

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA**

**7.00pm 3 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**BRISTOL ESTATE**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Mears (Chair)

**Representatives:** Lyn Bennett (M.F.R.T.A Rep), Anne Willson (M.F.R.T.A Sub), Janet Gearing (Woodingdean), Chris El-Shabba (Robert Lodge), Alan Cooke (Craven Vale),

**Officers:** Di Hughes (Business Change Manager), Keely McDonald (Resident Involvement Officer), Mel Fraser (Performance & Improvement Officer), Emma Gilbert (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), James Crane (Service Improvement Manager), Glyn Huelin (Business & Performance Manager), Sharon Davies (Business & Performance Project Manager), Eddie Wilson (Mears General Manager), Grant Ritchie (Lead Consultant – Health & Safety)

**Guests:** Sarah Booker-Lewis (Local Democracy Reporter)

**14 APOLOGIES**

14.1 Apologies were received by Councillor Bell, Brenda Murphy and Ian Ramage.

**15 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

**16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

16.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes were an exact record of the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018.

**17 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME**

17.1 (Item 1 – Laundry Tokens)

17.2 An officer confirmed that a 24 hour venue would now be open for tokens that posters had been put in place with information regarding laundry and that post offices would now be selling tokens.

17.3 **RESOLVED** – that the report was noted.

17.4 (Item 2 – Anti-social in Craven Vale)

17.5 A resident stated they were not entirely happy with the requested changes and that there was no realist expectation of a resolution.

17.6 An Officer agreed to follow up with the resident's concerns and provide an update.

17.7 **RESOLVED** – that the report was noted.

17.8 (3 Star Item – North Ward Item 1 – Service provided by Resident Involvement Team)

17.9 A resident enquired about Resident Involvement Officer's future attendance.

17.10 An officer clarified that Resident Involvement Officers would always try and attend as many meetings as possible, it was further noted that limited resources were available and that it was rare that it was rare that Resident Involvement Officers were unable to attend meetings.

17.11 **RESOLVED** – that the report was noted.

## **18 FIRE SAFETY UPDATE**

18.1 The officer gave a brief update on Fire Safety, it was stated that tests of fire doors had been conducted nationally and that BHCC currently had doors that had failed the 30 minutes test. It was confirmed that BHCC had stopped the door replacement scheme and that risk assessments had been completed.

18.2 A resident enquired if 10 minutes was an adequate score for BHCC fire doors to have achieved. Concern was raised regarding results from tests on master doors achieving 10 minutes against the expected result of 30 minutes.

18.3 An officer clarified that doors had been tested in 3 aspects and that master doors had failed tests by achieving 10-15 minutes. It was noted that other considerations were taken in to account that mitigated any concern that master doors were insufficiently safe.

18.4 The chair emphasised the importance of waiting until the final report had been published.

18.5 **RESOLVED** – that the report was noted.

## **19 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS REVIEW**

19.1 An officer gave a brief overview of the Housing Allocations Review, various changes following the review in 2016 were presented such as the move to a system to 4 separate queues. It was further noted that work to house homeless people was on target and that efforts to be more proactive to ascertain what people needed within specific queues was underway.

19.2 Residents had the following concerns, statements and enquiries:

- Concern was expressed regarding the slow process of Housing
- It was noted that offers were far from the original request

19.3 Officers responded to residents with the following:

- Some applicants had received housing first time
- Some people had received assisted bidding

- It was important to make use of the 700 houses in the city

19.4 The Chair noted that there were a series of regulations that Officers had to carefully follow. It was confirmed that this would be coming to committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

19.5 **RESOLVED** – that the report was noted.

## **20 OPTIONS FOR FUTURE DELIVERY OF HOUSING REPAIRS, PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL WORKS**

20.1 Two officers presented the options for future delivery of housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works. Various details were highlighted such as recent engagement works including attendance at area panels, service improvement groups, workshops, over 1000 door to door surveys and online and postal surveys were conducted.

20.2 Residents welcomed the report.

20.3 An officer confirmed that leaseholders agreed strongly with the report. It was stated that different approaches for value for money on a project by project basis were welcomed.

20.4 The Chair emphasised that this came from the Housing Revenue Account which was comprised of tenant's rents. The chair further emphasised that tenant's satisfaction was paramount.

20.5 **RESOLVED** – that the report was noted.

## **21 IMPROVE YOUR ESTATES PROGRAMME**

21.1 The panel considered a presentation on the Improve Your Estates Program, it was stated that currently a wide range of projects were being undertaken. Key projects were detailed such as Housing Officers being employed to address untidy gardens around the city and a discretionary gardening and decorating scheme for people aged over 70 not in receipt of benefits.

21.2 A resident requested that they be kept up to date on the projects announced.

21.3 An officer notified the panel that 2 apprentices were working alongside the Housing Officer in tending to untidy gardens.

21.4 The Chair stated that promotion of the projects should be city wide as well as across all area panels, the chair further agreed with resident's concerns of untidy gardens.

21.5 **RESOLVED** – that the panel agreed to note the report.

## **22 HOME PURCHASE POLICY UPDATE**

22.1 An officer gave a brief overview of the Home Purchase Policy Update, it was stated that the update followed the review at Housing and New Homes Committee last September. The officer noted that following a year-long pilot, BHCC had purchased

some properties and were proceeding with efforts to carry on this enterprise. The officer concluded by stating that more resources had been secured with an initial 2 million pounds having been provisionally agreed and an anticipated budget of 7 Million pounds.

- 22.2 A resident enquired what conditions had to be met in order for a property buy back to occur.
- 22.3 An officer stated that many different considerations were taken into account.
- 22.4 The chair supported the update and ongoing works carried out by BHCC. She stated the positive prospect of buying housing stock at this level.
- 22.5 **RESOLVED** – that the panel agree to note the report.

### **23 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1**

- 23.1 An officer gave a brief overview of the Housing Management Performance Report Quarter 1, various points of information were presented including that BHCC now had access to the system and were able to see when people's rent payments were in arrears and that a special focus on rent collection was under way.
- 23.2 A resident stated that Universal Credit could put people in arrears as payments were 4 weekly.
- 23.3 An officer responded to concerns by stating that there were myriad reasons for tenants entering arrears and that effort would be taken to resolve these as soon as possible. It was further stated that BHCC provided various assistance programs for people over 65 and that a further update would become available in future.
- 23.4 **RESOLVED** – that the panel agreed to note the report.

### **24 CITY WIDE REPORTS**

- 24.1 **RESOLVED** – that the panel agreed to note all City Wide reports.

### **25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 25.1 A resident enquired if EDB funding was available on hard standing over fencing.
- 25.2 An officer stated that the panel had agreed that bids were capped at £15,000. It was stated that bids for hardstanding were withdrawn after consultation and that the committee was to use the underspend to finalise fencing works for everyone.

### **26 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

- 26.1 The date of the next meeting is 15 October 2018.

The meeting concluded at 21:15.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of