

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 23 OCTOBER 2019

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Hugh-Jones (Chair) and Councillor Rainey

Representatives: Barry Humphries (Sylvan Hall RA Rep), Rita Levitt (Somerset Point), Emma Salcombe (Essex Place Sec/Rep), Martin Cunningham (Hampshire Court), David Spafford (Ardingly Court), Tomm Nyhuus (Somerset Point), Carl Boardman (Warwick Mount).

Officers: Glyn Huelin (Head of Housing Repairs & Improvement), Rebecca Mann (Community Engagement Officer), Geoff Gage (Business & Performance Manager), Gregory Weaver (Democratic Services Officer).

28 APOLOGIES

28.1 Apologies were received from Martin Reid, Margaret Reynolds, Roger Small (Leech Court), Councillor Nichole Brennan and Sam Warren.

29 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

29.1 An officer stated that all residents would be written to with information regarding help offered with carrying out rubbish.

29.2 A member of Mears construction stated that efforts to inspect the status of pavements had been undertaken and no areas of concern had been found.

29.3 A resident stated that City Clean had only been performing collections once a week as opposed to twice. A report on City Clean's practice was requested.

29.4 An Officer agreed to look in to this for a future Central Ward Panel.

30 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

30.1 The Chair addressed the panel and gave the following communications:

“Over the next few months Brighton & Hove City Council will be carrying out stock condition surveys for council owned homes, the outside of blocks and common ways. A sample of 20% of homes and 100% of blocks will be surveyed, with surveys starting in November 2019 and ending in February 2020.

We will be writing to residents directly when we are planning to survey homes. There will also be posters and information on the council website.

We are planning on undertaking a rolling 20% of surveys each year over the next four years to ensure all the council housing stock is surveyed.”

30.2 Residents enquired if the initial survey would be both inside and out.

30.3 An officer clarified that the provision was made in the budget.

30.4 It was stated that surveys in homes would be listing ‘components in houses’ in to the computer asset management system and that an update would be brought to area panel in spring next year 2020.

31 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

31.1 (Item 1 – Equality and Inclusivity of Customer Services – Future Repairs Task and Finish Group)

31.2 Residents had the following enquiries, concerns and statements:

- Concern was expressed regarding the potential cost of works and items.
- 1 year contracts were suggested over 5 and 7 years.
- It was stated that environmental aspects needed to be considered.
- It was suggested that the Housing Committee look at the responsibilities of contractors in receipt of long-term agreements despite not yet being involved.
- Residents expressed approval of current effort to maintain windows.

31.3 Councillor Clare Rainey had the following enquiries, concerns and statements:

- Councillor Rainey enquired if contractors were carrying out replacements and if repairs were being undertaken in-house.
- Clarification was sought regarding the perceived difference was, following the departure of Sharon Davis.

31.4 Officers responded to resident’s concerns, enquiries and statements with the following:

- An officer stated that repairs and empty homes refurbishments would be funded by the Estate Development Budget and discretionary schemes.
- It was clarified that components would be replaced across the city multiple times with some minor exceptions. As a result, better economies of scale along including long term value with contractors would be achieved.
- It was stated that multiple contractors were considered for major works.
- Possibility of looking at individual lots in future was considered.
- It was stated that by splitting works up, only a small number of potential suppliers would potentially be attracted.
- It was stated that a competitive element was employed for major projects.
- It was noted that 100 in-house repairs a-day were being performed.
- As issue with yearly contracts was that due to the amount of time for procurements to be finalised, it could take over a year to tender. This could also lead to ongoing projects with ever later deadlines thus protracting the process.
- In regard to windows, an officer stated that BHCC were working on this.

- It was stated that a new computer system was being introduced next year which sought to create a network by which different areas would be connected quicker such as call receivers.
- It was confirmed that a new person taking over Sharon Davis' role would be recruited soon.
- An officer agreed to look at windows due for maintenance.

31.5 **AGREED** – That the response was satisfactory.

32 CITY WIDE REPORTS

32.1 The Chair gave a brief update on the Housing Committee Work Plan and stated the following:

- It was stated that this was being presented as a joint Labour and Green Group undertaking due to a large overlap in manifesto objectives.
- Housing Committee Future reports would be brought back to future area panels.
- 5 key areas were identified where members had agreed to prioritise specific areas.
- Various key targets were being considered such as 800 councils, 700 additional affordable homes along with continued improvement of council housing.
- It was proposed that presentations be brought to future area panels.

32.3 Residents had the following concerns, enquiries and concerns:

- Clarification was sought regarding affordability.
- A resident enquired if the 700 new homes would be available at Council rent levels
- A resident enquired when solar panels would be implemented and enquired if there were plans to move on from gas as a heating source.

32.4 An officer responded to resident's concerns, enquiries and concerns with the following:

- An officer referred to the additional resources available and stated that funding arrangements would be provided in a report from Housing Committee.
- It was stated that the 700 homes would not necessarily be provided at just one rent level, it was noted that affordability would be subject to various conditions.
- The panel received confirmation that future information would be circulated to all wards.
- It was clarified that the term "affordable homes" included other council housing along with being provided by the living wage joint venture and other associations.
- It was stated that BHCC was trying to build a mix of different housing.

32.5 The Chair stated that efforts to move away from gas would be undertaken over the next 10 years.

32.5 **AGREED** – that the report was satisfactory.

33 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

- 33.1 An officer gave a brief overview of the Health and Safety Report. The following was stated:
- This was brought up following the emerging guidance from Central Government.
 - It was noted that the board had been working closely with other councils, partners and the East Fire Rescue Service.
 - It was stated that results from surveys identified no structural issues in blocks and they remained in good condition.
 - Further surveys were to be conducted in future with results being published in the incoming year.
 - Replacement doors were being considered for next year.
 - It was noted that risks around fire doors continued to be low and that balconies and panels were being reviewed following advice from Central Government.

33.2 Residents had the following concerns, enquiries and statements:

- Concern was expressed regarding payments made by residents to the amount of £750 for what was now regarded bad equipment. It was suggested that, in light of the admission of faulty equipment, residents ought to be remunerated.
- An update on sprinkler systems issues at St James' Court was requested.

33.3 Officers responded to resident's concerns, enquiries and statements with the following:

- It was stated that the low performance in fire doors had an impact on industry and that BHCC were involved in a working group with Central Government at addressing this.
- It was stated that all certified fire doors had to be kept under review and that advice from the fire chief was that the risk posed was low.
- It was stated that the status of resident's obligations in regard to payments for new door systems was being considered. It was stated that BHCC was responsible for building insurance and insurers were made aware of all details in advance however there could be an extenuating problem as the issue was specific to the doors.

33.4 The Chair requested that information regarding doors and procedures ought to be brought to a future area panel meeting.

33.5 **AGREED** – that the update be noted.

34 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

34.1 A resident expressed interest in the hidden homes programs on Bristol Estate and notified the panel of a large potential space to be considered by BHCC.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

