

Leasehold Forum Meeting Minutes - 7 July 2025

Present:

- Faith Elsegood, Housing Management Team Leader (Home Ownership)
- Julie Hood, Housing Equalities and Engagement Facilitator
- Fiona Brown, Change Manager
- 5 Leaseholders

Apologies:

- 4 received from Leaseholders

Julie Hood opened the meeting and welcomed everybody. City of York Council Officers introduced themselves.

Julie reminded the meeting that:

- although you are sitting in your home you are in a meeting; please do not do anything you wouldn't do in West Offices e.g. eat
- that everyone is in the meeting for their own reasons
- to treat everyone with respect at all times, this includes staff, attendees and any organisations present/discussed in the meeting.
- let others raise their issues
- Housing issues are the only issues staff may be able to change, they have no influence over other CYC departments e.g. Council Tax, Parking etc
- if it is suggested that your issue will be investigated outside of the meeting do not continue to discuss it
- no items will be discussed in any other business unless they have been sent 7 days prior to the meeting, under any circumstance.

Matters Arising

Items raised at the last meeting:

- a) Lighting is added to properties with no communal lighting. This has happened three years running. The charge is quickly removed but it is frustrating. (Holly Terrace)

Response: The leasehold management team are aware of the addresses which should and should not receive a communal lighting charge. We thought that these charges had been removed permanently so would not appear on the relevant invoices. Obviously this did not

happen and we apologise for this. We will work to remove these charges for the next billing period.

- b) The service charge bill for my property was much higher than expected. The reason for this was the number of times the communal door had been repaired. The door is often damaged by others living in the block of flats. This usually happens after dark so the resident who damages it can't be identified.

If the resident can be identified they would be recharged the full amount. However, in this instance we can investigate further. If these incidents of criminal damage have been reported to the Police, there will be a crime number. We can use this to claim from our insurers.

Response: Our Building Services team advise that it can be difficult to highlight repeated door repairs at certain blocks because of the breadth of the team and the volume of jobs that are raised across the city. CRS (our contractor for the repair and maintenance of the door entry systems) will report back to us if they believe there's been any foul play. We can then investigate internally. There is also a report for door entry systems which will highlight to the building services team where repeat repairs are required. This may flag some anti-social behaviour issues to address or may highlight additional maintenance needs.

Above all, we do rely on reports from residents when things like this occur so that we can follow up on the reports and address any underlying issues. Without this the perpetrators of this damage get away with it and we are forced to split the cost of the repairs.

- c) There are repeated charges on a service charge bill for replacing the lock on the electric cupboard. This is because the City of York Council Officers keep losing the key. Why are we paying for this?

Kate will investigate this as this cost should not be passed to residents

Response: Our building safety team, while not aware that this had happened, agree that costs for this should not be passed to residents. They have advised that a capital works programme for alternate locks on electricity cupboards are being considered. For example, installing key saes or code locks that means keys can't be lost as easily and electricity cupboards can be easily accessed.

- d) The postal service prioritise business over residential. This means that the postman doesn't deliver to residential properties until after 12 noon. The trade button doesn't work after 12 noon so we often don't have a mail delivery for days at a time.

Response: Our contractor has been asked to change the trade hours to 8am to 4pm. The initial change did not 'stick' so we are investigating the issue. We hope to have the trade hours changed as soon as possible.

- e) The intercom was condemned last year so we have to use a key. We were supposed to be getting a new fob system. Can we find out when this will be happening?

Response: The upgrade to the intercom system should be complete by the end of June.

- f) 2G and 3G systems will soon not work as this is being turned off. What will happen to the door systems that, currently, use these?

Response: The rolling upgrade programme to change all 2G and 3G systems to 4G should have been complete by the end of June.

- g) Can the service charge bills be sent by email. It would be more efficient

Response: It is a legal requirement for service charge invoices to be sent through the post. We are investigating the possibility of sending the invoices by email or making them accessible electronically. Sending the invoices in the post isn't the most convenient or efficient way, but we need to make sure we are legally compliant.

Consumer Standards

Fiona Brown, Change Manager

Fiona introduced herself. She explained recent Housing legislation including the Consumer Standards.

The Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) came into force on 1 April 2024

From this date the Regulator has powers for proactive regulation. This includes regular inspections (at least every 4 years) to ensure the Consumer Standards are being met.

We will be inspected within the next few years.

Consumer Standards

We will be measured against 4 Consumer Standards:

- Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard
- Neighbourhood & Community Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Safety & Quality Standard

The Safety & Quality Standard covers:

- Stock quality
- Decency
- Health & Safety
- Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements
- Adaptations

The Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard covers:

- Fairness and respect
- Diverse needs
- Engagement with tenants
- Information about landlord services
- Performance information
- Complaints

The Neighbourhood & Community Standard covers:

- Safety of shared spaces
- Local cooperation
- ASB and hate incidents
- Domestic abuse

The Tenancy Standard covers:

- Allocations and lettings
- Tenancy sustainment and evictions
- Tenure
- Mutual exchanges

Relevance for Leaseholders

Safety & Quality Standard

- Safety compliance in communal areas

- Responsiveness to repairs

Neighbourhood & Community Standard

- Safe and well-maintained environment

Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard

- Complaint mechanisms
- Influence and participation
- Access to information

Those present thought these regulations would make a difference. Currently some outside communal areas need improvement. These can be reported (including photographs where possible) to email:

housing.serviceimprovements@york.gov.uk.

Updates

Faith Elsegood

Year-end processes

The leasehold team are currently looking at year end processes. They are investigating ways to improve efficiency and make sure the charges are clean.

Registering on Open Housing and checking regularly will enable leaseholders to check the repairs done although costs are not included.

If leaseholders need help to register or log into Open Housing the Leasehold Team can help. Please contact them by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

Gas Safety Certificates.

All rented properties have to have a current Gas Safety Certificate (the gas supply is checked every year). This is not a service delivered to leaseholders; however they do need to hold a current Gas Safety Certificate.

This is important for the safety of other residents and the building. We are looking at the possibility of asking leaseholders to send a copy of their certificate to the leasehold team.

Any Other Business

Two items of any other business have been received:

Issues with items added to leaseholders bills incorrectly

I have had to query several incorrect charges for our property and a major one for wooden fence repairs when there are no wooden fences. Those in the leaseholder office have been fantastic getting it sorted but this is just increasing their workloads potentially increasing the leaseholders management fees we are charged.

Response: We aim to be as thorough as possible when checking the charges before the invoices are sent. There is a very short timeframe to do this, so some incorrect charges do slip through. Please accept our apologies for this.

Why do we no longer appear to get a breakdown of services which we had started to get.

Response: a breakdown of charges is sent with the service charge invoice however this was more detailed before Open Housing was introduced. If more information is needed please contact the leasehold team by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

Next Meeting

A date in October 2025, to be confirmed.

Agenda items

None were suggested