

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 28 MARCH 2017

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

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Gibson (Chair) and Morris.

Representatives: Carl Boardman, Jane Thorpe, Ann Ewings, George Coates, Martin Cunningham, Barry Hughes, Tomm Nyuus and Tony Worsfold.

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Rebecca Mann (Resident Involvement Officer), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement), Perrin Horne (Customer Service Manager) and Cliona May (Democratic Services Officer).

31 APOLOGIES

31.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Greenbaum, Jeff Tourmentin, Chris Row, Linda Shaw and Tony Worsfold.

32 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

32.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 November 2016 be approved and signed as the correct record.

33 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

33.1 The Chair explained that copies of a briefing from the Area Housing Panel Chairs were given to the residents by the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. This included information regarding: Revised Tenancy Agreement 2017; Tenancy Fraud Amnesty; and Service Improvement Groups.

34 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

34.1 Barry Hughes explained that he was the Joint Chairman of the Central Resident Tenant Meeting and they were attempting to resolve the items reported in the blue pages before the Area Housing Panel meetings to reduce the amount of 'three star' items.

34.2 (Item 5 – Estate Inspections) The Officer explained that the inspection process was being reviewed and they would continue to update the Area Housing Panels regarding this.

35 REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENT HANDBOOK

35.1 Perrin Horne, Customer Service Manager, introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- The original review of the Repairs & Improvement Handbook was completed in 2011 and there had not been any major changes or updates since this review.
- The report had been presented at the Service Improvement Group (SIG) and it would be reported to the Senior Housing Action Group (SHAG).
- The handbook would be published online; however, hard copies would be available with the Housing Department and Customer Repairs team if requested by residents.
- The online version of the handbook would provide links to different sections on the website.

35.2 In response to queries raised by the Panel the Customer Service Manager clarified:

- There was information in the handbook concerning damage being done when repairs were being completed.
- Resident leaseholders had a separate handbook.
- SIG had suggested an item in the handbook regarding home content insurance.
- Mears would have more engagement with residents regarding major repairs.

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 reports.

37 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

37.1 The Resident Involvement Officer explained that there had been an EDB bid submitted by Theobald House for flooring in the communal areas and it had been permitted for the funding to build up for three years. It had since been discovered that the tiles were asbestos and these would need to be removed which would exceed the £20,000 of funding accumulated. It was provisionally proposed that the funding would be spent on the community garden, the refurbishment of the community room toilets and sandblasting the exterior of the building.

37.2 In response to queries raised by the Panel the Resident Involvement Officer clarified the following:

- The removal of the asbestos tiles would be costly as Theobald House was 15 floors high.
- The money had been ring-fenced for Theobald House as they made bids over three years.
- The voting co-optees could agree for the money to be retained for Theobald House; however, at the Special Area Housing Panel on 25 May 2017 it could be discussed what the money could be used for.

37.3 **RESOLVED** – That the voting co-optees agreed for the money to be retained for Theobald House.

37.4 The following points were raised by residents and Officers:

- Concern that the decision of the Housing Committee in March 2015 was being taken as a mandate to roll out Multi Steel doors at low rise flats, which did not have the same problems of security or traffic as high rise blocks at a costly rate. It was requested that the Housing & New Homes Committee review the practice and asked officers to produce a proposal that was more appropriate to low rise blocks. The Officer responded and explained that they would have done a cost comparison, and as the doors were bespoke the prices varied considerably, and this was an open enquiry that would be feedback to the resident.
- It was requested that the Chairs of Resident Associations be copied into the Section 20 consultation notices. In response it was explained that under a freedom of information request the cost of major works could be shared with an individual when required but these would not be published online. Barry Hughes explained that he wished for it to be discussed at the Housing & New Homes Committee on 28 June 2017.
- Planning applications for work on council owned blocks of flats had been rejected by the Planning Committee and the resident explained that with more consideration and consultation with residents regarding these applications could have ensured these gained planning permission or may not have been required in the first place.
- It was queried whether residents and other interested parties received enough consultation and information before a planning application was submitted.
- It was raised that there could be a more cost effective way to maintain and clear gutters, potentially through a Citywide maintenance programme and noted that the Officers should complete a cost benefit survey.
- Area Panel representatives were elected; however, observers were allowed at the Panels and could speak at the Chair's discretion; however, they would not be able to participate in voting.
- Estate inspections were being considered in the resident review, which was ongoing and would be reported to the Area Housing Panels when completed.

37.5 The Chair welcomed comments from the residents on improvements that could be made to the Central Area Housing Panel. These were:

- It was suggested that an agenda setting meeting between the Chair and residents would be useful.
- It was suggested that the minutes included an action list to ensure suggestions were taken forward by Officers. The Democratic Services Officer explained that an item at the beginning of the agenda could be created called "Previous Actions Raised".
- The "three star items" process in the Resident Question Time needed to be reviewed.
- A more coherent flow between the Area Housing Panels, Resident Involvement meetings and Tenant Only meetings needed to be established.
- The residents found the discussions and interactive activities were more useful than presentations.

The meeting concluded at 4.05pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of