Leasehold Forum Meeting

26 October 2026

Minutes

Present: Richard Jones, Housing Management Team Leader, (Home Ownership)

Julie Hood, Housing Equalities and Engagement Facilitator

Sarah Charters, Fire Safety Officer

Callum Shaw, Leasehold Management Officer

9 Leaseholders

Apologies: Jenny Ward, Leasehold Management Officer

Bridget Walters, Leasehold Management Officer

Chloe Scott, Leasehold Management Officer

6 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.

Fire Regulations for internal communal spaces
Sarah Charters, Fire Safety Officer

Sarah introduced herself and explained her work. Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken on the communal areas of blocks of flats every two to three years.

The assessment looks at fire doors; emergency lighting; checks that all servicing to any equipment has been undertaken as well as looking for obstructions in the communal area. Any obstructions would hinder evacuation if there was a fire.

The Fire Risk Assessment may identify actions that are needed to reduce an identified risk. These actions will be given timeframes in which the remedial action must be completed.

Currently some Fire Stopping work is underway. This work is mainly in roof spaces to prevent the spread of fire. The work is being done on a 'block' by 'block' basis. All residents in the block of flats will be informed when the work is due to start in their block well in advance of work starting.

An item of any other business relating to Fire Safety was received prior to the meeting:

The recent fire door inspections carried out by CYC and the failure to then provide leaseholders with the reports and remedial action needed in a timely manner.
R – Thank you for raising this. This should have happened, moving forward all Leaseholders will receive a copy of the report.

One of the Leaseholders present raised an issue about their fire door and not receiving the report in a timely manner. Sarah will address this outside of the meeting.

If Leaseholders have any questions regarding Fire Safety please contact Sarah on sarah.charters@york.gov.uk

Sarah was thanked for coming along and sharing this information.

Insurance Update

Richard Jones, Housing Management Team Leader (Home Ownership)

Richard explained that there is no update as yet. The insurance company needed more information about the properties to give an accurate estimate. This information has now been sent.

Insurance to be included on the agenda for the next Leasehold Forum.

Management Charge Update

Richard Jones, Housing Management Team Leader (Home Ownership)

The Leasehold Team is responsible for delivering leasehold and shared ownership services, Right to Buy administration, and council garage management.

In 2024/25 20% of the team's time was spent working on Right to Buy administration and council garage management therefore 80% of their salary costs were allocated to leasehold and shared ownership when calculating management charges.

In 2026, the Leasehold Team expanded from one full time and one part time (3 days) Officers to three full-time officers. This was needed due to the increase in numbers of leasehold and shared owners from 651 to 962.

Leasehold reform and changes to the Right to Buy legislation have led to a significant reduction in the numbers and amount of time needed to administer Right to Buy. A review of service responsibilities identified that 10% of staff time is spent on Right to Buy administration and council garage management. Resulting in 90% of staffing costs being included within the management charge calculation.

We have recently identified that, due to an administrative oversight, the 2026 management charge was calculated using 100% of staffing costs, and the appropriate reduction for time spent on non-leasehold functions was not applied. This resulted in leaseholders and shared owners being charged for costs that should not have been included within the management charge.

To address this error an adjustment has been applied to the 2026 management charge to remove costs attributable to non-leasehold functions and ensure leaseholders and shared owners are charged only for the services they receive i.e. 90% rather than 100% of staffing costs.

All affected leaseholders and shared owners will receive written confirmation explaining the nature of the error, how the management charge should have been calculated, the corrective action being taken, and the resulting adjustment to their account.

We apologise for this error and have reviewed our processes to make sure future management charge calculations accurately reflect the costs attributable to leasehold and shared ownership services.

This will be corrected by adding a credit to each of your accounts:

- If you pay by standing order, you can arrange for your payments to be amended to reflect the reduced charge.
- If you pay by Direct Debit, the Council will adjust your payments on your behalf.
- If you have since sold your property, any reimbursement due will be calculated up to the date your lease or shared ownership interest ended and refunded accordingly

If you have paid your balance this amount will show as a credit and be deducted from your next annual invoice.

Leaseholders requested that the breakdown in management charge be included with the service charge invoices each year. This could be on the invoice or if this is not possible a breakdown could be a different document sent with the invoice. This was agreed to be taken forward.

Any Other Business
The following items of any other business have been received:

<u>Service Charges</u>
Repeated incorrect charges being applied to leaseholder accounts and the amount of time taken to get them resolved.
R - We are aware that this is a problem and this year we have already started to look at the charges, trying to identify any anomalies. Our repairs team now take photographs of all the repairs they do which might help to identify any repairs charged to the wrong block of flats.

Insurance

- Are all aspects of buildings insurance covered by City of York Council?
- What are the specific risks covered by policy?
- Should Leaseholders be aware of any need to arrange insurance cover for their property over and above general contents insurance?

R- Buildings Insurance for City of York leaseholders covers:

- fire
- lightning
- explosion
- aircraft collision

Current information can be found on the website here https://www.york.gov.uk/private-landlords-tenants/leaseholders/7

Solicitors

Does anyone know if it is cheaper to use a solicitor familiar with extending the leases of City of York Council Leasehold properties than one not used to doing this kind of work? If anyone would be willing to share the details of their solicitor, please email Julie.

At this point in the meeting two leaseholders asked if their email addresses could be shared.

The Leasehold Team contact details are:

email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

Next Meeting

A date in late January/early February 2027, to be confirmed.

Agenda items

- Insurance
- Process for extending the lease