

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
EAST AREA HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL

7.00pm 21 SEPTEMBER 2015

ROBERT LODGE MANOR PLACE BRIGHTON BN2 5GG

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Mears (Chair), Meadows, Mitchell and Bell.

Representatives: Alan Cooke (Craven Vale), Mary Whitner (South Hawk), Iain Range (Bristol Estate), Janet Gearing (Woodingdean), Pat McKenna (Manor Farm), Christine El Shabba (Vice-Chair)

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Management), Sharon Terry (Resident Involvement Officer), Glyn Huelin (Partnering Business Manager), James Cryer (Mears General Manager)

9 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Councillor M. Barradell, G. Mitchell, W. Morgan, S. Bell, D. Simson, J. Miller and Martin Tudsbury (South Hawk)

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

10.1 Alan Cooke requested removal of point 6.4 subsequently agreed by the panel.

10.2 Alan Cooke noted name spelling mistake for Janet Gearing

10.3 James Cryer requested point 5.2 be reworded to, "lifts were available"

10.4 Councillor Mears noted that the previous minutes 4.17 referred to an agreed report to be provided at next East Area Housing meeting and that this had not been brought to the meeting.

10.5 Sharon Terry stated she spoke to an officer who informed her that there was no budget for grass-crete anywhere. Officer feels there is no solution unless a budget is found elsewhere.

10.6 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the previous meetings held on the 21st September be approved and signed as the correct record.

11 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

11.1 1 Minute silence observed for Faith Matyszak MBE recently deceased.

12 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

12.1 (Item 1 – Parking and driving on grass verges)

- 12.2 Alan Cooke stated that bollards are not a solution; conversely they would be one of the problems. He noted that there is not a forum where issues such as highways can be raised and queried if everything went through RIO. Objected to the process as there is no ability to raise problems pertaining to highways and lighting as it took too long.
- 12.3 Cllr Mears noted that as we are in a unitary authority we are responsible for highways and lighting, we should be able to join the various departments in discussions.
- 12.4 Alan Cooke noted that cars passing each other on the narrow road rather than parking is the key issue.
- 12.5 Becky Purnell stated that Councillor Gill Mitchell has arranged bollards to be placed.
- 12.6 Janet Gearing rejected the placement of bollards.
- 12.7 Chair stated that the decision has to be collective.
- 12.8 Chris El-Shabba stated that she will mention this at the next due east meeting to see what can be done.
- 12.9 Chair noted that Due East must still work with other parts of Council whilst also agreeing that bollards are not the issue, a wider response is required.
- 12.10 Chair stated that in an emergency, bollards would be obstructive for vehicles.
- 12.11 Panel found the response in blue pages satisfactory
- 12.12 (Item 2 – 20mph Speed Limit)
- 12.13 Janet Gearing stated that no one pays attention to the 20mph speed limit. She noted that they are unpoliced and cannot be enforced; she voiced concerns of the amount of money expended.
- 12.14 Chair stated that certain communities will be surveyed, however commented that in reality they cannot be enforced,
- 12.15 Chris El-Shabba stated that it is not more green, citing the need to burn more fuel in order to travel slower over long distances.
- 12.16 Becky Purnell stated that a response has not yet been received regarding measurements of pollution levels.
- 12.17 The panel agreed the answer was satisfactory.
- 12.18 (Item 3 Community Development Workers)
- 12.19 Chair stated that the committee is happy with the response as it stands.
- 12.20 (Item 4 Reinstatement of the Housing Management Consultant Sub-Committee)

- 12.21 Chris El-Shabba stated while useful, a warped view of what is happening across the city would be formed due to most meetings taking place in east area.
- 12.22 Chair noted that point 6 was factually incorrect as sheltered housing was present.
- 12.23 Becky Purnell and Ododo Dafe agreed the proposal can be taken to housing meeting then policy and resources to be voted on.
- 12.24 Chair stated that leaseholders were also included to hear a wider voice.
- 12.25 Chris El-Shabba stated support for the reinstatement of the Sub-Committee.
- 12.26 Chair noted positive points for consideration.
- 12.27 Panel voted unanimously, 6-0 to forward report on to Housing Committee for consideration.
- 12.28 (Item 5 Major Improvements Work)
- 12.29 Janet Gearing questioned why Woodingdean are not receiving anything.
- 12.30 James Cryer stated strides have been made within a finite budget, works at high-rise buildings have taken place due to health and safety concerns, these are to be followed by roofs.
- 12.31 Janet Gearing claimed Woodingdean were being penalised in matters of renovation works as it did not contain any high-rises also that it had its share of health and safety works such as the lack of fire windows,
- 12.32 James Cryer stated a reason for the growing focus of works on high-rises is that
- 12.34 James Cryer stated that one thing can be done as compromise; by speaking to Patrick there may scope to service some windows.
- 12.35 Janet Gearing dismissed the offer of compromise as not good enough; on the grounds that due to upcoming weather forecasts, residents will be kept housebound as in 1963. She claimed that equal treatment should be promoted as all residents of the City pay rent.
- 12.36 James Cryer noted that as a contractor; budget limitations dictate the parameters in which they can work with the Housing Department.
- 12.37 Chair rhetorically requested confirmation on whether City Council or Mears are responsible for the 5 year plan.
- 12.38 James Cryer stated that Mears manage their stock use via the APEX database; which in turn uses the historical database prior to the contract.
- 12.39 Chair highlighted that many surveys have been conducted over many years and queried the results regarding stock surveys on council property entered into the system. She stated confusion as to how similar responses and results appear to continue being presented.

- 12.40 James Cryer stated info on windows was based on historic installation dates.
- 12.41 Chair claimed it was time to update the system currently in place.
- 12.42 James Cryer confirmed Mears can replace it.
- 12.43 Janet Gearing claimed that she had been told this has been stopped.
- 12.44 Chair requested a proper report on the status of the system and when Woodingdean will have a window program.
- 12.45 Janet Gearing stated by way of example that, in regards to surveys surrounding roofs being serviced in Woodingdean, on previous inspection her place of residence was missed. She noted that Mears should survey all properties comprehensively and not just from the outside.
- 12.46 Janet Gearing stated issues regarding mould growing around windows as cause for concern going into Christmas period.
- 12.47 James Cryer noted that some capital programs are driven by cost. Mears must identify where they keep repairing items. If this is found on an estate where everything is continually being repaired, that will start to drive the program, therefore it is not cost effective.
- 12.48 Pat McKenna enquired by what criteria do Mears use to set priority for works to be done.
- 12.49 James Cryer stated Mears rely on intelligence based on where the repairs are and the frequency. Everything has a code.
- 12.50 Pat McKenna enquired is Mears have a legal responsibility to fix it.
- 12.51 James Cryer confirmed Mears has a legal responsibility to fix it.
- 12.52 Chris El-Shabba stipulated that as per the tenant's agreement; the condition of windows must be maintained at all times. She urged people to ring in frequently. She reiterated tenants' legal right to wind and weatherproofed windows.
- 12.53 Chair noted that the same conversation has been ongoing for approximately the past 7 years.
- 12.54 Janet Gearing noted that many residents have endured with 10 year life span windows for the last 30 years. She enquired what the future plan for Woodingdean entailed.
- 12.55 James Cryer stated that Woodingdean is not on the plan for the next 5 years.
- 12.56 Chair requested the detailed report for Woodingdean from James Cryer for the next meeting.
- 12.57 (Item 5 B)

12.58 RESOLVED – That the answer is agreed.

12.59 (Item 5 C)

12.60 Chris El-Shabba stated that the approximate time of response to tenants of Robert Lodge calls for window repairs was 1 year. She emphasised that tenants must contact the contractor.

12.61 James Cryer noted that this level of contact would help with the business case.

12.62 Chair requested tenant reps report to tenants regarding the windows issue. She stated that the current situation was not satisfactory.

12.63 James Cryer clarified the maintenance report.

12.64 Chair asked for this to go on the upcoming housing maintenance.

12.65 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

13 TENANT AND RESIDENT SCRUTINY PANEL REPORT ON RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

13.1 Glynn Huelin presented a 3 part report covering responsive repairs and the ongoing work to update and enhance procedures to improve residents answer times, to provide alternative ways to achieve direct contact with residents such as meetings with tenants and leaseholders after the sheltered scheme project is completed and finally reintroducing the member's estate scheme.

13.2 Janet Gearing highlighted issues surrounding regarding response times for phone calls made at different times in the day.

13.3 James Cryer stated that residents must provide the job reference number to help expedite process.

13.4 Glyn Huelin noted that feedback around out of hours will be taken in to account as residents have requested clearer documentation on service levels.

13.5 Chris El-shabba provided a positive example whereby the provision of the job reference number resulted in a locksmith despatched within 2 hours.

13.6 James Cryer stated that a diagnosis of call responses is incoming.

13.7 Chair stated that this is not new, this enhancement of procedure is what should already be occurring.

13.8 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

14 RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

14.1 Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, gave a presentation regarding Resident Involvement which highlighted work carried out with various members

including people who attended City Assembly, results of consultations held with residents and stated the request to change City Assembly to a 'City Wide Conference' in light of an attendance drop in the last year and a half.

- 14.2 Chris El-Shabba stated the requested date is a month later than would have liked.
- 14.3 Becky Purnell requested area panel response to changing name of City Assembly to City Wide Conference.
- 14.4 Alan Cooke stated that the proposed date, venue and time were positive albeit will be potentially difficult for more than 80 people to attend.
- 14.5 Becky Purnell stated the Head of Housing, Tracey Johns will be invited as will Councillor Meadows. She stated that she has been involved with organising various consultations on asset management including the details of the next 5 years, residents attending will have an opportunity to glean information on the long term picture.
- 14.6 Chris El-Shabba highlighted concerns regarding distances, the effort required for residents to attend in relation to the venue and finally the date requested.
- 14.7 Becky Purnell confirmed that the date was the only time the venue was available, she added that catering will also be provided although not on the same scale as previous.
- 14.8 Chris El-Shabba noted although the chair's are notified, they do not always notify the tenants in their area.
- 14.9 Becky Purnell stated that due to the elections this year, officers were advised to wait until afterwards.
- 14.10 Becky Purnell stated the EDB Deadline is due in December.
- 14.11 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

15 ELECTIONS TO SERVICE IMPROVEMENT GROUPS

- 15.1 No nominations ahead of meeting
- 15.2 Appointment to the Following Groups:
- 15.3 **Home:**
Chris El-Shabba
- 15.4 **Neighbourhood and Community**
To be re-elected at a future panel.
- 15.5 **Tenancy**
To be re-elected at a later date

15.6 **Involvement & Empowerment**
Chris El-Shabba unanimously elected

15.7 **Business & Value for Money**
Patrick McKenna

15.8 **Tenant and Disability Network**
Ian Ramage

16 CITY WIDE REPORTS

16.1 **RESOLVED** – That the reports are noted.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 Alan Cooke enquired if everything regarding job numbers from 2014 on page 40 of the estate budget has been completed.

17.2 Becky Purnell stated that this is just in regards to the current year and for Alan Cooke to contact her.

17.3 Chair requested the Resident Involvement Manager clarify the fencing for manor farm and what the prices are for.

17.4 Becky Purnell clarified the figures were in relation to a contingency budget to repair a fence should it be blown down.

17.5 Sharon Terry will find report for Janet Gearing to clarify info regarding fences that need to have work done.

The meeting concluded at 8.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of