**TEMPLATE**

**Draft letter to Local MP’s from FPRA members regarding proposed changes to Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 – Section 20**

**Dear xxxxxxx MP**

**I am writing as members of the** Federation of Private Residents Association and would ask that you contact the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government on our behalf to use their powers under the above Act, to increase the financial limit under Section 20, so as to reflect the effects of building cost inflation since the present £250 limit was set 10 years ago.

We would welcome your support lobbying the Government on this important issue for leaseholders in our block and many other small Residential Management Companies (RMC’s) that are facing a huge bureaucracy carrying out ordinary day to day maintenance in their buildings.

Here is an example of the sort of ‘red tape’ we face:-

You apply for a dispensation from the process for urgent works such as the replacement of a lift at say a cost of approx. £20,000.  After the usual tedium of filling in the forms you eventually have a tribunal site visit and hearing.

 As a relatively small group of flats; each having a share of the freehold company, and have previously set aside sufficient monies to cover the cost of the lift as part of responsible budgeting.

 The current problem is:-

1.    Section 20 procedures are far too complex and perplexing to leaseholders who generally want their RMC to just get on with the job..

2.    There are huge costs to the taxpayer in dealing with S20 application when they have to be considered by a Leasehold valuation Tribunal (LVT)

3.    As a small RMC we would rather spend our time getting the best quotes and value for the leaseholders than spend time filling in paper and bombarding leaseholders with statutory letters from both the RMC and the Tribunal service.

4.  The current ‘hurdle’ rate to have to comply with Section 20 is so small there will be many items falling into the S 20 category. e.g. fence repairs, painting, etc. (all very mundane everyday items)

5.    We appreciate the general need for safeguards to tenants but some more leeway needs to be given to small RMCs if we are to avoid a general paralysis in our decision making and implementation.

1. The alternative to the problems identified above will be to ignore S 20 which would totally counterproductive to good block management., alternatively one way of quickly saving the taxpayer money and meeting the objectives of the ‘Big Society’ by cutting out much of this red tape and to raise the £250 threshold to 'say' £1250 with a corresponding increase for the recurring contracts.

The Secretary of State could make such a simple change using existing powers under the above Act without the need for primary legislation and I believe free voluntary Directors from RMC’s from a huge amount of pointless ‘red tape’ when managing their blocks of flats.

We would be grateful if you could raise this matter with Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP at the most appropriate opportunity in Parliament.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely