

## BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

### HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

2.00pm 27 JANUARY 2016

ST RICHARDS CHURCH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE, EGMONT ROAD, HOVE, BN3 7FP

#### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors Moonan (Chair), Barnett, Peltzer Dunn.

**Representatives:** Joe Macrae (North Portslade), Pat Weller (Knoll), Blackbear (Ingram Crescent), Vic Dodd (Ingram Crescent), Ann Packham (Ingram Crescent), and Ann Tizzard (Knoll).

**Officers:** Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Pat Liddell (Resident Involvement Officer), John Currell (Housing Asset Strategy Manager), Glyn Huelin (Business & Performance Manager), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement), Cliona May (Democratic Services Officer).

**Guests:** Ian Stone (Mears).

#### 29 APOLOGIES

29.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Atkinson, Councillor Lewry, Councillor Janio, Councillor Nemeth, Tracey Hill, Julie Fosberry, June Baker and Muriel Briault.

#### 30 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

30.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 December 2015 as a correct record.

#### 31 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

31.1 There were none.

#### 32 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

32.1 (Item 1 – Setting start and end dates for repairs and improvements) In response to Councillor Peltzer Dunn the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement explained that once something had been inspected, the timetabled repairs would then take place and tenants would be informed of the start date and the anticipated length of the work. It was added that minor repairs would not require a consultation process; however, the residents would be informed of lengthier repairs and a consultation process would be scheduled.

32.2 (Item 2 – Scaffolding) Glyn Huelin, Business & Performance Manager, explained to the Panel that depending on the housing insurance a tenant has, having scaffolding on their property could make it invalid and this was detailed to the tenant through a formal letter. Ian Stone, Mears representative, noted that scaffolding should be taken

down once the work had been completed on the property. To prevent it being up longer than necessary, Mears would not pay for the job until the scaffolding had been taken down. It was added that there was a less of a demand for scaffolding; therefore, it had become a recent problem that scaffolding was being left up on houses.

- 32.3 (Item 2 – Spacing of Resident Only meetings) In response to the Chair, the Resident Involvement Manager explained that the Area Housing Panels in January would be moved to March; therefore, the meetings would be evenly spread out over the year.

### **33 DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

- 33.1 John Currell, Housing Asset Strategy Manager, introduced the report and explained that there had been consultation meetings with residents. Residents were particularly keen to prioritise investment in the exterior repair of buildings and common parts, such as decorations in stairwells and lighting, with the aim of achieving a more consistent standard across the city. It was also feedback that residents wished the general focus for investment should be mainly on improving the quality of the existing housing stock, and ensuring that all housing should be of a good standard, and well insulated, to help with fuel costs.
- 33.2 In response to Pat Weller, the Housing Asset Strategy Manager clarified that Brighton & Hove City Council did have freehold buildings that were now 100% sold leasehold.
- 33.3 Councillor Peltzer Dunn noted that a “block of flats” should be specified in the report, as this could include two flats in one property.
- 33.4 Councillor Barnett stated that her constituents have feedback that it was disappointing that they could not buy their freehold.
- 33.5 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

### **34 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

- 34.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement introduced the report and explained that it was a brief report due to the despatch times of the meeting agenda. It was agreed that the residents would be informed when the full report was available on the website and hardcopies could be sent to residents who did not have internet access.
- 34.2 It was highlighted to the Panel that the problem with transferring calls in Customers Services, which had been previously noted by the Area Housing Panel, had not been resolved; however, would be by February 2016.
- 34.3 In response to Ann Tizzard, it was confirmed that the full report would state current arrears; however, it would not specify whether they were long term or short term.
- 34.4 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement confirmed to Pat Weller that there would be measures in place to help tenants that would be affected by universal credit. It was added that Officers had received training from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Head of Tenancy Services noted that funding had been received from the DWP to upskill and prepare unemployed individuals for work.

- 34.5 In response to Chief Blackbear, it was explained that individuals that may struggle, for example addicts, individuals with mental health issues and domestic violence victims, would be either exempt from universal credit or receive additional support. This decision would be made by the DWP. In response to the Chair, it was clarified that the individual would have to give consent for their information being shared with the DWP; however, would not need to inform tenants who are in long term arrears.
- 34.6 In response to Councillor Barnett it was explained that residents have feedback that there is a lack of correspondence with tenants who report tenancy fraud. The Head of Tenancy Services encouraged residents to directly contact either herself, Ododo Dafe, the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, or Tracy John, Assistant Director of Housing for an update.
- 34.7 In response to Councillor Peltzer Dunn the Head of Tenancy Services agreed to check that the full report would state the outcomes of the antisocial behaviour cases. It was explained that the 100% success rate for closed Tenancy Sustainment Officer cases, stated in the report, meant that they did not lose their tenancy.
- 34.8 The Head of Tenancy Services confirmed to Ann Tizzard that tenancy check letters were sent out to the resident and arrangements would be made, as tenants felt it was intrusive not to have notice. It was added that notice is not given for tenancy fraud checks.
- 34.9 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

## **35 REVIEW REPORT**

- 35.1 The Resident Involvement Manager introduced and explained that the last review was three years ago. The review was carried out to broaden tenant engagement and to increase resident involvement satisfaction. It was added that residents, area panel representatives and other interested tenants, would be involved in the review and would explore all areas of resident involvement.
- 35.2 The Chair thanked the Resident Involvement Manager for the report and encouraged the tenants to get involved.
- 35.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

## **36 CITY WIDE REPORTS**

- 36.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

## **37 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 37.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement informed the Panel that the Mutual Exchange Incentives report was agreed at the Housing & New Homes Committee; therefore, if tenants knew of residents looking for a mutual exchange, they should contact the Housing department.
- 37.2 Joseph Macrae noted that there was a problem with cars driving and parking on grass verges, which had been reported on a state inspection; however he had not had any

feedback on this. The Head of Tenancy Services agreed to report the query to the feedback team. Councillor Barnett noted that Councillor Gilbey was involved in a scheme to prevent cars driving on grass verges, and she agreed to contact her and feedback.

37.3 In response to Councillor Peltzer Dunn, the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement explained that tenants are encouraged to report problems to the individual teams.

37.4 In response to Chief Blackbear, Councillor Peltzer Dunn noted that the fire authority did not have concern regarding mobility scooters being kept in the communal hallways. The Head of Tenancy Services agreed to feedback to Chief Blackbear and Councillor Peltzer Dunn with further information.

37.5 The Chair requested feedback from the emergency sub-panel held 26 January regarding the budget proposals. The following feedback was given:

- The information was basic and was focussed on existing budgets, rather than the future budget proposals.
- The discussion was unfocussed and residents felt uncomfortable to comment and get involved.
- Would have been helpful to have the papers before the meeting. It was noted that the meeting was short notice and could not have despatched the papers in advance.
- The Panel agreed that having a budget meeting in September 2016 would be helpful.

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of