

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 28 NOVEMBER 2016

BRISTOL ESTATE, REAR OF 146-192, DONALD HALL ROAD, BRIGHTON, BN2 5DJ

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mary Mears

Representatives: Irene Boyce, Alan Cooke, Terence Hill, Hugh Logan, Iain Ramage, James Wheeler, Chris El Shabba, Patrick McKenna

Officers: Ododo Dafe (Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement), Therese Youngman (Contract Compliance Manager), Rachel Metcalf (Housing Manager)

Guests: Jeff Tourmentin (Mears), Chris Baker (Fire Safety Officer)

18 APOLOGIES

18.1 Apologies were given by Councillor Steven Bell, Cllr Mo Marsh, Cllr Dee Simson and Mr Gordon Roberts.

19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

20 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

21 HOUSING FIRE SAFETY POLICY

21.1 The Officer presented the Fire Safety Policy

- 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 Residents stated the following concerns and enquiries:

- Is the new sprinkler system just for current high rises or is there scope to have the system installed to low rise estates as well?

- Is it a legal requirement for a new build to have the new system?
- Are sprinklers per flat or per room?
- Clarification regarding at what height sprinklers begin?

21.3 Officers responded to the resident's concerns and enquiries with the following:

- Would like to see the sprinkler system everywhere unfortunately the funding implication is large,
- Given the go ahead to explore 2 further blocks however retro fitting the system to other high rise blocks is too expensive however cannot concretely state it will never happen for certain
- Installation of a sprinkler system is an extra not a sign of sub-standard housing
- It is 1 sprinkler per room which operates on a heat system, once set off, will not simultaneously activate in all other rooms.
- Have sent 1.5 million on upgrades throughout the city, the concentration of high rise blocks due to logistics surrounding getting fire safety teams to the top
- Confirmed that sprinkler systems are a requirement for high rise blocks over 30 metres in height.

21.4 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted

22 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

22.1 (Item 1 – Window Replacements in Woodingdean)

22.2 Officers responded to a resident's enquiry with the following:

- Agreed with Janet Gearing's point regarding the seeming priority over more exposed properties, stated that the Window Replacements Program has been brought forward from 2020 to 2017
- The chair stated discontent with the frequently similar response received regarding this issue over the past 8 years, she requested the figures for the total sum of the interim repairs cost over the last 8 years from the Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement.

22.3 (Item 2 – Robert Lodge Rear Doors)

22.4 Residents confirmed that the doors are being constructed and should be installed in 8 weeks.

22.5 Officers stated their satisfaction with the timeline.

22.6 (Item 3 – Robert Lodge Trade Buttons)

22.7 Resident's clarified that they received notification the trade buttons are to be removed.

22.8 (Item 4 – New Flats at Robert Lodge)

22.9 Residents stated concerns regarding the potential blocking of light due to the construction of a large retaining wall and other buildings.

22.10 Officers stated that they will talk to officers to investigate this.

22.11 (3 Star Items of Central Area Panel - Item 1 - Resident Involvement Review)

22.12 The panel were satisfied with this report

22.13 (3 Star Items of North Ward – Item 1 – Car Park and Lighting at Nettleton and Dudeney)

22.14 The panel were satisfied with this report

22.15 (3 Star Items of West Ward – Item 1 – Residential Involvement Review)

22.16 The panel were satisfied with this report

22.17 (3 Star Items of West Ward – Item 2 – Common and Private Gardens)

22.18 The panel were satisfied with this report

22.19 (3 Star Items of West Ward – Item 3 – Re-structuring of Housing Officers Roles)

22.20 The panel were satisfied with this report

22.21 **RESOLVED** –That the reports be noted.

23 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 - 2016/17

23.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income and Involvement, presented the report and highlighted:

- The indicators showed that 34 areas were on target, six targets were almost met and five were below target.
- The repairs contract was under target due to the average time to repair and the answering calls time. This was mainly due to the loss of subcontracting work, the high demand of work, and the change of staff on the helpdesk.

23.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement clarified:

- A resident raised concerns regarding major projects running one year behind schedule and noted that more detail should be included in the report explaining this. The Officer explained that the Council were working to resolve the issues with certain areas, for example, scaffolding and were monitoring the performance with Mears on a weekly basis.
- Mears was a competitive business and retaining staff was challenging. There was a recruitment day for Mears in December.

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

24 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET

23.4 The Officer presented the report to the panel introducing the revenue and benefits account budget, explanation of the HRA and what is being spent on Social Housing.

She further explained the Capital Investment Programme and summarised the impacts of the next year including a 1% rent reduction amounting to roughly 70p a week. She also 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”.

23.5 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted

25 TENANCY FRAUD AMNESTY BRIEFING

25.1 The Officer introduced the Tenancy Fraud Amnesty Briefing highlighting on the amnesty on people to submit unused flats and will not be prosecuting until the end of January. She further stated that advice is offered by Housing and Customer Service Team.

25.2 The Chair expressed support of this initiative reaffirming that the validity of the case that people still sublet BHCC properties.

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

26 STAR (SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS) SURVEY 2016 - ODODO DAFE

26.1 The officer presented the survey that is completed every 2 years and has received a 20% response rate which equates to 829 responses.

26.2 **RESOLVED** – that the panel were satisfied with this survey.

27 ESTATES DEVELOPMENT BUDGET REVIEW

27.1 The Officer introduced the report and clarified that this was carried out as part of the resident involvement review process and consists of a series of recommendations borne from the feedback from residents regarding how it can be improved.

27.2 A vote was taken under the heading, “Are you in favour of the recommendations and agreements?”

27.3 6 voted unanimously for yes.

27.4 **RESOLVED** –That the panel was satisfied with the Budget Review.

28 CITY WIDE REPORTS

28.1 **RESOLVED**- That the reports and minutes of the various Citywide groups be noted.

29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at 21.15pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of