

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

7.00pm 10 DECEMBER 2015

LABURNUM GROVE, GROUND FLOOR LOUNGE, BURSTEAD CLOSE, BRIGHTON,
BN1 7HX

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Hill, Meadows, Yates.

Representatives: Dave Eve (Nettleton & Dudeney), Peter O'Connor (Bates Estate), Heather Hayes (Coldean), Bob Spacie (Laburnum Grove), Tracey Cox (North Moulsecoomb), John Marchant (East Central Moulsecoomb)

Non-Voting Delegates: Paul Wright (Coldean), Jay Simmonds (Coldean), Terrence Hill (Bates Estate), Joanne Hills (Laburnum Grove), Mary Marchant (North Moulsecoomb), Ray Metcalf (East Central Moulsecoomb)

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Keely McDonald (Resident Involvement Officer), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income, Involvement and Inclusion), Nick Kitson (Performance and Improvement Officer), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services)

Guests:

16 APOLOGIES

16.1 Apologies from Barbara Castleton, North Castleton.

17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

17.1 Tracey Hill questioned offer of possible walk around in Hove at 12.9

17.2 Rachel Chasseaud stated that her offer to join panel member on a walk still stands.

17.2 12.8 that the word read 'contacts' not 'contracts'.

18 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

18.1 Chair gave brief statement on recently deceased panel member.

18.2 A Minutes silence was observed.

18.3 Councillor Meadows stated that recently, 2 landlords of HMO's have been fined for trying to avoid being licensed. She noted that this was good news for BHCC as it showed it was cracking down on Landlords operating illegally in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean.

18.4 John Marchant enquired as to how many cases have been reported

18.5 Councillor Meadows clarified that there are 48 currently being investigated however it will take time due to the legal process.

19 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

19.1 (Item 1 – Scaffolding)

19.2 Heather Hayes stated that she there has been scaffolding up by her area for 24 weeks now, she noted various concerns regarding work still outstanding.

19.3 John Marchant confirmed similar cases have been ongoing for years. Stated that issues will not be rectified unless reported.

19.4 Cllr Tracey Hill, Chair, agreed and suggested keeping this on the agenda through meetings.

19.5 Anne Meadows stated BHCC's monitoring of the Mears contract is strict and will continue to be scrutinised closely.

19.6 Panel agreed to revisit issue in 1 year.

19.7 (Item 2 – Porous brickwork on houses in Coldean)

19.8 Heather Hayes stated that BHCC must invest in properties as damp is being accrued due to the quality of materials previously utilised.

19.9 The chair stated that some are leaseholder property and need to go through consultation first.

19.20 HH stated that legal ought to expedite the process.

19.21 Councillor Meadows stated that Mears will be in a better position to take this on once consultation with leaseholders have taken place.

19.22 Councillor Yates stated consultation should begin earlier if section 20 is holding the process up. He noted that the Leaseholder action group want longer consultation times.

19.23 Councillor Meadows stated the entire program of works has been planned in; this can be assessed to identify priorities.

19.24 Bob Spacie stated that Mears promised this 6 months ago.

19.25 Councillor Meadows stated she will help to enforce it.

19.26 (Item 3 – Travellers in Wild Park)

19.27 Tracey Cox stated that bollards cannot be effective as a caravan has taken residence in the park. She

- 19.28 The chair stated that this meeting is for housing issues and clarified that concerned parties should liaise with City Parks.
- 19.29 Bob Spacie enquired if it would be possible to invite City Parks officers to future meetings.
- 19.30 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement, stated that area panels have invited members of City Park in the past however officers commented it was difficult to attend many meetings.
- 19.31 Rachel Chasseaud stated that this issue was discussed 10 days ago with Robert Walker.
- 19.32 Ray Metcalf enquired if the café owner is being invited
- 19.33 Rachel Chasseaud stated that a meeting has taken place with the café owner and the police.
- 19.34 Chair stated that this issue should be taken to City Parks.
- 19.35 (Item 4 - Replacement bulbs in kitchen and bathrooms)
- 19.36 Councillor Yates stated the issue was that bulbs were expensive; as a result light fittings were chosen.
- 19.37 Bob Spacie stated this has been discussed before at Service Improvement Group Meetings and that light fittings were concluded as the most effective way of lighting.
- 19.38 (Item 5 – Cleaning of road gutters)
- 19.39 Chair stated this has been passed on to City Clean.
- 19.40 (Item 6 – Litter bin on Barkham road)
- 19.41 Chair stated this has been passed on to the City Clean Association and shall get a response from them in due course.
- 19.42 (Item 7 – Grass cuttings)
- 19.43 Chair stated that this will go back to groups for discussion.
- 19.44 (Item 8 – Contacting neighbourhood officers)
- 19.45 Dave Eve stated this has been resolved and remedied.
- 19.46 (Item 9 – Code of Conduct)
- 19.47 Becky Purnell confirmed that this is an agenda item.
- 19.48 (Item 10 – Stage 2 complaints)
- 19.49 Bob Spacie stated almost a year has been spent on stage 1-2 complaints.

19.50 Councillor Meadows stated she cannot get involved once it has entered the legal stage.

20 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

20.1 Ododo Dafe gave a brief overview and presented the report noting customer satisfaction in terms of survey response is very good. She stated that there was an issue regarding internal referred calls creating issues as calls are bound out, as a result the figures will look different next quarter.

20.2 Councillor Yates stated that the number of tenants on 4.0.2 on page 29 doesn't add up to total of all number above it.

20.3 Ododo Dafe apologised for the error.

20.4 **RESOLVED** – That the panel agreed to note the report.

21 MUTUAL EXCHANGE INCENTIVE SCHEME PROPOSAL

21.1 Nick Kitson presented the report stating that other Council's such as Harlow and Cambridge have been cross referenced and found that there were positives such as financial benefits and a quick changeover if agreed by committee. He noted that money was set aside this financial year and that it is already available.

21.2 Dave Eve stated the financial incentive is large.

21.3 Tracey Cox stated there were elderly tenants in the area residing in 4 bed houses who have been told they cannot downsize to 2 bed.

21.4 Nick Kitson stated that it will not be a black and white issue. He noted that for the moment this is the best medium while acknowledging the hard decisions needed to be made.

21.5 Terence Hill highlighted a typo regarding the date which referred to 2016.

21.6 Nick Kitson acknowledged and apologised for this mistake.

21.7 **RESOLVED** – That the panel agreed to note the report.

22 WELFARE REFORM CHANGES

22.1 Ododo Dafe presented the report on Welfare Reform Changes stating that universal credit will be introduced next month and that it is likely to initially have a significant impact on a small number of people. She noted that Universal credit will now only be available to people over 21.

22.2 Heather Hayes stated computer illiteracy will be a problem. She enquired if BHCC will begin a specialist team to tackle this large issue.

- 22.3 Ododo Dafe stated that some people with specific disabilities can be exempt also some officers are involved in a project to look at getting volunteers to help others. She noted that there are more disadvantages to not being able to use the internet.
- 22.4 Rachel Chasseaud stated that there is free internet access at libraries around Brighton and Hove.
- 22.5 Tracey Cox in terms of online literacy, libraries are going to be at full capacity. She enquired how this is going to work.
- 22.6 Councillor Meadows stated that there are ongoing efforts to assess the impact on tenants and to create a policy for the future designed to enable them to live a life where they can be supported.
- 22.7 Peter O'Connor stated that many people will be a week in arrears rent by no fault of their own.
- 22.8 Ododo Dafe stated that as universal credit comes in, single jobseekers will be first. She noted in regards to free internet access; an effort via secured funding to provide more training hours at places like the Whitehawk inn, the Bridge, Hangleton and Knoll Centre and other areas is being undertaken.
- 22.9 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

23 MODEL CONSTITUTION

- 23.1 Becky Purnell presented the report. She noted that the West Area Panel moved to change the work to, 'genuine' on the last line on page 65.
- 23.2 Terence Hill stated that this has been update 5 times though the Resident Involvement Officers team, he noted that they have been very helpful.
- 23.3 Members agreed to this request.

24 REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT

- 24.1 Becky Purnell enquired if area panels would like someone elected or volunteered to meet with herself and other representative from other area panels to discuss and create a report for the next June area panels.
- 24.2 Terence Hill and Bob Spacie elected to engage with Resident Involvement Manager for new report.
- 24.3 **RESOLVED** – that the report is noted.

25 CITY WIDE REPORTS

- 25.1 **AGREED** – to note the report.

26 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26.1 Panel raised concern around BHCC effort to be cost effective in its response to tackle legionella at ponds, stated that they can reduce the price from £2000 to £450. Panel noted that Council prices are excessive.

The meeting concluded at 21:00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of