

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 15 FEBRUARY 2022

VIRTUAL - ZOOM

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Simson, Williams

Resident Representatives: Chris El-Shabba (Robert Lodge Tenants and Residents Association) (Chair), Emma Lewis, Janet Gearing (Woodingdean Tenants and Residents Association), Rosemary Johnson (Craven Vale Community Association).

Officers: Sam Warren (Community Engagement Manager), Keely McDonald (Community Engagement Officer), Ododo Dafe (Head of Strategy and Supply), Janet Dowdell (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), Grant Ritchie (Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance).

Guests: Sarah Brooker-Lewis (Local Democracy Reporter)

1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Apologies from Alan Cooke.

1.2 The Chair invited all attendees to introduce themselves.

2 ACTIONS AND MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 A resident raised the following changes to the minutes:

- There was a resident that should be included in the list of attendees.
- Job titles of staff should be included in the list of attendees.
- In item 10.9 it should have read along the lines of that the residents of the East Area Panel formally have no confidence in Councillor Brennan as a Chair. Sam Warren confirmed that Councillor Brennan had informed Community Engagement that she wouldn't be able to host any further meetings due to her ill health until the next financial year, and confirmed that the review was going ahead which would give consideration to how Chairs are appointed.
- In item 10.12 it should read that the Council would inform people moving in of the specific beehive in Craven Vale.
- In item 14.5 it should read that charts should be legible when printed in black and white, not that the Council should print the charts in colour.

2.2 Thomas Bald confirmed that authors of responses to residents questions would be named going forward.

2.3 The Chair confirmed that the issue of the Chair of the East Area panel would be resolved in the upcoming Area Panel Review.

2.4 Janet Dowdell confirmed that she would resend the email to a resident regarding the communal gardens in Langley Crescent as it didn't send the first time.

2.5 A response was provided to the final action where a resident had requested an update in the January meeting regarding the increase in costs of individual contracts. The resident concerned said the response did not answer the question. Ododo Dafe confirmed that each contract may have a clause regarding potential cost increases depending on the type of contract. Ododo Dafe confirmed she would get in touch with the resident to discuss the issue further.

RESOLVED:

- Janet Dowdell to resend an email to a resident regarding Langley Crescent in Woodingdean.
- Ododo Dafe to contact a resident regarding the increase in costs in individual contracts.

3 RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

Refuse and Recycling Collections on Bristol Estate

3.1 A resident confirmed that a feedback meeting was being held for Bristol Estate regarding the bin area.

Citywide Problems with Rubbish and Recycling

3.2 Cllr Simson raised that Melissa Francis and Rachel Chasseaud had given an informative presentation to the Woodingdean resident's association and suggested that this may be something other associations could look at.

3.3 Janet Dowdell confirmed that the designated cleaner for Robert Lodge only clears up mess on the floor, instead of cleaning the actual bins.

3.4 Cllr Williams raised that whilst there were more hidden homes, there weren't enough bin areas to accommodate the extra people, and this was discussed at Housing Supply and would be taken forward.

3.5 A resident was informed that CityClean report to housing when black bins are broken, and they are then authorised to replace or repair. They were also informed that if there any bins that need repairing that they could contact Janet Dowdell.

Repairs Backlog

3.6 A resident raised that leaving windows unrepaired leads to issues such as losing heat, letting in cold and wet, and being vulnerable to burglars, and that those in desperate need of replacing should be prioritised over the general window repairs programme.

3.7 A resident raised that having broken windows impacts on people's physical and mental health, and shouldn't have to wait 3 years for a replacement. She raised that disabled resident has been asking for heat in his bathroom for 3 years. Grant Ritchie raised that the repairs team are geared up to do small individual replacements, and said he would go back

to his team and see what could be done about closing the gap between individual replacements and wider replacements across the city.

3.8 A resident asked why window replacements in private properties had a 10 year guarantee but Council properties only have a 1 year guarantee.

3.9 A resident raised that with bills rising it is important that windows get replaced ahead of time, and suggested that the Council reach out to developers to supplement the repairs to windows.

3.10 Councillor Williams suggested that residents attending the hospital liaison committee regarding solutions to the new helipad at the hospital, and that there is a disability adaptation scheme that could be utilised for the resident mentioned earlier who wanted his bath converted and heat installed to his bathroom. Councillor Williams also raised that there is surely something that can be done to fix immediately problematic windows.

3.11 A resident raised the following points:

- The Council have found it takes more cost to chase the paperwork of the guarantees than just doing the replacements themselves.
- Replacement requests should be given straight to Anglian.
- A meeting was held about anti-social behaviour and the broken windows meant that residents could hear everything people were saying outside.

3.12 A resident raised that she hasn't ever had a key for her windows, which invalidates any insurance.

3.13 Councillor Simson raised that a carpenter was sent out to a repair but the windows were plastic so nothing could be done.

3.14 A resident confirmed that the Panel were not happy with the response and would require another response to address the issues raised. Grant Ritchie confirmed he would speak to colleagues and provide a more comprehensive response.

RESOLVED:

- Grant Ritchie to talk to colleagues to draft a more comprehensive response to doors and window repairs and replacements.

4 AREA PANEL REVIEW OUTLINE

4.1 Sam Warren introduced the item and raised the following points:

- A review of Area Panels would be taken to ensure they are accessible, the residents feel they have a good opportunity to speak to the Council, that enough residents come and that they are chaired by the right people.
- The review is aiming to be introduced in either November or January Housing Committee.
- There will still be 4 separate areas for the panels.

4.2 Residents were asked to provide their opinions on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of area panels, which were:

Strengths

- Councillors are able to hear issues and needs, also supporting actions through links with staff and signposting, as well as general knowledge of the area.
- Focuses on important topics for tenants and leaseholders.

Weaknesses

- Officers aren't always able to attend to discuss responses in detail.

Opportunities

- A resident Chair has local knowledge and connections
- Members should be able to select Chair of choice
- Communicating actions and progress widely with residents
- Support and training for Chair role, particularly for online meetings
- Briefing sheet for new prospective reps/attendees
- Representatives able to send someone in their place
- Encourage a wider attendance from communities, not just elected representatives. Non-resident leaseholders and tenants of leaseholders.
- Targeted engagement with areas which don't have an association

Threats

- Lack of clarity on elected representative eligibility.

5 HOUSING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2021/22

5.1 Ododo Dafe introduced the report starting on page 25 of the Agenda.

5.2 Councillor Simson was informed that the more properties the Council acquire, the more properties need major repairs, but not disproportionately, and that empty properties being worked on are to just get them up to standard, such as replacing bathrooms or kitchens, which are labelled as major works.

5.3 A resident asked about what support there is for homeless people in new tenancies, and how they can sustain those tenancies. Ododo Dafe raised that the Council want to keep people in their Council properties as much as possible, and that a lot of work is happening with private sector landlords as they have been helpful in reducing homelessness.

5.4 Councillor Williams added that when homeless people are housed they go through a triage system to identify any extra support they might need, such as addiction.

6 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

6.1 Councillor Williams raised that St. George's Church are introducing their community cinema which will show films in the Church, and a baby and toddler group which is also being held at the Church, looking to introduce more groups on Bristol estate and Craven Vale.

6.2 Craven Vale are planning the Jubilee celebration going ahead on the 4th June.

6.3 A resident raised there would be tree planting on Bristol estate going ahead at the weekend.

6.4 Robert Lodge are holding an open house on the 4th June for the Jubilee.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at 9.13pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

