

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA
7.00pm 14 DECEMBER 2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Fowler (Chair) and Grimshaw

Representatives: Ian Beck (Hollingdean Residents Association), Des Jones (Hollingdean Residents Association) and Heather Hayes (Coldean Residents Association)

Officers: Martin Reid (Assistant Director Housing Management), Sam Warren (Community Engagement Manager), Geof Gage (Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management), Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), Hannah Barker (Community Engagement Officer), Grant Ritchie (Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance), Kenna Kendall (Housing Manager), Francis Mitchell (Democratic Services Support Officer) and Emma Thomson (Democratic Services Officer)

1 – WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 There were no apologies received.

2 – MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 It was noted that the resident referred to as 'Catherine Roberts' was actually 'Catherine Lawrence'.

3 – ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

NA6 – Grant Ritchie acknowledged that this action was yet to be completed.

ACTION – Grant Ritchie to investigate Heather Hayes' lengthy boiler repair time (why it took so long to fix).

4 – EIB QUARTLERY REPORT

4.1 Justine Harris delivered the report for this item.

4.2 There were no questions for this item.

5 – BUDGET

- 5.1 Martin Reid delivered the report for this item.
- 5.2 Heather Hayes was informed that the Council was asked to write a letter to Central Government and the Regulator for Social Housing detailing the work being done to increase resources to combat dampness and mould in private sector and council housing stock.
- 5.3 Martin Reid highlighted that lessons had been learned from the death of a four-year-old in Rochdale caused by exposure to dampness in their home.
- 5.4 Heather Hayes was informed that Housing will be re-looking at all reported high-risk cases of damp.
- 5.5 Grant Ritchie stated that residents are asked to clean damp and black mould off walls using household cleaners as a precautionary measure before staff are sent.
- 5.6 Ian Beck stated that he had previously reported black mould on behalf of a resident and was told by the Council that action would not be taken. Ian Beck further stated that during this correspondence, the Council blamed the tenant for black mould but acknowledged that this was no longer the case. Martin Reid iterated that all instances of black mould should be reported to Housing.
- 5.7 Cllr Grimshaw shared that the number of tenants reporting black mould had increased since the death in Rochester.
- 5.8 Heather Hayes stated that residents are reluctant to contact the Council due to inaction in the past.
- 5.9 Grant Ritchie highlighted measures that can be taken to prevent the growth of black mould and stated that condensation and mould prevention leaflets are being produced.

ACTION – Grant Ritchie to share condensation and mould prevention leaflets with attendees of area panels.

- 5.10 Cllr Grimshaw asked if there was any money set aside for emergency contingency, citing damaged pipes from tenants who are not using their heating over the winter. Martin Reid stated that while there are reserves, tenants are advised to contact the council for support if they are concerned that they will not be able to use their heating during the winter months.
- 5.11 Cllr Grimshaw stated that when current supplies of wooden bath panels are exhausted, plastic bath panels will be installed going forward. Cllr Grimshaw stated the benefits of plastic bath panels, including the fact that they do not flake like their wooden counterparts.

6 – RESIDENTS’ QUESTIONS – 3 STAR

Boiler Installation and Repairs: K&T Heating:

- 6.1 Ian Beck stated that he was impressed with the service provided by the K&T Heating out of hours repairs support line, commending their response time, courtesy, and respect to his property.

Repairs:

- 6.2 Cllr Grimshaw was informed that the majority of roofing repairs require scaffolding. Grant Ritchie stated that there are approximately 60 scaffolds assembled in the city. Grant Ritchie stated that cherry pickers are not always a viable alternative to scaffolding, citing concerns with access.
- 6.3 Ian Beck criticised the amount of time taken to remove scaffolding after the completion of repair work.

Poor Maintenance of Verges, Pavements and Parks:

- 6.4 Ian Beck stated that City Parks are not responding to residents or doing the work that is expected of them and cited overgrowing weeds becoming trip hazards. Ian Beck also stated that residents in wheelchairs and those with pushchairs cannot travel on Davey Drive due to overhanging brambles. Ian Beck requested for the first metre of brambles to be cut back.
- 6.5 Martin Reid invited Ian Beck to contact him, Justine Harris, and Grant Ritchie regarding concerns of accessibility on Davey Drive and stated that he would also contact Rachel Chassaud regarding this.

ACTION – Martin Reid to catch up with Ian Beck and Des Jones before the end of January regarding accessibility issues on Davey Drive and Tavistock Down caused by overhanging brambles and overgrowing weeds/nettles.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

- 6.6 Ian Beck stated that he was liaising with Tenancy Services regarding Anti-Social Behaviour and that he was satisfied with both the direction it was going and the response given.

7 – RESIDENTS’ QUESTIONS – 2 STAR

7.1 Rubbish and Recycling in Hollingdean:

- 7.2 Ian Beck stated that the collection of rubbish and recycling had improved significantly but mentioned remaining issues regarding rubbish collections in Southmount, stating that there was no consultation regarding the installation of double-yellow-lines in Southmount.

ACTION – Martin Reid to contact Des Jones regarding rubbish and recycling collection in Southmount.

~~Tavistock Down~~ Crestway flats: obstructed access to flats and dangerous storage sheds:

7.3 Ian Beck stated that it is the storage sheds at the back of the Crestway, rather than those on the Tavistock Down side, and despite having been assured by a member of Grant Ritchies team that repairs would be undertaken, a block of concrete fell and narrowly missed a tenant. Ian Beck stated that although the issue was passed to Geof Gage's team, Geof Gage had not been in contact.

7.4 Geof Gage stated that this was being looked at and the External Decorations and Repairs Contract to repair sheds was scheduled to begin in February.

8 – CLEAN UP DAYS DISCUSSION

8.1 Grant Ritchie highlighted potential solutions to keeping estates clean and shared that the idea of an amnesty day that had been mentioned at other area panels.

8.2 Ian Beck stated that the clean up day in Tavistock Down went extremely well and questioned whether the clean-up day could be replicated in other parts of Hollingdean.

8.3 Justine Harris outlined measures being taken to reduce and prevent fly-tipping including mobile CCTV units and stated that an amnesty day is being looked into.

9 – POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

9.1 Ian Beck stated that he was happy with the work being done by Grant Ritchie.

10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Council Housing Performance Report:

10.1 Martin Reid delivered the report on this item.

10.2 Ian Beck criticised that the average time to complete repairs was 55 days and was informed by Martin Reid and Grant Ritchie that the target is 15 days. Martin Reid also outlined the measures being taken to decrease the average time taken for a repair to be completed.

10.3 Grant Ritchie stated that work needs to be done regarding communication with tenants who are on the waiting list for routine repairs so that residents do not believe their repair has been forgotten.

The meeting concluded at 20:54

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of