

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CENTRAL AREA HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL

2.00pm 19 SEPTEMBER 2014

LEACH COURT (ENTER PREMISES VIA CALLING NUMBER 38)

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Bowden (Chair)

Voting Representatives: Alan Hale (Hereford Court), Barry Kingston (Hampshire Court), Chris Row (St James' House), Jean Davis (Leach Court), Charles Penrose (Sloane Court), Carl Boardman (Warwick Mount), Barry Hughes (Sylvan Hall), Ann Ewings (Mount Pleasant), Owen Spence (Mayflower Square)

Non-Voting Delegates: Jason Williams (Hereford Court), Roy Strong (Hampshire Court),

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Tom Matthews (Performance and & Data Analyst), Satti Sidhu (Performance & Improvement Officer), Brett Wells (Health & Safety Manager), John Peel (Democratic Services Officer), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement), James Cryer (Partnering Manager- Mears), Rebecca Mann (Resident Involvement Officer)

Guests:

12 APOLOGIES

12.1 Apologies were received from Al Davies, Andy Tuck and Tony Cutler.

13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

13.1 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 July 2014 be approved and signed as the correct record.

13.2 As a matter arising, Panel representatives expressed concerns regarding overdue Estate Development Budget (EDB) work.

13.3 Ann Ewings stated that she had met with Keith Dadswell and he had explained that his new team were making an extensive effort to catch up with overdue work and confident of doing so.

13.4 Barry Kingston stated that he found himself constantly having to chase up work which should not be the case.

13.5 Alan Hale stated that he would prefer to hear a proposed solution to the problem of overdue work rather than an explanation of the causes.

- 13.6 The Partnering Manager, Mears stated that the issues would be addressed following a period of catch up.
- 13.7 Charles Penrose stated that the Panel had used to receive updates at each meeting via a spreadsheet circulated and that he would like that system re-introduced to keep representatives clearly updated.

14 ELECTIONS / STRENGTHENING AREA PANELS

- 14.1 Following elections conducted via anonymous electronic voting, representatives for the central area were elected to the following groups:

Home Group

Deputy: Jason Williams

Tenancy Group

Representative: Chris Row

Representative: Barry Kingston

Area Panel Deputy Chair

Ann Ewings

Area Panel Task & Finish Group

Barry Hughes

Tenant Disability Network

Representative: Jason Williams

Representative: Owen Spence

15 TENANCY POLICY 2014

- 15.1 The Panel considered a report that outlined the draft Tenancy Policy 2014 and request feedback and comments on the draft document.

- 15.2 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

16 PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 2014/15

- 16.1 The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement presented a report that covered Housing Management Performance during Quarter 1 of the 2014/15 financial year. The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement stated that the table provided figures and a RAG rating system against key performance indicators adding that the intention of the report was to provide Area Panels with information on Housing services performance and, as with previous versions of the report, comments and feedback on its presentation was welcomed to improve future versions.

- 16.2 Chris Row asked if the figure of 25% for tenants in rent arrears had consistently been as high.

- 16.3 The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement stated that whilst the percentage of tenants in rent arrears was dropping, there had been an increase partly due to the

recent changes in welfare reform. The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement added that the council were facilitating support measures to help tenants and in an attempt to prevent rent arrears.

- 16.4 Chris Row noted his surprise that tenant satisfaction with repairs was 92% when this was certainly not the case in his experience. Chris asked is every resident had been surveyed.
- 16.5 The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement clarified that a reasonable sample was taken as a proportion that was conducted through random selection.
- 16.6 The Chair enquired whether a card could be left with tenants subsequent to a repair requesting their feedback.
- 16.7 The Partnering Manager, Mears clarified that a card survey had been used previously but response rates from tenants had dropped significantly under that system. Furthermore, tenants would only complete the survey if they had received excellent service or very bad service which did not provide Mears with accurate data. The Partnering Manager stated that Mears would be returning to random telephone surveys which provided a better sample.
- 16.8 The Chair asked why so few cases of anti-social behaviour were closed with undertaking legal action.
- 16.9 The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement stated that it would be useful to make a distinction between legal action and other actions undertaken to resolve the problem. Legal action could be costly and did not always result with the best option in the circumstances. Furthermore, the Anti-Social Behaviour Team also undertook prosecutions.
- 16.10 The Chair stated that he hoped the reports of anti-social behaviour by type could include those drug related if they didn't already.
- 16.11 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

17 SPRINKLERS HIGH RISE BLOCKS

- 17.1 The Panel considered a report that provided information on pilots for the retro fitting of sprinkler systems in high rise buildings. The pilots had been commissioned in response to a Rule 43 letters from the coroner's office and conducted with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.
- 17.2 Chris Row asked if the new sprinklers would be sufficiently vandalism proof.
- 17.3 The Health & Safety Manager confirmed that the new sprinklers were very resistant to tampering and any such action would heavy duty industrial tools.
- 17.4 Chris Row asked if problems were anticipated with access to flats to carry out the work required.

- 17.5 The Health & Safety Manager clarified that it was hoped that the pilot to be carried out at Somerset Point would provide a positive message to other blocks of its benefit.
- 17.6 Alan Hale noted his concern that leaseholders would be met with another significant cost for improvements.
- 17.7 The Health & Safety Manager clarified that leaseholders were not statutorily obliged to pay for the new system but the significant benefits in doing so would be expressed clearly.
- 17.8 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

18 ITEMS FROM TENANT ONLY MEETING

- 18.1 (Item 1- reporting after hours repairs) Ann Ewings stated that the out of hours service was very poor, that she had not received a job number for a recent issue she had raised and that residents were not aware of changes to the service.
- 18.2 The Partnering Manager, Mears clarified that checked this specific voice recording of the telephone call and it was clear that a job number had been provided. Furthermore, there had been no changes to the out of hours service and the base in Welwyn used exactly the same system as operatives based in Brighton.
- 18.3 (item 2- estate inspections- deterioration in service) Carl Boardman stated that he disagreed entirely with the description in the response detailing the estate inspection service as "well organised. Carl stated that communication in this area was extremely poor. He personally had not received any information on a re-inspection held in July and the service was currently a huge inconvenience to representatives who had to take on duties above and beyond of what could be reasonably expected.
- 18.4 The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement stated that she would try to organise a meeting between Carl and the Neighbourhoods Team Manager to resolve this issue.
- 18.5 **RESOLVED-** That the responses provided to the issues raised from the Tenant Only meeting be noted

19 COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY (FOR INFORMATION)

- 19.1 **RESOLVED-** That the Panel notes the information provided regarding CIC's.

20 CITY WIDE REPORTS

- 20.1 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes and reports of the various Citywide groups be noted.

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 21.1 Charles Penrose relayed that Sheltered Housing Action Group had decided at its most recent AGM to rename itself 'Seniors Housing Action Group'.
- 21.2 Carl Boardman stated that High Rise Action Group received and he believed it would be useful for that document to be circulated at Area Panels too.

The meeting concluded at 4.35pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of