

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

2.00pm 20 FEBRUARY 2018

ST RICHARDS' COMMUNITY HALL, BN3 7FP

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Moonan (Chair), Barnett, Gilbey, Nemeth

Representatives: Vic Dodd (Ingram Association), Ted Chapman (Clarendon & Ellen Road), Alison Grey (Clarendon & Ellen Road), Ann Tizzard (Knoll), Ann Packham (Ingram Association), Joe Macrae (Portslade) and Pat Weller (Knoll)

Officers: Pat Liddell (Resident Involvement Officer), Hilary Edgar (Housing Service Operations Manager), Sharon Davies (Business & Performance Project Manager), Miles Davidson (Housing Sustainability & Affordable Warmth Manager), Simon Whitwell (Financial Inclusion Coordinator - SHINE Project), Annie Sparks (Regulatory Services Manager), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement), Eddie Wilson (Mears) and Tom McColgan (Democratic Services Officer – Lower)

33 APOLOGIES

33.1 Councillor Peltzer Dunn sent his apologies.

34 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

34.1 The Chair informed the Panel that Larissa Reed was making a presentation at the Chartered Institute of Housing Conference in Brighton on Wednesday 7th March. A day ticket had been allocated to each panel. The Chair asked the Representative who attended the event to give feedback at the next meeting.

35 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

35.1 **Resolved:** That the Panel agreed the minutes of the previous meeting to be an accurate record.

36 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

How to keep the repairs service working well

36.1 In response to Residents, Officers stated:

- Mears has two classifications for repairs; priority which were responded to within 24 hours of reporting and routine which were responded to within 28 days
- Exchanges were taken as found by the resident moving in. If there were any outstanding repairs these would still be completed regardless of any exchange taking place.

Recycling notices on bins at Clarendon & Ellen

- 36.2 Officers presented the proposed signs for the recycling bins to the Panel.
- 36.3 Residents responded that the issue of recycling not being properly sorted and disposed of was not just an issue for Clarendon & Ellen and asked if the signs could be more widely displayed. Residents noted that there was a need to better educate people about recycling.

Delayed bids to Estate Development Budget

- 36.3 Residents expressed concern that money had been identified from the estate development budget (EDB) but that work had not been done. If residents were now required to re-bid for the work there would be a question over where the funding which was initially allocated had been spent.
- 36.4 Officers stated that if a bid had been accepted the work would be done and residents would not have to re-bid for the funding. Officers reported that work had taken place at Stapley Court and Knoll Close following successful EDB bids. Stapley Court had been jet washed on 12 August 2014 and surveyors were due to inspect it for algae again shortly. The carpeting at Knoll Close had been delayed following an issue with leaseholders. This had now been resolved and work was due to commence in 2018/19.
- 36.5 The EDB Board was due to look at outstanding bids some from as far back as 2014 in the coming months and would be chasing to ensure that outstanding work was completed.

Installation of digital central heating thermostats (North)

- 36.6 Residents noted that the answer to the question from north area residents concerning thermostats did not address the concerns of the questioner. The question suggested the fault was with improper installation and not the equipment which the answer blamed.
- 36.7 **Resolved:** That the Panel noted the written answers

37 UPDATE ON SHINE PROJECT AND FUEL POVERTY

- 37.1 Officers stated that fuel poverty was distinct from general poverty and had first been defined in the 1980s as: fuel costs above the average which if purchased would leave the individual below the poverty line. 15,000 households in the city were in fuel poverty which was higher than both regional and national averages. The housing stock in the city was aging and tended to be energy inefficient. Which combined with the high cost of living in the city made it difficult for people to heat their homes.
- 37.2 Fuel poverty could have a serious impact on health including cardiovascular difficulties, exacerbating arthritis and having a negative effect on mental health. A cold, damp house with mould and the occupant not turning on the heating were all signs of fuel poverty.

- 37.3 The Council had a campaign called 'Warmth and Wellbeing', a fuel poverty and affordable warmth strategy, and a new strategy for the Housing Revenue Account had been adopted at the Housing & New Homes Committee meeting in January 2018.
- 37.4 The SHINE energy efficiency project worked with leaseholders and tenants to reduce both pollution and fuel poverty. SHINE had conducted 250 advice visits to provide information to reduce fuel consumption and meet their wellbeing needs. SHINE had also referred residents to Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-op for home visits. SHINE would be training a team of volunteers to help advise residents how to reduce their fuel costs.

38 PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME FOR HOUSING REPAIRS, PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL WORKS

- 38.1 Officers introduced the report and stated that the current contract would expire in 2020. The contract covered repairs, planned works and capital improvements. Residents' views will shape the new contract and service through working groups. The Housing Team aimed to make the consultation as wide and inclusive as possible.
- 38.2 In response to Residents officers stated:
- Historically contracts had been split geographically across the city but there was the possibility of splitting the contract different i.e. by types of work.
 - It was a legal requirement to go out to tender at the end of the contract.
 - By completing a full consultation the new contract tendered in 2020 would show what is expected of the service upfront.
 - There would be the opportunity to examine and change the lifecycle of a repair.
- 38.3 In response to Councillors and the Chair officers stated that they would publish a programme of engagement events for both Members and Residents.
- 38.4 **Resolved:** That the Panel noted the report

39 FIELD OFFICERS

- 39.1 Officers introduced the report. The new Field Officer position would work across 9 council services housing, planning enforcement, community safety and regulatory services. The role would include both community engagement and effective enforcement action. The Team was expected to be in place from June 2018 and would consist of 7 officers working across the whole city.
- 39.2 In response to comments from the Panel residents responded:
- The posts were not resulting in any redundancies in current specialist teams.
 - Lone working risk assessments would be carried out and Field Officers could work in pairs when dealing with clients of concern and could work with the police where necessary.
 - Field Officers will make referrals to specialist services for the specialist service to then investigate further.
 - Field Officers will assist the Highways Team by collecting abandoned bikes, removing objects from the road and cutting back vegetation.
- 39.3 The Chair suggested that a Field Officer be invited to a meeting of the Panel after the team has been established.

39.4 **Resolved:** That the Panel noted the report

40 THE PROCUREMENT OF LEGIONELLA ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL SERVICES FOR HOUSING STOCK

40.1 Officers presented the report and stated that the current contract ends in September 2018. The framework for the services was presented in the agenda and that it was proposed that a new contract would similar to the existing one. The Housing & New Homes committee would consider the report on 14 March 2018.

40.2 **Resolved:** That the Panel noted the report

41 TENANCY FRAUD AMNESTY

41.1 There would be an amnesty for tenancy fraud running from 3 April 2018 – 31 May 2018. This followed a successful amnesty which had been run from December 2016- January 2017 which had led to several properties being returned and re-let. The amnesty would raise awareness and provide an opportunity for people to come forward.

41.2 **Resolved:** That the Panel noted the report

42 PERFORMANCE REPORT

42.1 Officers introduced the report and highlighted the front sheet which was now provided with the performance report following feedback that the reports were difficult to understand. Satisfaction with anti-social behaviour was under the target for the last quarter and every other indicator was at or above target.

42.2 Councillor Barnett requested that officers provide more information about why on average properties were vacant for 334 days in Hangelton & Knoll.

42.3 **Resolved:** That the Panel noted the report

43 INFORMATION FROM COMMUNITIES CO-ORDINATOR

43.1 The Communities Co-ordinator was not able to attend the meeting to present the information sheet which was provided in the agenda. Officers suggested that Milinda King may be able to help Representatives who had found it difficult to arrange a quorate AGM.

43.2 **Resolved:** That Panel noted the report

44 CITY WIDE REPORTS

44.1 **Resolved:** That the Panel noted the two city wide reports.

45 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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AREA**

- 45.1 Joe McCray (Portslade) stated that there was an issue with repeated fly tipping by the bins at the back of Carden Court. He asked officers if it would be possible to install a CCTV camera or install bollards at the top of Valley Road to prevent access.
- 45.2 Councillor Gilbey stated that she aimed to use some of her ward budget to replace the tree at the top of Valley Road would act as a natural barrier to vehicles.
- 45.3 The Chair suggested that the area could be identified as a fly tipping hotspot which would mean that the mobile surveillance equipment could be de deployed there.
- 45.4 Officers responded that the council has successfully prosecuted individuals for fly tipping in the past but that the surveillance capacity was limited. The Resident Involvement Officer would follow up with Mr McCray.
- 45.5 In response to Vic Dodd (Ingram Association) reported that there was currently no lighting on a footpath rendering it dangerous. Officers stated that they would follow up after the meeting.
- 45.6 Councillor Barnett stated that the railings on Poplar Close had become very rusty and needed maintenance and that a post had fallen down. Officers stated that they would follow up after the meeting.
- 45.7 Alison Grey (Clarendon & Ellen Road) stated that there were issues with people fly tipping and rough sleeping in the lock up and she asked if a fob system could be introduced to limit access to only those who have space in the lock up.

46 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 46.1 The next meeting was due to be held on 24 May 2018

The meeting concluded at 3.45pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

