

Minutes

Name of meeting: Rents and Service Charge Review Project

Date: 1 March 2023, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Venue: By MS Teams

<p>Attendees</p> <p>Residents Barbara Cliffe (BD), Jean Harry (JH), Julian Cross (JC), Kerry Campbell (KC), Lee Hall(LH), Roger Hankey(RH), Princess Adjei(PA), Catherine Arhin(CA), Dinesh Ethya(DE), Michael Roberts(MR), Tamara Lysenko(TL)</p> <p>Milton Keynes City Council Andrew Hodgson(AH), Roz Duffy(RD), Sebastian Kulig(SK), Rahima Ahmed(RA), Mohammad Bari(MD)</p>	
Guests: Christopher Boyo (CB)	
Apologies: Rae Kane and Joan Drake	
Note taker: Rahima Ahmed	

1.	Introductions and Apologies [video timings 0:00-3:00]	Action
1.1.	<p>AH welcomed all to the meeting and introduced MKCC staff attending and their roles: RD, SK, RA</p> <p>AH mentioned that we are not expecting people to send apologies for online meetings but would need to know attendance for face to face meetings</p> <p>Note: Rae Kane and Joan Drake emailed before the meeting to give their apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Approval of minutes [3:00-8:50] Minutes were approved in terms of content and format by the group</p> <p>Decision 1 Keep minutes format the same Attendees were happy to keep the format of the minutes. It was noted that as the project commences minutes may need to evolve.</p>	

<p>2.1 2.1.1 2.1.2</p>	<p>Updates on actions from minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered Schemes [2:01-2:03] Resident Engagement are visiting Sheltered homes to inform them of the project within the next 6-8 weeks. • Communication progress [9:35-26:09] SK shared presentation. Advertising the group using email, text and website was successful in attracting over the capped amount. <p>Decision 2 Close membership of the group Membership to the Service Charge Review group is now closed. Other residents can still comment or vote though our website on items requested by the group.</p> <p>SK shared three options on access to the website and requested opinions regarding format. LH and RH requested more time to go through options before deciding.</p> <p>Action: SK to share links to each option. Group to let SK know which access they prefer and if they are happy with the format of the webpage.</p>	<p>SK/All</p>
<p>3. 3.1</p>	<p>Terms of Reference [26:09-39:09]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct. RA shared code of conduct. Group happy with content. AH suggested adding apology notification for in person meetings and CB suggested adding something around voting. There was a discussion around confidentiality verses transparency. <p>Action: RA to add in suggestions made by CB and AH.</p> <p>Decision 3 The right to have confidential meetings We will along the principles of transparency so residents can monitor and influence progress through our webpage. Both the group and MKCC can request for aspects of meetings to be confidential. Particularly if it effects privacy and data protection.</p>	<p>RA</p>

4	Main Activity	
4.1.1	<p>Rent Increase Letter. [39:54-1:16] AH presented context and method of rent and service charges within Milton Keynes setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rents and service charges are lower than surrounding areas due to historic decision making and current legislation. • MKCC need to work towards <i>cost neutral</i>. Part of the plan is to look at energy efficient measures and educating residents of usage as well as how we calculate. • We need a collective understanding of how we definite things • Tenants will be moving from <i>fixed</i> to <i>variable charges</i> from 1st April 2023. <p>Action:</p> <p>a) AH will provide definition of rent and service charge at next meeting. This and any other definitions will be agreed by the group</p> <p>b) SK/RA will share agreed definitions on the Housing consultation webpage.</p> <p>c) MKCC will publish standard responses and any help available on our Housing consultation webpage</p> <p>d) AH will call LH outside the meeting to discuss communal charges</p>	<p>AH All SK AH/SK/RA AH/LH</p>
4.1.2	<p>Service Charge Items [1:16-1:45] AH shared presentation about service charges. Discussion around what are the top priorities for the group.</p>	
<p>Decision 4 High priority service charge items Group will look at Electricity, Utilities and Management Fees as high priority. Items which are statutory and prescribed will be discussed on one meeting.</p>		

	<p>Action:</p> <p>a) AH will look to arrange discussion of the following</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 271 1209 703"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="300 271 754 315">Meeting</th> <th data-bbox="754 271 1209 315">Topic</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 315 754 443">April</td> <td data-bbox="754 315 1209 443">Accountancy functions like Sinking Funds and Reserve Funds</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 443 754 571">Summer</td> <td data-bbox="754 443 1209 571">Asset team to go through what is statutory and what we have a choice with</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 571 754 616">Other</td> <td data-bbox="754 571 1209 616">Legionella- talk about the cost</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 616 754 703">October</td> <td data-bbox="754 616 1209 703">Open Space ground maintenance</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>b) AH will seek consent to share how we work out estimated costs.</p>	Meeting	Topic	April	Accountancy functions like Sinking Funds and Reserve Funds	Summer	Asset team to go through what is statutory and what we have a choice with	Other	Legionella- talk about the cost	October	Open Space ground maintenance	<p>AH/RD</p> <p>AH</p>
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<p>4.1.3</p>	<p>Spotlight on Caretaking and Cleaning service [1:45- 1:54]</p> <p>CB explained what the caretaking service is and how the group can influence the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provided <i>in-house</i> by 3 supervisors and 24 caretakers. • They are responsible for the property, environment and locality. • Whilst there is a standard that the team works towards it is long overdue for a review. • This group can help define what good looks like in terms of service. • It is noted that different blocks will require different levels of service. 											
<p>5</p> <p>5.1.1</p>	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>Levels of Engagement [1:57-2:04]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the channels we have introduced, 70 to 80% of residents are reached. • The government states that we should make all reasonable adjustments to ensure engagement that is not cost prohibitive. We also need to comply with Registered Social Housing standards. • Next meeting will be in person to cater for those not digitally able • There are tools and apps that can translate webpage. • Group was happy with the level of engagement 											

5.1.2	Next meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Civic where we will discuss Accountancy Considerations. • We will also share how to vote for decision making Action: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) RA/SK will be in touch with further details in due course b) Group to confirm attendance for catering purposes 	RA/SK ALL
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All documents and files related to the meeting are available on the website

Date of Next Meeting: 5 April March 2023. Arrivals and light buffet 6:00-6:30. Meeting starts 6:30pm Milton Keynes City Council, Council Chambers,

JARGON-	
fixed price	A fixed amount charged. It is taken from the average cost over a number of year plus 2 or 3%.
Variable charge	Charges vary year on year
cost neutral	MKCC covers the cost of providing the service.
Deficit	Not enough charged resulting in a debit
surplus	More than required resulting in credit
Gas communal	Gas provided to areas enjoyed by all residents. For example, corridors, common rooms, laundry
Gas private	Any gas used behind your front door in your living space.
PAT testing	Periodical Annual Testing of electrical equipment
LOLER inspections	Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
MVHR systems	Mechanical Ventilation with heat recovery
In-house	A service delivered by MKCC staff and not from a separate company or contractor