

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

2.00pm 20 SEPTEMBER 2016

SANDERS HOUSE INGRAM CRESCENT WEST HOVE, EAST SUSSEX, BN3 5NW

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Moonan (Chair), Barnett and Gilbey.

Representatives: Vic Dodd, Joe Macrae, Muriel Briault, Tracy Angus, Brenda Magee and Ann Tizzard.

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Pat Liddell (Resident Involvement Officer), Glyn Huelin (Business & Performance Manager), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services), Theresa Youngman (Contract Compliance Manager), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement) and Cliona May (Democratic Services Officer).

Guests: Keith Dadswell (Mears).

9 APOLOGIES

9.1 Apologies were received from Pat Weller, Alison Gray and Councillors Peltzer Dunn, Janio, Lewry, Robins and O'Quinn.

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

10.1 Councillor Gilbey noted that she had sent her apologies and this was not recorded in the minutes.

10.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 July 2016 be approved and signed as the correct record.

11 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

11.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“Chairs and Secretaries were recently sent an advance copy of an article for Homing In on the new design of Housing’s landlord services.

The structure, which will come into effect in October, is based on residents’ feedback that they prefer having fewer teams involved in matters they report to Housing.

Housing Officers, arranged in four area teams, will replace Neighbourhood Officers, Neighbourhood Team Leaders and the Tenancy Enforcement Team.

Tenants will see very little change in terms of accessing services as the Housing Customer Service Team and the Repairs Helpdesk will remain as before.

If you have any queries about this, now or when your members receive Homing In, please contact the Resident Involvement team.”

12 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

12.1 Item 2 - Incomplete EDB work:

- If there were not any records of a bid being submitted, then it could be resubmitted.
- The proposed playground area at Wickhurst Rise had been delayed but there would be an organised site visit and plans would be redrawn.

12.2 Item 4 - Boiler replacement at Woods House: A resident noted that there were not any problems with the boilers that were being replaced. The Mears representative agreed to investigate this and feedback.

12.3 Item 5 - Scaffolding and home contents insurance:

- Leaseholders could choose which insurance company they used; however the Council recommended an insurance that covered the property when scaffolding was installed and would not occur an additional charge.
- The recommended insurance was on the Brighton & Hove City Council website and there would be an article in the next Homing In explaining in more detail.

12.4 Item 6 - Philip Court Entry phone:

- Complaints had been received by residents that visitors could not be granted access via the intercom.
- Multi-steel doors and the new door system were to be installed shortly.
- The control panel for the door at Downland Court had broken and the residents were told it was an urgent job; however, it had not been fixed and the door was being propped open. The Officers agreed to investigate and feedback.

13 REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

13.1 Glyn Huelin, Business & Performance Manager, introduced the report and highlighted:

- Regular monitoring reports would be presented at the Housing & New Homes Committee and Area Housing Panels to ensure contractors were operating effectively.
- Mears had reduced hiring subcontractors by half due to the feedback that had been received by residents and from the monitoring reports that had been presented at Committee. It was added that glazing, large scale draining and scaffolding jobs would continue to be delivered by subcontractors.
- Mears had employed an additional 14 local employees.
- A new performance indicator system had been introduced to gather feedback on subcontractors used and these would be reviewed. If the subcontractors did not deliver to the standards that Mears and the Council had set, they would no longer be able to operate for Mears.

- Weekly meetings would be held with Mears to review ongoing work and repairs. There would be ongoing reviews of major works and these would continue to feedback to the Area Housing Panels.

13.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Business & Performance Manager clarified:

- The response that had been received regarding the out of hours service was unsatisfactory; however, the Council were going to meet with the Mears call centre staff and were expecting an improvement.
- Calls made to the out of hours service were recorded and listened back to.
- Mears would continue to use subcontractors for specialist jobs and where it proved to be better value for money; however, subcontractors would continue to be monitored.

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

14 SOMERSET POINT SPRINKLER PROJECT

14.1 Theresa Youngman, Mears representative, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The Council worked closely with East Sussex Fire Service and were hoping to launch a scheme, where the fire authority would match the invested money from the Council towards a new sprinkler system in high risk properties.
- The buildings were fire proof and there were fire detection systems in place; however, sprinklers would be an extra measure.
- The heat from a potential fire would have to reach a certain temperature to activate the sprinklers.
- The feedback received from residents was positive.

14.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Housing Strategy Property & Investment clarified:

- Buildings with six storeys or above were technically high rise blocks.
- East Sussex Fire Authority had create a matrix system that would confirm which blocks were more “high risk” than others. The matrix would be updated annually.
- New builds would automatically be fitted with a sprinkler system.

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

15 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS UPDATE

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

16 CITY WIDE REPORTS

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

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 The following points were raised by residents and Officers:

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AREA**

- Councillor Barnett requested that Mears looked at the skip in Buckley Close as it was a danger to children.
- There would be a small group of staff working with different areas of housing; therefore, there would be one contact for all housing queries in the area. The local team staff would contact the local Councillors to ensure they had the right contact.
- There would not be estate inspections for a while; however, residents would be received notification of this.
- Dates for the estate inspections would be confirmed after the restructure. Councillor Barnett requested that residents and Councillors received notification of the inspections the day before.

The meeting concluded at 3.15pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of