

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

**7.00pm 18 FEBRUARY 2019**

**BRISTOL ESTATE COMMUNITY ROOM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Mears (Chair) and Platts.

**Representatives:** Chris El-Shabba (Robert Lodge RA), Alan Cooke (Craven Vale CA), Lyn Bennet (Chair - Manor Farm TRA), Janet Gearing (Woodingdean TRA)

**Non-Voting Delegates:**

**Officers:** Martin Reid (Assistant Director – Housing), Sharon Davies (Housing Business Programme Manager), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement), Annie Sparks (Regulatory Services Manager), Hilary Edgar (Housing Service Operations Manager), Eddie Wilson (General Manager – MEARS) and Anoushka Clayton-Walshe (Democratic Services Apprentice)

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

**54 APOLOGIES**

There were none.

**55 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

55.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“I am pleased to let you know that Resident Inspectors will be taking part in a training event developed in partnership with a new organisation - South East Training Uniting People, also known as SETUP. This group brings Resident Involvement officers from Brighton and Hove together with officers in similar jobs in Eastbourne & Lewes District Council, Wealden District Council, Optivo Housing Association, Brighton Housing Trust and Seaside Homes.

This event was suggested by Brighton and Hove and will be led by a trainer from TPAS, a national group promoting tenant participation. Our Resident Inspectors will meet residents from the other organisations, so as well as being a training event it will also be a great opportunity to network and share ideas. Please get in touch with the Resident Involvement team if you are interested in taking part, or have an idea for future training events.

Also on the subject of training, a member of the Resident Involvement team recently attended a Dementia Awareness event run by the Dementia Friends group. The trainer has offered to come along to association meetings and run a 45 minute

session to raise awareness about dementia and the support that is available for people with the condition, their family and carers. If any association would like to arrange this, please let the Resident Involvement team know and they will put you in touch with the trainer”

## **56 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

56.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 3 December 2018 were agreed as the correct record.

## **57 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME**

**RESOLVED:** That the Panel agreed to note the responses.

## **58 THE FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE**

58.1 Sharon Davies, Housing Business Programme Manager, introduced the briefing paper that detailed the resident engagement arrangements on the future Housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works programme and their involvement in the process of setting up the new repairs and maintenance services between March 2019 and April 2020.

58.2 In response to the Chair, Martin Reid, Assistant Director Housing, stated that the process to recruit volunteers to sit on the proposed task and finish group would follow the Area Housing Panel guidelines.

58.3 Officers stated that as well as generally seeking representation from many different profiles, they aimed to particularly include Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) or younger candidates as they did not have any representatives of those groups.

58.4 In response to residents asking how frequent and how long the Task and Finish Group would occur, officers stated that the groups would vary depending on the activity on the session.

58.5 The Chair stated that residents should maximise their involvement to ensure they received value for money on their services and that residents should be fully briefed throughout the whole process.

58.6 In response to residents asking whether the time of the sessions would consider people's working patterns; officers responded that the schedule could be flexible to accommodate residents who wanted to get involved.

58.7 Officers stated that they would keep all residents informed on the process whether they were a representative on the Task and Finish Group or not.

58.8 **RESOLVED:** That the Panel agree to note the report.

## **59 FIELD OFFICERS**

59.1 Annie Sparks, Regulatory Services Manager, introduced two of the new Field Officers (FOs), James Barr and Dario Saracini. She stated that the team had launched in December 2018 and they had already worked with a number of services, including

Housing and had started to take on larger cases. She stated that they had successfully begun their tasks of evidence gathering, information sharing, service referrals and providing community reassurance during unsociable hours. FOs would be leading the remodelling of the estate inspections by working with residents to identify the improvements they want to see in their neighbourhoods.

- 59.2 In response to residents, officers stated that the FOs role was securely funded from existing services by transferring vacancies to provide an encompassing role that would benefit multiple services.
- 59.3 In response to residents asking to be provided with resources that explained the role of the FOs in order to distribute to tenant and resident associations, officers stated that there was information on the website and an article would be published in the next edition of Homing in.
- 59.4 Residents raised concern for elderly tenants being unaware and unfamiliar of the service and FOs themselves calling to their homes, particularly on evening visits. They asked what support the Field officers could provide that residents could not access themselves.
- 59.5 Officers responded that as the FO's work developed the benefits of the service would become clear to residents and associations; they can attend meetings of association to discuss their work in more detail, if invited.
- 59.6 In response to the Chair, officers stated that there were seven FO operating city wide and that data would be gathered to make sure each service would receive the right resources and attention from the FO to provide an objective taskforce.
- 59.7 In response to residents who raised concern for vulnerable tenants being presented with a FO on their doorstep, officers stated that FOs had had previous job experience in working with vulnerable people and in specific situations Housing Officers would inform them of sensitivities.
- 59.8 In response to residents asking how the FOs were finding the job so far, FOs stated that it had been challenging, diverse, interesting and an opportunity to learn a lot.
- 59.9 **RESOLVED:** That the Panel agree to note the update.

## **60 UPDATE ON THE EDB REVIEW**

- 60.1 Hilary Edgar, Housing Service Operations Manager, introduced the update on the EDB review that looked to improve the delivery timescale, resource deployment and the range of projects funded. This review included the task to improve the process by making the EDB easier to understand, fairer and more equitable.
- 60.2 Residents asked what EDB funded projects the Woodingdean area could to bid for as it was predominantly independent houses that did not have communal areas meaning that they could only primarily benefit from bins and fencing.
- 60.3 Officers responded that queries and problems relating to the EDB should be addressed at an earlier stage in the process in order identify issues so they could be rectified and ready to proceed to the next stage. In terms of fencing, individuals would

be able to apply on a separate scheme; communal fencing could still be part of EDB bids.

60.4 In response to residents who expressed frustration over the limited things they could bid on, officers stated that they would be available to meet resident associations or individuals to suggest robust bids that reflected their needs, something that they previously had done on other estates when invited.

60.5 Officers stated that the approach of the EDB review was about the council being a fair landlord using clear city wide criteria and a collaborative approach with tenants.

60.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Panel note the update.

## **61 ELECTIONS TO VACANT SEASIDE HOMES TRUSTEE POSITIONS**

62.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Panel agree for the two Central Area Panel candidates be approved by the East Area Panel to be nominated as Seaside Home Trustees.

## **62 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT**

63.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the report which included a basic summary and a more detailed document to outline the housing management performance for Q3 2018/19.

63.2 Councillor Platts stated that in the last meeting residents wanted more information on Universal Credit and arrears and asked why it was taking longer to re-let properties.

63.3 Officers responded that the primary reason for the delay was that some units of senior housing could be unpopular due to the size and facilities of the property. She added that they were reviewing and trying to improve the scheme by organising open days, asking residents for ideas to make properties more attractive, investing money to redecorate the properties, putting an article in Homing In and to think about other possible uses for those units.

63.4 The Chair stated that review did not span wide enough and should cover the whole housing stock in more detail.

63.5 Residents stated that they had seen many examples of properties being redecorated and transformed from their previous poor to a welcoming environment. Officers added that the timescale of remodelling could sometimes be longer due to the depth of damage and age. In the case of properties being too small they hoped residents could balance this by utilising the community rooms.

63.6 Residents raised concern for some third floor properties remaining vacant due to the absence of a lift.

63.7 Officers responded that after the report going to the Housing and new homes Committee, councillors were keen to understand more about sheltered housing and map where problems and blockages arose.

63.8 **RESOLVED:** That the panel agree to note the report.

**63 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

64.1 Hilary Edgar, Housing Service Operations Manager, stated that the dates for coming year's area housing panel had been confirmed. The next date would be the 1 April 2019 for EDB voting, information sharing and discussion at the Housing Centre.

**64 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next East Area Housing Management Panel would be the 3 June 2019.

The meeting concluded at 8.50pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

