

EAST AREA PANEL

14 FEBRUARY 2023

MINUTES

Attendees:

Residents: Chris El Shabba (Chair), Alan Cooke, Rosemary Johnson, Ben D'Montigny, Lee Catts

Councillors: Cllr Williams, Cllr Simson

Officers: Martin Reid, Grant Ritchie, Sam Warren, Gabriel Tiranti, Francis Mitchell, Matthew McCaw, Justine Harris, Geof Gage

1 – WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 There were apologies from Keely McDonald.

2 – ACTONS & MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes –

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed subject to minor amendment.

Actions –

EA1 – Rosemary Johnson confirmed that Martin Reid had contacted her regarding this action and stated that it felt that anti-social behaviour was on the decline in Craven Vale.

EA2 – Justine Harris stated that she had not been able to contact Janet Gearing regarding this action.

EA3 – Martin Reid stated that this matter had been resolved and provided an update to the meeting.

EA4 – Justine Harris provided an update on this action to the meeting. Rosemary Johnson was not satisfied with the response given and asked if residents are paying fixed amounts per month towards communal heating & hot water, how are rates fixed on residents standing charges and how would those residents have incentive to save on energy bills.

EA5 – Geof Gage stated that no residents were wrongly charged for aerial systems that are not connected and invited Lee Catts to share information regarding residents for whom this may be the case.

EA6 – Justine Harris stated that a site visit would be carried out in Robert Lodge in March.

EA7 – Martin Reid provided an update to the meeting. Justine Harris stated she would contact Cllr Simson regarding concerns raised over parking on Sandhurst Avenue

EA8 – Justine Harris provided an update to the meeting. Ben D'Montigny suggested the printing of posters to relay information regarding recycling services.

3 – EDB REVIEW CONCLUSION REPORT

- 3.1 Sam Warren delivered the report on this item.
- 3.2 Cllr Williams was informed that EDB underspend money does not accumulate.
- 3.3 Janet Gearing stated that the panel had previously been informed that unspent money went back into the EDB budget and was divided amongst the four areas of the city. Sam Warren stated that had been the case five or six years ago, but that this had since changed.
- 3.4 Alan Cooke expressed that he was disturbed to hear that EDB underspend money does not accumulate, stating that previous discussions at the task and finish group had indicated that the East Area would keep 20% of total underspend.
- 3.5 Sam Warren stated that the recommendation in the report was for all EDB underspend to be ringfenced back to EDB. Sam Warren also stated that EDB underspend stays with its area, and at the end of the financial year goes into the HRA.
- 3.6 Rosemary Johnson stated that the report made no mention about non-resident leaseholders, raising concerns that they would be charged for EDB bids but have no say in what the money is spent on, citing that a badly thought out EDB bid could potentially knock thousands from leaseholder's property prices. Rosemary Johnson also expressed concerns that some elected Area Panel representatives can no longer vote on EDB bids as they are not council tenants. Martin Reid stated that he and Sam Warren would meet with Rosemary Johnson outside the meeting to address her concerns regarding leaseholders.
- 3.7 Sam Warren stated that members of tenants and residents' associations will still be able to vote, additionally stating that if the EDB conclusion paper and the Area Panel paper aren't aligned on leaseholder voting then this would need to be addressed.
- 3.8 Cllr Simson was informed that the EDB toolkit would be available at either the next Area Panel meeting or the meeting after that.

4 – HOUSING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2022/23

- 4.1 Martin Reid delivered the report on this item.
- 4.2 Lee Catt stated that multiple repair teams have to be sent out due to incorrect diagnoses of issues, citing an incident where three teams were sent to his home with one repair team claiming he would require a new shower pump costed at approximately £300, and another repair team claiming he would not need a new shower pump, but would need to replace a £10 rubber washer. Lee Catt stated this repair was successful, but due to the first team not repairing the shower there had been water left on the floor which had caused it, along with the toilet, to need to be replaced.
Lee Catt stated that the job should have cost the council £10 but has likely cost in excess of £3000.

- 4.3 Grant Ritchie stated that Interfinder, a new repair tracking system, was being bought in at the end of the month that will allow tenants to access their repair reports in more detail.
- 4.4 Janet Gearing was informed that sub-contractors are used in large-building and window repairs as well as specialist tasks such as scaffolding and asbestos removal.
- 4.5 Lee Catt highlighted the correlation between low-quality windows and an increase in mould, stating that in the rooms inside his flat with new high-quality windows, mould and condensation is not an issue.
- 4.6 Grant Ritchie outlined the processes around preventing and removing mould from properties.
- 4.7 Martin Reid outlined examples of planned investment to improve housing stock within the city.
- 4.8 Martin Reid stated that he would talk with Ben D'Montigny about what information would be most useful to have from residents to ensure that repairs are completed correctly the first time.

5 – AREA PANEL REVIEW: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND REPORT

- 5.1 Sam Warren delivered the report for this item.
- 5.2 Rosemary Johnson raised concerns regarding mixed wording and was informed that the report should have referred to 'tenants only meetings' as 'residents only meetings'.
- 5.3 Cllr Simson was informed that resident co-chairs would be elected at the beginning of each financial year by each area panel.
- 5.4 Alan Cooke stated that section 2c of the report would exclude him as a freeholder from attending meetings.

6 – RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

- 6.1 Alan Cooke stated that the question 'Council Staff and Lack of Responsiveness' had been left out of the papers and asked 'Why senior and other Council staff often don't respond to their emails or questions to area panels'. Sam Warren stated that this question was sent to the Resource Centre to be reworded.

7 – POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 7.1 Lee Catt stated that anti-social behaviour had decreased as drug-dealers had been moved from the estate.

7.2 Alan Cooke invited all attendees to the Craven Vale Coronation Party being held on Sunday May 7th.

7.3 Ben D'Montigny shared that hibiscus planting was underway on Bristol Estate and stated that approximately 12,000 plants were being planted in the west side of the estate and thanked CRPE, the landscapers, the gardeners and the volunteers for their work.

8 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Justine Harris agreed to contact Cllr Williams regarding why EDB bids had been rejected.

8.2 Cllr Simson stated that Woodingdean Tenants and Residents Association had amalgamated with the Community Association.

8.3 Cllr Williams expressed disappointment in the closure of the Whitehawk Inn.

The meeting concluded at 21:18.