

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA**

**7.00pm 7 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**THE HOUSING CENTRE, EASTERGATE ROAD, BRIGHTON, BN2 4QL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Hill (Chair), Yates, Meadows

**Representatives:** Walter Sargison (Broadfields), John Dean (ECMTRA), Paul Wright (Coldean Tenants and Leaseholders), Jenny Simmonds (Coldean), Heather Hayes (Coldean Tenants and Leaseholders), Terrence Hill (Bates TRA), John Marchant (ECMTRA), Ray Metcalf (ECMTRA), Barbara Castleton (NMTRA), Mary Marchant (NMTA), Pete Weston (Deputy Chair East Moulsecoomb TRA)

**Non-Voting Delegates:**

**Officers:** Emma Gilbert (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), Hilary Edgar (Housing Service Operations Manager), Scott Lunn (General Building Manager), Jeff Tourmentin (MEARS), Keeley McDonald (Resident Involvement Officer), Gregory Weaver (Democratic Services Assistant)

**Guests:** Angela Martin, Eddie Cope, Leslie Cope, Glynis Shipley, Theresa Biggs, Hayley Smith,

**1 APOLOGIES**

1.1 Apologies were received from Jane Hunter, Sarah Roundtree, Peter O'Connor and David Metcalf.

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

2.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 March 2017 be approved and signed as the correct record.

2.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous Special Area Panel meeting held on 25 May 2017 be approved and signed as the correct record.

**3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

3.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

*“The Housing team have requested that attendees complete a survey about their experience of today’s Area Housing Panel and send it back in the prepaid envelope provided.*”

*There is an additional report on the agenda about a proposed Home Purchase Policy. Copies will be handed out. Comments on the report should be sent to Di Hughes whose details are at the end of the report.”*

## **A HOUSING PURCHASE POLICY**

- 3a.1 Hillary Edgar presented the report highlighting the issues addressed by the report regarding the right to buy, BHCC properties put on the market, purchasing properties on the market, other opportunities and the criteria and budget including the next steps to be taken. She welcomed feedback from the panel.
- 3a.2 Councillor Anne Meadows stated that at a recent tenant rep meeting an enquiry was made regarding why BHCC can't buy back a home. She clarified that this is a policy that sets out the ground rules to buying back homes. She further noted that had the policy been in place prior, BHCC would have been able to purchase between 15 to 17 properties of the last 2 years.
- 3a.3 Councillor Daniel Yates praised the scope of being able to buy properties up to the value of £250,000. He noted that plots of land with planning permission for housing development in Bevendean were a good idea.
- 3a.4 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

## **4 PRESENTATION BY RESIDENT INSPECTORS**

- 4.1 Keeley McDonald, Resident Inspector, gave a presentation and showed a video that outlined the role of the resident inspectors. The following points were highlighted:
- The Resident Inspectors would compare the findings in the flat to a list provided by Mears detailing the work that had been completed.
  - Mr Cope showed an example questionnaire that would be completed by the Resident Inspectors and this would then be sent to Mears.
- 4.2 In response to queries raised by the Panel Mr Cope highlighted the following:
- Serious matters, such as a water leak, would be classified as an urgent job and this would be fixed before tenants moved in to the property. Other recorded works would be reported to Mears and these would not be prioritised.
- 4.3 Councillor Meadows stated that BHCC does not make any money from void properties.
- 4.4 Cllr Yates suggested possibility of photos being taken and uploaded as proof of work having been completed.
- 4.5 Mears Officers clarified that in the case of void properties a standard within the framework designated as “lettable” constitutes the minimum order of work for tenants required, so as to able to let the new tenant move in straight away as it is important to house people at that point, they noted that there were no situations where works are carried out on a whole property as it is too time consuming.

4.6 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

## 5 ITEMS FROM RESIDENT ONLY MEETINGS

5.1 (Item 3 – Housing Customer Service Phone Lines)

5.2 Residents enquired the price for BHCC to have phone lines installed in the area, the further enquired in the possibility of BHCC providing a Freephone system.

5.3 Officers responded by stating all calls will be answered and noted that BHCC are moving away from a Freephone system to be replaced with a system of standard rates and good service, they further clarified that the switchboard is priced at standard rate.

5.4 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

5.5 (Item 4 – Estate Development Budget)

5.6 A resident state that in regards to the quote at the bottom, if it is overpriced, Mears will cover cost.

5.7 (Item 10 – Soakaways)

5.8 Residents stated the following enquiries and concerns:

- A specific issue of soakaway being clogged on a road
- West Tenant's only meeting stated the highway cleaning was not up to standard and was subsequently referred to Highways and Motorways. Why did West area's concerns get on the paper?

5.9 Officers responded to resident's concerns with the following:

- referred resident to Southern Water who are ultimately responsible for that specific issue
- Stated that there was a chairs meeting in October on uniformity and how blue pages are used.

5.10 Chair ended discussion stating the objective was to focus on issues that are both within the remit of the meeting's purpose and that needed to be solved as soon as possible.

5.11 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

## 6 ELECTIONS TO SIGS

6.1 Votes were taken to appoint 2 representatives and 2 deputies to 5 SIGs.

6.2 Home group:

- Terence Hill – Unanimous.

6.3 Tenancy and Neighbourhood

- Pete Western (reps) Unanimous
- John Marchant (reps) Unanimous
- No deputies

6.4 Business and Value for money SIG

- No vote.

6.5 Involvement and Empowerment SIG

- Pete Weston (rep) Unanimous
- Des Jones (rep) Unanimous
- Terrence Hill (deputy) Unanimous
- No further nominees

6.6 Tenant Disability Network SIG

- Pete Weston (Rep) Unanimous

**7 ELECTION OF RESIDENT VICE CHAIR**7.1 Election of Resident vice chair

- Pete Weston 4 -1 against
- Terrence Hill 1 -1 against.

7.2 Vice Chair for North Area Panel

- Pete Weston = Vice Chair.

**8 TENANCY AGREEMENT REPORT**

8.1 Officer gave presentation highlighting work carried out by BHCC over summer in regards to changes to the Tenancy Agreement last updated in 2009. She stated various changes such as updated legislation were addressed along with actions taken by BHCC, questionnaires had also been sent out. She furthered that the new layout includes new sections along with updating of data protection and information sharing statement to be kept in line with BHCC privacy Policy.

8.2 Residents stated the following enquiries and concerns:

- Enquired as to the vagueness of passage describing what constitutes a weapon
- Asked for clarity on regarding barbecues or gas containers needed for fuelling objects

8.3 Officers responded to resident's statement and concerns with the following:

- Stated that the clause on weapons was deliberately left vague so as to encompass the different situations where an object could be considered a weapon

- Recommended people contact Housing Customer Service for Fire Services to attend and provide resident meetings.
- Confirmed this was all to come in to effect in Jan 2018.

8.4 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

## **9 STAR ACTIONS REPORT**

9.1 Hillary Edgar presented the STAR actions report regarding reassurances for residents. She stated that there were noted drops in satisfaction levels regarding the quality of homes and neighbourhoods as a place to live.

9.2 Residents enquired what the frequency of the capital maintenance program report is

9.3 Officers responded by stating that the national report is every 2 years, she furthered that the reason for this update is as a follow up on the progress made since the last report.

9.4 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

## **10 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

10.1 Emma Gilbert presented the Quarter 1 Performance Report outlining various findings explained in the report. She requested ideas regarding what future targets could be. She further stated that other area panels had noted that targets could be taken to EDB panel and that the panel has a discussion to make suggestions on what the targets should be.

10.2 A residents agreed that a target factor should be a consideration on EDB panel.

10.3 Officers stated that there were no arrears relating to current and former tenants.

10.4 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

## **11 FEEDBACK ON ANY SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS**

11.1 Residents made the following enquiry and notice:

- Notified the panel of a new training program for the involvement and empowerment group called learn, create and innovate.
- Suggested that different items on the agenda have specific allotted times.

11.2 Officers stated that this new learning program is in this month's Homing In.

11.3 The Chair stated she was willing to test allotted times for agenda points.

## **12 CITY WIDE REPORTS**

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

## **13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The meeting concluded at 21:00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of