



Notes from Owner's meeting Tuesday 26th January 2021

Meeting held on Zoom

Present:

Evelyn Mathershaw – Housing Manager (EM)

Claire Rowlands – Estates Officer (CR)

Malcolm Richards – Tenant and Member of Management Committee (MR)

James Harris – Gill Park RTA (JH)

GS – Owner Grangemouth

AS – Owner Grangemouth

EM started meeting by thanking everyone for attending. She then talked the group through the attached presentation with the following points being highlighted:

- Mainland Scotland currently in a Covid Lockdown meaning some restrictions to the work / services PHA could currently undertake.
- In terms of performance in relation to factoring services – when compared to other Registered Social Landlords who acted as factor – PHA Performance average in terms of both owner satisfaction and level of management fee charged. Paragon was not setting out to be average and wanted to work with owners to improve communication and services provided.
- A revised Property Factors Code of Conduct had just been published and had to be adopted by factors by the 16th August.
- There was an anticipation that the 'written statement of service' issued to all owners would need to be updated and re-issued.
- Similarly the current Policy would need to be updated to reflect changes to Code of Conduct and this was an ideal time to look at other areas.
- The big issues were highlighted as detailed below:

FACTORING– The Big Issues

For most owner's it's not about strategy and policy it's about operational practicalities

Invoicing

- currently twice a year c. Jan and July
- is the timing / frequency right

Management Fee

- £55 a year – below the Scottish Average for RSL's
- should we increase and if we increase could / should we add close cleaning? Could also include small reactive repairs

Insurance

- Reactive Repairs** - cost and quality
 - £50 charge 'without consultation' should it be £250 (as per tenements Act)

Improvements

- Sinking Funds

Fire safety – cross tenure, implications for owners

There was then a general discussion around the following points

Communication

It was agreed that communication was improving – the recently issued letter was highlighted as a positive example – and that there was a general willingness from Paragon to work to improve things wherever it could.

Monitoring

- Section 24 of the Association's Factoring Policy states that 'the Association will establish a clear monitoring system to ensure the effective working of the policy.' It was felt that not enough had been done to make owner's aware of the systems that had been put in place or what the key performance indicators were.
- EM talked the group briefly through KPI's that were relevant to owners and acknowledged that more could be done to share these with owners. Similarly the report on the owners satisfaction survey undertaken in 2018/19 had not been circulated or acted on in the same way as the Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

Repairs

- Owners present at the meeting wanted more transparency about how decisions were made on undertaking repairs and how charges were set for those repairs.
- EM talked through the reactive repairs contract and the schedule of rates etc and explained that there was no mark up / admin fee when recharging for reactive repairs, owners were recharged according to their 'share' as outlined in their title deeds.
- In some instances owners felt it might be cost effective for the repair to be 'rolled over' into a programmed repair cycle and wanted to know if this was

considered. It was agreed that how programmed works were agreed and times would be part of the consultation process.

Rubbish / Flytipping

- Owners felt that they were sometimes unfairly treated when compared to tenants when it came to being charged for uplifts – especially from back courts – they asked if tenants were always recharged over and above their rent payments for uplifts and if not was it fair that owner's should be recharged. It was agreed that this was a difficult subject needing more discussion.
- EM / CR outlined that the Association was looking at ways – CCTV , Environmental Design – to reduce incidents of flytipping.

Management Fee / Invoices for reactive and planning works

There was a general discussion about the level of the management fee and it was agreed that this was quite low and consideration when consulting with owners should be given to the possibility of increasing and incorporating other things into the management fee – for example some frequent repairs or communal painting etc.

It was felt that invoices issued by PHA could be clearer, especially when it came to detailing reactive repairs or programmed works undertaken.

The potential for setting up 'sinking funds' was also discussed.

Owners Survey

EM advised that it was our intention to issue the owner's survey along with the next invoice (end of Feb) and asked the group to review the questions asked last time.

It was suggested that the survey might be an opportunity for owners to list what they consider to be priorities in the coming years.

Next Steps

EM outlined that she was hoping to recruit some more owners to join the group and for the group to effectively become a working group overseeing the review of the Factoring Policy. Timetable as follows:

23/2/2021 – meeting of group to look at content of Code of Conduct and to look at PHA Programme of works and how reactive repairs issued and re-charged

26/2/2021 – Owners invoices and survey issued

23/3/2021 – meeting of group to look at results from survey, presentation on current policy and suggested changes

20/4/2021 – meeting of group – consideration of draft policy and look at statement of service

25/5/2021 – meeting of group consideration of consultation plan and starting to look at monitoring

June – wider consultation and on 29/6/2021 working group / focus group meeting

27/7/2021 – meeting of group – performance monitoring

From September 2021 quarterly owners meeting looking at performance and forward planning.

Meeting ended with EM thanking everyone for attending. General feedback from owners present was that the work of the Estates Team (and Claire Rowland the Estates Officer in particular) was appreciated with those present feeling that Paragon was heading in the right direction.