

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 5 NOVEMBER 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Mears, Simson and Williams

Representatives: Chris El-Shabba, Sarah Harris, Alan Cooke, Janet Gearing.

Officers: Keely McDonald, Bethan Hudson, Justine Harris, Keith Perry, Indi Hicks.

Guests:

9 APOLOGIES

9.1 Apologies from Councillor Brennan.

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

11 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

“We would like to acknowledge the feedback that residents and staff took time to give us about the last round of Area Panels.

There are challenges with using the internet particularly with software, different devices and networks. I recognise that this can make the meeting more complicated to follow and we hope that these issues can be gradually resolved.

We also know that online meetings can be difficult for some and the community engagement team are working with residents to support as many people as possible to access them.

It was very useful to learn how people felt about having a large single online meeting and you can be reassured the feedback, both negative and positive, will be used to help improve the way meetings are organised in the future.

I would like to remind everyone that the Area Panels are for future planning and issues that affect everyone, they are not the forum to raise individual issues, or repairs that have not been dealt with. If you do have an individual issue that is stuck in the system, please do speak to your Community Engagement Officer who will be able to put you in touch with the right service or person.”

12 EAST AREA AGENDA

Good News from Resident's Groups

12.1 Resident gave the following statements:

- A guarded approval was granted from EDB to install a heavy fence to stop cars rolling down the hill and into blocks of flats.
- The honey collective are holding regular monthly meetings, and are due to finish their training in January/February 2021 and open the community apiary in March/April.
- The kitchen underneath Robert Lodge is working well.
- Regular meetings are being held at Robert Lodge for residents who wish to speak.
- Robert Lodge now has their own cleaner.

12.2 Janet Gearing was informed that a quick bid could happen for the Java Café, which supplies a food bank service during lockdown.

12.3 Councillor Simson said that the Java Café could be managed through the Tenant Association and would get this organised.

City Wide Resident's Question Time

12.4 Janet Gearing raised a concern about the underspend from last year which was redistributed to other areas of the city.

12.5 Councillor Simson was informed by Keely McDonald that going forward the budget would be split into 2 parts of the year in order that people would more likely get a successful bid for a project.

12.6 Councillor Mears requested a succinct answer to Janet Gearing's query about how the EDB budget would be spent going forward. Keely McDonald confirmed that she would seek the answer to that question and feed it back at a later date.

12.7 Councillor Simson was informed by Keely McDonald that the decision to split the budget in half was made by the EDB review panel and could find out the date that this decision was made if necessary.

12.8 Alan Cooke pointed out that it would make sense to roll over any underspent budget to the next half of the year but any leftover from previous years should be split evenly between the 4 areas of the city.

12.9 Keely McDonald confirmed she would give this feedback to the relevant people.

12.10 Councillor Mears was informed by Christine El-Shabba that she sat on the EDB review panel alongside Carl Boardman, Ian Bennett, and David Spafford.

12.11 Keith Perry confirmed the EDB review panel.

12.12 Councillor Simson was informed that Christine El-Shabba was unaware of this decision as she wasn't present at the last meeting.

- 12.13 Keely McDonald confirmed that the new system was confirmed in April 2020, and that the annual fund would be split into two rounds, one in April and one in October, to space out bids and speed up delivery time. In April of this year there was an underspend in the North and West areas so it was decided there would be a second bid round in October to spend the remaining money. This would be trialled to all bids in preparation for the financial year 2021/2022.
- 12.14 Councillors Simson, Mears, and Williams requested detailed guidelines about the future of EDB bids.
- 12.15 Alan Cooke read aloud the response to Item 9 (Tenancy termination following a tenant's death):
- “Tenancy Services work sensitively with people clearing and sorting out belongings after a death. We appreciate this can be very upsetting and sometimes take a bit of time, and the people assisting with this may not always live locally. If anyone has a different experience of this, please could you let Justine Harris know.”
- 12.16 Janet Gearing pointed out that the Council were good at clearing the flat but charged her for unpaid rent from her uncle.
- 12.17 Justine Harris apologised for this and hoped that it doesn't happen to anyone else.
- 12.18 Christine El-Shabba raised that it would be good for the TA's to circulate the Gardening Scheme for the Elderly leaflets to people. Janet pointed out that you must be over 70 to qualify for the scheme.
- 12.19 Christine El-Shabba raised that equipment was being provided by the Council to support virtual communication.
- 12.20 Keith Perry gave verbal updates of the documents on pages 29-36 of the Agenda which included:
- Bylands (page 31) – Bike Shelter. Keely McDonald clarified that the bike shelter would be lockable and therefore would have to be maintained by the Council, and would be included as part of the Car Parks and Garages process.
 - Craven Vale (page 32) – Tarmac Path from back of community centre to Craven Road.
 - Lichfield Court (page 33) – Bin store.
 - Westham (page 34) – Bin/Recycle hut, cycle store, new pathway.
 - Woodingdean (page 34) – New wire fence and gate.
 - Woodingdean (page 35) - Picnic tables. Councillor Simson pointed out that the park was being refurbished and the organisers weren't aware of the picnic tables, so would have to liaise. It was agreed that Janet Gearing and Keith Perry would get in touch with parks.
- 12.21 Alan Cooke gave the following updates:
- There is an outstanding bid for 2018/19 for Craven Vale about vinyl flooring. This has now been completed.
 - There is an outstanding £10,000 for the Southwater Close store – Housing need to finalise the planning application for change of use of the building and are waiting for

one minor document. It is estimated that it will be another 6-9 months until a planning decision. Keith Perry responded that the £10,00 is being reserved for this project.

- There is an outstanding quick bid for some footsteps between some houses. This request will now be withdrawn.

12.22 Christine El-Shabba asked for an update about items 18/19 about north and south gates for Robert Lodge. Keith Perry responded that he hadn't heard anything back. Keely McDonald added that there was some consultation about the gates to be scheduled but has been put on hold but is on the list to get sorted.

Reports Going to Housing Committee

12.23 The Panel welcomed an update on the Housing Report due to be taken to the Housing Committee.

12.24 **AGREED** – that the update was satisfactory.

Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy

12.25 Keely McDonald gave a presentation summarising the information from item 8 of the Agenda starting on page 37.

12.26 Councillor Williams raised that it would be helpful to have more virtual meetings to involve people in the decision-making process.

12.27 Councillor Simson mentioned that this strategy wasn't likely to work. Councillor Mears added that tenants need to be listened to and not told what the Council will do in future.

12.28 Councillor Williams said that there were some successes already and that it would be helpful to have a positive outlook.

12.29 Janet Gearing commented that funds should be prioritised on Brighton residents instead of students.

12.30 Councillor Simson noted that a lot of projects were done through community development instead of housing engagement and asked how these projects marry up with the community development work. Keely McDonald responded that a joint plan on how to address these issues is being created.

12.31 **AGREED** – that the presentation was noted.

13 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

13.1 Refer to Item 12.

14 EAST AREA EDB BIDS

14.1 The Panel welcomed a brief overview of the status of EDB Bids.

14.2 Residents enquired of the status of a series of EDB Bids that were ongoing while the officer provided details on this.

14.3 **AGREED** – that the update was satisfactory.

15 TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

15.1 Refer to Item 12.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.1 There was no AOB.

The meeting concluded at 8.42pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

