

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 30 NOVEMBER 2015

CRAVEN VALE COMMUNITY HALL, THE VALE, 17A HADLOW CRESCENT,
BRIGHTON, BN2 0FH

MINUTES

Present:

Representatives: Alan Cooke (Craven Vale), Irene Voice (South hawk), Janet Gearing (Woodingdean)

Non-Voting Delegates: Mary Whitner (Secretary South Hawk)

Officers: Tracey John (Head of Housing), Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Sharon Terry (Resident Involvement Management), Nick Kitson (Project Officer), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement Improvement), Delia Hills (Mears), Gregory Weaver (Democratic Services Assistant)

18 APOLOGIES

18.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Mary Mears, Chris El-Shabba and Ian Ramage.

19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

19.1 In reference to 12.5, Resident Involvement Manager, Becky Purnell stated Councillor Gill Mitchell is working with the association to try and resolve traffic issues.

19.2 In reference to 12.64 the Chair asked for the asbestos report services carried out to be added to the maintenance report.

20 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

20.1 Tracey John, Head of Housing, gave a brief introduction of her role within the Council and stated what rents can be charged, how rents worked previously and how it has changed. She stated it is due to change again by Central Government.

20.2 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement and Improvement, stated the new developments taking place in Brighton.

21 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

21.1 (Item 1 – Major Improvement Works)

- 21.2 Becky Purnell clarified the survey to be undertaken.
- 21.2 Janet Gearing stated that a more comprehensive study is required.
- 21.3 Sharon Terry confirmed she will feedback the request from the panel that examinations of residences should include rear windows and from inside the properties to the team.
- 21.4 Janet Gearing enquired as to why a Brighton firm has not been awarded a contract to replace windows, she proposed a Woodingdean estate firm that offered a discount.
- 21.5 Ododo Dafe stated that BHCC cannot use a local company as part of the tendering process, previously companies were able to put in a bid for work however as BHCC spent a lot of money on contracts assurance around liability, insurance etc had to be taken in to account. As a result companies may not bid for work as it is too substantial, she also noted that as long as companies are able to do the work it may be possible for them to partner with the contracted firms. She also reaffirmed that there were a lot of bidding circumstances to consider.
- 21.6 (Item 2 – Grass Cuttings)
- 21.7 Alan Cooke was happy for the accurate response however issued concern over the poor performance. He noted that as a leaseholder he was only receiving 60% of what is being paid for. In reference to point D, he enquired how residents would be expected to dispose of garden waste.
- 21.8 Janet Gearing stated that residents need somewhere to remove garden waste, she also noted that in previous meetings possible options such as vans with a mesh to collect waste were discussed.
- 21.9 Ododo Dafe stated that some queries are meant for other departments and emphasised the concentration of concern on tenancy and housing primarily at Housing Management Area Panels.
- 21.10 Becky Purnell stated the blue page response contains a general number and suggested taking it to the tenant only meeting. She noted that as we are on a chalk base
- 21.11 (Item 3 Parking Issues)
- 21.12 Alan Cooke stated that all responses received were excellent, although he may not agree with them, he was grateful they were taken seriously.
- 21.13 Panel was satisfied with responses.

22 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 22.1 Ododo Dafe gave a brief overview and presented the report noting customer satisfaction in terms of survey response is very good. She stated that there was an issue regarding internal referred calls creating issues as calls are bound out, as a result the figures will look different next quarter.

22.2 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

23 MUTUAL EXCHANGE INCENTIVE SCHEME PROPOSAL

23.1 Nick Kitson presented the report stating that other Council's such as Harlow and Cambridge have been cross referenced and found that there were positives such as financial benefits and a quick changeover if agreed by committee. He noted that money was set aside this financial year and that it is already available.

23.2 Janet Gearing asked if an applicant would be allowed if their rent was in arrears.

23.3 Nick Kitson stated this is a considered on a case by case basis.

23.4 Janet Gearing stated all financial positives must be highlighted to promote this scheme.

23.5 Nick Kitson agreed with the statement and noted positivity in previous cases.

23.6 Alan Cooke enquired if mutual exchange can be outside of the city as well.

23.7 Nick Kitson stated that it can apply to people leaving as long as it is a Council tenant receiving money.

23.8 Mary Whitner enquired if there was a limited amount of smaller spaces available.

23.9 Nick Kitson stated this was correct, he noted that far more people want small spaces.

23.10 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

24 WELFARE REFORM CHANGES

24.1 Ododo Dafe presented the report on Welfare Reform Changes stating that universal credit will be introduced next month and that it is likely to initially have a significant impact on a small number of people. She noted that Universal credit will now only be available to people over 21.

24.2 Janet Gearing stated they are only providing a specific amount and enquired how much extra will be required.

24.3 Ododo Dafe stated supply and demand are one of many reasons for rent prices. She clarified that if capped families have to pay certain bills, they will need to offset the payment from somewhere else. She noted this was a bid to promote people in to a job and to find work. She clarified that whilst only available to single persons in its infancy, other groups will be introduced later on. She emphasised that people will be encouraged to practice budgeting.

24.4 Janet Gearing warned of incoming issues regarding the 6 week wait for people.

24.5 Ododo Dafe clarified that the process currently followed is more complicated as all rent is due on a Monday and in advance. With universal credit it will be on an

individual date per person; BHCC will spend more money chasing rent payments from tenants.

- 24.6 Janet Gearing enquired if BHCC has to help homeless people.
- 24.7 Ododo Dafe stated that BHCC does have to offer some assistance although not housing, there is a discretionary fund for people in stress. She noted that this fund will become overly requested soon and warned of a possible vicious circle of decisions having to be made such as food/fuel and eat/heat which may contribute to physical and psychological health concerns.
- 24.8 Mary Whitner enquired if the aforementioned changes apply to pensioners.
- 24.9 Ododo Dafe confirmed that pensioners will not be affected.
- 24.10 Nick Kitson stated that people who currently receive tax credit won't see a large drop, he noted that it is to be more of a delay rather than a drop. He clarified that 3 million people will experience loss later on once universal credit is adopted. He noted that Brighton is the last place to experience this in the country.
- 24.11 Janet Gearing enquired if universal credit will available to those on low wages supplemented with working tax credit.
- 24.12 Ododo Dafe confirmed this would happen.
- 24.13 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

25 MODEL CONSTITUTION

- 25.1 Becky Purnell presented the report which concluded with a request to amend the model constitution by way of revising the lexicon to fully adhere to the equalities act.
- 25.2 Members agreed to this request.

26 REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT

- 26.1 Becky Purnell enquired if area panels would like someone elected or volunteered to meet with herself and other representative from other area panels to discuss and create a report for the June Area Panel.
- 26.2 Alan Cooke expressed interest in the use of the constitution to remedy issues in the past, he stated this promoted politeness and added by way of example, that East Area have had people sign a form at the local foodbank in past to promote good conduct.
- 26.3 **RESOLVED** – that the report is noted.

27 CITY WIDE REPORTS

27.1 **AGREED** – to note the report.

28 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

28.1 Alan Cooke enquired who is responsible for providing bus shelters as people on the estate have requested another.

28.2 Sharon Terry stated she will try and find out.

The meeting concluded at 8:30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of