

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

7.00pm 21 FEBRUARY 2019

HOUSING CENTRE, MOULSECOOMBE

MINUTES

Please note that this meeting was not quorate and therefore no formal decisions were made.

Present: Councillors Yates (Chair) and Meadows

Representatives: Andrew Hunter (EMTRA), Jane Hunter (Chair EMTRA) and Terrence Hill (Bates Estate TRA)

Officers: Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement), Brett Stacey (Field Officer Manager), Philip Goddard (Field Officer), Marcus Richardson (Surveyor & Contract Manager), Eddie Wilson (General Manager - MEARS), Sharon Davies (Housing Business Programme Manager), Sam Warren (City Neighbourhood Co-ordinator), Martin Reid (Assistant Director of Housing) and Hilary Edgar (Housing Service Operations Manager)

Guests: Sarah Lewis (Local Democracy Reporter)

59 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

60 APOLOGIES

60.1 Apologies were received from Hannah Barker, Resident Involvement Officer.

61 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

61.1 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”

62 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

62.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 29 November 2018 would be considered in the next quorate meeting.

63 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

63.1 1) East Central Moulsecomb Tenant & Residents' Association

- In response to the Chair stating that the deadline outcome of the appeal had passed, officers added that there had been no further action and the response still stood.
- In response to the Chair stating that he had heard that residents had approached the council to reinstate a TRA, officers added that a reinstated TRA would have to be a new organisation.

3) Repairs service contract - oversight

- In response to residents asking if there would be a Clerk of Works, officers stated there would be someone to check the quality of works.
- Residents expressed concern over the customer service quality check text messages were sent from a premium number which meant residents were charged an inflated rate and some residents were limited from providing feedback on their personal SIM contracts.
- Officers responded that this would be investigated and changed and stated that it was not the intention to impair residents from providing feedback but to allow them to help frame the new service.

6) Housing Revenue Account (HRA Budget)

- The Chair stated that the central area spent their HRA budget to which residents commented that this was because they had a lot of sheltered housing where funds could be spent quickly and efficiently.

7) Estate Inspections and Resident Involvement

- Residents stated that people needed to be more pro-active in looking after the environment of the estates.

64 THE FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- 64.1 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.
- 64.2 In response to the Chair questioning the TUPE arrangements, officers stated that the current employee's terms and conditions in their contracts would be protected.
- 64.3 Officers stated that the formal process of contractual change and pro-active conversations with the unions had begun, there had been informal dialogue with employees to discuss a positive prospect of opportunities and where all parties were working together.
- 64.4 In response to the Chair asking what the protections of payment were regarding overtime and salaries, officers responded that these were not yet known and this would be investigated through work between the unions, lawyers and employees.
- 64.5 The Chair stated that residents who were interested in joining the Task and Finish group should enquire through the resident involvement team.

65 FIELD OFFICERS

- 65.1 Brett Stacey, Field Officer Manager, introduced the Field Officer update and stated that they were working hard to remodel the estate inspection service and they were ensuring that tenants were engaged in the process. There was an online system being developed and a meeting would be organised to discuss the concrete proposals moving forward. He stated that Field Officers had successfully begun their tasks of evidence gathering, information sharing and service referrals back to Housing as well as becoming a more visible service.
- 65.2 Residents welcomed the new Field Officers and looked forward to their good work and invited them to attend the local Tenants Association meetings.
- 65.3 Residents expressed concern about the irregularity of previous estate inspections and whether Field Officers inheriting the inspection service would have the time and resources to reach the outer suburbs.
- 65.4 In response to residents, officers stated that the Field Officers were mobile across the city and were not assigned one area. He added that if residents wanted a case investigated that they should continue to enquire via the usual route, directly to the service, and they would get centrally distributed to avoid duplication.
- 65.5 Councillor Meadows stated that the Field Officers should come familiar with the Tenant Associations to enable casework to be completed easier and quicker by using their knowledge.
- 65.6 Residents stated that when the role of the Field Officers was originally discussed and devised that a primary focus was that they would have more of a focus and

involvement in taking over the estate inspections in collaboration with residents who were knowledgeable of the area.

- 65.7 Officers responded that the project was discussed a number of years prior to the delivery with various versions proposed which had now refined in an enforcement based role.

66 UPDATE ON THE EDB REVIEW

- 66.1 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.

- 66.2 In response to the Chair asking if there was a new funding process for fencing due to its removal from the EDB; officers responded that there would be a separate scheme however they did not yet have further details.

- 66.3 The Chair asked if channelling fencing funding from a specific budget would allow money to become available for other projects on the EDB. He stated that if there were incidences where fencing was required to tackle anti-social behaviour then residents could still apply for communal fencing on the EDB.

- 66.4 Residents stated that the Task and Finish Group discussed the idea of an online web portal for residents and that recommended actions for improving the EDB process identified the need to improve the information and guidelines for residents making EDB bids.

- 66.5 Officers stated that the next round of bidding would begin in May and that the Task and Finish Group was still live.

67 ELECTIONS TO VACANT SEASIDE HOMES TRUSTEE POSITIONS

- 67.1 The North Area Housing Panel could not participate in the election due a non-quorate attendance and the panel agreed to not postpone the vote and accept the two Central Area candidates be approved.

68 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 68.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the report which included a basic summary and a more detailed report to outline overall Quarter 3 2018/19 performance.

- 68.2 In response to residents asking if Moulsecoombe and Hollingdean ward ranked highly with eight and if there was a major loss in rent on 3.7 on the report, long term empty dwellings by ward (empty six weeks or more as of 1 January 2019), officers stated that that was not a particular concern as five of these properties experienced major works in this period and that loss of rent was due to two of the properties being in senior housing.

- 68.3 In response to residents asking why two properties in Preston Park ward remained vacant for one year, officers stated that there had been an issue with specific works however it was an improvement on the previous year.
- 68.4 Officers commented that the issues of long term empty properties had been challenged by members in the Housing and New Homes Committee and stated that the main problem arose from issues with seniors housing where they had struggled to make properties attractive and they often had structural obstacles.
- 68.5 In response to residents questioning the disparity in rent and housing allowance for Seaside Homes, officers stated that there would be a review of the rent and the model of Seaside Homes.
- 68.6 In response to residents asking if 4.17 included emails, Repairs Helpdesk – calls answered, officers stated it did not.
- 68.7 In response to the Chair asking if Housing had Key Performance Indicators for emails responded and answered to residents, officers stated that they did not current however this could be established. She added that the email turn around was approximately 10 days and they had introduced dedicated officers to answer these.
- 68.8 In response to residents asking why the time period was 35 days in Q2 in 4.22, Estate Development Budget main bids – average duration of work, officers stated that this could include the sample process, notice of work and the time needed for different trades to operate on the site.

69 CITY WIDE REPORTS**70 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 70.1 Hilary Edgar, the dates for coming year's area housing panel dates had been confirmed. The next date would be the 1 April 2019 for EDB voting, information sharing and discussion.
- 70.2 In response to residents raising concern of low attendance at the TRA, the Chair stated that this was an issue for the city to discuss.

71 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting would be 6 June 2019.

The meeting concluded at 8.38pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of