

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

2.00pm 6 DECEMBER 2016

SANDERS HOUSE INGRAM CRESCENT WEST HOVE, EAST SUSSEX, BN3 5NW

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Gilbey, Barnett and Nemeth.

Representatives: Vic Dodd, Muriel Briault, Tracy Angus, Alison Gray, Roy Crowhurst, Pat Weller and Ann Tizzard.

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Pat Liddell (Resident Involvement Officer), Glyn Huelin (Business & Performance Manager), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services), Theresa Youngman (Contract Compliance Manager), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement) and Cliona May (Democratic Services Officer).

Guests: Keith Dadswell (Mears).

18 APOLOGIES & APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

- 18.1 The Democratic Services Officer opened the meeting and noted that the Chair had sent her apologies.
- 18.2 Councillor Gilbey was nominated to Chair the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Barnett.
- 18.3 **RESOLVED** – That Councillor Gilbey was appointed Chair for the meeting.
- 18.4 Apologies were received for Councillors Moonan, Peltzer Dunn and Robins and Joe Macrae.

19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 19.1 Apologies were received for Councillor Nemeth; however, this was not recorded in the minutes from the previous meeting.
- 19.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 September 2016 be approved with the above amendment and were signed as the correct record.

20 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 20.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“The recent City Wide conference took place on the 17th November 2016 and 40 people attended.”

20.2 Councillor Barnett noted that the attendance was low and this could have been due to the venue. The Head of Tenancy Services noted that residents would have an opportunity to discuss the venue before the next City Wide Conference.

21 HOUSING FIRE SAFETY POLICY

21.1 Rachel Chasseaud, the Head of Tenancy Services, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The new fire safety policy would be reported at the Housing & New Homes Committee on 18 January 2017.
- The current policies and vulnerable resident fire procedures had been updated.
- The sprinkler system had been installed in Somerset Point and a further two high rise blocks were to have the system installed in 2017.
- Following the advice from the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, alternative solutions were being found to store mobility scooters, as they could not be kept in the communal hallways.
- There was an article in the previous edition of Homing In providing information regarding fire safety, and there would be a further, more detailed, article in the winter edition. Posters had been redesigned and leaflets had been produced.

21.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Tenancy Services clarified:

- That the Housing Association should be abiding by the Council's policies regarding keeping clear common hallways.
- The majority of purpose built blocks had storage space that could be used for bikes and mobility scooters; however, a lot these were not being used. Lower cost solutions were being looked at for storage and these would have smoke detectors installed.
- The East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service encouraged power sockets to be switched off at night. New homes were being built with sockets located higher on the walls, in accordance with the national building regulations, to ensure vulnerable residents can reach them.
- The East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service noted that candles should not be left unattended.
- Brighton & Hove City Council and Mears were aware that more power points were needed, as extension leads could be a hazard, and they were insuring more were being installed in new homes.
- There was a limited space for advertising homes; therefore, available storage would not be noted in an advert.

21.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

22 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

22.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the responses.

23 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2

23.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The report had been reformatted to be read easier.
- The indicators showed that 34 areas were on target, six targets were almost met and five were below target.

23.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

24 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET

24.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement highlighted the presentation that was given at the City Wide Conference on 17 November 2016.

24.2 The Officer outlined the slide regarding the Capital Investment and the proposed areas that would have their budgets either reduced or increased to make savings. The six voting co-optees present undertook an electronic vote in response to “Do you think we have got the balance right?”. The results were as follows:

83% voted “yes”.

0% voted “no”.

17% voted “not sure”.

24.3 In response to Councillor Nemeth the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement explained that leaseholders were expected to pay for necessary improvements or repairs to the building. The leaseholder had an opportunity to dispute these.

24.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

25 TENANCY FRAUD AMNESTY BRIEFING

25.1 Rachel Chasseaud, Head of Tenancy Services, introduced the report and highlighted:

- An amnesty was beginning at the beginning of December to potentially gain properties back that may have been sub-let.
- The Housing team were working alongside the tenancy and fraud team.
- The keys to the properties could be returned to the Council anonymously and the resident would not be prosecuted. It was a cost effective way to regain properties.
- Similar amnesties had been successful in other authorities.
- The residents were encouraged to report and fraud suspicions they may have.
- It had been advertised in Homing In, on social media and posters had been distributed.
- There would be a feedback report presented at the Area Housing Panels in March.

25.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Tenancy Services clarified:

- A tenancy fraud case must have substantial evidence to take the tenant to court and gathering this could be lengthy. The tenancy fraud team currently had two members of staff and there were approximately 100 active cases. The cases with the most evidence would be prioritised.
- Local Councillors and residents would receive feedback regarding how many properties were regained in the amnesty.

25.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

26 STAR (SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS) SURVEY 2016

26.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement introduced the report and highlighted:

- The postal survey was sent to a randomly selected sample of 3000 tenants and had received a higher response rate from the previous year.
- There were two areas where the satisfaction rate had been reduced, these being: the overall quality of homes; and neighbourhoods as a place to live.
- There will be a short article in the next edition of Homing In and a further, more detailed article in the spring edition outlining the findings.

26.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

27 ESTATES DEVELOPMENT BUDGET REVIEW

27.1 Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The budget was going to be reduced; however, the reserves in place would be added to the total and the amount would remain the same as the previous year.
- The feedback that had been received through the EDB budget consultations and through the “blue pages” showed that residents wished for the process to be made fairer.
- A survey had been sent to the Chairs, Secretary and Treasurers of the Tenant Only Meetings.
- The proposals for the EDB budget were:
 - 1) To limit the number of main bids to four per association.
 - 2) To limit the value of a main bid up to £15,000.
 - 3) To limit the number of quick bids to five per year.
 - 4) Residents should not use the EDB budgets for multiple quick bids for a work that should be a main bid.

27.2 The following comments were made by the Panel:

- Limiting the number of quick bids to five a year would not help the Estates Development Budget to be used evenly across the city.
- Residents should be able to apply for smaller items, for example; kettles and cushions.
- The EDB Panel should be made up of more than four residents.

27.3 A vote was taken by the voting co-optees present.

27.4 **RESOLVED** – That the recommendations were agreed.

28 CITY WIDE REPORTS

28.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the reports.

29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

29.1 There was none.

The meeting concluded at 4.05pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of