

Housing Management Panel: East Area

Date: 12 October 2021

Time: 7.00pm

Venue Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Members: Councillor Brennan, Ward Councillors for the Area, Delegates of Tenants Association in the area.

Contact: Thomas Bald
Democratic Services Officer
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Meeting will be open 15 minutes before start. Anyone requiring help joining the meeting can contact the Community Engagement Team for assistance.

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AGENDA

PART ONE

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5 Minutes

Verbal

Instructions on how to access the Zoom Meeting (copy attached)

2 MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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15 Minutes

Minutes of the last meeting held on 17.8.21 (copy attached)

Actions of the last meeting held on 17.8.21 (copy attached)

3 RESPONSES TO RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS

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45 Minutes

Responses to Resident's Questions (copy attached)

BREAK

5 Minutes

4 EAST BRIGHTON SKATE PARK

30 Minutes

Verbal

5 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

10 Minutes

Verbal updates from attendees on positive things happening in the community

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5 Minutes

Verbal

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact , (01273 291354, email thomas.bald@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Date of Publication - Monday, 4 October 2021

East Area Panel

12th October 2021, 19:00-21:00

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89405260039?pwd=V0JbG5JZXVTYWNDNkJSdIRVFkxQT09>

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Meeting ID: 894 0526 0039

Passcode: 7wPY7y

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- The phone and tablet will have a built-in microphone and camera, but if you are using a desktop you might need a web-cam for people to be able to see you.
- When it is time to join the meeting, just click on the link emailed.
- If you are using a phone, tablet or computer you can ignore anything asking you to download Zoom – you can join in a Zoom meeting without doing this.
- If you are using an iPad you will need to download the Zoom app
- Turn on video or audio, if it asks you to – you may not need to do this if it is already enabled on your device.
- You will go to a 'waiting room' first of all, and then will be invited in to the meeting.
- You will then see yourself, and everyone else who has joined the meeting.
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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 17 AUGUST 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING - ZOOM

MINUTES

Present:

Representatives: Christine El-Shabba (Chair), Ben D'Montigny, Rosemary Johnson, Janet Gearing, Emma Lewis

Councillors: Mears & Platts

Officers: Bethan Hudson, Janet Dowdell, Justine Harris, Ododo Dafe, Glyn Huelin, Thomas Bald

Other: Frank le Duc (Press)

1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES, AND INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Apologies from Cllr Gill Williams, Cllr Dee Simson, Rachelle Metcalfe, and Alan Cooke.

2 ACTIONS AND MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes

2.1 Rosemary Johnson raised that point 4.1 of the minutes should have included an answer about Council Officers expecting information back from residents quickly. Bethan Hudson agreed to take this away and come back with a response.

2.2 Rosemary Johnson also raised that point 6.4 should refer to all documents not just ASB documents.

2.3 Councillor Mears raised that it would be helpful to gather information from the East Area Panel members concerning the Charing arrangements. Rosemary Johnson also mentioned that the Chair should be consistent and knowledgeable but wouldn't need to specifically be a Councillor. Thomas Bald confirmed they would feed back at the next meeting if there were any updates on when this would be brought to Housing Committee.

RESOLVED:

- Bethan Hudson to get a response concerning officers expecting instant replies from residents;
- Thomas Bald to come back with any updates about when the Terms of Reference for Area Panels will be discussed at Housing Committee.

Actions

2.4 Glyn Huelin confirmed that the responses were included on page 15 of the Agenda.

2.5 Janet Gearing raised that the meeting with Rachelle Metcalfe to look around Langley Crescent, but no action has been taken since as the land has to be confirmed as being managed by either Highways or Housing. Janet Dowdell confirmed she would come back with a response.

RESOLVED: Janet Dowdell to come back with a response from about the progress of the issues on Langley Crescent.

3 RESPONSES TO RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS

EDB as a Resident Led Budget

1.1 Rosemary Johnson raised that the Leaseholders will get charged for services even if they don't live in the property. Chris El-Shabba raised that the EDB panel do consider Leaseholders and the costs they incur.

1.2 Janet Gearing was informed that 'residents' refers to tenants and leaseholders.

1.3 Councillor Mears raised a concern that the EDB is funded from the HRA which is made up from tenant's rents, and tenants must be careful not to use the HRA to compensate the general fund.

1.4 Councillor Platts asked if residents were informed about deadlines for EDB bids, as she had received some complaints from people wanting to put in a bid, but didn't have enough time to find help as they were unaware of the deadlines – and that it would be a good idea to publicise the deadlines so everyone is aware. Bethan Hudson confirmed she would email around the cut off dates for EDB bids to members of the panel.

1.5 Ben D'Montigny raised that he had found that all bids he had been involved with had been resident led, and his strong digital platform shows high engagement. Rosemary Johnson raised that it is easier to contact tenants as we know which addresses they live in, however it is much harder to reach the leaseholders renting out those addresses to tenants.

Resident Associations and Resident Involvement

There was no discussion.

Lack of Maintenance of Estates

1.6 Rosemary Johnson raised that in response to the West Area Panel's question, other areas are still experiencing problems with the maintenance of estates, and no information has been given regarding the Old Bin Store Community Workshop project.

1.7 Janet Gearing raised that someone she knows hasn't had her lawn mowed by the Council for months, and the overgrowing of grass verges, pavements, and the lack of

emptying of bins has made the city look dirty. Councillor Mears agreed that the pavements in the city are overgrown and dangerous.

1.8 Ben D'Montigny was informed that Rob Walker at City Parks would be the main contact to report overgrown weeds.

1.9 Janet Gearing raised that 2 tennis tables have been installed, and a gym is due to be installed soon.

4 HOUSING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2021/22

1.10 Ododo Dafe summarised the report starting on 27 of the agenda.

1.11 Janet Gearing raised that a worker who came to her property recently for a repair was deaf, and the Council should text him not ring him going forward.

1.12 Janet Gearing was informed that everything is being done by housing to get empty properties let.

1.13 Rosemary Johnson raised that arrears system need to be updated sooner for rent payments, and that illegal anti-social behaviour such as drug dealing needs to be addressed too.

1.14 Ben D'Montigny was informed that the first few lockdowns created a backlog of about 4-6 months of routine repairs, meaning that extra effort is having to be put in going forward, as well as prioritising more important repairs such as roofs. He was also informed that the refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms isn't operating at full capacity due to the challenges mentioned above.

Leasehold Payment Options and Updates

1.15 Glyn Huelin summarised the report starting on page 51 of the agenda.

1.16 Rosemary Johnson raised that if anyone would like to get involved with the Leaseholder Action Group please get in touch with Councillor Hugh-Jones or LAG via Rosemary Johnson. She also raised the following points in response to the report:

- LAG are glad to see the extension of the mix and match options and extension of provision to non-resident leaseholders.
- Some leaseholders are looking at bills of up to £65,000, so it might be worth extending the options to accommodate those.

5 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 1.17 Chris El-Shabba brought attention to the East Brighton Food Project starting on page 65 of the Agenda, and a farewell party will be held for Janet and Brian of the project on the 12 September for the residents of Robert Lodge.
- 1.18 Ben D'Montigny raised that he has gotten partial funding for a defibrillator to be installed at the community centre.
- 1.19 Rosemary Johnson raised that there is a welcome back to Craven Vale week of activities starting on August Bank holiday Monday, such as a quiz, pasta pizza and jigsaw puzzles day, woodland tours, beekeeping tours, and an all day barbecue. Rosemary Johnson also raised that an electric vehicle charging point has been installed, but without consultation of the residents, and the charging point was resting on the pavement in order to charge the car.
- 1.20 Chris El-Shabba raised that an extension of the bus stop has eliminated a parking space on the Broadway, and Cllr Platts confirmed she'd look into it and report back.
- 1.21 Ododo Dafe raised that she was very impressed by the work completed by Ben D'Montigny about the issues on Bristol Estate. Emma Lewis asked to share how the project was completed as an example going forward.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

The meeting concluded at 9.02pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

Actions from August Area Panel

East

Action	Officer	Response
Bethan Hudson to email around the cut off dates for EDB bids	Bethan Hudson	EDB Deadline dates were emailed to East Area Panel Attendees on 18/08/2021
Janet Dowdell to chase for a response from Property & Estates about the progress of the issues on Langley Crescent.	Janet Dowdell	<p>The issues concern the rear communal pathways that go across the back of properties that face onto Langley Crescent roughly between 29-77 Langley crescent. Initially it was thought this would involve a few individual issues but it turns out to be more complicated and a bigger piece of work.</p> <p>We want to explore options for the gates to avoid fly-tipping opportunities and whether we would need to replace locks so that all residents can have keys to avoid access and fire safety issues.</p> <p>Taking all that into account we aim to put together a package of work to generally improve the area and this will be allocated to a Housing Officer from the East Area Housing Team.</p> <p>There are communal paths and archways running along the back of the houses. Some residents have fenced off their bits of path outside their back doors and some have blocked the archway, and some archways have gates that are locked and not everyone has keys and some are left open. We need to establish whether there are any fire safety, land ownership or general Health and Safety reasons why the residents should not fence off their areas and we will need a consistent approach so the message is clear to all residents.</p> <p>We also want to look into maintenance arrangements for the paths to deal with slippery moss and lighting.</p>
Bethan Hudson to get a response regarding Council Officers expecting instant replies from residents.	Bethan Hudson	I have spoken to the resident and resolved the matter outside Area Panel.
Thomas Bald to get more information about the update of Area Panels Terms of Reference including Chairing Arrangements.	Thomas Bald	Verbal update at the next meeting

East 3 Stars

Cityclean service, sanitation and covid

Background

Cityclean is still failing to provide a full service and has repeatedly said this is due to staff absence due to covid. This is leading to poor sanitation throughout the city with bins overflowing, creating a haven for rats and flies which represent a health hazard to the population of the city.

Research has shown a clear connection between sanitation levels and the spread of covid. As Brighton and Hove has a high prevalence of covid, it is therefore urgent that the city council improve the collection of refuse to rectify poor sanitation levels in the city.

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and request a report on:

- What weight has been given to improving the refuse and recycling services as part of Brighton and Hove's strategy to reduce covid cases
- What action the council is taking to improve the performance of CityClean

Response

Melissa Francis

The City Environment Modernisation Programme is developing a sustainable future for the service in Brighton & Hove in the context of reducing council budgets, increasing customer demand and potential future legislative changes. As part of the programme, a number of improvement projects are underway and updates on these are regularly provided at the Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee.

The improvement projects include:

Bin Infrastructure Action Plan - implementing a new approach to managing litter and street cleansing

Communal bin system - Reviewing the existing communal bin system and identifying areas for improvement which includes, distribution of bins, capacity offered for different waste streams, improvements to glass recycling (bins, contamination of, and noise), bin bays, signage, type of bins, expansion of waste streams, and application of colour coding for the different waste streams

Digital Cityclean - Modernising the service and supporting the wider programme of change through technology

Fleet replacement - Delivering of a 10-year strategy and green procurement plan, providing cost and savings projections. The strategy includes the migration to new technology as it develops, such as hydrogen fuel cells, to reduce maintenance and carbon emissions

Managing waste responsibly - Delivering an informative and educational campaign to assist residents, visitors, businesses and crews to dispose of waste responsibly

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Wheelie bin audit and rollout - Implementing a wheelie bin recycling service to all the streets identified as suitable for this service from the city-wide wheelie bin audit. A full list of the projects and current progress can be found in the modernisation update report presented to committee on 21 September 2021.

East

3 Stars

Graffiti on estates

Background

Residents have noticed that there is a significant increase in graffiti. In Craven Vale this is mainly on sheds and bus stops. Graffiti is recognised as a 'signal crime' that has the potential to lead to an increase in other crimes in an area. It is therefore important to prevent it and ensure it is cleaned off quickly when it does occur.

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and request information on the council's procedures for removing graffiti.

Response

Melissa Francis

The council will remove offensive graffiti from all types of property, and aim to do this within 24 hours of it occurring, however for other types of graffiti we are only able to remove where it is on publicly owned property. With regards to the sheds responsibility to remove the graffiti will fall to the owner or leaseholder. It is possible to write to those responsible reminding them of these obligations. For the bus stops, these belong to Brighton and Hove Buses. I would be more than happy to write to our relevant contacts to make them aware of the graffiti in Craven Vale and ask them to remedy this. Looking forward we are in the process of introducing Community Protection Notices for graffiti which give us greater enforcement powers in these types of situations where reasonable requests to remove have been ignored. These will ensure that property owners are required to take greater responsibility or face legal action for not doing so.

East & West

3 Stars

Estate Development Budget (EDB) Task and Finish Group

Background

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West

The Estate Development Budget (EDB) process has changed beyond recognition. It was originally established as a resident-led fund, but is now led by officers and encourages top-down solutions. It has become more complex, less flexible, and less useful as a vehicle for residents to improve their living environment.

Since this was raised at the West meeting on 22nd June 2021 the city-wide EDB Task and Finish Group has been opened up to more residents. It has become clear that residents throughout the city are dissatisfied with the process.

The meeting discussed three specific issues:

1. A new scoring system has been proposed by officers, with the scoring carried out by Community Engagement Officers. This takes control of the process away from residents.
2. Quick bids are no longer quick. The panel only meets every two months and bids have to be submitted a month in advance. If there is a query they have to be re-presented at the next meeting. As a result, it can be several months before they are agreed.
3. The CEO's written response to the Area Panel on 17th August stated: "An internal audit carried out in 2018, identified that there was only partial confidence in the EDB process and improvements needed to be made to make it fairer and more inclusive."

Residents would like to query the validity of this audit for the following reasons:

- An audit had already been carried out in 2017/18 which residents haven't been able to see.
- There is a lack of transparency on how the audit (completed in February 2018) was set up, how the officers were selected to carry it out and how the specification was drafted.
- Residents have been told that the audit showed the process to be unfair, but have not been shown the evidence for this.
- Five example bids were used for the audit. They were all problematic bids, and possibly not typical or representative of bids overall. Information hasn't been provided on how these examples were selected.

East

The EDB Task and Finish group has not been set up in a way that will enable any significant improvements in the EDB process.

- Four of the residents present had attended the EDB Task and Finish group. The meeting was two hours long and the first half was spent on matters arising, repeating the discussions that had happened at the last meeting.
- Attendees were not all given an equal opportunity to speak – one attendee was allowed to speak at length about past decisions without being stopped whilst everyone else waited to be given the opportunity to discuss new procedures.
- The meeting didn't keep to the agenda or complete it.
- There was insufficient time to have clear and focussed discussions to move the process forward.
- There weren't any council officers present who are in a position to address residents' substantial concerns and make proposals that would facilitate any significant changes to the EDB process.

There is a lot of inconsistency on what work gets done and how quickly it is done. Some work agreed this year has already been done, but other work agreed in

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previous years is still outstanding. Work that was originally done to a poor standard is not being put right.

- A new path in Craven Vale that was agreed 18 months ago has still not been done and residents have not been given any information about when the work will start.
- The planters at Robert Lodge are so crooked that they can't be used. Council officers have agreed to get this resolved but it hasn't happened.
- Planters for Bristol Estate, which were agreed this year, have already been installed.
- It isn't clear what order work is being done in or how decisions are made to delay some work and prioritise other work.

Action

Residents are requesting:

1. A report on the audit completed in February 2018, to include:
 - How the specification was drafted and personnel selected
 - How the example bids were selected
 - What evidence was found that the process is unfair and not inclusive
2. Changes to the process for Quick bids so they are simpler, quicker and easier to use for residents
3. A change to the proposed scoring system so that it is led by residents

East request the following:

That the EDB Task and Finish group be attended by council officers who are able to respond to residents' concerns and formulate them into proposals for significant improvements to the process.

That meetings be chaired effectively, to ensure the agenda is kept to and there is space for all to contribute equally.

- A list of all outstanding EDB projects, with details of when they will be completed
- A report on how different EDB projects are prioritised

Response

Keely McDonald

A report about the EDB audit report will be provided the the EDB task and finish group by the end of the calendar year. Officers to commit to a further discussion with the task and finish group about the feedback on the quick bids process and the scoring system. Feedback about the EDB task and finish group is noted; officers will reflect on officer attendance and chairing and ensure officers are able to facilitate the group reaching a solution. All members of the group will be reminded of ground rules for the meeting. A list of approved EDB projects is provided at each meeting and will continue. A report on how different EDB projects are taken forward will be provided to the task and finish group by the end of the year.

East & West

3 Stars

October 2021

Grounds maintenance service

Background

The condition of estates is still deteriorating. Weeds are growing across paths, in front of entrance doors and through the cracks in pavements. This is a hazard for residents and is causing damage to paved areas which will cost money to repair. When City Parks come to do the grounds maintenance, they cut the grass but do not get rid of the weeds in the paths.

Examples were given from Conway Court and Clarke Court, where elderly and disabled residents are having to go out and clear the weeds themselves because the work isn't being done by the council.

Officers inspect the area and mark up damaged areas of the pavement that need to be repaired with white paint, but the repairs then don't get done.

The increasing weeds, overgrown shrubs and uncut grass are becoming a hazard for residents. The council's decision to stop the use of glyphosates has not been matched with an increase in staffing levels to ensure the city is kept tidy and safe. Residents felt that the council should investigate the option of using alternative, safe herbicides to address this problem.

Action

Residents are requesting information on how the council plan to cut back shrubs, clear the weeds on paths and cut the grassed areas to an acceptable standard.

Response

Justine Harris

Thank you for your question. CityParks used to spray in some hard surface areas within Housing estates but since ceasing use of Glyphosate weed killer are unable to help maintain areas prone to weeds. Managing weeds is challenging without the use of pesticides, other options have been explored.

As residents have pointed out, failure to manage them effectively can lead to damage on pavements and roads and weeds can become obstructions and/or trip hazards.

Housing has a hard surfaces team consisting of two members of staff. This is not enough to maintain Housing land. We are now exploring use of a contractor, who is able to weed without use of chemical pesticides. The hard surfaces team have been asked to attend Clarke Court and Conway Court to clear the weeds.

Generally land on estates is Housing's responsibility to maintain. CityParks mow the grass and cut back shrubs. The growth has been unusually rapid during this summer and they are still catching up, we are prioritising hedge pruning in areas where access is prevented. Hard pruning is carried out through Autumn & Winter. The level of service has also been below standard due to staffing issues.

North

3 Stars

Tackling anti-social behaviour in high rise blocks

Background

Issue:

The council's current procedures for tackling anti-social behaviour are not effective for either the perpetrators (who often need a higher level of support) or the victims (who have to live with very stressful situations for years).

Background:

In Nettleton Court and Duneney Lodge there are six long-standing problems with anti-social behaviour which the Council has been unable to resolve.

The RA has held a meeting with local councillors, a member of the anti-social behaviour team and a resident who has been suffering from their neighbour's noise nuisance for 4.5 year. The council has agreed to have a 'single point of contact' so everyone knows who to contact when there are problems. Residents are also planning to make a deputation to the Housing Committee on 22nd September 2021.

The meeting agreed that the council's over-reliance on collecting evidence, asking residents to keep diaries, and using a legal process is not solving the problem. Many of those who are causing problems for their neighbours are experiencing their own difficulties with poor mental health, dependency on drug or alcohol, etc. This is exacerbated by the construction of the flats which allows noise to travel between the flats very easily.

Action

Residents feel that the problem needs to be looked at more broadly:

- More supported housing is needed, which offers intensive support so people can maintain their tenancies and not become homeless.
- More intensive support is needed for those given tenancies with the council or Seaside Homes, especially those who are known to be vulnerable, have a dependency on drugs or alcohol, or have poor mental health.
- Allocations should take into account the needs of the new tenant and the needs of existing tenants they will be living next to.
- Moving the victim doesn't solve the underlying problem and is not fair to tenants who want to stay where they are.
- These issues should be considered as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Review and the Allocations Review.

Response

Justine Harris

Thank you for highlighting these concerns, these will be considered at part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Review, we are very keen to improve how we respond proactively to reports of anti-social behaviour. These concerns were also responded at Housing Committee on 22nd September Link to Housing Committee . The impact of Anti-social behaviour on our residents is taken very seriously.

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We are seeking to further enhance tenancy support, including consideration of provision of support to our most vulnerable tenants. Part of this is reviewing how we better support residents who are moving from temporary accommodation into settled accommodation. We want to ensure that perpetrators of anti-social behaviour receive the support they need to sustain their tenancy without their behaviour impacting on others. We have increased provision of Housing First and Housing Led support accommodation for clients with multiple and complex needs. All cases of anti-social behaviour that have not been resolved at Nettleton and Dudeney have been referred to Housing's Complex Case team to review, to explore remedial options available.

I hope this information is useful and the residents can continue to work with officers to respond to the issues arising and to participate in our antisocial behaviour policy review.

West 3 Stars

Maintenance Schedule

Background

This issue arose in response to requests to the EDB for funds to carry out work that should be done as part of the regular maintenance schedule.

The council's written response to the Area Panel in May stated: "The council does not work to a fixed pattern of carrying out certain work to its properties every 'X' amount of years, instead the council prioritises work as and when it is required."

In the past residents have been informed that there is a schedule, in that specific types of work will be carried out in a cycle of every 5, 10, 15 or 20 years – depending on the nature of the work. This has led residents to submit EDB bids in the belief that work such as internal decoration of blocks cannot be done until they are due according to the schedule. If the schedule is flexible and based on inspections of blocks, then it should be possible for work to be brought forward if it is deemed to be necessary.

Action

Residents are requesting information about how often the council plans to carry out maintenance to blocks, such as internal decoration, external decoration, replacement of windows and doors.

{Central AP Agenda Setting meeting request Geof Gage or Martin Reid attends Central AP to speak in person about this.}

Response

Geof Gage

We have planned works programme that is based on information that we receive from stock condition surveys carried out by and on behalf of the Council. These

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identify areas of work that we need to address on a 5, 10, 15, 20 25 and 30 year cycle.

We do not operate our programmes on a 'cyclical' programme due to budget constraints and resources we are unable to do so.

We prepare our works on an urgent requirement and assess the needs on this basis.

The planned programme for external and internal decorations and repairs covers both repairs and decorations and it is often the case that there are essential external repairs to be carried out.

It is not possible to bring work forward to suit an EDB suggestion for example as our programmes are established in advance and there is often little scope for 'ad-hoc requests.

What we are able to do in the case of an EDN+B request is to advise as to when a particular block is anticipated to be on the programme, this would be on a within 5, 10, 15 year cycle and then consideration can be given as to whether this is suitable for EDB funding from that source.

West

3 Stars

Impact of residents vaping in blocks of flats

Background

Residents are concerned about the impact on other residents if people are vaping in their flats or in communal areas of blocks. There has been some research evidence that vaping can be harmful to people's lungs and hearts.

Given this risk, residents would like to know what policies the council has developed to ensure all residents are protected from the potential harmful effects of people vaping in proximity to their homes.

Action

Residents are requesting information on what policies the council has developed to ensure all residents are protected from the potential harmful effects of people vaping in proximity to their homes.

Response

Justine Harris

The NHS website advises :

"There's no evidence so far that vaping causes harm to other people around you.

This is in contrast to second hand smoke from smoking, which is known to be very harmful to health." As a landlord we do not control whether someone can smoke or vape in their own home. More information can be found on

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking/>

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West

3 Stars

Repairs to empty properties

Background

Some empty properties are being let to new tenants when the properties aren't in a fit state.

Repairs staff are leaving rubbish and debris in communal areas.

A new tenant in Clarke Court was signed up for a flat even though it wasn't possible to open the front door. A repair was ordered, but the operative looked at the backdoor and reported that it was OK, so the repair didn't get done.

There have also been problems with repair staff leaving the communal areas and lifts in Clarke Court very dirty with debris lying around.

Action

Residents would like to know what procedures are in place for void properties to be inspected to ensure they are fit for the new tenant.

{Central AP Agenda Setting meeting request Grant Richie attends Central AP to speak in person about this.}

Response

Grant Richie

All properties are post inspected by BHCC Supervisors to ensure they meet the Technical Lettable standard. We have checked our records and cannot find a job to attend to the locks at the 3 properties that have been through the empty homes process at Clarke Court over the past 18 months. The flat entrance door locks are changed upon completion of the Empty Homes works by the Estates Services team, it is possible that this report went directly to Estates but we would need the specific address to look into this matter further. Since transfer to BHCC the Empty Homes team have started utilising two new contractors, we have received a complaint of materials/debris being left in communal areas by one of these contractors, this was addressed at the time and we have not received any further complains or picked up any issues about site cleanliness when carrying out spot inspections. Any concerns should be raised at the time by calling the repairs helpdesk.

Central 3 Stars

Future of gas central heating in council housing

Background

Prompted by the theme of the Citywide Conference, residents would like more information about the council's planned response to the government's decision to move away from gas heating

- The contracts for new heating systems in council housing are currently under discussion.
- The government has indicated that it will not be legal to install new gas boilers after a certain date.
- Heat pumps are being suggested as an alternative, but it is difficult for residents to get clear information about the total lifetime carbon impact of these.

Action

A report is requested on the Council's plans for moving away from gas central heating. When does the council intend to stop replacing gas boilers with new gas boilers, and what alternative heating methods are planned?

{Central AP Agenda Setting meeting request Miles Davidson attends Central AP to speak in person about this. HLT to confirm back to CE Team for Agenda.}

Response

Miles Davidson

A report on the Council's plans to retrofit its own housing stock including the decarbonisation of heat to contribute to the ambition to be Carbon Neutral by 2030 will be presented to Housing Committee in the coming months. We are currently scoping out a new contract for servicing, maintenance, repair and installation of heating and hot water services to replace the current contract when it expires at the end of March 2023, a report seeking approval to procure will be going to housing Committee in January and will be shared with AP's at the appropriate time. There have been indications that new gas boilers will be banned sometime in the 2030's but this has not yet been confirmed or a date given. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) will be a significant option to retrofit in our own housing in place of gas boilers but will not be suitable for every setting, so we will be looking at a range of zero/low carbon technologies. New technologies are being introduced to the market regularly and we want to ensure we invest in the right technologies that meet the needs of residents. We can provide more detail on ASHPs as required, and will be keen to engage with residents including through AP's and Home Group on these issues.