

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 2 DECEMBER 2015

THE BARNARD CENTRE, ST JOHNS MOUNT FLATS, MOUNT PLEASANT, BRIGHTON,
BN2 0JP

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Gibson (Chair)

Voting Representatives: Carl Boardman (Warwick Mount), Tomm Nyhuus (Somerset Point), Jason Williams (Hereford Court), John McPhillips (Albion Hill), Cheryl Lomax (St James House), Ben Lomax (St James House), Theresa Mackey (Highcroft Lodge), Martin Cunningham (Hampshire Court), Jean Davis (Leach Court), Charles Penrose (Sloane Court), Ann Ewings (Mount Pleasant), Barry Hughes (Sylvan Hall), Jane Thorpe (Highden Westmount)

Non-Voting Delegates:

Officers:

Guests:

18 APOLOGIES

18.1 Apologies were received for Chris Row.

19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

19.1 The Panel noted that at 13.2, it should read "Resident Inspectors" and not "Resident Assesors".

19.2 The Chair noted that at the previous meeting the Panel had agreed to invite a Councillor to each meeting.

19.3 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 September 2015 be approved and signed as the correct record subject to the above amendments.

20 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

20.1 The Chair shared the news that Stuart Burston-Gover had recently passed away. The Panel observed a one minute silence.

20.2 The Chair reminded the Panel of the City Wide Conference that was held on Wednesday 16th December at 14:30pm at the Friends Meeting House.

20.3 The Chair proposed an informal meeting to discuss and share information about potential budget cuts. The Panel agreed.

21 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

- 21.1 (Item 1 – Dog Fouling) Charles Penrose reported back to the Panel that gates had been fitted and had been preventing dog fouling, however; it is still possible for dog walkers to access Hampshire Court from the other side.
- 22.2 Barry Hughes commented that more dog waste bins are needed on estates. The Resident Involvement Manager stated that City Clean will not empty dog waste bins, therefore; they do not encourage installing more. It was added that dog waste can go in the black communal bins and the Panel suggested signs detailing this.
- 22.3 (Item 4 - Lighting in bathrooms, Warwick Mount) Carl Boardman commented that he believed it is a health and safety risk and the contractors have put the wrong fittings in, therefore; they should fix them. The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement stated that she would ask Rosie Wakley to contact Carl Boardman back directly to discuss further.
- 22.4 (Item 5 - Surface water drainage and Southern Water) Barry Hughes commented that Brighton & Hove City Council should notify Southern Water where the soakaways are because not all residents are aware of where they are located. The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement stated that she had contacted Southern Water, however; they will not discuss with the Council as they are not the customer and will only discuss with the residents. It was agreed that this will be explored further and reported back to the Panel.

22 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 22.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement introduced the report and highlighted the traffic light system and explained that 1a on the table (Calls to Housing Customer Services Team (HCST) answered) was red because there is a problem when people are transferred through to the HCST. The team were working on resolving this.
- 22.2 Tomm Nyhuus stated that the target waiting time for calling repairs helpdesk should be adjusted from five minutes to two minutes. In response, the Officer explained that targets are adjusted at the end of the financial year and would be set so they are challenging but realistic. The Panel wished to see the average waiting time in the next report.
- 22.3 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted

23 MUTUAL EXCHANGE INCENTIVE SCHEME PROPOSAL

- 23.1 The Performance & Improvement Officer introduced the report and explained that tenants who are living in larger properties than needed and would like to move to a smaller property. The Mutual Exchange Incentive Scheme would pay tenants a

maximum of £2500. He noted that money was set aside for the next financial year and that it was already available.

23.2 In response to Jason Williams, the Officer explained that Brighton & Hove City Council do not find exchanges. Tenants organise it online or through adverts in shop windows, however; the Mutual Exchange Incentive Scheme will not change how exchanges are found.

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

24 WELFARE REFORM CHANGES

24.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement presented the report and summarised the changes to benefits. It was stated that universal credit would be introduced next month and that it was likely to initially have a significant impact on a small number of people.

24.2 It was explained to the Panel that everything would now have to be managed online by the claimer. Claimers had been contacted and given advice regarding online payments.

24.3 A resident questioned the Officer how people would claim if they didn't have access to a computer. The Officer stated that they would be put in touch with local community organisations that can help with computer access, or suggested using public libraries or community spaces.

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

25 MODEL CONSTITUTION

25.1 The Resident Involvement Manager introduced the report and stated that the two proposed amendments to the Model Constitution were: to amend the language of the protected characteristics in the Equalities Act; and to add Vote of No Confidence.

25.2 **RESOLVED** – The Panel agreed the amendments.

26 REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT

26.1 It requested for two residents to volunteer to meet with the Tenancy Service Improvement Group and the Resident Involvement Manager to undertake a review and bring a report back to the April Area Panels.

26.2 **RESOLVED** – Barry Hughes and Ann Ewings volunteered.

27 CITY WIDE REPORTS

27.1 **RESOLVED** – The report be noted.

28 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 28.1 Barry Hughes raised concern that Tracey Waters, the Communications Officer, was leaving at the end of November and what effect this would have on tenants and leaseholders. He requested assurance that Brighton & Hove City Council intended to continue publishing Homing In in printed magazine form and not online. It was added that distribution of the magazine should be broadened to include leaseholders and all residents.
- 28.2 The Resident Involvement Manager explained that there is a resident involvement budget and that it could be cut. The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement stated that the circulation would not be extended due to the cost and viewing it online would be promoted to reduce printing costs. It was added that residents would be consulted through focus groups, emails and area panels before anything changed.
- 28.3 The Chair stated to the Panel that he wished to hold an informal meeting at 2pm, 11 January 2016 in Tyson Place, Brighton to discuss budgets.

The meeting concluded at 4.05pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of