

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

14.30pm 27 MARCH 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER – HOVE TOWN HALL, NORTON ROAD, BN3 3BQ

Present:

Councillors: Nann (Co-Chair) Grimshaw, Hewitt, Baghoth, Pumm, Miller

Clerk: Niall Breen (Democratic Services Officer)

Representatives: Victor Dodd (Ingram Crescent Community Group), Muriel Briault (North Portslade Residents Association), West Area tenancy association representatives

Officers: Geof Gage, Martin Reid, Justine Harris, Keely McDonald, Grant Ritchie, Luke Harris, Jane Dowdell, Steve Moreton, Hannah Barker, Anita McGrath, Simon Bannister, Grace Leonard

Guests: Sarah Booker-Lewis (Local Democracy Reporter),

OPEN SURGERY (DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL ISSUES)

14:00 – 30 Minutes

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

5 - 6

14:30

1.1 Co-Chair Cllr Nann notified the panel that the resident co-chair Roy Crowhurst had resigned due to health issues. They informed the panel that an election for the vacant position would take place at the September 2024 West Area Panel meeting.

1.2 There were apologies from the following Ward Councillors for West Area: Cllr Muten and Cllr Atkinson.

1.3 There were apologies for Pat Weller and on behalf of their TRA for being unable to attend.

2 MINUTES & ACTIONS

7-14

2.1 **RESOLVED:** The panel agreed unanimously that the minutes were a fair and accurate record of the previous area panel meeting.

2.2 West Area Action 1 (WA1) regarding meeting with North Portslade RA to visit Valley Road was agreed as complete.

2.3 West Area Action 2 (WA2), concerning requested reports and information to be sent to Cllr Miller regarding issues at Elizabeth Court was agreed as complete, officers confirmed reports had been sent.

2.4 West Area Action 3 (WA3) regarding providing further detailed information to the panel on the process for carrying out water checks on the authority's housing stock, was agreed as complete, officers confirmed further information could be provided and added that there were initiatives being undertaken to update and review the procedures for water inspections.

2.5 West Area Action 4 (WA4) regarding providing further, more in-depth information to Cllr Bagtho regarding price caps agreed by the Housing Service regarding inflationary pressures and any further steps being taken, this was incomplete as the information had not been circulated to Cllr Bagtho. Officers confirmed that they would follow up on this.

2.6 West Area Action 5 (WA5), providing an update to ward councillors regarding new regulatory environment from April 24 and inspections of local authority and housing association properties. Officers confirmed information had been circulated, however ward councillors requested further information and so the action was recorded as incomplete and to be followed up.

2.7 West Area Action 6 (WA6), regarding providing an update and further info to Cllr Bagtho and the panel on customer service statistics – specifically out of hours repairs and maintenance including providing previous months data to the request, (11/23). The action was recorded as completed in the agenda, but residents raised objections to this and informed the officers and councillors that they had not been provided relevant information, officers confirmed that they would follow up on this. Incomplete, ongoing.

2.8 West Area Action 7 (WA7), regarding distributing information on recycling methods to residents in West Area to improve the percentage of recycling taking place and ensure a cleaner environment and deter bulk waste. Officers confirmed that an article specifically concerning the action raised was to be included in 'Homing In', the authority's housing and estates services newsletter. The action was confirmed as complete.

2.9 West Area Action 8 (WA8), concerning restarting the estate walks programme in West Area as suggested by Cllr Hewitt following a meeting with the Knowle Estate Action Group, Cllr Hewitt confirmed they had been contacted with regards to this and the action was confirmed as complete.

2.10 West Area Action 9 (WA9), regarding concerns raised by residents to further address the needs of those unable to engage virtually with the HAP or access services digitally. Martin Reid confirmed that they would be available to follow up on concerns raised after the meeting had concluded, the action was recorded as complete.

3 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 2023-24

15-34

3.1 Justine Harris delivered a verbal brief of the item as included in the agenda.

3.2 Cllr Grimshaw asked for clarification on why the average time to complete routine repairs had increased compared with the previous quarter.

3.3 Geof Gage confirmed that this had been identified as an issue and work was being undertaken to improve this statistic in the next quarterly report and confirmed a more detailed answer on the process could be provided.

3.4 Cllr Nann asked for clarification on why the number of calls being answered had dropped compared with the previous quarter.

3.5 Justine Harris provided clarification on this and informed the councillor this was due to the way the calls were being recorded, with even cancelled calls being included in the statistic leading to the number of successful calls being answered being lowered.

4 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW - CONSULTATION

35-36

4.1 Luke Harris delivered a verbal brief of the item as included in the agenda.

4.2 Cllr Miller suggested a 6-month window being built into the succession process to ensure those who had recently lost a family member or loved one.

4.3 Luke Harris confirmed that this had been considered in the policy and steps would be taken to ensure no one was forced from their property without proper consideration.

4.4 Cllr Miller suggested the policy would have unintended consequences due to this.

4.5 Luke Harris agreed and invited the Cllr to make contributions to the consultation of the policy.

4.6 Cllr Grimshaw queried the legal right to succession after March 2012, inline with changes to legislation on the matter,

4.7 Luke Harris confirmed all tenancies still had succession rights; it was further confirmed that the changes made in 2012 were that partners could succeed but children of tenants could not.

4.8 Cllr Grimshaw queried whether this would still apply going forwards with the new proposed policy.

4.9 Luke Harris confirmed that under the current policy those children of tenants under 16 were not entitled to succession but children of tenants over the age of 16 were entitled. It was confirmed there was not a plan to change this in the policy, but it would be considered in the consultation.

4.10 A resident asked for clarification as to why the policy was not allowing those who had suffered a grievance to remain in their parents' property.

4.11 Luke Harris provided an answer that they were not responsible for this section of the policy but confirmed this could be followed up afterwards and the current policy was very clear in law that a spouse was prioritised over a child.

5 HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-29

5.1 Steve Moreton delivered a verbal brief of the item.

(The item was on the screen and not included in the agenda document)

5.2 A resident made note that many consultations similar to the item take place and information is not forthcoming.

5.2 Cllr Nann provided clarification that the point was important, and information should be better circulated however the item did not concern the points made and the approval was not required at this panel for the strategy.

5.3 A resident made note that it was not clear how the strategy could be accessed by those who were not as readily digitally literate.

5.4 Steve Moreton confirmed that any necessary accommodations would be made to ensure that residents could engage with the strategy and help to inform it.

5.5 Cllr Bagtho seconded the point made by the resident and requested clarification as to how those who were not online would be able to engage with the strategy and even inform those responsible for it that they would be unable to engage digitally.

5.6 Steve Moreton confirmed that the policy was being circulated in consultation with CE and the third sector and again confirmed that any necessary accommodations would be made to ensure that residents could engage with the strategy.

5.7 Hannah Barker confirmed that the online surveys were advertised in Homing In and also confirmed that the wording should be changed to avoid any confusion over accessibility – action.

5.8 Cllr Nann made note that a broader consultation was going on with regards to engagement.

5.9 Cllr Grimshaw suggested that the use of bus stop display boards could be used to further communicate the policy proposals. Steve Moreton confirmed this would be considered.

5.10 Cllr Pumm requested clarification as to how the policy would engage with the private sector.

5.11 Steve Moreton clarified that it had been identified that the private rented sector and social landlords required further attention, and this would be considered in the strategy.

5.12 Martin Reid confirmed works were underway to proactively engage with private landlords to change the licensing regime for HMO's and extend it to selective licensing to expand the stock in the city.

6 RESIDENTS' QUESTION TIME

37-56

6.1 W3.1 – Written confirmation was provided by Janet Dowdell regarding actioning efforts to ensure refuse storage is properly covered to prevent wildlife gaining access and creating nuisance for residence. This was agreed as satisfactory.

6.2 W3.2 – Regarding complaints lodged against the emergency maintenance service being provided by PH Jones, A resident raised concerns that this was not satisfactory, and their experience of the contractor’s response had not met the expectations or service levels required and advertised.

6.3 W3.2 – Martin Reid confirmed that temporary heating should have been provided and confirmed that this would be followed up on outside the meeting.

6.4 W3.2 – Cllr Grimshaw seconded the resident’s concerns and confirmed that they had received similarly poor responses with regards to similar issues.

6.5 W3.3 – Regarding the maintenance of overgrowth in and around authority housing properties, the written response to this was deemed unsatisfactory by residents.

6.6 W3.3 – A resident questioned as to why the service was not taking place despite it being promised and service charges being taken.

6.7 W3.3 – Justine Harris confirmed this was being considered in the composition of the new maintenance contracts.

6.8 W3.3 – An officer confirmed that there was a small reactive budget for extra works and any issues similar to these would be entitled to use this budget.

6.9 W3.3 – Cllr Grimshaw confirmed that they had experienced and been informed of similar issues without receiving a response. An officer confirmed this would be followed up on.

6.10 W3.4 – Regarding the prices of garage licenses made available in local authority housing. Residents made note that they had not been consulted with regards to the issue of garage licenses.

6.11 W3.4 - Cllr Miller made note that the changes noticed were with regards to enforcement policy as the condition on the licences had not changed since 2007. They suggested enforcement should be changed rather than the policy itself.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 A resident noted that EDB bid consultations were not being properly circulated to residents properly leading to decisions being taken without input from residents.

8 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

57-74

8.1 Chair closed the meeting at 15.41.

