

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA**

**2.30pm 18 JUNE 2024**

**BRIGHTON TOWN HALL – COMMITTEE ROOM 1**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Mcleay (Co-Chair), Goldsmith, Thomson, Shanks, Mackey

**Residents:** Emma Salcombe (Co-Chair), Chris Vine, Eileen Stewart, Pipin Boardman, Rosemary Johnson, Max Brown, Warwick Mount Representatives, Craven Vale Representatives, Somerset Place Representatives

**Officers:** Geof Gage (Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management, Keely McDonald (Senior Community Engagement Officer), Grant Ritchie (Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance), Jane White (Business & Performance Manager), Janet Dowdell (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), Hannah Barker (Senior Community Engagement Officer), Sabina Karabasic (Community Engagement Officer), Emma Gilbert (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), Sharon Halle-Richards (Performance & Improvement Officer), John Evans (Housing Manager), Sam Nolan (Community Engagement Manager)

**Clerk:** Niall Breen – Democratic Services Officer Apprentice

**Guests:** Sarah Booker-Lewis LDRS, Jess Warren

- 1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS 5-6**
  - 1.1 There were apologies from, Linda King, Martin Reid, Justine Harris, Councillors Burden and Wilkinson.
  - 1.2 Emma Gilbert (EG) made a statement with regard to the pre-election period.
- 2. MINUTES & ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 7-14**
  - 2.1 There were a number of corrections noted for the minutes of the previous panel meeting (March 2024).
  - 2.2 These included the incorrect listing of Emma Salcombe (ES) as Resident Co-Chair at the start of the meeting, resident *inspectors* incorrectly recorded as *inspections* and correcting the record regarding attendance for Janet Dowdell (JD).
  - 2.3 CA1 – Regarding organisational and operational support from Community Engagement to set up TRA AGM's. Residents raised concerns with the response and stated they were not able to vote due to issues surrounding support. Sam Nolan provided a verbal briefing to alleviate concerns surrounding engagement.

2.4 CA3 – Regarding resident inspections and spending time with external contractors. Residents raised concerns stating that there had been no progress on this process, Grant Ritchie (GR) noted to the panel that the process was planned to be implemented and discussions were ongoing.

2.5 CA5 – Regarding increased communication and co-operation with highways regarding drainage and gutter clearance. GR confirmed that the issue was to be raised with Highways. Residents stated there had been no progression from TRA perspective. GR confirmed follow up with the residents.

2.6 CA08 – Regarding CCTV related queries in Essex Place. Officers confirmed Alan Harriet contacted and that they would follow up individually with residents involved.

2.7 Actions and minutes agreed otherwise as accurate

### **3. HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 2023/24**

**15-38**

3.1 EG delivered a verbal brief as per the item in the agenda. Covering changes in line with the move to Universa Credit for social payments, highlighting a 53-week-year this year, leading to changing statistics compared to the normal 52-week-year, they also noted that the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) still operated on 52-week-year for payments leading to the discrepancies

3.3 Residents queried if the changes would affect sheltered accommodation, EG provided clarification that it may affect individuals on a case-by-case basis.

3.4 Cllr Mackey raised a query with regard to how the changes were communicated to those who were not digitally literate and whether it affected PIP payments. EG confirmed that PIP was separate and also further confirmed that any necessary accommodations could be made.

3.5 ES provided further information to Cllr Mackey regarding the queries raised and also provided insight in their personal situation with regard to the matter.

3.6 Rosemary Johnson (RJ) informed the panel that they had not been given support with regard to their requested accommodation. EG clarified that any vulnerabilities would be noted officially on the system for communication methods.

3.7 EG confirmed that Community Engagement would be making proactive contact with known residents with vulnerabilities.

3.8 Representatives from Craven Vale requested clarification upon why the DWP was working to a 52-week-year for payments when it was in fact a 53-week-year. EG clarified that this was a DWP policy and not in the gift of the authority.

3.9 Cllr Mcleay requested clarification upon how the EPC rating for the Council's property stock compared to other Local Authorities. Geof Gage (GG) confirmed that they would follow up with this.

3.10 RJ congratulated the authority on Anti-Social-Behaviour (ASB) initiative progress. Janet Dowdell (JD) clarified that eviction was the last option taken by the authority and BHCC policy was not to increase the number of evictions.

#### **4. HIAM BUILDING SAFETY RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

4.1 Jane White (JW) delivered a verbal brief on the engagement strategy (there was no item in the agenda).

4.2 ES queried whether physical meetings would be agreeable with regard to the HIAM strategy, JW confirmed this.

4.3 Craven Vale representatives raised concerns that there were no mandatory gas checks for leaseholders, a safety issue, especially in high rise buildings. GG seconded this and confirmed it was something to be looked at in the strategy, noting there was no legislation to empower the authority to act.

4.4 RJ noted that if a leaseholder rented their flat, they came under legislation, otherwise there was a loophole and raised queries regarding cladding checks. GG provided clarification on the cladding checks being undertaken and the state of cladding on authority properties being inline with the Building Safety Act, noting it was only relevant to high rise. It was also noted to the panel that no 'Grenfell style' cladding. Officers confirmed all local authority owned buildings are registered with the building safety regulator.

4.5 Cllr McLeay requested update on timeframe for draft. JW clarified that this would last around six weeks.

4.6 Pipin Boardman (PB) raised queries regarding whether the review would include signage and raised personal example. EG confirmed that details could be taken and issue actioned. EG further clarified that an increased regime of checks were being undertaken.

#### **5. LAUNDRY REVIEW**

5.1 JW delivered a verbal brief on the engagement strategy (there was no item in the agenda).

5.3 ES noted the last review was 2004, JW corrected it was 2009. ES stated their paperwork was from 2004 for Essex Place, queried are disabilities still being considered in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

5.4 JW confirmed that all vulnerabilities, needs and accommodations requested would be included in the process, highlighting that the Equality Act 1999 superseded the 1995 Act would be accounted for. ES questioned whether the authority would be willing to refit properties to better accommodate personal washing facilities.

5.5 JW & EG confirmed this would be attended to on a case-by-case basis and included in the review outcome.

5.6 RJ queried if the £40k cost was a net cost and if it was queried as to why laundries weren't being used. EG confirmed it was a net cost and JW confirmed the intention of the review was to look at those using the laundry, further confirmed letters regarding the review would go through all authority property households with contact details.

5.7 RJ proposed inclusion of information for use of laundrette to tenants/residents, ES further confirmed this that lettings was not informing new moves of laundrette. EG confirmed that this would be considered in the review. Craven Vale representatives queried rationale for not charging for laundrette, EG clarified that it was a decision taken in pandemic and not yet reversed, Craven Vale representatives noted to panel that residents were taking advantage of free laundrette. Residents queried if the contracts for seniors and regular laundrette were the same contractor, JW confirmed they were separate.

- **The Panel adjourned between 15:25 and 15:35 for refreshments**

## **6. RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME**

**39-60**

6.1 C3.1 Regarding cleaning standards at Craven Vale. RJ & Craven Vale representatives made clear they thought the answer to be unsatisfactory. Chloe Mclaughlin confirmed they would follow up individually to action. Residents suggested methods to alleviate their concerns.

6.2 C3.2 Regarding the Hampshire Court roof replacement. GG provided a verbal explanation of the answer given and noted it was in the 2025-6 programme and the carpark would be brought into 24-25 if possible due to structural issues, hopefully bringing the block into the programme for next year as opposed to 26-27. Residents queried how vulnerable residents would access their own vehicles due to larger residents' vehicles, also noted a lack of disabled spaces, they also queried options under review for rebuild. GG confirmed there was no fire risk, with regard to disabled spaces that it was being considered for the works programme, with a paper released the previous week regarding the matter.

6.3 C3.3 Regarding the Housing Budget Consultation. ES noted the item was too large for C-HAP and needed a separate meeting. GR referred to the fact that C-HAP no longer was attached to committees and changes in governance had led to a gap in consultation. Residents raised that they would prefer a separate meeting regarding the consultation due to the intensity and depth of the subject. Panel agreed unanimously, officers confirmed area based for budget. RJ noted that consultation should include leaseholders not just tenants.

6.4 Sam Warren (SW) suggested earlier engagement before area-based meeting to take conversations to tenancy associations to gather widest range of views. GR affirmed this and noted budget considerations began in September ahead of February decision. Hannah Barker (HB) suggested meeting with resident only & co-chairs to consider timeline to ensure there was not missed engagement/consultation.

6.5 C3.4 Regarding windows in Essex Place. ES confirmed no works done during their residency, noted repair backlog, and requested full survey for Essex Place, they also noted not just Essex Place would be requesting survey. GG confirmed plan for a survey was in place. GR affirmed that the contractor for windows should not have that much of a backlog. RJ raised queries regarding Orbis partnership framework and how this impacted procurement and how planned works were impacted by this— GG clarified on this.

6.6 PB raised similar concerns for residents in other blocks such as Warwick Mount, affirmed this was concentrated and not the entire building. Somerset Place Residents raised concerns regarding newly installed doors malfunctioning, and queried if materials to be used were in the spec. GG confirmed this. RJ raised concerns that Craven Vale residents were raising concerns of newly installed windows and doors not being able to deal with the weather.

## **7. POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS**

7.1 Residents informed the panel of a new artistic social group that had been established. And noted a summer fare on July 27<sup>th</sup> in Craven Vale community centre as well as the January 5<sup>th</sup> annual fruit sale with folk singers from Hastings.

7.2 RJ raised that Craven Vale coffee mornings on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month. RJ added that the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday evening of every month there was a disco.

7.3 Residents of Craven Vale also informed the panel of the whispering trees project in Craven wood, preserving British trees.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 GR raised two additional contractors had been instructed to work on backlog, 'United Living' and 'Access Europe'. To raise awareness with tenants/residents regarding new contractors undertaking works. They also added that information was to be included in HomingIn.

## **9. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**61-82**

