

**Items from the Tenant Only meeting held on 16/12/14**

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**1. Estate Inspections**

*The issue of Estate Inspections was raised at the recent Central Council Residents Only meeting. They agreed to contact the Chairs of the Resident Only meetings in the other three Areas, to see if they have had similar problems and to get some city-wide feed-back on levels of satisfactions with Estate Inspections.*

*The issues raised in the Central area were:*

- a) Estate Inspections used to involve a range of people, and be useful and constructive events.*
- b) Tenant Representatives now feel demoralised and frustrated by the Estate Inspection process, and overall changes to the Neighbourhood system.*
- c) Communication is poor. Follow up reports on inspections are very slow, sometimes don't happen at all, or have inaccurate and partial information. Tenants are not kept informed about cancelled meetings and changed dates.*
- d) Tenants are 'eyes and ears' on the ground, and know what the problems and issues are in a way that officers can't. This is an important and under-used resource.*
- e) Sometimes there is too much talking and not enough listening from officers.*
- f) A programme of Estate Inspections has been produced, but this is meaningless as the timetable on the programme is not kept to.*
- g) Cut backs and staff shortages are continually given as reasons for planned meetings and inspections not happening, poor communication and reporting.*
- h) Tenant Representatives are working hard to build a partnership with officers, and help improve the process, for example by offering to pick up reports from the Housing Office and distribute them.*

*The West meeting noted similar experiences in the West area and supported the item from Central. It was agreed to raise this item on the Blue Pages for the next West Area Panel, with the addition of the following points:*

- a) Estate Inspections are really valued by tenants as a way of ensuring problems on their estates are recognised and dealt with. If officers are not talking to tenants how do they know about the condition of the estates?*
  - b) Estate Inspections used to work well, with good feedback and involvement from tenants and officers.*
  - c) North Portslade representatives said the last Estate Inspection they were involved in was in October 2013. Ingram Court representatives said they are no longer having Estate Inspections.*
  - d) It is not enough to advertise Estate Inspections on the Council web-site, without contacting representatives to inform them. Communication between officers and representatives is not good.*
  - e) Information about Estate Inspections on the website is often unreliable.*
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**Response by Robert Keelan – Neighbourhoods Manager, T: 01273293261**

There are 12 Neighbourhood Officers in the team covering 14000 rented and leasehold council properties in the city.

I am sorry to hear that tenant representatives feel inspections are not working for them and we want to work in partnership with residents. To this end, I would like all tenant representatives who have concerns about how their inspections are happening, to meet their local Neighbourhood team leaders and Neighbourhood officers(s) to hear these concerns and discuss a remedial plan. The team leaders should be present at all Area Panels to make contact with the tenant representatives and if time allows, some issues may be brought before the Panel for discussion.

Generally however, the team leaders can be contacted on 01273294675 and have a geographic responsibility for different areas (wards) of the city. Appointments can be made direct with the relevant Team leader who will be happy to meet on site.

Complaints and concerns on the estates can be diverse and I would rather these are addressed in a more relevant and effective way by officers spending time with residents and in a place that residents have chosen.

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## **2. Communal TV aerials**

*Alison Gray asked if there was a general problem with the effectiveness of the communal aerials. She needs to re-tune her television about once a month. Representatives from Ingram Crescent said there were also problems in their blocks.*

*It was agreed to raise this on the Blue Pages and to ask:*

- a) What problems are there across the city with communal aerials?*
  - b) What can be done to ensure that communal aerials become more reliable and effective?*
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### **Response from Robert Nayan - Property & Investment Manager, T: 01273293021**

- a) We have checked with the contractor (SCCI) who supply communal TV aerial systems to the council. They have confirmed that as far as the checks and the logs of complaints received from tenants were concerned, there are no ongoing problems or issues with communal TV aerial systems across the city. SCCI have received one complaint of signal being lost to one block recently but this was an isolated incident rather than a general problem across the city.
  
  - b) The communal aerial systems are already reliable and effective. The systems can experience signal problems from time to time due to bad weather- particularly in the Winter months - but this is a general problem in the industry and not isolated to Brighton & Hove. However, to minimize the impact of such signal problems, our contract with SCSSI provides response maintenance and repairs during weekends and over Bank Holidays. We acknowledge that there is always room for improvement in our services and welcome any further discussions on this matter. We are thankful for this enquiry and will be happy to investigate if there are any individual concerns.
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