

# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 27 JULY 2016

THE BARNARD CENTRE, ST JOHNS MOUNT FLATS, MOUNT PLEASANT, BRIGHTON,  
BN2 0JP

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors; Gibson (Chair), Deane

**Representatives:** Ann Ewings, Martin Cunningham, Barry Hughes, Jason Williams, John McPhillips, Tomm Nyhuus, Carl Boardman, Owen Spence, Jane Thorp, David Stratford, Linda Shaw, George Coates, Emel Abdelmessih.

**Officers:** Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services), Cliona May (Democratic Services Officer).

**Guests:** Theresa Youngman (Programme Manager), Jeff Tourmentin (Mears).

#### 1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Alan Davis.

#### 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 February 2016 be approved and signed as the correct record.

#### 3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 The Chair noted that the Housing & Planning Act 2016 could potentially have a significant impact on the future for the Council and he had concerns for the sale of high value properties.

3.2 The Head of Tenancy Services explained that the sale of high value homes would likely be implemented by October 2016 and the "pay to stay scheme" by April 2017. She added that there were working groups within the Housing department that would share information with the Housing Area Panels when it became available.

#### 4 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

4.1 The following points and actions were raised by residents and officers:

4.2 Item 1 – Roof repair at Highden, Westmount and Crownhill:

- It was confirmed that Mears had a roofing team that managed and maintain the roofs in the city.

- Theresa Youngman, Mears, confirmed roofs with water leaks or water ingress to the property would be given important status as it could be a slip hazard.

#### 4.3 Item 2 – Communication with leaseholders:

- Residents should be consulted on upcoming major works in further in advance. It was explained that, due to policy, consultation could only happen once jobs had been confirmed. It was noted that Mears had recognised that communication with residents needed to be improved and welcomed ideas from the panel on how to action this.
- It would be useful to have a plan of upcoming maintenance work published on the website.

#### 4.4 Item 2 – Scaffolding:

- An agreement had been made where the scaffolding companies, used by Mears, would be charged if the scaffolding was not taken down within two weeks of the job being completed. Residents were encouraged to report scaffolding that had been left up for a lengthy time.
- Scaffolding was often the safest way of working on a multi-storey property; however, other options could be cherry pickers, mast climbers and abseiling.
- Letters would be sent to residents before scaffolding is erected and notices would be on display in communal areas, unless the repairs are at emergency status.

#### 4.5 Item 5 – Estate inspections

- The dates for all upcoming estate inspections were available on the website; however, improvements were looking to be made with the communication before an inspection.
- Residents were encouraged to report repairs needed in communal areas directly to Mears helpdesk.
- “I’ve Been Reported” stickers would be sent to all relevant parties to prevent repairs being reported multiple times.

#### 4.6 Item 6a-6f – EDB

- The EDB review was ongoing and Officers were gathering comments from residents regarding what areas should be covered EDB.
- An EDB bid could be placed for the redecoration of the communal areas; however, a redecoration program was being introduced and this would ensure communal areas would be redecorated approximately every ten years.
- The Resident Involvement Officers can work with tenants to help them make a bid.
- EDB queries should be emailed to Mears or tenants could call the EDB telephone line. It was added that they did not have the capacity to receive and respond to letters.

## **5 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

- 5.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement introduced the report and explained that it was a brief report due to the despatch times of the agenda. It was agreed that the residents would be informed when the full report was available on the website and

hardcopies could be sent to residents who did not have internet access. The following points were highlighted:

- Rent arrears had reduced and it was believed this was due to the welfare reform work that had been completed.
- The phone line issues with the Customer Services & Complaints team had been resolved and the figures had therefore been improved since the last performance report.
- The letting time for properties had been improved; however, there had been problems with senior housing lets. It was explained that current work was being completed and this had brought down the average turnaround time for senior housing.
- A high number of repairs had been completed and there had been an improvement with appointments being kept with Mears and tenants.
- There had been two cases of antisocial behaviour where legal action had been sought.
- Work was being done to prevent tenancy fraud and two properties had been re-let in the last quarter. Residents were encouraged to report suspected fraudulent cases and these would be investigated. The Head of Tenancy Services added that 37 properties had been returned to the Council in the last year.

5.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement clarified:

- Data collected from the estate inspections could be included in the next Quarter Performance report.
- The Officers agreed to look into including the satisfaction of the EDB Budget in a future Quarter Performance report; however, noted that it would be difficult to gather the data.

5.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

## 6 DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT

6.1 The Resident Involvement Manager introduced the report and stated the following:

- The Code of Conduct was developed as part of the Everyone Counts report that was agreed by the Housing Committee in December 2012.
- The Code of Conduct had not been rewritten; however, a shorter set of ground rules for meetings had been developed, which was similar, to make them more user friendly.
- The residents should decide whether a section in the constitution should be added to include the protocol for when a resident behaves poorly at a number of meetings.
- Residents had added a section called “Length of Withdrawal from Resident Involvement” after a previous breach.

6.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

## 7 CITY WIDE REPORTS

7.1 The Resident Involvement Manager noted and apologised that the Leaseholder Action Group (LAG) minutes in the agenda were from January 2015 rather than January 2016.

7.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the reports.

**8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 The following points and actions were raised by residents:

- The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement agreed to look into the ongoing parking problems at Mayflower Square and feedback to Owen Spence. It was added that if residents did not receive a response from Officers when reporting problems, residents could contact her directly.
- There had been ongoing problems with visitor car parking spaces on estates and it was felt that these complaints should be going to the Housing department, rather than the Parking department. The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement explained that it was being proposed that parking on Council land would be regulated the same as highways and private estates. This would result in visitor car parking spaces being no longer available.
- Gutter maintenance should have a separate contract from Mears and should be discussed and monitored by the Housing & New Homes Committee. Head of Tenancy Services agreed to feedback.
- There was an ongoing problem with CityClean not collecting the rubbish off of the estates. It was encouraged that residents should report this.

The meeting concluded at 3.55pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of