

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

14:00PM 11 JUNE 2024

HOUSING CENTRE – EASTERGATE ROAD, BRIGHTON, BN2 4QL

Present:

Councillors: Sheard, Hill, De Oliviera, West, Fowler

Clerk: Niall Breen (Democratic Services Apprentice)

Representatives/Tenants: Theresa Mackey (Co-Chair) (Highcroft Lodge Residents Association), Jim Hornsby (Mimosa Court Leaseholders Association), Heather Hayes (Coldean Independents), Donna James (Bates Estate Community Association), Ian Knowles (Bates Estate Community Association), Desmond Jones (Hollingdean Residents Association), Catherine Lawrence (Hollingdean Tenants Association), Barney Miller (Sylvan Hall Residents Association), Penny Simmonds, Gordon Taylor, Ian Beck,

Officers: Niall Breen (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice), Geof Gage (Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management), Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), Keely McDonald (Senior Community Engagement Officer), Grant Ritchie (Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance, Sabina Karabasic (Community Engagement Administrator), Jane White (Business & Performance Manager), Martin Reid (Assistant Director Housing), Sharon Halle-Richards (Performance & Improvement Officer) , Emily Gilbert, Claire Nicholls, Sam Nolan,

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

OPEN SURGERY (DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL ISSUES)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

5 – 6

1.1 There were apologies from, Jane Hunter (EM TRA Chair), Cllr Pete West (Round Hill Ward), Claire Lawrence (Residents' Association), Mitch Watkinson (Residents' Association), Chloe Mclaughlin (Housing Estates Manager).

1.2 Resident Co-Chair Theresa Mackey declared their election as a councillor (in a separate ward to the area panel).

1.3 Cllr Co-Chair Tobias Sheard read out a statement regarding the pre-election period (purdah) to clear any confusion regarding answers on policy matters

2 MINUTES & ACTIONS

7 – 14

2.1 The minutes were agreed unanimously as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

2.3 The actions were agreed as follows.

- 2.3 NA1 – Regarding lighting in common areas. Agreed as complete.
- 2.4 NA2 – Regarding maintenance infrastructure (scaffolding) on the Bates Estate. Agreed as complete.
- 2.5 NA3 – Regarding Coldean related EDB bids. Agreed as complete.
- 2.6 NAO4 – Regarding overgrowth management around Sylvan Hall & jurisdictions. Agreed as complete.
- 2.7 NAO5 – Regarding CCTV on the Bates Estate. Ongoing, verbal brief provided at panel by Justine Harris.
- 2.8 NAO6 – Regarding communication between Resident’s Associations and CityClean. Agreed as complete
- 2.9 NAO7 – Regarding ascertaining responsibility for blocked drains in Hollingdean. Ongoing, verbal update provided by Grant Ritchie. Possibility raised at panel that issue falls to Highways England.
- 2.10 NAO8 – Regarding updating the panel on the availability of skips from the authority for waste disposal (Bates Estate waste amnesty). Agreed as complete.
- 2.11 NAO9 – Regarding queries surrounding overgrowth management raised by Hollingdean RA. Ongoing, verbal brief provided by Cllr Co-Chair at 11.06 and 19.03 panels. Possibility raised at panel that issue falls to Highways England.
- 2.12 NAO10 – Regarding outstanding works at Coldean Youth Club. Verbal brief given at panel, confirmed as ongoing with a written response to follow.

3 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 23/24

15 – 38

- 3.1 Justine Harris (JH), delivered a verbal brief on the item as included in the agenda.
- 3.2 Residents noted their appreciation for the Gas Safety/Compliance certification process running efficiently.
- 3.3 Officers noted the drop in the percentage of rental payments being made due to the migration of many tenants from legacy social and financial support programmes over to universal credit.
- 3.4 The Resident Co-Chair asked for confirmation on the circulation date for homing in, JH confirmed it has been agreed that the next copy would be circulated just after the election (4th July).
- 3.5 JH & Grant Ritchie (GR) explained that the rise in the number of homes to be re-allocated was due to the opening of new properties in the stock which created waves of vacancies as people were moved and also noted that there were changes being made to actions taken when a property was vacant to ensure it would be allocated sooner.

3.6 DJ (Desmond Jones) noted that contractors visiting their property to complete works did not wait long enough for them to be able to actually open the door. Officers apologised for this and confirmed this should not be the case and confirmed they would follow up.

3.7 GR delivered a verbal brief on the status of the backlog (routine repairs) and how this was being tackled through the contracting of two external firms to assist with outstanding works to be undertaken with a desire to clear the backlog by December 2024.

3.8 Cllr Hill asked for clarification on the recommendation given to those in temporary/emergency accommodation with regards to the safety of properties provided by the temporary accommodation service. JH provided a verbal answer on the options available to those in temporary/emergency accommodation, confirming they could follow up with further information.

3.9 The Resident Co-Chair asked officers to provide a verbal brief on the ASB reports (to follow at the next panel). JH provided a verbal update of this process and how it would develop going into the next quarter.

3.10 Ian Knowles (IK) asked for clarification on ASB issues raised in the previous panel, JH confirmed that officers were aware of this issue and that the process with regard to this was progressing in the proper legal method.

3.11 Heather Hayes (HH) asked officers for clarification upon why victims were often relocated as opposed to 'perpetrators', JH provided a verbal answer and explained that the authority took a victim centred approach and prioritised their safety in the situation, and it would never be the intention of the authority to re-locate anyone unless absolutely necessary and also made note of the high-low approach with regards to mediation and enforcement.

4 HIAM BUILDING SAFETY RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY + 5 LAUNDRY REVIEW

4.1 Jane White (JW) delivered a verbal brief on the item as per included in the agenda (high rise safety). This was in response to a central government directive for local authorities to develop their own high rise safety strategy in response to the Grenfell tragedy. This included informing the HAP on the current and future measures being taken and the circulation of the strategy once agreed to all over-16's allocated to properties deemed to be 'high-rise' or of sufficient risk.

4.2 DJ asked for clarification on what has been circulated to residents, JW confirmed that the strategy was still being formulated, and fire safety information was being circulated.

4.3 JW delivered a verbal brief on the item as per included in the agenda (laundry review). This brief included statistics on the use of 'in-house' laundrettes and the cost to the authority measured against the take-up by eligible residents. It was noted that the current format was costing the authority £40K in F/Y. The officer made it clear that any changes would be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment before they were implemented to ensure no one had a service that they made use of, made unavailable to them.

4.4 HH asked clarification if residents had to pay upfront to use the service, the officer clarified that this had not been the case since the pandemic but was subject to change in the future. HH asked for further clarification if senior/vulnerable residents would be impacted by this. The officer provided clarification that this service would not be changing.

6 RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

39 – 62

6.1 N3.1 – A resident asked for clarification from officers on steps being taken to address ASB issues in Hollingdean. JH provided a verbal brief to the residents and clarified the steps that could be taken to report ASB and the points of contact for doing so. The Resident Co-Chair reiterated these points and confirmed that a clear response had been given.

6.2 N3.2 – GR delivered a verbal brief of the written answer and made clear that the authority deemed the fencing for the individual properties the tenants' responsibilities. They also added that this would be reviewed later in the year.

6.3 Bates Estates residents made note of their appreciation to estates services for overgrowth and weed management.

6.4 Cllr Fowler delivered a verbal brief regarding the use of glyphosates by the authority and the history behind this decision.

6.5 Residents raised concerns regarding the installation of new windows. Geof Gage (GG) confirmed that these works were still being undertaken and that they could follow up with regard to this. They also provided further clarification that any urgent repairs would be appropriately prioritised.

7 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

7.1 DJ – Bates Estate, noted to the panel that new community spaces and a hub was undergoing planning permission. Officers confirmed the EIB bid was in the works. Residents noted their thanks to the authority for their support with regard to this process.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 DJ brought to the attention of the panel overgrowth in Hollingdean. Officers confirmed the specific growth mentioned was not in the authority jurisdiction but it would be passed onto the relevant authority.

8.2 Residents from Coldean RA requested a written answer regarding why the areas around amenities such as lampposts was not being managed along with other overgrowth. Cllr Co-Chair Sheard provided verbal update at panel, confirmation was provided that CityClean had been notified.

8.3 Residents raised concerns that requests to CityClean for overgrowth management had not been adequately responded to, specifically regarding the area around Davey Drive.

