

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 3 JANUARY 2018

HAMPSHIRE LODGE - HAMPSHIRE LODGE

MINUTES

Present: Councillor David Gibson (Chair)

Representatives: Carl Boardman (Warwick Rep), Jason Williams (Hereford Court Chair), Roger Small (Leach Court), Marting Cunningham (Hampshire Court), Christina Hadleigh (Hampshire Court), John McPhillips (Albion Hill Res Assoc), Tony Worsfold (LAG), David Spafford (Ardingly Court), Barry Kingston (Hampshire Court), Barry Hughes (Sylvan Hall RA), Tony McCoy (Sloane Court rep), Diets Verschuren (St James House Res Assoc),

Officers: Eddie Wilson (General Manager Mears), Marcus Richardson (Surveyor & Contract Manager), Alexander Fox (Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services)

25 APOLOGIES

25.1 Apologies were received by Councillor Adrian Morris.

26 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

26.1 The Panel observed a minute silence for Ms Becky Purnell and Ann Ewings.

27 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

28 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

28.1 (Item 1 – Accessibility Issues)

28.2 A resident stated their preference for the Verdana font, minimum size 16. They requested if it was possible to receive pdf versions along with hard copies of agenda packs in the future.

28.3 An officer agreed to make adjustments to future despatch proceedings to include sending an electronic copy to the resident.

28.4 (3 Star Item – West Area Panel)

28.5 (Item 2 – Review of the Estate Development Budget)

28.6 Residents stated the following concerns and enquiries:

- Expressed confusion as to why another review was being requested

- Stated that Central didn't receive everything that was bid, inferred that a bid had been lost due to incompetence on behalf of Mears.
- A request for a review on Mears' handling of EDB was submitted and formally seconded
- Noted that the company "Lee Sullivan" appeared to be receiving a large number of sub-contractual work through Mears.

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

- Agreed that in the specific case of Mears potential negligence, would follow up and report on findings. They clarified that there was a difference between a specific enquiry and systemic issues.
- Emphasised that the change in the past Estate Development Budgets was fundamental and that this is to be a more collective audit.
- Stated that there was no evidence to suggest Lee Sullivan area receiving extra money from Mears. They furthered that Mears are legally allowed to sub-contract specialist works.

28.8 The Chair confirmed the request for guidance in regards to details of the review.

28.9 (Item 3 – Tackling Social Isolation)

28.10 Residents had the following enquiries, statements and concerns:

- Stated that the response trivialises the experience
- Expressed concern that a check-up every 5 years is not help
- Whilst recognising the depleting resources, residents objected to the response on the grounds that it was lightweight
- It was stated that engagement with new tenants was important and that Resident Officers must be more pro-active in future

28.11 Officers had the following responses for residents:

- Apologised for the appearance of a soft response and reaffirmed that this was not the intention
- Laid out the current system of support and the role the resident association plays and stressed its importance
- Clarified that the Resident Involvement Review ascertains what is available within the terms of finite resources.

28.12 Chair summarised that this is an issue of being proactive in future. Enquired if it would be possible in future tenants to be notified of a new Resident Officer upon moving in.

28.13 (Item 4 – Affordable Housing)

28.14 **AGREED** – That the report be noted.

28.15 (Item 5 – Black boxes and recycling in South Hawk)

28.16 **AGREED** – That the report be noted.

28.17 (Item 6 – Rubbish in tenants gardens)

28.18 **AGREED** – That the report be noted.

28.19 (Item 7 – Reporting anti-social behaviour)

28.20 **AGREED** – That the report be noted.

28.21 (Item 8 – Tenancy requirements at Nettleton & Dudeney)

28.22 **AGREED** – That the report be noted.

28.23 (Item 9 – Gardens for new tenants)

28.24 A resident enquired if it would be possible for this to be considered as part of the 5 year check.

28.25 An officer offered to take this suggestion forward.

28.26 (Item 10 – Grants to Resident's Associations)

28.27 Resident's enquired why bank accounts are required

28.28 An officer stated that the account they hold is for office and statutory equipment.

28.29 The Chair agreed with resident's request to address the scope of the grants payments system.

29 ROUND ROBIN

29.1 Residents had the following enquiries, statements and concerns:

- Criticised the new token payments system in the laundries along with BHCC's approach to service and maintenance
- Requested a review of the anti-social team as reports that were being released were incorrect
- Still waiting for a full response from James Crane, Service Improvement Manager, in regards to the allocations policy
- Stated there was an issue finding new attendees to attend a newly started resident association
- A resident stated that they had given money for bulbs to City Park's Nursery a year ago and are still awaiting remuneration for this
- A resident highlighted an infestation of bed bugs and urged all reps and officers to take the possible spread seriously
- A leaseholder stated that attempts to advertise services on the Resident Association noticeboard.

29.2 Officers responded to resident's enquiries with the following:

- An agreement was made to follow up with a workshop for resident representatives.
- Will discuss issue regarding bulbs with the relevant resident

29.3 The Chair confirmed an upcoming working group meeting to be held with leaseholders.

30 HRA ENERGY STRATEGY

30.1 Alex Fox, Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager, presented the HRA Energy Strategy Report, he explained various issues including the background information contained within the document. Feedback in regards to energy efficiency was encouraged.

30.2 Residents had the following concerns, statements and enquiries:

- Enquired as to BHCC's decision to utilise regular lighting rather than warm white LED to reduce energy cost
- Enquired whether residents will be kept informed and notified of any progress made in future
- Enquired if there will be any benefit by way of reduction in rents for residents?
- Requested that this is forwarded to the next area panel

30.3 Officers responded to residents with the following:

- Speculated that the use of regular light bulbs over LED lights was something that was down to remit
- Stated that consultations and focus groups have been held and depending on the responses; a form of governance may be brought forward
- Agreed that scope should include effort to be brought to area panels
- Willing to have a look at and will also be looked at in future as part of a holistic approach

30.1 Chair suggested possible feedback be taken to Resident Only Meeting next day.

31 ITEMS FOR HOUSING COMMITTEE

31.1 An Officer stated that the HRA budget and Capital Budget paper is not yet public, and enquired if members would like a special meeting on this specific budget.

31.2 Members unanimously agreed to convene a special meeting on Thursday 11th January at 14:00, they further requested a specific scrutiny on the issue of reduced level of funding for the Estate Development Budget.

A PRESENTATION ON THE DRAFT TENANCY HANDBOOK

31a.1 Rachel Chasseaud, Head of Tenancy Services, gave a presentation on the draft tenancy handbook and explained the different aspects of the new agreement such as an update of details.

32 TIMINGS OF FUTURE MEETINGS

32.1 The Chair enquired if the panel would consider any possible changes to the logistics of future area panels, it was agreed that a survey or discussion be held at the next Resident Only Meeting. Changes such as possibly holding meetings in the evening in the Summer and afternoons in the Winter were proposed.

32.2 A resident stated that there may be issue with morning meetings as many residents carry out medicinal regimes at that time.

33 CITYWIDE REPORTS

33.1 **AGREED** – That the reports be noted.

34 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

34.1 Residents enquired of the current situation on the surrounding works on garage repairs.

34.2 Mears state that they will follow up on this concern.

35 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS UPDATE

35.1 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 16:00.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

