

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA**

**2.00pm 3 MARCH 2021**

**VIRTUAL - ZOOM**

**MINUTES**

**Present**

**Councillors:** Hugh-Jones (Chair) & Rainey

**Officers:** Ododo Dafe, Sam Warren, Janet Dowell, Hannah Barker, Kenna Kendall, Glyn Huelin, Miles Davidson, Thomas Bald.

**Housing Area Representatives:** Jane Thorp, Carl Boardman, David Spafford, Eileen Stewart, Linda King, Emma Salcombe, Theresa Mackey, Barry Hughes, Michael Collett.

**1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES, INTRODUCTIONS, AND MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 Apologies from Martin Reid.

1.2 Emma Salcombe raised that issue 4.3 should be amended as she was raising the issue on behalf of a disabled tenant, not herself.

1.3 Barry Hughes raised that himself and Geof Gage were referred to by the wrong name and for this to be corrected.

1.4 Jane Thorp raised that issue 4.8 should read 'repairs' instead of 'reports'.

**RESOLVED** – The minutes be agreed subject to the above conditions.

**2 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

2.1 The Chair Gave the following communications:

"I would like to thank everyone for attending, and to acknowledge the time and effort that you have given to take part in the Area Panel meetings. We recognise your commitment to working with the council at these meetings and are particularly grateful that you have continued to do this under the exceptional and difficult circumstances we're all currently experiencing. Your continued willingness to take part here is very much appreciated.

I'd also like to thank you for your patience in taking part in the Area Panel meetings while we have changed from face to face meetings to virtual, it has been a learning process for all of us and we have received valuable feedback from you. As a result, following this round of Area Panel meetings we will return to separate meetings for each area.

I would also like to welcome [Kenna Kendall] to the meeting. I have requested that, in addition to officers presenting reports, there should always be a member of the local housing team present at area panels so that they are immediately aware of any issues raised and any action that needs to be taken locally.

I would just like to alert leaseholders to the fact that the leaseholder consultation on the major capital works procurement is scheduled for posting on Monday 8th March so please look out for that.

Finally, many of you will no doubt be aware of the work that Sam Warren has been doing on preparing a Community Engagement and Tenant Involvement paper. Many thanks to those of you who have contributed. We are looking at that report at the Housing Committee pre-meet scheduled for immediately after this area panel (so we will be finishing promptly at 4pm). It will then come to committee on 17th.”

### **3 ITEMS FOR HOUSING COMMITTEE**

**3.1** Ododo Dafe gave a presentation referring to pages 23-46 of the Agenda and mentioned the following points:

- The attached report set out information to tenant association representatives about the Housing Committee workplan.
- The headline results on page 13 highlight that rent collection has slightly dipped since the last report but is currently above target, the empty homes letting time has improved and there has been some overall positive feedback from residents.
- The top scorers laid out on page 14 include adaptations, rent collection, energy performance, repairs appointments, and gas certification.
- The lowest scorers include voids, turnaround times for empty homes, lifts, and repairs being completed on time.

**3.2** Jane Thorp was informed of the following points:

- The leaseholder disputes process generally is triggered by the service charge, which comes in in September which tends to generate any stage 1 disputes, why is why there is generally a low level in quarter 2 and a higher level in quarter 3.
- Disputes can range from being straightforward about a service charge up to something higher like the quality of work, as well as technical questions which can be answered at stage 1.
- Setting targets for settling disputes can be quite difficult.
- Residents are encouraged to raise disputes if necessary.
- Statutory targets are set about dispute resolution. More of these can be included in future. More narrative will be provided concerning targets.
- Discussions were held about the appropriateness of including information about tribunals. More contextual information will be added about the resolution of tribunals.
- The new proposed building safety legislation is based primarily around fire safety following Grenfell.

**3.3** Ododo Dafe was informed by Emma Salcombe that item 5.2 on page 24 of the Agenda regarding fire safety doors would not be suitable for disabled or elderly tenants due to accessibility concerns about the weight of the doors. Ododo Dafe confirmed they would report back about potential solutions.

**3.4** Barry Hughes raised that some tenants are being caught out in larger properties with little money due to the increase in Local Housing Allowance and Universal Credit as the benefit cap hasn't also increased. Ododo Dafe responded that emergency funding (discretionary housing payments) is available to assist people in the shorter term if needed.

**3.5** Linda King was informed that a consultation would be taken before deciding on the way forward regarding sprinklers, and added that the fire doors need to be addressed before sprinklers. Linda King also requested a conversation with Glyn Huelin regarding the bin doors at Essex Place.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- Ododo Dafe to provide more contextual information concerning disputes and tribunals in the next performance report.
- Ododo Dafe to get in touch with colleagues to gather more useful feedback about inaccessible fire safety doors.
- Glyn Huelin to follow up with Linda King about the bin doors at Essex Place.

## **4 RESPONSES TO RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS**

### *Renewal of Knightguard Contract*

**4.1** Glyn Huelin raised the following points:

- The scoping for new procurement for the service area for the coming year will include door entry systems and cctv.
- Before any procurement takes place, residents will be consulted through area panels and the leaseholder action group.
- The current contract has been extended for 2 years due to good performance.
- Door entry systems and main entrance doors are based in different parts of the contract.
- An age system is in place for replacing equipment, and a fine balance has to be taken between replacing equipment too early and replacing too late.

**4.2** Jane Thorp raised the following points:

- The Knightguard contract has had numerous complaints from tenants over 3 years from both tenants and leaseholders.
- A repairs log needs to be sent immediately once a repair request is submitted.

Glyn Huelin responded that the contract had to be signed in advance to adhere to the appropriate timescales, and fully qualified engineers are sent to complete door entry system repairs and that the Council check the quality of work afterwards.

Miles Davidson added that:

- If Knightguard come across a situation where they cannot repair or replace an issue, they will go to the Council to get a decision on the way forward such as removing a lock to allow access to a building.
- Only a few complaints about the Knightguard contract had been submitted.
- Knightguard were hitting all of the Key Performance Indicators consistently.

- Fully qualified engineers are sent to complete repairs.
- A discussion would be held about providing a repairs log to leaseholders upon starting a new repair.

**4.3** David Spafford raised that it was not accurate to say the Knightguard contract was performing well and was shocked Council workers were not aware of the issues. Glyn Huelin clarified that only the door entry system is managed by Knightguard, not the door itself.

**RESOLVED:** Miles Davidson would look at the possibility of providing the full repairs log to leaseholders when starting a new repair project.

#### *Anti-Social Behaviour*

**4.4** Janet Dowell raised that there was a request raised to have a full review about the Anti Social Behaviour Policy, and this was looking to start in June, and the aim is to work with residents to complete the review.

**RESOLVED:** The response was satisfactory.

## **5 RESPONSES TO RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS (CONT.)**

#### *Maintenance Schedule*

**5.1** Jane Thorp raised that cyclical maintenance was included in the Mears contract but hasn't been actioned. Glyn Huelin responded that there are ambitions to create cyclical maintenance schedule, and there are currently numerous checks that happen regarding gas checks and asbestos, but there isn't a diarised schedule.

**5.2** Emma Salcombe was informed that gutters are not managed by Estates, but can raise issues with the repairs & maintenance team.

**5.3** Barry Hughes suggested that officers are not permitted to attend Resident Only meetings, as implied in the recommendations from the West Area Panel.

**5.4** David Spafford was informed that the stock condition survey is not public or online, and is only a sample of properties that help forecast long term plans.

**RESOLVED** – Residents discussed the maintenance schedule and raised their concerns.

## **6 UPDATE FROM CENTRAL HOUSING TEAM**

**6.1** Kenna Kendall introduced herself to the Panel as the new Housing Manager for Central.

## **7 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS**

**7.1** Barry Hughes mentioned that the plant your postcode scheme had been postponed due to COVID-19, but now fruit trees have been planted for the community.

**7.2** Linda King wanted to thank the Council that laundrettes have been kept open.

**7.2** Eileen Stewart wanted to thank Geof Gage for getting the roundabout fixed promptly.

**8 AOB**

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 15:45.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

