

Leasehold Forum Meeting

10 October 2023

Minutes

Procurement	2
Insurance	4
Engagement Strategy	4
Action Plan Updates	5
Any Other Business	6
Next Meeting	10

Present: Julie Hood, Housing Equalities and Engagement Facilitator

Peter Holt, Housing Team Leader (Accounts and Assets)

Chloe Wilcox, Head of Procurement

17 Leaseholders

Apologies: 3 received from Leaseholders

Julie Hood, opened the meeting and welcomed everybody

She 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.

Peter Holt and Cloe Wilcox introduced themselves

Procurement

Chloe Wilcox

Chloe gave an overview of the procurement procedure. She explained that as a Local Authority, procurement processes are bound by procurement law (Public Contract Regulations 2015). Alongside the regulations, City of York Council also has internal procedures that must be followed for purchasing decisions and procurements.

One of the many processes City of York use is the “Open” process. Meaning this is open to the whole market and any business can register their interest and submit a bid for the opportunity if they wish to do so. On all procurements, a tender pack is published which comprises procurement documents, specification, pricing documents, a contract and supporting documents to assist with bidding, of process is open to the market.

Depending on the value and the nature of the procurement, the tender is usually open for between 8 to 14 weeks. The tenders submitted are checked by a member of the procurement team (other than the direct procurement officer involved in producing the tender pack) and the evaluation stage is entered into. The service area who’s procurement it is, will be sent the quality submissions but no pricing will be released. Pricing is only released to the service area once all scores have been finalised and sent to the procurement team to avoid any influence of scores and to keep it a fair, open and transparent process. Each evaluation team will consist of 3 or more evaluators, of which the contract manager will be one. Should any bids exceed the budget City of York has available, and extra funding cannot be secured, the contract will not be awarded

Dependent on the value of the procurement, once awarded there is a 10 day standstill period (Alcatel). This is the time period to give other bidders the opportunity to challenge the decision and process. This process will only apply to procurement that are above the Public Contract Regulations threshold.

Budgeting decisions sit with City of York and go through the necessary Executive and Full Council meetings. Again, dependent on the procurement, further executive reports may be required. If capital, the spend and requirement has already been shown on the CRAM bid, this shows how much spend is available in the relevant trade/category.

Should any procurements require leaseholder consultation, the process will take place through Section 20 and the relevant internal officers will be consulted and involved until the process has been concluded.

In terms of how evaluation criteria, this will differ on each procurement due to the nature of what you are buying. Typically, the “standard” approach is 60% quality, and 40% price. Meaning, there will be a number of questions created by the service area to ensure quality assurance throughout the contract and evidence is put forward to form part of the bidders response.

Additional checks are undertaken by the procurement team, a few examples being:

- References
- Financial Stability
- Credit scores and risk scores
- Insurances
- Liabilities
- Fraudulent background
- Modern slavery
- Use of local supply chain

Should an external framework be used as the procurement process, all suppliers on that framework have already been vetted and checks completed. To successful be on a framework, the framework provider/creator will have completed the preliminary steps and final checks we as a procurement team would do. This does mean as the process has already been completed, City of York are not able to repeat the same questions or undermine the process the suppliers have already been through. So additional questions can be added to cover all elements.

There were no more questions, Chloe was thanked for coming to the meeting and explaining the process.

Insurance

Peter Holt

Peter Holt has gathered the information for each property as requested however he has now been asked to submit the size of the properties (feet squared or meter squared)

We do not currently have this information so the Business Change Manager is identifying a resource to gather the average size of each property type e.g. maisonette, one bedroom flat, two bedroom flat etc

As there are only two companies now providing the policy the market isn't in our favour and the expectation is that the individual cost will be triple figures.

Until quotes are received there is no information as to how the insurance company will determine the price; how this might be divided amongst leaseholders etc. Work will need to be done once the quote has been received.

The intention is to have a basic insurance (as now) and an enhanced insurance cover.

Peter will bring an update to the next meeting.

Engagement Strategy

Julie Hood

The engagement strategy is a plan of how we will engage with and gather feedback from tenants and leaseholders. The plan will cover the next 4 or 5 years.

It explains to tenants and leaseholders the different ways they can give us their views and thoughts on how we can improve our service. How we will let them know how their feedback is used and the difference it has made.

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel are producing a first draft and have asked if one or two leaseholders would join them in their discussions to make sure leaseholders views are included.

They meet on the first Tuesday of every month, virtually at 6.30pm. If you would like to be involved please email Julie.

Action Plan Updates

Peter Holt

1. Explore providing more comprehensive insurance for leaseholders

Action - Peter Holt to discuss with CYC Insurance team

Target date - December 2022

Current – Broker was provided with dataset of all council properties, size, build type, bedrooms, elevation level etc. This was with a view of providing a quote for insurance. Insurance team have now advised that area size of properties is required, which we do not have for all stock. Currently looking at getting area measurements for sample of each type of property to mitigate this. Currently with Service Change manager to identify resource for this.

Previous – Will require writing to all leaseholders to find out what if any structural alterations have taken place along with obtaining rest of info Insurance have identified in previous update

- On Hold. Insurance advise they need to know the full address including postcode, type of property, number of bedrooms and bathrooms and each unit will require a rebuild sum insured. PH looking into rebuild sum, however some leaseholders have added additional bathrooms / en-suites and CYC do not have full data for this

2. Creation of Leaseholder accounts on new ICT system, allowing management of service on one system

This is now complete

3. Leaseholder access to Open Housing self serve portal, allowing leaseholders to see what repairs have been raised to the block

This is now complete

4. Parking Project

Current – With Business Intelligence team to identify properties that are within both Res Park and this scheme. Highway Supervisor assessing where best to place signs for each identified area. Next meeting Nov 23

Previous – Properties being loaded onto Traffic Taranto System. Advice being sought from Legal on wording for signs. Design and cost of signs being looked at. Parking enforcement need to serve Traffic

Regulation Order with a 3 month lead in time before new scheme can be activated. Letters to all residents early new year explaining scheme

5. Leaseholder Manual needs revising and updating

This is now complete. Our communications Team is reviewing the Manual following this it will be put onto the website

Any Other Business

Virtual meetings

The zoom licence will not be renewed so future Leasehold Forum meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams.

The app can be downloaded onto devices in the same way as zoom and access to the meetings is the same. Either click the link in the email or input the numbers.

Timings of meetings

You may have read in the press that City of York Council Officers will no longer be working overtime. As overtime is paid from 7pm the timings of evening meetings will need to be changed.

Several options were discussed and it was agreed that in future the Leasehold Forum will be held 4 times each year from 6pm to 7pm. The next meeting to be held in January.

The following items of any other business were received from Leaseholders at least 7 days prior to the meeting:

- Flyer put through doors of flats in St Stephens Road regarding double yellow lines being drawn in front of flats preventing leaseholders and residents parking outside own homes.
R - This would be a decision made by Highways and one that the Leasehold Team was not aware of
- Increasing problems in St Stephens Road with smelling and poor drainage of water pipes.
R - Repairs system shows only one job to repair a downpipe in Nov last year. This will be passed onto the repairs team to ask them to raise a job to inspect further.
- CCTV inside and outside at Drake House and Frobisher House, Woolnough Avenue –
 - I requested that CCTV to Frobisher House remain active and

was supported by my neighbours to watch over their cars and hopefully deter any attempt to damage or steal them. The Council refused my request on the grounds of illegal infringement on the public thoroughfare and the Council had CCTV already installed. I requested that since my CCTV was no longer active and my car was parked on Council property would the Council pay the cost of any criminal damage to my car or those of the residents in both blocks, unfortunately I never got a reply. Since then, two cars have been damaged. One had all four tires slashed, the second had two tires slashed. Another vehicle had some property stolen from it and recently a car had paint stripper poured over it. Unfortunately, the police were unable to identify those who were responsible and no further investigation can be pursued. If the residents CCTV were still active then the people responsible would have been identified and caught saving the owners and insurers the expense of repairs.

- I hereby request that we be allowed to activate our CCTV and help to stop this criminal damage to any vehicles or property as well as helping the police and ensuring a peaceful and safe area.
- The Council CCTV that was installed on the outside of the two blocks does not cover the whole area satisfactorily and other cameras are necessary for the security of residents property.
- I have also been informed that the Council camera are dummies, if this is so then there is no security and that is why we have had these cars damaged,
- Since the cameras inside the blocks are dummies, I had an incident where my property was broken into by the police who could have checked the CCTV (had they been working), and needed no reason to break in, leaving me approximately £5,000 out of pocket and continuing stress and insecurity within my own home.
- If the CCTV cameras indoors and outside are duds can we have activated cameras? And reactivate residents cameras to cover the blind spots to help the police fight crime in the area
- If the cameras inside are active did the North Yorkshire Police make a request to view on or before 14 June 2023 (leaseholder welfare)?

R – The Housing Management Officer has advised there did used to be CCTV in these blocks which was managed by Gough & Kelly. The Housing Management Officer was not allowed access and had to request to view the recordings. They

had some serious anti social behaviour going on so it was installed.

The leasehold team do not have authority to request that the CCTV be reinstated however if there is evidence of on-going damage to cars and anti social behaviour this would be a Housing management decision. Installation of CCTV would be within the guidelines of the CCTV policy as below:

Permission will not be given (see exception below) for residents to operate or install CCTV on any building, wall or within their property which contains or includes filming of any communal areas. Communal areas include public footpaths, public highway, shared entrances, shared gardens, access, car parks etc. This includes CCTV that is within a property filming on a communal area.

An exception may be made to this, only where the Housing Officer and Police have discussed the need for CCTV due to sustained and substantial anti social behaviour within the block and agreed with a Team Leader that there are no other options available. It will not be used for the resident to monitor car parking areas, sheds etc. generally and a strict time scale will be given for the CCTV to be in operation. The resident must complete a request form and will be given explicit permission for the CCTV for a fixed period only. There is no minimum period however the maximum will be for up to 3 months.

Removal of CCTV which is set up inside a property but filming a communal area is subject to tenancy action and/or Police action on the grounds of harassment and/or breach of privacy and/or breach of data protection (via Information Commissioners Office).

There followed a discussion about Ring doorbells as these record images. Ring doorbells outside a flat door may capture the images at other doors in the block. CCTV Factsheets are included with these minutes

- Who owns the land the flats stand on?
R- The City of York Council owns the land
- Calling CYC – this was raised regarding using the automated call, when you ask for someone the answer is that they are not in the Office and ring back later, when you do it's the same answer. The

answer from reception is the same so you ring back and ring back etc. The person is in the Office but we are led to believe they are not available for some reason or another, this infuriates the caller and the person they are calling, can this be rectified?

R- more information has been requested from the leaseholder to determine which department is being referred to. Once the information has been received this will be followed up.

- When tenants move out and new tenants move in can the tenancy agreement be changed?

R – Housing Management have been asked this question. When a response is received it will be forwarded to the leaseholder.

- Control of costs for various repairs.

R – more information is needed. When more information has been received a response can be given to the leaseholder

- Do I have to give the major work consultation letters about possible future works to my solicitor when I sell my property? Doing so has jeopardised our sale. The mortgage provider has come to the conclusion that the works will definitely be carried out, even though this has been confirmed as not being the case.

R - This is a conveyancing issue so we cannot advise on this with any certainty. Please find a link from Lease-advice for leaseholders preparing to sell a flat <https://www.lease-advice.org/podcast/selling-a-flat/>

- Insurance for leaseholders: we have been flooded 3 times in last 5 years by council tenants who did not have any liability insurance. This resulted in having to claim on our insurance losing our no claims bonuses and having to pay higher premiums.

R - Unfortunately this is a risk of being a Leaseholder in a mixed tenure block. CYC cannot enforce its tenants to take insurance products. Leaseholders are able to access the 'simple insurance scheme' through the Council where there is no excess requirements.

<https://www.york.gov.uk/HouseholdContentsInsurance>

- Are you putting solar panels on flats? If not how can I get permission to put them on?

R - As advised at the previous meeting this is something that will form part of the Councils drive to achieve net zero, although we are unaware of any specific projects for this in the short term.

Requests such as this type need to be made in writing to

Leasehold Team who will then take the request to Head of Housing for determination. In considering the request such matters as ability to maintain and repair the roof would be considered.

- I read recently that the grant towards installing heat pumps may be increased. My gas boiler is 10 years old. It doesn't have to work very hard since I put in an electric shower, nevertheless I have started considering my options for replacing it. Mine is a ground floor flat and a heat pump could be sited at the rear. Does the council have a policy for this?

R - There is no specific policy for this, as Government advice changed recently on the requirement for heat pumps. However, requests would need to be in writing with planning regs approval already sought.

- Why were leaseholders at Magnolia Court not informed of previous meetings?

R - Management of shared owners was only passed to Leasehold team in spring this year. Once this happened then leaseholders were invited to the next forum.

The Leasehold team can be contacted by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

Next Meeting

A date in January 2024, to be confirmed.

Future agenda items to be:

The new Investment Manager to be asked to give an overview of their role

Repairs/Public Realm to discuss lack of gutter cleaning/gardening

The process of extending leases