

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 26 MAY 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING - SKYPE

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Hugh-Jones (Chair), Rainey

Voting Representatives: Eileen Stewart, Barry Brewster, Jane Thorp, David Spafford, Barry Hughes, Carl Boardman, Theresa Mackay

Officers: Sam Warren, Janet Dowdell, Simon Bannister, Fabrizio Oliveri, Hannah Barker, Glyn Huelin

Guests: Sarah Brooker-Lewis

1 ACTIONS & MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- 1.1 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 March 2021 be approved as the correct record.

2 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 2.1 The Chair provided the following Communications:

Residents' questions

Many thanks to Jane Thorp for her work on the Major Works Defects Review. I note the request for this to come to the next Housing Committee meeting. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions and the fact that the legislation allowing remote Council meetings has not been extended, the next Housing Committee will be very constrained, both in terms of numbers and reports.

I therefore think it is more appropriate that we pick up on this request at September's Housing Committee. We have a report on leaseholder payment options which is now scheduled to come to September Housing Committee. I have suggested to officers that we extend that report to include a set of commitments to leaseholders and tenants, which will set out:

- what information leaseholders can expect to receive in relation to major works
- what the quality assurance processes are for planned and major works and;
- a written process for dealing with disputes and compensation.

EDB

A number of the residents' questions from other area panels relate to the EDB. I am proposing not to take them but to rely on the presentation by Sam Warren and Lucy Beasley which is the next agenda item after residents' questions.

Fire doors

At last committee, Emma Salcombe raised concerns about the weight of the fire safety doors rendering them unsuitable for disabled or elderly tenants. I have to apologise for the fact that this is currently outstanding owing to extended staff absence. The Housing team will follow this up as soon as possible.

Our highest priority remains the safety of our residents and those visiting or working on council homes.

We work in partnership with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) to keep housing fire health and safety matters under regular review and to consider new information and guidance that becomes available following the Grenfell Tower Fire. This includes new building safety guidance following publication of the draft Building Safety Bill. Our Housing Revenue Account budget and investment programme reflects this key priority.

As previously reported to Housing Committee and Area Panel, since the Grenfell fire new guidance has been issued on the performance of composite doors. Many local authorities, including Brighton & Hove, use Masterdor fire doors which predate the latest recommendations. The National Fire Chiefs Council has advised that, where these doors have been fitted, the risk to public safety is low as the doors provide some protection and are in any case just one of a range of fire-protection measures fitted in council buildings. However, given the doors do not consistently meet the expected performance standards required of fire doors, we are procuring new contracts for fire doors.

Officers have previously advised Housing Committee & Area Panel that additional fire risk assessments had been carried out on high-rise buildings, including specifically looking at the impact of fire doors.

In addition to the council's partnership working with ESFRS, we continue to maintain our regular fire risk assessment programme, including on all our high-rise buildings. We also continue to proactively manage and monitor our agreed fire safety protocols, for example in relation to clear common ways".

3 RESPONSES TO RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS

Major Works Defects Review

- 3.1 In response to an observation from Jane Thorp that there had been no acknowledgement or compensation for defects, Glyn Huelin apologised and stated that an updated tracker would be circulated. Overall, progress had been made but some items remained outstanding. Glyn Huelin added that the response in the agenda provided contact information and details of the complaints and compensation process.
- 3.2 The Chair stated that frustrations with the process were understood and she had requested this be detailed in a report to Housing Committee in September.
- 3.3 In response to a question from Jane Thorp, Glyn Huelin explained that it was not yet clear whether leaseholders would have to pay for the new fire doors as the lease type was a very complex factor.

Maintenance Schedule HLT

- 3.4 In response to a query from Jane Thorp, Glyn Huelin answered that he understood the internal survey of Crown Hill was yet to be undertaken and details would be circulated once the schedule was known.

- 3.5 **RESOLVED-** That the Panel note the responses provided to Resident's Questions and the verbal updates provided.

4 EDB UPDATE

- 4.1 The Panel received a comprehensive verbal update on the Estate Development Budget. Sam Warren stated that a copy of the update would be provided to Panel representatives subsequent to the meeting.
- 4.2 **RESOLVED-** That the update be noted.

5 FIRE DOOR SAFETY REGULATIONS

- 5.1 The Panel considered a verbal update from Glyn Huelin on changes to fire door safety regulations.
- 5.2 In response to a question from Gary Jones, Glyn Huelin stated that the regulations currently only related to Masterdoor however, there would be a thorough risk assessment of all doors and changes made to those where required. The majority of the doors identified were in high-rise accommodation.
- 5.3 In response to queries from Barry Hughes and Jane Thorp, Glyn Huelin stated that the charging regime for the changes for what was a substantial change to regulations was still currently being worked through. Some of the changes would be made before the introduction of the Building Safety Act however, it was understood that sprinklers were unlikely to be part of the Act.
- 5.4 **RESOLVED-** That the Panel note the update.

6 ANNUAL REPORT & ITEMS FOR HOUSING COMMITTEE

- 6.1 In response to a question from David Spafford relating to the current figure of empty temporary accommodation, Glyn Huelin stated he would recheck the figure provided on page 83 of 370 and confirm subsequent to the meeting.
- 6.2 In response to a query from Carl Boardman, Glyn Huelin stated that the Carbon Neutral Strategic Action Plan rating was for overall housing stock and so was different and not comparable to Energy Ratings used for individual properties.
- 6.3 **RESOLVED-** That the update be noted.

7 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 7.1 Barry Hughes stated that the orchard had now been planted at Sylvan Hall and had benefited from the recent rainfall.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 8.1 In response to a query from Eileen Stewart, Hannah Baker apologised for the tone of a letter recently sent out in relation to communication details. Hannah explained that the Communities Team were seeking to assist representatives with the contact details

hosted publicly and could assist with related provisions such as a dedicated mobile phone if that was needed.

The meeting concluded at 4.05pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of