



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

11 September 2020

Nick Walkley
Chief Executive, Homes England
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Dear Mr Walkley,

Please find attached a copy of a petition which has been signed by nearly 300 residents on the Leybourne Chase development. This represents around 50% of leaseholders who own their properties outright, and does not include any Housing Association tenants who may share a similar view.

The petition seeks the immediate removal by Homes England of Taylor Wimpey appointed Directors from the Leybourne Grange Management Community Interest Company Board (LGM CIC). Under the current terms of the Board, there are three Taylor Wimpey appointed Directors sitting on the LGM CIC Board, under a duty of the development agreement to ensure that LGM CIC is properly equipped and ready to be handed over to Resident Directors by the end of 2021.

The existing LGM CIC Board has appointed Trinity Estates to act as Agent to perform some obligations to manage and maintain community facilities in Leybourne Chase. However for a number of years, and particularly in this financial year, residents have been charged significantly more than Budgeted for works which have taken place, and in many instances they have fallen below the required standards. Indeed, there are cases of successful claims by residents to The Property Ombudsman in relation to failures on Leybourne Chase by Trinity Estates.

The latest figures show that Trinity Estates accrued a £61,453 deficit in estate costs in the previous financial year alone, in addition to further deficits of £9,389 on the Community Hall Charge and deficits of up to £2,465 for some individual dwellings. The result of this is that residents have had to pay thousands of pounds above and beyond what is expected of them for services which Trinity Estates provide.

The LGM CIC declaration does make clear that the power for residents to remove Directors, on the basis of poor performance, does not currently exist. Indeed I understand that individual residents and leaseholders are not considered members of LGM CIC under the declaration itself. Therefore as I understand this is underpinned by Homes England, I would be grateful if you could give serious consideration for speeding up the process to ensure that LGM CIC is in majority control of residents as quickly as possible.

The development of Leybourne Chase is very close to completion and indeed there are only a small number of works ongoing on the Manor House development. However, this has resulted in many residents understandably feeling that LGM CIC is not working in the

Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling

020 7219 4727 - tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk - www.tomtugendhat.org.uk

interests of the community, and the nearly 800 homes on the development already, with majority control in the hands still of the developer who is only responsible for a small part still. I have been in communication with Taylor Wimpey regarding the imminent adoption of the main spine road, Hawley Drive, and neighbouring roads by Kent County Council. Again this process has been delayed significantly by the developer from original promises made, for which I can provide evidence following correspondence with my office.

While residents may wish to make a complaint about the standard of service to the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies, a far more satisfactory resolution would be for the immediate adoption of a majority of resident Directors on LGM CIC, reflecting the fact that residents, rather than Taylor Wimpey, have responsibility for the majority of their own properties on Leybourne Chase. They should be able to influence and determine how community facilities are managed and maintained, especially considering the failures that have been numerous in recent months and years.

I trust you will look favourably upon this request and look forward to hearing back from you. I have approached Taylor Wimpey regarding removing their Directors from the LGM CIC Board but am awaiting a response.

Best wishes,

Tom Tugendhat

TOM TUGENDHAT