happened, but we will try to get a better deal for leaseholders in the future.</p> <p><b>Q</b> Were contractors bought to book for poor workmanship?</p>	

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	<p><b>PC</b> This is part of my walkabout on 20 September. I will talk to Apollo.</p> <p><b>Q</b> The contractors said that part of the costs go to training. Is this so?</p> <p><b>PC</b> I wasn't happy with what the framework contractors said. It was more that local recruitment rather than training led to additional costs, but that doesn't wash with me, as all companies are required to train their staff.</p> <p><b>Q</b> The committee has discovered what leaseholders already knew. When will the report be ready?</p> <p><b>PC</b> Before Christmas, I don't have the precise date yet. It will be published and go the Council Executive. They will inform HFI if they want to implement our suggestions. I don't want this to be political football, I want it to be supported by all councillors.</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<p><b>Questions and answers</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b> <b>BP</b> I have copies of a recent LVT case, please take a copy if it is of relevance to you. Doug, would you like to comment?</p> <p><b>DG</b> The case relates to the issuing of a Section 20B notice. This was pre the 2003 legislation and was not a framework contract. It is HFI's view that LBI followed the legislation at the time, but the LVT ruled in favour of the leaseholder as they said we were unable to prove the costs at the time the Section 20 was issued. HFI are not going to appeal as it is not cost effective, even though the legal advice we have is that we have a reasonable case. We will defend similar cases in future.</p> <p><b>BP</b> There is no prescribed Section 20 documentation. This case doesn't set a precedent, but may be of use to leaseholders in similar situations.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> <b>Q</b> My patio door was installed by the council in 2001. It is jammed shut and the locksmiths that have looked at it have been unable to fix it. It's a fire hazard. When I speak to HFI they tell me that as I'm a leaseholder it's up to me to fix it. Age Concern and Islington Peoples Rights won't help me. What can I do?</p> <p><b>DG</b> We need to take your details. We will get back to you within 14 days.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> <b>Q</b> My bill does not have enough information on it about the types of works. The details were in a separate letter. Also, my costs are different to my neighbours. Will this be resolved?</p> <p><b>PC</b> Barnet Homes provide this information with the bill as well as in the Section 20.</p> <p>Post meeting note: HFI will look at this area of good practice.</p> <p><b>3.4</b> <b>Q</b> Leaseholders on my estate are not happy with the CCTV works that are taking place. We were told in 2004 there would not be a cost for</p>	<p><b>AS</b></p> <p><b>AE</b></p>

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	<p>leaseholders, but now there is.</p> <p><b>BP</b> I was at the meeting where the officer said there wouldn't be a cost. He didn't know what he was talking about.</p> <p><b>PC</b> Let me tell you a story about the Bemerton Estate. It had a lot of ASB, the police wouldn't come to the estate unless they were in a large group. CCTV was suggested. The HFI scheme had 120 cameras and cost £1,200,000, and would have led to additional costs for tenants and leaseholders. The tenants and leaseholders rejected the scheme. If the residents work together you will have influence.</p> <p>The Council have this attitude that leaseholders live in goldmines, but many leaseholders are on fixed incomes.</p>	
3.5	<p><b>Q</b> You say that the scrutiny will make things better for leaseholders in the future, but what about the people that have already had works?</p> <p><b>PC</b> I'm embarrassed that the Government aren't doing more. They turned down the option of having a cap of £10,000. A cap would lead to better value for money.</p>	
3.6	<p><b>BP</b> HFI are having their Audit Commission inspection later this year. Someone from the Commission is coming to the ILF next month. You have the opportunity to ask them questions.</p> <p><b>PC</b> You should tell them what you have experienced. They will also look at the scrutiny report.</p>	
3.7	<p><b>Q</b> At Dunoon House leaseholders are charged for the CCTV, but the camera doesn't help us. HFI have ignored this and said it is for the good of the estate.</p> <p><b>PC</b> People pay for services they don't get due to the nature of the estate. The concierge is a good idea, but can be done badly.</p>	
3.8	<p><b>Q</b> Are you going to recommend capping in your report?</p> <p><b>PC</b> We haven't discussed this yet. There is likely to be some capping in general terms. LBI would have to be able to implement the recommendations.</p>	
3.9	<p><b>Q</b> Why are the PFI works capped and not the HFI works?</p> <p><b>PC</b> It's illogical.</p> <p><b>CT</b> There are two types of capping; mandatory, which is Government funded, and discretionary, where it's up to Councils. The difference for discretionary capping would have to come from the HRA.</p> <p><b>BP</b> The Council have been asked in the past and have said no. But capping</p>	

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	<p>may lead to bad work at a high cost. Instead we should have good value for money for necessary works.</p> <p><b>DG</b> HFI doesn't have discretion. We are employed by LBI to collect their money for them.</p> <p><b>BP</b> If capped money comes from the HRA, tenants would pay.</p> <p><b>PC</b> The risk with the cap is that contractors get sloppy. But in special circumstances it may be appropriate.</p>	
3.10	<p><b>Q</b> The work done at Presidents House three and half years ago was poor quality, but LBI are unwilling to admit this. If you find out that the works were bad, will you apologise to all the residents?</p>	
	<p><b>PC</b> I would be happy to write to all residents on behalf of the council.</p>	
3.11	<p><b>Q</b> Can we opt out of the digital TV switch over works? It would be more cost effective to have it done privately.</p>	
	<p><b>DG</b> The Government switch is in 2012, and we need to make arrangements. We have gone out to tender for the costs. At the moment you can't opt out, but there is a paper for the consultation panels this month.</p>	
3.12	<p><b>Q</b> Will leaseholders have to pay towards the cost of the wind turbine at Kestrel House?</p>	
	<p><b>DG</b> This is part of the LBI green agenda. My understanding is that it will not be rechargeable to leaseholders.</p>	
	<p><b>PC</b> The reason it is a visible wind turbine rather than solar panels is for LBI to publicise their green credentials.</p>	
3.13	<p><b>Q</b> How is Sky justifying £75 for digital TV installation costs? For individuals it is only £50.</p>	
	<p><b>DG</b> We went out for tender on this project and got the best price we could.</p>	
	<p><b>PC</b> This is another example of the tendering process leading to high costs.</p>	
3.14	<p><b>Q</b> I have 16 mobile phone masts on my roof. The profits go to LBI, but the leaseholders have to pay for the damage they cause.</p>	
	<p><b>DG</b> As I have previously said on this topic, this is managed by LBI Finance. I have raised this issue with them on numerous occasions. I am concerned that this has been going on for two years.</p> <p><b>Q</b> Can't you invoice LBI for the works to the roof?</p> <p><b>DG</b> No, the money is LBI's not HFI's. HFI have advised LBI on what they possibly could do.</p>	

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3.15	<p><b>Q</b> For the digital switch, are PFI doing the same as HFI?</p> <p><b>CT</b> I don't know a lot about this, but I think that this is not in the PFI contract.</p> <p><b>CT</b> to look into, and the answer will be circulated at the November ILF.</p>	<b>CT</b>
	<p><b>Date of Next Meetings</b></p> <p><b>Question and Answer Session 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007 Council Chambers, Town Hall 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm</b></p> <p><b>Business Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> November 2007 Council Chambers, Town Hall, 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm</b></p>	