



Minutes Homeowners Forum

Thursday 3rd March 2022

6:30pm – 8.30pm, by Zoom

Attending

Homeowners

- Adaeze Chukuma (AC)
- Adam Murby (AM)
- Ivan Romero (IR)
- Michael Wailes (MW)
- Nick Galliera (NG)
- Sam Eaves (SE)
- Sarah Harris (SH)

Hexagon

- Amanda Walker, Resident Voice & Engagement Facilitator (AW)
- Ebrahim Piperdy, Rent and Homeownership Manager (EP)
- Rebecca Outram, Housing Services Director (RO)

Apologies

- Jackie McGuinness-Seales (JM)
- Jean Hutchinson (JH)
- Michelle Wordsworth (MWo)
- Pauline Manning (PM)
- Samantha Ebanks (SEb)

Minutes	Action
1) Welcome & introductions	
EP opened the meeting and all attendees introduced themselves. Welcome to AM who was unable to make the first meeting. NG standing in for JM – this may be longer term due to availabilities.	
2) Proposals for Prioritisation	
2a. Share and review for Forum input	
RO and EP shared and presented further information on the Service Area Improvement Plan for discussion:	
<p style="margin-left: 40px;"><u>Section 1: Shared Ownership & Leasehold Estimates</u></p> <p>Consistency in presenting estimates and actuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NG: Consistency between estimates and actuals is key, currently it is difficult to track as the breakdown of estimates do not align with the actuals, e.g. headings and how they are broken down (sometimes for block, sometimes individual, sometimes for the year, sometimes for the day). • RO agreed and noted that 'service charge lessons' had been done with AC's block to help understand the method and increase transparency - would like to roll this out with all homeowners in the 	

next 12 months. AC found the 'service charge lesson' very useful to help understanding.

Providing information on planned works and budget implications

- It was confirmed that 'service charge lessons' will include conversations with residents about planned works for the next year.
- SE: Suggestion, following inspections, for Hexagon to have conversations with residents about prioritisation and sequencing of works depending on urgency and managing budget implications.
- RO agreed and wants Hexagon to work with residents rather than 'do works to' residents.

Section 2: Service Charge Actuals 2021

Clarity when tracking service charge contributions

- AM++: Unable to track service charge contributions to associated expenditure – both the language used and sums are unclear.
- RO & EP: That's not good enough and it should be accessible and consistent (as noted above). Intending to improve tracking – agreed to bring template options for review to the next Forum to be implemented for next year's actuals.

Action: template options shared for next meeting.

Poor internal communication / inaccurate information

- NG: More broadly, poor communication between Hexagon departments results in incorrect information being passed-on and trust being eroded.
- RO acknowledges this is an issue and is currently developing a communication strategy to build the foundations of improved internal communications.

Section 3: Implementation of CX Service Charge Module

RO: Paused pending demo to ensure the process is robust. Once this is online, it will enable online access to service charge information on the online portal. Looking to get input from residents to help sense-check individual apportionment of service charges.

Resident involvement in service charge apportionment

- NG: Service charge apportionment is Hexagon's responsibility as part of the service.
- RO: accepted this in part, noting that a Neighbourhood Officer isn't able to see the specifics of all apartments from communal areas and that developer's information on unit specification doesn't always directly translate into management. Therefore, Hexagon does need to sense-check for idiosyncrasies.
- AM: noted that the details should be drawn-up in service agreements and suggested that residents are part of this process.

Section 4: Section 22 requests

Section 22 requests are when residents request all invoices for the previous year. Aiming for this information to be readily available on the online portal.

Section 5: Section 20 recharge

Section 20 is a consultation process with Homeowners when Hexagon would like to do any works over £250. Planning for this to move to EP's team to have the specialist knowledge.

EP

- SE: When is the switchover likely to happen and will this impact current requests? RO: Looking at recruitment in the new financial year with appointment in the summer and there won't be any impact on existing requests.
- NG: Wanted to confirm that Hexagon will provide 100% of invoices moving forward and be compliant with section 22. RO confirmed this was correct.

Section 6: Key sites and relationships for Homeowners

Remortgaging (and staircasing) process

- AM++: Cited experiences of mortgages / remortgages nearly falling through due to paperwork delays from Hexagon.
- RO & EP: this should be looked at and Hexagon could also add information to the website.

Action: Improving the staircasing & remortgaging process to be added to the improvement plan.

Action: EP and AM to have discussion to map-out the delays and issues to inform improvements.

EP

EP&AM

Increased transparency and communication

- SE: Having an understanding of upcoming works will help. RO: Agree and this also needs to be the case internally. Also looking at having a property manager for blocks which are predominantly homeowners – they would be the main point of contact.
- AC: Could there be a shared property manager for homeowners in mixed-tenure blocks? RO: It wouldn't be cost-effective to have a property manager for mixed-tenure blocks and would put a significant burden on the management fee. These blocks will still have a Neighbourhood Officer although improvements could be looked at with this.

Section 7: Management fee review

RO: Hexagon are not currently recovering the full management fee - but will not be making changes at the moment as the service needs to be improved first.

- SE: Percentage management fees are unclear. RO: agree and don't think they are fair – prefer a set management fee with tiers that reflect the level of service received.

Section 8: Setting up Homeownership Forum

Section 9: Develop specific web pages for all schemes

Section 10: Performance management

No further discussion.

Action: Service improvement plan updates to be made and re-circulated.

EP

Action: Associated recommendations to be locked for tracking.

AW

2b. Agreeing the Forum's key scrutiny themes

AW shared a summary of key themes raised to date for discussion and input comments included:

- Inclusion of improved mortgage application process
- Look-ahead and budget for planned-works

Action: Update and circulate.

AW

3) Chair & Vice Chair election	
<p>AW summarised the role of Chair and Vice Chair and invited nominations from the Forum. SE stepped forward and all members were happy to welcome SE as Chair.</p> <p>The role of Vice Chair was not appointed and it was agreed to re-visit at the next meeting as support for the Chair is important.</p> <p>Action: Vice Chair appointment at next meeting.</p> <p>Action: AW and SE to meet to discuss and refine the Chair's role.</p>	<p>AW</p> <p>AW&SE</p>
4) Forum documents	
<p>4a. Finalising the Terms of Reference This was agreed by the Forum. Action: Circulate for signing by Forum members.</p> <p>4b. Code of Conduct Thanks to all who have signed, there are a few outstanding, No technical issues were reported. Action: AW will follow-up with everyone remaining for signing.</p> <p>4c. Online access to Forum documents Online access to Forum documents can be provided with email and password sign-in. Members were happy to have this resource. Action: Login details to be circulated when set-up.</p>	<p>AW&All</p> <p>AW&All</p> <p>AW</p>
5) Home News / website article	
<p>AW: Following on from the recommendation at the last meeting, an article to introduce the Homeowners' Forum has been approved for the Spring Edition of Home News. Would like to develop collaboratively. Forum members agreed and it was decided that AW will circulate an update on the Forum for comment/input and group members will provide a short quote on their ambitions for the group. Action: AW to circulate draft and members to provide quotes etc.</p> <p>AW: The recommendation to have regular Homeowner-focused articles has also been picked-up. Internal suggestions so far have included service charge estimates and staircasing. However, it would be valuable for the Homeowner's Forum to guide these article topics. Agreed to discuss in a dedicated future agenda item.</p>	<p>AW&All</p>
6) Next steps & next meeting	
<p>Thursday 28th April 6.30-8.30pm was agreed for the next meeting.</p> <p>The following topics were scoped as possible next agenda items. Action: for review and agreement with the Chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review service charge / estimate templates. • Developing a suite of performance indicators for Homeowners. • Home News Article suggestions. • Discuss remit of proposed property managers – review job description. <p>RO: would also like to include a member in the recruitment process – MW volunteered. Action: Liaise with MW regarding involvement in recruitment process.</p> <p>Shared ownership rent levels NG: With levels of inflation, will Hexagon consider limiting upcoming rent increases for Shared Owners? In 2020 General Needs tenants had rent reduced but Shared</p>	<p>AW&SE</p> <p>RO/EP</p>

Owners increased according to inflation – feels that Shared Owners are treated differently to others

- RO: The rent increases are approved by the board and January they approved the upcoming rent increase according to the rate of inflation – this is calculated on the inflation rate at the end of September and also reflects increased costs as an organisation. The Board also wanted to make sure there was no hardship due to rent increases and a hardship fund has been approved to be able to target support.

7) AOB

Post meeting Zoom survey to assess how the meetings are working for everybody – quick survey at the close of the meeting.