

# Homeowner Virtual Panel

29 October 2024, 18:00pm to 19:30pm

## Minutes and Action Log

In attendance:
Catherine Jarrett (CJ) Director of Sales & Marketing, Delphine Guillemoteau (DG) Customer Involvement Officer, Kim Avery (KA) Head of Customer Engagement, Thomas Dennis (TD) Insight and Data Analyst, Viv Price (VP) Existing Homes Sales Manager

Apologies
Helen Llyod (HL) Head of Insight, Kerry Castello (KC) Policy and Efficiency Analyst

## Minutes

1	<p><b>Welcome, apologies and introductions</b></p> <p>CJ welcomed everyone to the meeting. Seven customers attended the meeting: 6 leaseholders and 1 shared owner. HL and KC sent their apologies. Welcome to KA who is Head of Customer Engagement.</p> <p>VP gave an update on leaseholder's ground rent payment which was raised at a previous meeting. VP said that the finance team confirmed that the invoices for the ground rent 2024 will be issued soon. VP could not confirm if the outstanding ground rent would be added to the ground rent for 2025 or invoiced separately. However, it will be invoiced shortly.</p>
2	<p><b>Scope of meeting</b></p> <p>The scope of the meeting is to receive comments on the Service Standards for shared owners and leaseholders, to provide headline insights from our first Voice of the Customer report for homeowners and to give an update on the Customer Engagement Plan 2024-2027.</p>
3	<p><b>Service standards</b></p> <p><b>Shared owners:</b> Discussions focused on the statement: 'we will acknowledge your query within 10 days'. Shared owner Martin Depper said this certainly wasn't his experience. VP said there was a difference between acknowledging a query and giving a full resolution to a query. Martin explained that the intercom where he lives has been corroded by heavy rain and that despite reporting it nothing had happened in the last few weeks. Martin added that it isn't the first time that the service they receive is poor. KA asked how this was reported: through the Neighbourhood Coach (NC) or via the call centre as she was surprised the intercom repair had not been picked up much more</p>

quickly. Martin explained that both channels are problematic: it is hard to get hold of the NC and there is a long waiting queue for the contact centre. Issues get complicated as a management company is also involved in the area, building. CJ said this was not the first time Martin had complained and that she will go on site (with the NC) as soon as she can to understand exactly what is happening. DG to action next steps.

Customer Tony Woolley asked how the performance of NC's is managed? Customers should not be ignored or have to chase their NC for answers. KA said that their performance is closely monitored through our feedback programme delivered by Helen Lloyd (Head of Insight) and their leaders. The customer feedback given on NCs is used by leaders to manage their performance.

Tony also said that he enquired about his most recent service charge statement and that 20 days in no answer / resolution has been provided to him which is not acceptable and similar to the customer experience he received last year. DG said that she followed up on a service charge query for a customer Elaine from our last meeting and although she got an acknowledgement email within 5 days to get any resolution to her query took weeks (waiting on a response from service contracts). Once she got the answer it was left up to her to summarise and write up an email response to the customer even though she isn't the service charge expert- why is it up to the none expert to respond to the customer? Who takes ownership?

**Leaseholders:** Leaseholders Tony, Diane and Delia asked if discussions had progressed with regards improving the offer provided to homeowners especially with regards to easier access to Bromford colleagues and expert knowledge: a designated colleague/number for homeowners and/or leaseholders. 'We can't get any answers, the service is no longer a professional service and it is ineffective from a business point of view.' KA and CJ said that this type of change would need to be discussed at Board level as it has operational and financial implications and is different to the way we operate now. Tony said he had spoken to Paul Coates (Chief Customer Officer) about this at the Customer Engagement Away Day in September.

A question was raised about the word 'consider' in the statement: 'consider requests to extend the term of the lease'. VP explained there are two ways of getting an extension: the statutory route (need to have owned the property for at least two years) and the voluntary route. In any case, such a request takes a minimum of twelve weeks and it can also be done at the point of re-sale too. VP to provide information on this process to Diane via Tony. Please refer to our web-site: Guidance for leaseholders section called: Extending Your Lease.

Delia explained she did not believe her current lease is fit for purpose and that on this basis she could challenge the lease and use her own supplier to replace her windows instead of going through Section 20. VP said she knows that we are using more modern leases currently and she said that she would compare Delia's lease to a more modern lease which is currently in use: what are the differences? DG also said that Abigail Bennett (Leasehold Service Officer) who deals with Section 20 (who is back from maternity leave) would be able to help with this query. Diane also wanted some advice on whether regardless of her lease she could overrule Bromford and get her 33 year old windows replaced herself as they are highly ineffective. DG said we need to invite an expert in the 'right to manage'. Customer Dot also wanted to know what she could or

	<p>couldn't do with her windows (does Bromford own the frame and the leaseholder the glaze)?</p> <p>DG said that it is not useful to distinguish between tenures in a block of flats as everyone is living under the same roof and everyone should be treated the same – even if some legalities get in the way- we should aim to work more collaboratively. Mixed tenure building blocks are difficult to manage (leaseholder told: 'get your own door' without any wider understanding of the issues she was facing).</p> <p>Customer Diaby asked why the cleaning in her building is so poor and what she can do about it, to challenge it, as she is not happy with it and the building is no longer a desirable place for her to live in. DG said she would find out what can be done and get back to Diaby.</p>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Homeowners Voice of the customer report: Quarter 2 – July to September 2024 conversations</b></p> <p>TD shared feedback received from homeowners in the second quarter of this financial year which will be available with the minutes of the meeting. It is the first time that the data is presented in the Voice of the Customer report format which matches the format used for other tenues in the business.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Customer engagement plan 24-27</b></p> <p>KA outlined the new Customer Engagement Plan highlighting the different range of opportunities open to customers who want to get involved. KA reminded customers that issues can be brought to the strategic customer group CCIN if they feel they are not being resolved or are bigger issues that stretch beyond the homeowner virtual panel. The chair of CCIN is a non-exec Board member.</p> <p>Tony asked what will happen to CCIN if we merge and become Bromford Flagship. KA said we do not know yet as the merger hasn't taken place but nothing had been decided yet in any case. This also applies to Locality Influence Networks which will carry on with their work alongside the four Place pilots.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Next steps and A.O.B.</b></p> <p>We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting. Please send any individual queries to the following email: <a href="mailto:homeownership.panel@bromford.co.uk">homeownership.panel@bromford.co.uk</a></p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting:</b></p> <p>Tuesday, 28th January 2025: Zoom, 6pm start</p>