NOTES OF MEETING

Present

Jan Tate JT Leasehold Officer
Patricia Allen PA Leaseholder
Ian Ward IW Leaseholder
Mike Smith MS Leaseholder
Michael Bryant MB Housing Attributes Manager
Graham Hart GH Fire Safety Manager

1 Welcome

JT Welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies

No apologies were received at the 14th October 2019

3 Meet the Team: Michael Bryant Housing Attributes Manager

MB introduced himself and provided an overview of his team who sit within the Property Services Group.

MB oversees a team of 5 people who manage servicing contracts e.g. Gas & Electrical servicing.

In addition the team manage the procurement of works and services for South Essex Homes this includes major works e.g. Roof Renewal and services e.g. Asbestos surveying.

MB explained procurement had to adhere to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's own contract procedure rules.

Southend Council Contract Procedure Rules

The Council is accountable to the public for the way it spends public finds. Professional procurement activities contribute to the efficiency, effective & economic delivery of services to the public.

For goods and services at varying levels a number of criteria must be met:

£1-£999.99 1 written or verbal quotation (a local provider if possible)

£1,000-£9,999.99 Minimum of 1 Written quote (a local provider if possible)

£10,000-£24,999.99 Minimum of 3 Written quotes (2 local providers if possible)
£25,000-£74,999.99 Specification or tender document must be supplied
   Advertised on contract finder; a government website advertising public sector contracts

£75,000.00+ As with the £25,000-£74,999.00 level plus a detailed appraisal; approval to aware; complete signed Contract

Public Contract Regulations 2015

Applies to all works and services above £25,000.00. As such a Specification or tender document must be prepared. Advertised on Contract finder and adhere to the Treaty of Rome. This notes the tender process should be open to competition, be transparent and treating everyone fairly

Advertising in the European Union

For services exceeding £181,302 and for works exceeding £4,551,413 contracts must also be advertised in the European Union. The Official Journal of the European Union can be found online

MS asked whether the Council and South Essex Homes had preferred suppliers. MB noted they did previously but it was quite bureaucratic managing these e.g. ensuring criteria such as Public Liability Insurance is up-to-date. Tenders do specify our requirements and request these documents as part of the bidding process

MS clarified what steps have been taken to ensure contractors complete works to a high standard. MB noted contracts are now assessed on 50% cost and 50% quality which is designed to limit these risks. Previously assessment was done on a 80% cost and 20% quality basis

Meet the Team: Graham Hart, Fire Safety Manager

GH introduced himself to the group and explained he had recently been appointed the Fire Safety Manager for South Essex Homes. The new role will cover a number of issues to ensure South Essex Home’s properties are as safe as possible in the event of any fire risk. This includes major works e.g. fire doors, a rigorous assessment and compliance programme together with initiatives to assist residents within their homes and in the communal areas e.g. Fire Safety Workshops

GH invited members to join a recently formed Fire Safety Focus Group and noted details of meetings would be in the next edition of Insight

IW noted he was due to be charged for the recent door works GH & JT stressed the requirement to ensure resident safety and the doors were the best on the market

IW & MS both mentioned potential issues in respect of their front doors. GH advised he would visit to assess

IW noted the front entrance door was missing lower fixings. JT to investigate

Minutes of last meeting & Matters Arising

-Members agreed the Minutes of the last meeting were a true record.

-Following Anita McGinley advising she would be happy to provide members with an
update on Community Safety. Members requested if she could attend February’s meeting. JT to arrange

-JT advised members an internal consultation had been conducted in regards to the Allocations Policy. JT to supply any additional updates in future meetings

-JT advised Service Charges had recently been completed

6 Communications, Policy and Procedures

Reserve Fund

-JT advised he was hoping to have a Reserve Fund Policy draft for review at the next meeting

-Once agreed letters would be sent in December/ January in time for next years estimates

-In respect of outstanding queries. JT had received clarity from the Group Manager at the Council for Financial Planning and Control

The Councils Investment strategy including statement of accounts is available on the following webpage


-In the event a local authority ran out of money; unlike a company, it cannot become bankrupt as the government would intervene

Contract and Repairs

-JT provided an update on the Insurance Renewal. The tender is currently being advertised and both the council and South Essex Homes supplied further information in respect of the buildings following further queries from prospective suppliers. This included further information on construction, fire alarms, the compartmentation works and claims history

Leasehold Event 2020

Discussion took place in regards to future focus group meetings. Members were happy with current format i.e. a mixture of evening and afternoon meetings

Drop in events would continue in December with a further review following these

Members will discuss a future leasehold specific event at the next meeting All
Insight

The next edition will shortly be published. Leasehold matters consisted of a thank you to Stephanie Frost who had recently moved away.

The main article featured advice on preventing blocked drains.

An advertisement was included for December’s drop in event together with a range of online forms which can be completed online. This included a permission for pets form and the sub-letting notification form.

General articles within the Newsletter included Crimestoppers as suggested by members.

Future articles would involve the re-publication of the ready reckoner.

Gas Safety

JT noted 520 of 619 certificates had been received.

JT noted James Williams had prepared 136 1st reminder letters and 140 2nd reminder letters since the last meeting.

Member Updates

South Essex Homes

JT advised members that a staff briefing was taking place next week on the 24th October 2019.

JT noted a new employee benefit provider had started. This included the provider operating cycle to work schemes and car leasing. This was following a consultation on terms and condition undertaken by Senior Management earlier in the year.

General

JT noted the Citizens Advice Bureau were setting up a free Energy Switching Service at their Southend Offices on Church Road.

A specialist would assist persons switching energy supplies whilst providing energy saving tips and providing advice on fuel poverty.

Appointments will take place on Tuesdays and an appointment can be booked by calling 01702 456352 or visiting the offices between 10am-3.30pm Monday to Friday.

MS advised he was involved in the campaign to ensure affordable housing is on offer at the Fossets Farm development and was meeting with James Dudderidge MP and other representatives of the campaign on the 2nd November 2019.
Better Queensway

MS noted that the next residents briefing will be held on Monday 21st October 2019 and was looking forward to seeing the draft plans in respect of the development.

The briefing would be a further chance to meet members of Swan Housing Association and discuss any developments in respect of the settlements for Leaseholders.

9 Open Questions

Non-received

10 Date of Next Meeting
Tuesday 3rd December 2019 2pm-4pm
Civic Centre Committee Room 6