

NORTH AREA PANEL
18/05/2022
DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees:

Residents: Jennifer Simmonds, Heather Hayes, Ian Beck, Desmond Jones, Peter O'Connor, Richard Clarke,

Councillors: Fowler (Chair)

Officers: Francis Mitchell, Grant Ritchie, Janet Dowdell, Justine Harris, Rebecca Mann, Sam Warren, Michael Raywood, Geoff Gage

Press: Sarah Booker-Lewis

1 – WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 There were apologies from Tony Gribben.

2 – MINUTES & ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 Update on actions from the previous meeting held on 16th February 2022:
- 2.2 Action 1 – Heather Hayes informed the panel that this action had been completed.
- 2.3 Action 2 – Michael Raywood provided a verbal update on this action, stating that a site-visit had been arranged by Peter Maddox. Heather Hayes pointed out that bins are being missed out on a consistent basis and stated that residents have been refused larger bins. Ian Beck stated that the issue of missed collections was also prevalent in other areas such as Tavistock Down.

ACTION – Justine Harris to contact Cityclean regarding missed collections.

- 2.4 Action 3 – Heather Hayes clarified that the action did not pertain to a door handle but instead to a repair on her back door. Heather Hayes stated that she had waited two years for a replacement back door and criticised the fact that a council repair worker visited her home and took a picture of the door without acting further. Grant Ritchie stated that he had not been able to locate this as a repair. Heather Hayes stated that the door itself is level with the path outside and so water leaks in, Grant Ritchie suggested that a channel might need to be installed by the door to prevent leaks.
- 2.5 Action 4 – Janet Dowdell stated that there is a small budget allocated for the replacement of fencing. Janet Dowdell stated that while there are criteria in place for replacement, these criteria are not fixed. Ian Beck stated that somebody's fence had fallen and now their garden is being used for fly-tipping. Janet Dowdell invited Ian Beck to provide her with the address of this incident for investigation.

ACTION – Janet Dowdell to contact Ian Beck regarding broken fence in garden that has led to fly tipping.

2.6 Action 5 – Michael Raywood provided a verbal update on this action, detailing the advantages of concrete posts and stating that they were being looked into as an option. Heather Hayes asked if concrete support beams would be provided on garden walls that are leaning over and was informed by Michael Raywood that each case would be assessed on its individual merit.

3 - ADDITIONAL ITEM – ASB REVIEW

3.1 Justine Harris presented the report for this item as seen in Addendum 1.

3.2 Justine Harris informed Jennifer Simmonds that little can be done regarding children screaming in gardens unless there is an element of anti-social behaviour involved. Janet Dowdell recommended that Jennifer Simmonds contact the customer services team regarding noise concerns.

3.3 Heather Hayes stated that the family in question live in a one-bedroom flat with three children and that it seems as if they are waiting for another property to move into, questioning the suitability of their current accommodation. Justine Harris invited Heather Hayes to share the address outside the meeting in order to investigate the suitability of the accommodation.

3.4 Ian Beck thanked the Council for taking up the issue of Anti-Social Behaviour and stated that historically it was difficult to get a response regarding ASB. Ian Beck stated that he has noticed a positive difference in the way that ASB is being reported and commended his areas Community Engagement Officer.

3.5 Janet Dowdell informed the panel that the Council has a strong relationship with the police and that they are worked with closely with when dealing with drug-dealing and other ASB. Janet Dowdell also stated that the police deal with enforcement while the housing department deals with legislation such as eviction notices.

3.6 Michael Raywood informed Heather Hayes that victims are often moved as this is what they request and stated that enforcing ASB and moving a perpetrator can be a lengthy process.

3.7 The Chair questioned whether the next tenant to move into a property would suffer as a result of the perpetrator not being moved and was informed by Michael Raywood that if the ASB was directed towards the previous tenant then it is likely that it will not persist with the new tenant.

3.8 Michael Raywood invited Richard Clark to contact him regarding ASB in Patcham.

3.9 Heather Hayes stated that perpetrators of ASB require a support package, perhaps in the form of a support worker, and asked if this is something that can be arranged. Justine Harris informed Heather Hayes that this is being done and requires a multi-agency response.

4 – RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

Student Housing and the lack of homes available for local people.

- 4.1 Heather Hayes stated that only one Council property has been bought back by the council in Coldean. Justine Harris presented a report written by Ododo Dafe that detailed the number and types of housing being built in the North Area.
- 4.2 Janet Dowdell informed Heather Hayes that one reason a student may be given a Council property to rent despite there being dedicated student accommodation in the area is that the Council may have a responsibility to house the individual, citing care-leavers as an example of such responsibility.
- 4.3 Heather Hayes asked what happened to field officers and was informed by Justine Harris that residents thought that estate inspections were too officer heavy and as part of a review the estate inspections will now be carried out by a combination of officers, environmental surveyors, and Councillors. The panel was informed that the first estate inspection had been carried out on the day of the meeting (18.05.22).
- 4.4 Janet Dowdell stated that in future, residents will be able to suggest areas of improvement for the Council to inspect and stated that the intention would be to provide an annual schedule for estate inspections so that residents can know when to expect visits.
- 4.5 Janet Dowdell informed the panel that if a garden has become overgrown and is being used as a tip, the Council can remind the occupant of their tenancy obligations to keep outside areas tidy.

ACTION - Michael Raywood to contact Chair of the Bates Estate Community Association regarding their list of improvements for the estate.

Clearing of Davey Drive Bank.

- 4.6 Michael Raywood provided a verbal update on this question and stated that the thickness of the brambles and the steepness of the slope has provided health and safety risks for clearing the bank and highlighted difficulties in finding a contractor that will clear the bramble. Michael Raywood stated that there is a proposal to use a remote strimmer that is being tested that might be able to reach brambles at the top of the bank. Michael stated that the bank had been fabricked to stop the growth of brambles. Michael Raywood also highlighted that another issue would be finding a contractor that is able to maintain the bank going forward.
- 4.7 Ian Beck stated that the primary concern regarding the bank on Davey Drive is the first metre of brambles overhanging onto the pavement. Ian Beck also stated that, since double-yellow lines had been installed, parking is no longer an issue on Davey Drive.

ACTION – Michael Raywood to contact Robert Walker regarding the clearance of brambles overhanging onto Davey Drive.

Refuse and Recycling collection.

- 4.8 Desmond Jones communicated issues with refuse and recycling collections being frequently missed.
- 4.9 Ian Beck stated that he has attempted to contact Melissa Francis and Rachel Chassaud but has not yet received a response. Ian Beck stated that smaller lorries will not be necessary as double-yellow lines have been installed on narrower streets so that standard dust-vans can fit. Ian Beck also cited inconsistencies in rubbish collections, stating that rubbish is not being collected on advertised days and that as such residents have missed taking their bins out in time for collection.

ACTION – Rachel Chassaud to be invited to the next meeting.

Kitchen Replacements.

- 4.10 Grant Ritchie provided a verbal update on this question and stated that a replacement kitchen is expected to last 30 years.
- 4.11 Heather Hayes expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the kitchens in Council properties, stating that the vinyl that is used peels off surface tops and was informed by Grant Ritchie that there were issues with the brand of vinyl previously used by Mears.
- 4.12 Grant Ritchie informed Heather Hayes that doors will not be replaced if the damage is cosmetic unless the door cannot be cleaned and stated that the fixing of vinyl on a door is not considered an urgent repair.
- 4.13 Ian Beck stated that his kitchen was last replaced in 1988 and though he was informed that his kitchen would be replaced this year, he has not heard anything else regarding this since February. Grant Ritchie informed Ian Beck that during this visit the kitchen would have been put into a programme of work and sent to contractors. Grant Ritchie stated that the kitchen programme is currently a year behind schedule due to the repairs backlog.
- 4.14 Heather Hayes asked whether the Council has enough operatives and questioned how long the Council would be catching-up on the repairs backlog. Grant Ritchie informed Heather Hayes that when repairs were bought in-house there was a shortage of approximately 60 staff and went on to state that staffing levels are now where they should have been when the services were bought in house.
- 4.15 Grant Ritchie informed the panel that approximately 3000 repairs per month are carried out and that backlog relief methods such as external contractors and temporary staff are being looked at.

Insulation of council properties.

- 4.16 Heather Hayes expressed satisfaction with the fact that improper insulation had been removed from properties in Coldean. Heather Hayes also stated that she was happy with the fact that scaffolding in Coldean had been removed in a timely manner.
- 4.17 Jennifer Simmonds expressed satisfaction with the fact that warmer boards had been installed in her house and that it seems the issue of damp has stopped.
- 4.18 Ian Beck thanked the Council for fixing parking issues by installing double yellow lines on Davey Drive.

5 – HOUSING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2021/22

- 5.1 Martin Reid delivered the report on this item.
- 5.2 Martin Reid provided a report on the Survey of Tenants and Residents, stating that there has been a drop in customer satisfaction as a result of the repairs backlog.
- 5.3 Martin Reid informed Heather Hayes that the Council is in the process of developing 200 homes in the Moulsecomb Hub and that houses are also being built on Victoria Road. Martin Reid also stated that the Council buys back houses and that the reason only one house had been purchased by the Council in Coldean is that it was the only house available for the Council to purchase in the area.

6 – POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 6.1 The Panel felt they had already communicated their positive news.

7 – AOB

- 7.1 There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 21:00

