

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 10 FEBRUARY 2020

THE WHITEHAWK INN, WHITEHAWK ROAD, BRIGHTON, BN2 5NS

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Brennan (Chair)

Representatives: Chris El-Shabba, Alan Cooke, Janet Gearing, Tom Goodridge, Rosemary Johnson

Officers: Glyn Huelin, Sam Warren, Keely McDonald, Gregory Weaver

Guests: Sarah Booker-Lewis

39 APOLOGIES

39.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Mary Mears and Steve Bell.

40 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

40.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

41 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

41.1 The Chair stated that the government had provided some information regarding the Coronavirus and gave the following website address for more information:

- <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/uk-warnings>

Residents were notified that the Met Office had declared a yellow weather warning.

42 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

42.1 (Item 1 – Anti Social Behaviour)

A resident noted that there was no response in regard to the percentage of new tenants being visited to ensure that they were meeting their tenancy conditions.

42.3 An officer agreed to follow up on this issue.

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

42.5 (Item 2 – Estate Development Budget)

42.6 Residents had the following questions, concerns and statements:

- Clarification was sought regarding when works were undertaken throughout the year.
- Residents requested a spreadsheet which included the current EDB bids being processed.
- Residents noted that the new system employed was working well.

42.7 Officer had the following response to resident's questions, concerns and statements:

- An officer confirmed that they would be meeting with P&I to consider outstanding issues that were to be resolved.
- It was noted that focus would be placed on works that had not been completed in the last 3 years.
- It was stated that what was not finalise, would be transferred to the in-house team.
- It was confirmed that works would be appointed and prioritised based on a range of factors. For example works regarding the planting of flowers would occur after winter.
- Officers agreed to provide the current EDB spreadsheet for resident's information.

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

42.9 (Item 3 – Valley Social Centre)

42.10 Residents welcomed the response however it was stated that the main issue lay with the undemocratic process that had been pursued.

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

42.12 (Item 4 – Knightguard Contract)

42.13 Residents had the following questions, concerns and statements:

- Residents stated that there was confusion as to what was being specifically referred to within the response.
- A resident noted an issue of unfinished installation of doors.
- Clarity was sought on the payment process for works carried out by Knightguard, specifically as to whether Knightguard were paid before or after works had been completed.
- A resident enquired if Knightguard could be penalised as a result of dereliction of duty on works for elderly people.
- It was noted that the response was missing reference to a question regarding fines or penalisation.

42.14 Officers responded to resident's questions, concerns and statements with the following:

- An officer clarified that this was in regard to door entry systems and CCTV and that Mears was mostly responsible for doors.
- It was noted that there were 2 separate contractors between doors and entry systems.

- It was clarified that Knightguard would only be paid after works had been completed.
- An officer offered to follow up on resident's enquiries regarding fines and penalisation.

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

43 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT 3RD QUARTER

43.1 An officer provided a brief overview of the Quarter 3 Performance Report. Key statistics and trends were presented to the panel. Information regarding the empty homes and re-let times were highlighted. It was noted that performance at end of quarter 1 was low and that there had since been a steady turn around. It was confirmed that in future, KPIs would be considered in the performance report.

43.2 Residents had the following enquiries, concerns and statements:

- A resident gave positive feedback regarding service provided by the repairs helpdesk.
- A resident enquired how many people were operating the helpdesk at any time.
- A resident found the works undertaken to address bulk waste management.

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

- It was stated that the number of people on the repairs helpdesk varied and that the office tended to be busy on Monday mornings.
- It was clarified that the repairs helpdesk generally ran with 7 – 10 staff members on at any time.

43.4 **AGREED** – that the panel noted the report.

44 CITY WIDE REPORTS

44.1 **AGREED** – that the City Wide reports be noted.

45 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT GROUPS

45.1 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.

45.2 Panel members had the following comments, enquiries and concerns:

- A panel member stated that they had already joined 2 groups and enquired if this was the limit.
- A Panel member noted that meetings were held during daytimes in the week which could conflict with the schedules of people who were at work and enquired consideration could be made as to finding alternative times/dates in future.

45.3 An officer responded to Panel Member's enquiries, concerns and statements with the following:

- Stated that members could only sit on 2 Service Improvement Groups and that this was a request for other members to commit.
- It was confirmed that, as part of the community engagement, alternative times for meetings would be looked at.

45.4 **AGREED** – That the panel note the item.

46 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP

46.1 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.

46.2 An Officer enquired why people thought area panels were useful.

46.3 Panel Members gave the following responses:

- A member noted that area panels were there to open lines of direct communication between residents and officers.
- It was noted that the process to procure works via the EDB Bidding system could be complex and that area panels were useful in helping to provide information and guidance.

46.4 An Officer enquired what panel members felt was needed to build strong residents associations, area panels and tenant groups.

46.5 Panel members gave the following responses:

- It was stated that a strong chair was willing to listen to the group and was an effective communicator.
- It was confirmed being involved with panels and other groups added to the sense of community.
- It was noted that the busiest meetings were often due to a subject that affected many residents such as planning issues.

46.6 An Officer sought panel members' views on how officers could further engage with people to improve involvement.

- A member noted that there were a large number of non-English people on estates and enquired if more resources could be allocated to help engage with non-English people.

46.7 An officer acknowledged residents' language barriers and suggested that information could be provided to them regarding translation services and specialists contacts.

46.8 An officer sought residents' views on how they felt they could get involved.

46.9 A resident noted that breaking the ice and loneliness was an issue.

46.10 An officer stated that efforts to promote addressing loneliness and helping with ice breaking could be looked at.

46.11 An officer sought panel members' views on what would make a successful group.

46.12 A member stated that Area Panels ought to feel vibrant and welcomed bringing interesting people in with a view to promote networking.

46.13 **AGREED** – That the panel noted the responses.

47 TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION UPDATES

47.1 The Chair requested members' positive updates and experiences.

47.2 Residents gave the following experiences and updates:

- A resident confirmed that their area had conducted a successful wassail with around 90-100 people in attendance over the course of the day. It was noted that as a result of the positive attendance and participation, a new tradition had begun and that among those that attended, many varied in age.
- It was noted that a beekeeper's session would be taking place and that efforts were underway to procure a new defibrillator following a recent first aid workshop.
- The Chair was invited to future breakfast sessions held at a local community estate room.
- It was noted that a Turkey was donated for Christmas eve which and further notification of a lunch that was currently running was provided.

47.3 **AGREED** – that the item was noted.

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

48.1 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 updated / maintenance was required; residents would be consulted and that contracts were managed robustly by a dedicated engineer in the City.

48.2 Residents had the following enquiries, concerns and statements:

- A resident enquired of the number of people that would be bidding on this.
- A resident sought clarification as to when the current contract would expire.
- A resident requested confirmation that lifts would not be retro fitted in to blocks.

48.3 An officer responded to resident's concerns, enquiries and statements with the following:

- It was stated that this would go out to the whole EU Market with the 1st stage being open to anyone, 2nd stage would then proceed by limiting the list down to 6-10 suppliers.
- An officer clarified that the current contract would end in April 2021.

- It was stated that in some blocks, 1 lift could be provided to improve accessibility for people and that there was no program in place which sought to retro fit these.
- It was clarified that some stair lifts were subject to an entirely different process and that an assessment of need would have to be followed. It was suggested that alternative adaptations to resident's homes could also be considered such as stair lifts etc.

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

49 FUTURE REPAIRS UPDATE PROGRAMME UPDATE

49.1 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.

49.2 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.

49.3 Residents had the following enquiries, concerns and statements:

- A resident enquired if new staff would be hired.
- Clarification was sought in regard to contracts being put out to tender and if they would favour local contractors.
- Concern was expressed regarding stock condition surveys and further information on BHCC's approach was requested.

49.4 An officer stated that agency staff would be hired temporarily to put numbers up and that further employment drives would take place in future. It was stated that a report would be provided to Housing Committee to enable this to be brought back to area panels for further updates and to hear the views of panel members.

- An officer stated that BHCC couldn't favour local contractors but would structure the contract to look good to local companies.
- It was noted that stock condition surveys were a snapshot of information and that this was a one-off stock condition survey.
- It was clarified that the approach was on focusing on resident's communities, value for money and not driven by making savings.

49.5 **AGREED** – that the update be noted.

50 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

