

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 12 FEBRUARY 2020

HAMPSHIRE LODGE, OFF VERONICA WAY, BRIGHTON BN2 1JW

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Hugh-Jones (Chair), Councillor Rainey

Representatives: Barry Humphries (Sylvan Hall RA Rep), Rita Levitt (Somerset Point), Emma Salcombe (Essex Place Sec/Rep), Martin Cunningham (Hampshire Court), David Spafford (Ardingly Court), Tomm Nyhuus (Somerset Point)

Officers: Ododo Dafe, Sam Warren, Glyn Huelin and Gregory Weaver.

45 APOLOGIES

45.1 Apologies were received from Marge Reynolds (Leach Court)

46 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

46.1 It was clarified that the voting representatives referred to in the previous meeting were from Sylvan Hall not Sylvan Court.

47 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

47.1 The chair noted that Resident Associations didn't cover entire estates and that it was better for estate services to disseminate information in regard to posters and information.

48 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

49.1 (Item 1 – Leaseholder disputes)

49.2 Residents had the following enquiries, concerns and statements:

- A resident noted the second letter to an officer which enquired if issues had been resolved.
- A resident noted that the experience at Sylvan Hall was negative and requested a full review.
- Concern was expressed of the length of time for works to be undertaken.
- Residents expressed serious concern over condescending attitude from staff along with a similar attitude from some Councillors.

49.4 Officers responded to resident's enquiries, concerns and questions with the following:

- An officer agreed to follow up on the resident's letter.
- An officer agreed to perform a post contract "lessons learned" review.
- An officer thanked residents at Sylvan Hall for raising the issue and noted that BHCC were concerned and would look into this. Concern for residents and leaseholders was paramount.
- An officer clarified that BHCC didn't pay for extra works or any surplus due to bad works, it was established that this was paid for by the contractor.
- An officer clarified that there were 2 places that needed works.
- It was stated that BHCC customer service was largely positive and that level of service often surpassed utility companies and other sectors. The officer reaffirmed that despite this, rudeness would not be tolerated and requested the resident forward specific concern to the relevant officer.

49.5 **AGREED** – that the response was satisfactory.

49.6 (Item 4 – West Area – Knightguard Contract)

49.7 Residents had the following enquiries, concerns and statements:

- A resident stated that BHCC had signed off on decision to condemn doors and that it appeared that Knightguard seemed to make unilateral decisions on doors.
- A resident expressed concern that Knightguard only used 1 supplier.
- It was enquired if more could be done given the number of complaints.

49.8 Officers responded to resident's enquiries, concerns and statements with the following:

- An officer stated that the decommissioning of the door was checked by an engineer who would have signed off on this. It was further noted that this would have been double checked and that there was only one specialist.
- An officer stated that they were happy to look into the entry tech supplier as they were employed between 3 / 4 years ago.
- An officer agreed to look at how doors had been condemned.

49.9 **AGREED** – that the responses were satisfactory.

49 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT 3RD QUARTER

49.1 An officer provided a brief overview of the Performance Report Q3. The officer noted the reason for a change in the ways calls were taken and stated that it was found that calls from non-tenants were taking longer. It was further noted that an explanation would be included in a full report that was forthcoming.

49.2 Residents had the following enquiries, statements and concerns:

- A resident expressed concern of the Mears helpdesk's conduct.
- A resident enquired when the contract would be brought in house.
- A resident noted that it appeared that the rent arrears rose by a large sum and enquired of the issue with staffing in this section.
- A resident enquired how soon KPI's could be included in performance reports.

49.3 Officers responded to resident's enquiries, concerns and statements with the following:

- An officer stated that the Housing customer service staff objectives provided more positive interaction whereas repairs from Mears led to more negative situations which could explain the situation and reason for the staff turnover.
- It was noted that some staff chose against TUPE transfer and preferred to look for a new job.
- It was clarified that the merge would not be instant and that this was a slow process. It was noted that BHCC would be hiring Mears staff for first year.
- An officer noted that arrears were understaffed and that not all members on staff were full time.
- It was stated that BHCC would be looking to gather information and soon include KPI's in the report for April's performance report although this could be pushed for a later date.

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

50 CITY WIDE REPORTS

50.1 A resident enquired if there was an age limit for sheltered accommodation.

50.2 An officer clarified that the general age limit was 55 however some people were under this age but their needs were such that some leeway was made to include them.

50.3 **AGREED** – that the city reports be noted.

51 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT GROUPS

51.1 An Officer circulated information regarding on Service Improvement Groups with the aim to increase participation. Panel members were invited to register any possible commitment to groups on the list.

51.2 **AGREED** – That the update was noted.

52 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP

52.1 An officer ran a brief workshop with a view to ascertain Panel Members' views as to the function of Housing Area Panels and to provide further feedback. The following questions were posed, and responses provided.

52.2 An officer sought resident's views on the reason for Area Panels.

52.3 Panel members gave the following responses:

- It was stated that area panels gave representation for all residents and leaseholders.
- Accountability was paramount and that panel meetings were a good exercise in governance.
- It was noted that area panels were the last direct route left with direct communication to the Housing Committee.

- It was further noted that the objectives of BHCC and the tenant were different and that tenants were looking to solve specific problems that they witnessed at homes and in their neighbourhoods.

52.4 The officer enquired what was needed to build strong tenant's association and what support was needed.

52.5 Panel members gave the following responses:

- A resident stated that it was important for officers to listen and respond to residents and tenants. Concern was expressed of how views from residents were taken.
- A resident found that there was more support in being able to contact LAG rather than Area Panels and that Councillors were largely absent. Concern was expressed of Councillors' conduct in being both absent but also allegedly in pursuit of personal goals.

52.6 The officer enquired what tenants wanted in terms of help.

52.7 Panel members gave the following responses:

- It was stated that the reason for TA failure in Sloane Court was that they were having difficulty in finding people to attend.
- A resident gave an example of people paying very little attention to TA's and suggested a possible name change.
- A resident expressed concern that Homing-In Magazine was provided as a PR exercise for BHCC designed to provide only positive anecdotal stories and requested that, in future, the magazine include negative comments which would allow for following editions that outlined both a response and actions taken to resolve these issues.

52.8 **AGREED** – that the panel noted the responses.

53 TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION UPDATES

54.1 **AGREED** – that the update was noted.

54 PROCUREMENT OF CONTRACT FOR SERVICING, REPAIR, MAINTENANCE AND INSTALLATION OF LIFTS

54.1 An officer gave a brief overview of the Procurement of Contract for Servicing, Repair, Maintenance and installation of lifts. The panel were notified that the contract was due to conclude in April 2021 and that works were underway to seek the necessary contracts for lifts service maintenance for 3 years. It was noted that a lift replacement program was currently under review and that performance across all lifts were constantly under assessment and that overall performance would be assessed against a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It was stated that where a significant update / maintenance was required; residents would be consulted and that contracts were managed robustly by a dedicated engineer in the City.

54.2 **AGREED** – that the report was noted.

55 FUTURE REPAIRS UPDATE PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 55.1 The panel considered a report update on the Future Repairs program. An officer noted the ongoing process regarding the TUPE transfer of staff in to BHCC from Mears.
- 55.2 An officer provided a verbal update of the Future Repair Program. Focus was placed on current status of TUPE transfer of Mears staff in to BHCC along with all the challenges that would arise from this. A brief timeframe was outlined with one to ones taking place over the coming weeks. It was noted that the strategy was to carry out pre-employment checks such as Right to Work and DBS and that new vans were starting to arrive with 50 more to arrive before April alongside the Mears fleet. It was clarified that work needed to be done to make sure the infrastructure was in place to be able to support 107 new vehicles. It was noted that in regard to planned works contracts, there had been many bids and that these would be evaluated individually by staff members who were coming together to ascertain scores.
- 55.3 **AGREED** – that the update was noted.

56 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 56.1 There was none.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

