

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 16 SEPTEMBER 2016

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Gibson (Chair) and Morris.

Representatives: Carl Boardman, Ann Ewings, Jane Thorp, Anthony Priels, G Coates, Martin Cunningham, Barry Hughes, Theresa Mackey, Alan Davies and Amanda Orchard.

Officers: Hilary Edgar (Housing Service Operations Manager), Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Martin Reid (Head of Housing Strategy Property & Investment) and Rebecca Mann (Resident Involvement Officer).

Guests: Ian Stone (Mears Representative).

9 APOLOGIES

9.1 Apologies were received from Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement and Rachel Chasseaud, Head of Tenancy Services.

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

10.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 July 2016 be approved and signed as the correct record.

11 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

11.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“Chairs and Secretaries were recently sent an advance copy of an article for Homing In on the new design of Housing’s landlord services. The structure, which will come into effect in October, is based on residents’ feedback that they prefer having fewer teams involved in matters they report to Housing. Housing Officers, arranged in four area teams, will replace Neighbourhood Officers, Neighbourhood Team Leaders and the Tenancy Enforcement Team. Tenants will see very little change in terms of accessing services as the Housing Customer Service Team and the Repairs Helpdesk will remain as before. If you have any queries about this, now or when your members receive Homing In, please contact the Resident Involvement team.”

11.2 The Chair stated to the Panel that there was a report on housing delivery options that was to be presented at the Housing & New Homes Committee on 21 September 2016. He noted concern for the lack of consultation that had been done with home owners and residents and agreed to propose to the Committee that a full consultation was conducted.

12 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

12.1 Item 2 - Highden, Westmount and Crown Hill:

- The Officers agreed with residents' concerns regarding the timeframe that the work was to be completed in and noted that there the communication with residents was poor.
- A provisional plan for major works that had been identified was published online annually; however, this was subject to change as emergency jobs would be prioritised and it was budget dependent.

12.2 Item 3 - Communication between departments:

- It was proposed that residents would discuss the ongoing problems with contacting different departments at a tenant only meeting.
- The restructure of the Housing department could resolve the recurring issues and there would be a reporting regarding this at a future Housing Area Panel.

12.3 Item 3 - Scaffolding and home contents insurance:

- A resident noted that there would be an article regarding scaffolding in the future addition of Homing In.

13 REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

13.1 Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy Property & Investment, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The report was to be presented at Housing & New Homes Committee on 21 September 2016.
- There was a history of issues regarding Brighton & Hove City Council not meeting the decent home standards and investment was needed to improve the stock standard.
- A 10 year programme had been produced and would focus on: meeting with Mears on a weekly basis to discuss progress with quality assurance within the partnership; undertaking a review of the partnership to identify further improvements that would benefit the partnership, residents and stakeholders; and further reports to be presented and discussed at future Housing & New Homes Committees.

13.2 Ian Stone, Mears representative, highlighted the following:

- All repair and improvement work was being evidenced, including before and after photos.
- 18 directly employed staff had been hired and an apprenticeship program had been developed.
- There had been a positive change of the standard of work following the beginning of the 10 year programme.

13.3 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Housing Strategy Property & Investment clarified:

- The Property & Investment team had internal surveyors and worked closely with Procurement and Health & Safety.
- It was agreed that examples of reports that Mears used to document inspections would be provided at a future Area Housing Panel.

13.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

14 SOMERSET POINT SPRINKLER PROJECT

14.1 The Head of Housing Strategy Property & Investment introduced the report and highlighted:

- The sprinkler project was part of the investment programme.
- The Council worked closely with the fire service to ensure the statutory fire safety guidelines were upheld. They wished to promote the use of sprinklers in high rise blocks.
- Somerset Point was considered a high risk building as the majority of residents were elderly and it was high rise.
- The report included the process that was taken, the precautions that were taken to prevent disruptions for residents and feedback received.
- A future report will be presented at Housing & New Homes Committee in November 2016 to discuss the installation of sprinkler systems in other high rise blocks across the city.

14.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Housing Strategy Property & Investment clarified:

- The fire service would determine which properties were higher risk and the majority of these would be high rise blocks.
- The fire service and the council had statutory duties to complete annual checks of the properties in the city; however, the sprinkler system would be an additional safety precaution.
- The sprinklers were isolated and would not set off the sprinklers in every room of the flats, unless necessary. A pilot trial was completed in a test flat and positive feedback had been received from the residents that had attended.
- Elderly and disabled residents that lived in flats above ground floor level should have additional provisions in place.

14.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

15 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS UPDATE

15.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

16 CITY WIDE REPORTS

15.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the reports.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 The following points were raised by residents and Officers:

- Cladding often needed planning permission; therefore, planned works could be delayed or cancelled.
- The Chair encouraged residents to contact Officers with suggestions of future items that could be discussed at Area Housing Panels.

The meeting concluded at 3.35pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of