

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 10 MAY 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Caulfield (Chairman); Barnett, Carden, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson) and Wells

Tenant Representatives: Stewart Gover (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Chris Kift (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Pat Miles (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Beverley Weaver (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group), John Melson (Hi Rise Action Group) and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network)

Apologies: Councillor Davey, Beryl Snelling, David Murtagh, and Muriel Briault

PART ONE

85. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

85A Declarations of Substitute Members

85.1 Nicola Proud declared that she was attending as a substitute for Muriel Briault.

85B Declarations of Interests

85.2 Councillors Simpson and Wells, Heather Hayes and Ted Harman declared a personal interest in any discussion on the LDV as they are Board Members of Brighton and Hove Seaside Community Homes (the Local Delivery Vehicle).

85C Exclusion of the Press and Public

85.3 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

85.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

86. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

86.1 Councillor Simpson referred to paragraph 83.9 of the minutes. She again raised the case of an elderly couple in poor health who had asked to downsize to a two bedroom property. They had now been informed that they could only bid for a one bedroom property. The couple needed a two bedroom property for medical reasons. An estates warden had visited and listed 6 items of works that needed to be carried out to their present property. These works had been carried out in spite of their health problems. Councillor Simpson considered that the couple should receive an apology and compensation and a swift decision on the number of bedrooms to which they were entitled.

86.2 The Chairman replied that it was not appropriate to discuss an individual case at the committee meeting. The Assistant Director, Housing Management agreed and stressed that officers had reviewed the case since the last meeting. There were special reasons why works were required and the case was complex. He would ensure that Councillor Simpson was briefed on this case, and that further action would be taken to resolve the issue.

86.3 Stewart Gover referred to paragraph 73.20 of the minutes. Chris Kift reported that he had still not received a reply from John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. As a result of the General Election, it would be necessary to wait until it was known who would be Secretary of State before a further letter was sent.

86.4 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

87. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

City Assembly

87.1 The Chairman explained that the next City Assembly would be this Saturday, the 15th May 2010. The agenda included a presentation from the Tenant Services Authority, and would provide an update on a mobility scooter storage project, and a presentation on the law around succession. There would also be a panel discussion and an opportunity to meet other residents' representatives from across the city.

87.2 Chris Kift reported that there would be stalls at the City Assembly. Mears Limited, the Mediation Service and the Fire Service were some of the services to be represented.

Meeting with the LDV Board

87.3 The Chairman reported that Members of the HMCC had been invited to a buffet lunch to enable them to meet with members of the Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes Ltd Board. The lunch would be held on Monday 24 May 2010 at 13:30 at the Thistle Hotel, Brighton.

- 87.4 Councillor Simpson mentioned that the meeting would be an opportunity for members to meet the Board rather than a discussion about the specific offer. The Chairman agreed but stressed that members would like to raise issues with the Board.

Choice Based Review Meeting

- 87.5 The Chairman reported that the first Choice Based Review Meeting had been held and had been excellent. The next meeting would be held on 17 May 2010 at 11.00 am to 1.00pm in Brighton Town Hall.
- 87.6 Councillor Simpson asked if other councillors could be invited. The Chairman replied that this was a tenant led group and was not a cross party group. Councillor Barnett would be in attendance as the new Deputy on Housing matters. Meanwhile, the Chairman was happy for members of the Allocations group to attend the Choice Based Lettings Group if they wished. As some members had not received invitations to the new group she asked the Assistant Director, Housing Management to investigate.

88. CALLOVER

- 88.1 The Chairman asked the Committee to consider which items listed on the agenda it wished to debate and determine in full.

- 88.2 **RESOLVED** - That all items be reserved for debate and determination.

89. PETITIONS

- 89.1 There were none.

90. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 90.1 There were none.

91. DEPUTATIONS

- 91.1 There were none.

92. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 92.1 There were none.

93. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 93.1 There were none.

94. HOUSING REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS REPORT

- 94 .1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which informed members of the progress made on delivering the new Housing

Management Repairs & Improvement Partnership with Mears Limited which commenced on 1 April 2010. The Committee also received a presentation with slides.

- 94.2 John Melson stated that he was impressed with the presentation and hoped the partnership lived up to its promise. Mr Melson mentioned that he had spoken to the response team at Mears about a problem with windows in a nearby block.. The person he had spoken to did not respond satisfactorily and had not known what was meant by a clerk of works or a quantity surveyor. He stressed that these problems with the front desk staff needed to be resolved.
- 94.3 Members were informed that Mears Limited were carrying out training on the front desk. This would take a while to sort out. There would be a move away from surveyor teams. If a property was in a mess but did not need repairs carried out, a Customer Care Manager would visit. A team of supervisors would manage properties. The Head of Repairs and Maintenance reported that Brighton & Hove Council had a Clerk of Works, not Mears Limited.
- 94.4 Councillor Mears asked if it would be possible to have an update report to monitor the contract in 4 to 6 months. The Chairman replied that she had been assured by the Assistant Director Housing Management that there would be quarterly monitoring reports.
- 94.5 Beverley Weaver expressed concern that the system was not reporting complaints registered on the old system. The Mears representative replied to explain that routine jobs had not been issued to Kier in late March. Mears Limited had inherited these jobs. If they were not on the list, he would be happy to investigate the matter. He hoped his team could investigate historically and see which jobs needed to be completed.
- 94.6 Ted Harman asked about the Estate Development Budget. He was told that this years work was currently being carried out. However, Mears would complete outstanding work.
- 94.7 The Chairman emphasised that the EDB was now part of the repairs contract. There were outstanding repairs but Mears Limited had agreed to take on these jobs.
- 94.8 Councillor Wells asked if there had been positive feedback from mystery shoppers.
- 94.9 The Mears representative explained that Mears employed RICS trained surveyors. The day time satisfaction rates were going well. There needed to be more work on out of hours satisfaction rates.
- 94.10 John Melson requested that in future, Members and tenants representatives should be given one months notice if there was to be a further presentation on the progress of the partnership. This would enable tenants to raise issues before the committee meeting.
- 94.11 The Chairman thanked The Head of Repairs and Maintenance and the Mears representative for their presentation.
- 94.12 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the progress made on delivering the new Repairs & Improvement Partnership be noted.

95. TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

- 95.1 The Committee considered a report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which set out the research findings from the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey carried out in December 2009. It also highlighted some ways in which the surveys would be used.
- 95.2 The Head of Housing Management reported that officers were keen to give information in a variety of ways. The survey had shown that there was an underrepresentation of involvement from people who were under 25 and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. There was overrepresentation from people who were 45 or over and from people with disabilities and long term illnesses. There had been a low response in relation to electronic media but it was still higher than expected.
- 95.3 John Melson was pleased with the results of the survey. He was surprised that the results relating to electronic media were considered higher than expected as this form of communication had been around for the last 20 years. He made the point that there had been an attempt to interest younger people over many years and this had not been successful. Mr Melson suggested concentrating on the things that could be changed rather than looking at matters which could not be changed.
- 95.4 Chris Kift stated that there was a need to nurture young people who were interested. He pointed out that people who responded to questionnaires did not always respond to follow up letters.
- 95.5 Stewart Gover referred to paragraph 5.5 which stated that the survey results had shown that anti-social behaviour was one of the main concerns of residents. He made the point that most noise was experienced at weekends or in the evenings when there was no-one available at the council.
- 95.6 Chris Kift mentioned that the ASBO Focus Group would be meeting on Monday 17 May for the first time. There would be discussions on antisocial behaviour and access to CCTV systems.
- 95.7 **RESOLVED** - That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to:
- (1) Note the findings of the survey.
 - (2) Approve the potential ways in which interested people can become more involved than they are at present.

96. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 3)

- 96.1 The Committee had before them a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which set out the third quarter for Housing Management Performance for the financial year 2009/2010. The report included comparisons with the first and second quarter figures for this year, the end of year performance for the last financial year and targets for future years. The areas covered included key Best Value (BV) performance indicators, by which the government measure and compare the council's performance in key service areas.

96.2 **RESOLVED** - the report be noted.

97. PROCUREMENT OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT - HOUSING MANAGEMENT LAND

- 97.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which reported on the way the Housing Management parking controls were enforced and the outcome of the recent parking enforcement process. Clamping had been the preferred method for parking enforcement on housing land since 2004. Parking control by clamping was the recommendation of the Car Parks and Garages Working Group. The current contract expired at the end of 2009. Following the parking procurement process, the evaluation panel agreed that Ethical Parking Management had submitted the most advantageous tender on the basis of both quality and meeting the expectations and aspirations of residents.
- 97.2 The Housing Manager reported an error in paragraph 7.1. The report had been submitted to the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting on 21 April 2010.
- 97.3 Stewart Gover stated that he did not agree with clamping as a way of controlling parking. He considered clamping counter productive.
- 97.4 The Chairman reported that the council was looking to amalgamate the contracts for housing land with on street charges in the future. There would be discussions with the Car Parks and Garages Working Group about ticketing issues.
- 97.5 The Assistant Director, Housing Management reported that a transfer of the land out of the HRA and a Road Traffic Regulation Order would be needed in order to have the existing on-street ticketing system. A decision to proceed with clamping was taken to enable parking enforcement on housing management spaces. Staff in the car parks team had received complaints from people who were renting spaces and were not able to access them. It was necessary to ensure these spaces were made available. Renting spaces released a significant income which could be used to spend on peoples homes. Meanwhile, officers would be looking at the feasibility of moving to the ticketing system in the course of the contract.
- 97.6 John Melson considered that ethical parking and clamping did not go together. He asked if associations would be able to opt in or out if a ticketing system was introduced. The Chairman replied that there would be discussions about these issues.
- 97.7 Councillor Fryer reported that she had received complaints in her ward from people who had been clamped. Sometimes people were not clear on the regulations. For example, a disabled driver had been clamped for not displaying the correct information. She considered that clamping was discriminating against people on low incomes. She felt it would be better to have a ticketing system.
- 97.8 Chris Kift mentioned a car park near St James's House which used to have a chain across it. This was now clamped. He asked why Amex staff were able to use this facility. The Chairman stated that this could be investigated. A number of tenants spaces were rented out to people who were not tenants.

- 97.9 Councillor Mears stated that she would only support the decision to award the contract if it were noted that she had concerns about the contract. Councillor Mears wished to see regular update reports presented to the Committee on the progress of the contract with Ethical Parking Management. Councillor Wells concurred with Councillor Mears and asked for his concerns to be noted.
- 97.10 John Melson mentioned that there was an underuse of some high rise car parks and he would be happy for these spaces to be rented out as it released revenue for the HRA.
- 97.11 The Chairman acknowledged that people did not want clamping. However, it would not be possible to combine the contracts for on street parking and housing management, until the on street parking contract was renewed in 18 months time.
- 97.12 Pat Miles informed the Committee that she had sat on the interview Board for the tendering process. Ethical Parking Management had submitted the best tender. The Car Park and Garages Working Group would set up a meeting with Ethical Parking Management every two months to review the contract. She questioned why concerns about the contract had not been raised during the tendering process. Beverley Weaver concurred. She stated that she was a member of the Car Park and Garages Working Group and she also questioned why concerns had not been raised earlier.
- 97.13 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

98. VOTE OF THANKS

- 98.1 The Committee agreed that they wished to give a vote of thanks to the Chairman, for her long and dedicated service to this Committee and the Council in general. They were pleased to note that she would be continuing to work in these roles.
- 98.2 Councillor Wells informed the Committee that he had welcomed working with the members of the Committee. After his year as mayor he would look forward to working with the Committee once more.

The meeting concluded at 4.59pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of