

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 5 JUNE 2019

HAMPSHIRE LODGE, HAMPSHIRE COURT, BRIGHTON, BN2 1LN

MINUTES

Please note that this meeting commenced at 3.40pm and that residents and officers were at the knowledge of two different start times, 2.00pm and 7.00pm respectively. The Chair authorised the meeting to commence once a reasonable number of officers were able to arrive.

Present: Councillors Hugh-Jones (Chair) and Gibson

Voting Representatives: Theresa Mackey (Highcroft Lodge), David Spafford (Ardingly Court), Jason Williams (Hereford Court – Chair), John Dewbury (Hamshire Court – Deputy Chair), Tomm Nyhuus (Somerset Point), Barry Hughes (Sylvian Hall), Tony McCoy (Sloane Court), Jane Thorp (Hanover RA), and Eileen Stewart (Somerset Point)

1 RATIFICATION OF CHAIR

1.1 Councillor Hugh-Jones was appointed as Chair with one nomination.

2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

3 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Childs and Karl Boardman.

4 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“Anti-social behaviour is one of the most important issue for tenants of social housing. It damages lives and communities and its impact can be profound and far reaching. Our Tenancy Team work in close partnership with the Police and Community Safety Team to deal with anti-social behaviour within the city.

The team works to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in our housing stock and works with new legislation that has radically altered the powers the council has to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Please let your Community Engagement Officer know if you would be interested in attending one of the Enforcement workshops being arranged by the team which share information on how they work and deal with this type of behaviour.

Estate Development Budget online form

You will now be able to apply for Estates Development budget online. This will make the process much easier and encourage more tenant and leaseholder groups to apply. The online version still contains the information that was required on the paper form, but we will now be able to see all the details of each bid in one place. This will also improve the decision making and the delivery of EDB projects.

Residents can still request help from the Community Engagement Team if they do not have IT access or find it difficult to use. The CE team can do an information or training sessions on the online form and process when requested. All feedback will be used to continue to improve the process over the next year”

- 4.2 The Chair stated that if any residents had difficulties in completing the online survey they should seek help from the Housing Customer Services Team.

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 5.1 **RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

6 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

6.1 1) Knightguard contract

- In response to residents expressing dismay over the expense of the decision to replace and not to repair, Glyn Huelin stated there had been feedback surrounding this issue and proposed take this through other groups to explore other options before discussing the whole strategy at the Housing and New Home Committee.
- In response to residents stating that the situation on the block had been resolved, Glyn Huelin stated that the block in question had significant problems with anti-social behaviour and that the accepted proposal to fit a high-spec door had reduced problems. The one size fits all approach has progressed to judgement on a case by case engagement by tenants and leaseholders.

6.2 2) Support during installation of new kitchens

- Residents stated that all options available should be made clearer before a decision and that the current system worked on the principle that only style of kitchen was suitable to all flats when personal safety needs should be considered when dealing with vulnerable people.
- Glyn Huelin stated that the design process was important and that there was more that could be done in those terms however that in some situations there were certain standards and legislation that had to be adhered to.
- in response to residents raising concern over the litter involvement residents had in the past, Glyn Huelin stated that future contracts will be designed so adaptations and supported moves involved tenant consultation.

6.3 3) Rubbish bins at Hampshire Court

- Residents expressed frustration over the Council having blamed resident associations problem and that CityClean needed to communicate with all residents to settle remaining issues.
- Residents explained how they had met Melissa Francis, Head of Operations – CityClean, and discussed how the bin store had been moved away from the entrance and without reason, good notice or resident consultation and that accidents had occurred due to malpractice where lighter bins would have been more suitable.
- In response to residents asking for new lighter bins, Ododo Dafe stated that she was not clear on what opportunities CityClean had to purchase new bins because where there were implications of space, weight, procurement and health and safety.
- Councillor Gibson stated that the practice changed to a system that did not suit residents and that problems arose from CityClean cutting corners. He proposed that Rachel Chasseaud, Assistant Director - City Environmental Management, should be invited to the next meeting.

6.4 4) Estate Development Budget (EDB) bids for refuse/recycling bins

- Residents asked why council tenants as council tax payers had to pay for additional bins when other council tax payers did not, why when asking CityClean for peddle bins for the elderly they had deemed the current bins adequate and whether these issues were funding problems or just deemed as a null request.
- The Chair stated that Rachael Chasseaud could answer questions on Rubbish bins at Hampshire Court and the EDB in person.
- Residents stated that bins were an environmental issue and should be encompassed within the new environmental budget.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SURVEY

- 7.1 Janet Dowdell, Tenancy Services Operations Manager, introduced the update on the new environmental improvement survey to collate resident ideas for neighbourhood improvements for HRA land and presented a heatmap to showcase the current number of responses across the City. Once the data was collected the Field Officer Manager would present the results to community meetings and discuss the proposals with residents, councillors and Housing staff to decide on new future projects.
- 7.2 Residents stated that a substantial number of tenants would have difficulty accessing the survey online, where many lacked computers or Wi-Fi, and that many residents did not know this survey existed. Residents stated that there should be more than 90 posters in total as that doesn't cover the number of blocks across the City and that residents who were partially sighted would not look to community noticeboards and visits should be arranged to notify those people of the survey.
- 7.3 Janet Dowdell responded that all the Housing staff had been briefed on the survey and said that visits to tenants could be arranged and there would be an article in Homing In. An alternative to completing the survey online, residents who had difficulties could either visit or ring the help desk or customer services for a member of staff to assist or complete the survey on their behalf.

- 7.4 In response to the Chair commenting that the survey was already half-way to the response deadline, Janet Dowdell stated that the survey was still live for 2-3 weeks.
- 7.5 In response to leaseholders asking whether Housing could circulate email links of the survey via the leaseholder database, Ododo Dafe stated that this would be difficult due to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDRP) and that they could only circulate information to people who request information and not for promotional purposes.
- 7.6 Leaseholders stated that the LAG could work to create a leaseholder circulation list, to which other leaseholders complained that the database was for housing management and the survey linked to how leaseholder money was spent.
- 7.7 Glyn Huelin proposed that there was an opportunity to refresh the contacts and resolve the GDPR issues for the leaseholder survey at the LAG.
- 7.8 In response to the Chair asking whether the consultation period could be extended, Janet Dowdell stated that this could be possible.
- 7.9 Councillor Gibson raised concern over vulnerable residents being excluded from the survey by not providing paper copies which should at least be an option, that the return was lower than if more options were provided, and that community engagement would be removed between residents.
- 7.10 Ododo Dafe explained that Housing would provide paper copies if they had more resources, as providing hard copies was costly, however this initiative did promote environmentally friendly practice. She explained that Housing were encouraging residents to access the internet through efforts such as Wi-Fi provision in council blocks and their intention was not to exclude.
- 7.11 Residents suggested that Housing could email the block's scheme managers and they could communicate with tenants and that local libraries could be utilised which would combat the problems of access to the internet and lack of face-to-face engagement,
- 7.12 Ododo Dafe agreed there was more they could do to maximise participation such as tweeting and making use of senior housing managers for a wider audience, Janet Dowdell added that the project group were meeting half way through the survey to reflect and discuss options to improve the impact of the survey and the item would return to a future Panel.
- 7.13 The Chair stated that beyond the initial two-year trial there would be further opportunities for engagement.
- 7.14 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agree to note the update.

8 ANNUAL REPORT 2019

- 8.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the draft Annual Report 2019 and stated that the format was presented similarly to previous yearly editions which provided information about the Council as a social landlord and there would be a follow up in the next issue of Homing in.

- 8.2 Residents commended that the report was informative and accessible.
- 8.3 In response to residents asking if there were any facilities for blind or partially sighted people to access Homing in, Ododo Dafe stated that they had a register off all residents who required a specialised format that included brail, audio or large print editions.
- 8.4 In response to residents asking how many Ty-foam replacements there would be for low rise blocks in reference to page 43 of the agenda, Glyn Huelin stated that Ty-foam was generally for street properties and not blocks.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agree to note the report.

9 NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

- 9.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the new service that aimed to pool knowledge from the Community Engagement Team and the Resident Involvement Team to work with residents across all Housing tenures to pool specialist knowledge. The team was set to be more robust and to join up services for communities to access services with an easier point of contact and assured the initiative did not reduce the number of officers on the ground.
- 9.2 Residents stated that the RAT application was confusing and that the CIT should be used instead. (I do not know what this is abbreviated from, could you suggest what this meant?)
- 9.3 Councillor Gibson said that it made sense for these services to be joined up and that this was a step forward to a wider scope and opportunity for teams to respond more directly to residents' feedback and concerns on estates.
- 9.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agree to note the update,

10 HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 10.1 Councillor Gibson presented a brief introduction on resident interests in the future Housing Committee reports which included an item on the options and modelling for emergency homeless accommodation and Youth Service provision on estates. The youth service provision had been funded by the HRA for three years, even though it was not a landlord service because it was deemed as a desirable service and had proved effective for estates.
- 10.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agree to note the update.

11 PROGRAMME FOR FUTURE HOUSING REPAIRS, PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL WORKS

- 11.1 Glyn Huelin, Head of Housing Repairs & Improvement, stated that Sharon Davies, Housing Business Programme Manager, had worked on this programme and had started a resident engagement task and finish group. Residents had attended the market engagement day and staff engagement and transition events had taken place.

There were new members of the Housing team who would be introduced at future Panels and the Citywide Conference.

11.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agree to note the update.

12 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

12.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the report that provided statistics and information on the Council acting as a social landlord. There were nine indicators on the front summary infographic sheet and this report presented Q4 performance and the whole year performance against previous years which was presented in a format that could be compared to other local authority housing stock.

12.2 In response to the Chair referring to 3.7 on page 67 of the agenda and asking why two properties in Preston Park remained empty dwellings for such a long period due to major works, Ododo Dafe stated that this situation had arisen due to them being sensitive adjoining flats and complex corresponding moves.

12.3 In response to residents referring to item 3.1 on page 65 of the agenda that indicated the average time to re-let properties had decreased to red for both for Q4 and since the previous year and asked whether this was due to the Mears contract ending, Ododo Dafe stated the main contributing factor was not the time to complete repairs but was often because the resident needed to give four weeks' notice and that the Council could inspect the property to decide necessary works only after the tenant had left. Problems also arose due to some senior housing accommodation taking time to re-let due to their small size and staffing issues in particular Housing teams.

12.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agree to note the report.

13 CITY WIDE REPORTS

13.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agree to note the reports.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 In response to residents stating they had not yet received a response from Justine Harris, Head of Tenancy Services, regarding a petition of changing locks for residents who had experienced arson attacks, Glyn Hulin stated that he would investigate case.

15 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

15.1 The date of the next meeting would be the 11 September 2019.
The meeting concluded at 4.20pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of