

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA**

**7.00pm 24 NOVEMBER 2016**

**LABURNUM GROVE, GROUND FLOOR LOUNGE, BURSTEAD CLOSE, BRIGHTON,  
BN17HX**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor Tracey Hill (chair) and Councillor Daniel Yates

**Representatives:** Chris Baker, Terence Hill, David Eve, Mary Marchant, Barbara Castleton, John Marchant, Carol Hayes, Peter Harvey, Peter Hartley, Paul Wright, Ray Goble, Des Jones, Michael Raywood.

**Officers:** Simon Pickles, Ododo Dafe, Hannah Barker, Rachel Chasseaud

**Guests:** Jeff Tourmentin (Mears)

**18 APOLOGIES**

18.1 Apologies were received from Ray Metcalf, John Dean, Peter O'Connell, Jane Hunter and Councillor Mo Marsh.

**19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**20 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS**

**21 HOUSING FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

21.1 The officer presented the Fire Safety Policy report and requested any feedback

21.2 Residents had the following feedback, enquiries and concerns:

- Who decides what is a fire risk and what would be the process to decide a fire risk
- Is it possible to have a fire officer to give a talk at specific tenant meeting in the area
- Requested clarity on issue regarding storage of scooters

21.3 Officers gave the following responses:

- Fire safety policy covers all of housing, corporate team and includes many officers. Housing also have a health and safety manager. The current commission through Mears states the current fire risk assessments taking place
- Would arrange to do individual risk assessment with person considered as fire safety risk, depending on situation could receive additional support

- There is no one person in charge however there is a program of work with checks and balances that must be adhered to
- Fire officers are happy to talk to residents
- People have not been permitted to store scooters in common areas since 2011, it is the responsibility of the person who has purchased a scooter to ensure its security

**22 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME**

22.1 (Item 1 – Car Park lighting at Nettleton and Dudeney)

22.2 Residents expressed the following concerns:

- Stated concern regarding the frequently similar responses given in the blue pages
- Possible imposition of time limits for different stages

22.3 Officers responded to resident's concerns stating the following:

- Officers recognised the concerns over responses given via blue pages and agreed to look at the issue presented
- Stated that stage 2 takes longer because someone has been dissatisfied with the response they have received at Stage 1

22.4 (Item 2 – community Payback)

22.5 Residents stated the following concerns and enquiries:

- The community payback team a department of justice
- Stated that residents feel like they have been lied to many times and still feel payment is owed

22.6 Officers responded with the following:

- Community payback is a rehabilitation group of young people who have to schedule their work accordingly, if work requires a higher skill then certain considerations will be taken in to account
- Officers will meet with the company to go through the various issues

22.7 (Three star items of West Area Panel – Item 1 – Resident Involvement Review)

22.8 Residents expressed the following concerns and had the following enquiries:

- Concerns regarding the withdrawal of support of the Lewes Road Consortium, was this a recognised association and why was it removed?

22.9 Officers responded to resident's enquiries and concerns by way of the following:

- In terms of Residents Consultative Groups, that is all part of the review, during this review it was discovered that Lewes Road Consortium was an anomaly as it was not originally constituted like Area Panels.

- 22.10 (Three star items – Item 2 – Common areas and private gardens)
- 22.11 Satisfied
- 22.12 (Three star items – Item 3 –Restructuring of Housing Officer Roles)
- 22.13 Residents enquired if there has been a reduction in posts
- 22.14 Officers stated that a new Area Housing Manager has been appointed and that there has been a mild reduction of posts due to cuts and savings.
- 22.15 (Three star items of Central Area Panel – Item 1 – Resident Involvement Review)
- 22.16 **RESOLVED** – That the responses provided to the issues raised from the Tenant Only meetings be noted.

### **23 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 - 2016/17**

- 23.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income and Involvement, presented the report and highlighted:
- The indicators showed that 34 areas were on target, six targets were almost met and five were below target.
  - The repairs contract was under target due to the average time to repair and the answering calls time. This was mainly due to the loss of subcontracting work, the high demand of work, and the change of staff on the helpdesk.
- 23.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement clarified:
- A resident raised concerns regarding major projects running one year behind schedule and noted that more detail should be included in the report explaining this. The Officer explained that the Council were working to resolve the issues with certain areas, for example, scaffolding and were monitoring the performance with Mears on a weekly basis.
  - Mears was a competitive business and retaining staff was challenging. There was a recruitment day for Mears in December.
- 23.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

### **24 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET**

- 23.1 The Officer introduced the report to residents noting revenue and expenditure throughout 2016/2017.
- 23.2 Residents enquired what the attitude towards the cap of £31,000
- 23.3 Councillor Daniel Yates stated that the cap is not the decision of the Council.
- 23.4 The Officer outlined the slide regarding the Capital Investment and the proposed areas that would have their budgets either reduced or increased to make savings. The seven voting co-optees present undertook an electronic vote in response to “Do you think we have got the balance right?” The results were as follows:

63.6% voted "yes".  
27.3% voted "no".  
9.1% voted "not sure".

## 25 TENANCY FRAUD AMNESTY BRIEFING

25.1 Rachel Chasseaud, Head of Tenancy Services, introduced the Tenancy Fraud Amnesty Briefing and highlighted the following:

- An amnesty was beginning at the beginning of December to potentially gain properties back that may have been sub-let.
- The Housing team were working alongside the tenancy and fraud team.
- The keys to the properties could be returned to the Council anonymously and the resident would not be prosecuted. It was a cost effective way to regain properties.
- Similar amnesties had been successful in other authorities.
- The residents were encouraged to report and fraud suspicions they may have.
- There would be a feedback report presented at the Area Housing Panels in March.
- The amnesty will last 2 months.

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

## 26 STAR (SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS) SURVEY 2016

26.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The postal survey was sent to a randomly selected sample of 3000 tenants and had received a higher response rate from the previous year.
- There were two areas where the satisfaction rate had been reduced, these being: the overall quality of homes; and neighbourhoods as a place to live.
- There will be a short article in the next edition of Homing In and a further, more detailed article in the spring edition outlining the findings.

26.2 Residents state enquired of the number of complaints there have and if the numbers provided include numbers from both stages 1 and 2.

26.3 Officers stated that there have been a total of 32 Stage 1 complaints this quarter, 24 of which have been responded to within the requisite timeframe. She noted that as this is the first time such details have been requested, no digestible information was yet available.

26.4 **RESOLVED** – The panel agreed to note the report.

## 27 ESTATES DEVELOPMENT BUDGET REVIEW

27.1 Hannah Barker Resident Involvement Officer presented the report to the panel, she stated that the budget was going to be reduced; however, the reserves in place would be added to the total and the amount would remain the same as the previous year.

- The feedback that had been received through the EDB budget consultations and through the “blue pages” showed that residents wished for the process to be made fairer.
- A survey had been sent to the Chairs, Secretary and Treasurers of the Tenant Only Meetings.
- The proposals for the EDB budget were:
  - 1) To limit the number of main bids to four per association.
  - 2) To limit the value of a main bid up to £15,000.
  - 3) To limit the number of quick bids to five per year.
  - 4) Residents should not use the EDB budgets for multiple quick bids for a work that should be a main bid.

27.2 6 voted to approve the recommendations given, 7 voted against.

27.3 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

**28 CITY WIDE REPORTS**

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

**29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

29.1 **RESOLVED** – that the City Wide Reports be noted.

The meeting concluded at 21:15.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

