

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

7.00pm 28 JULY 2016

**LABURNUM GROVE, GROUND FLOOR LOUNGE, BURSTEAD CLOSE, BRIGHTON,
BN17HX**

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Dan Yates (Moulsecoomb and Bevendean Ward)

Representatives: Ray Goble (Elwyn Jones), Des Jones (Hollingdean), Clifford Willett (Bates Estate), John Marchant (East Central Moulsecoomb), Bob Spacie (Laburnum Grove), Barbara Castleton (North Moulsecoomb), Mary Marchant (North Moulsecoomb)

Non-Voting Delegates: Walter Sargison (Broadfields), Terrence Hill (Bates Estate), Jane Hunter (East Moulsecoomb), Andrew Hunter (East Moulsecoomb)

Officers: Emma Gilbert (Tenancy Services), Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager)

Guests:

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Anne Meadows, Tracey Hill, also from Peter O'Connor, Tracey Cox and Ray Metcalf.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Jane Hunter to be stated as a rep and not a voter.

2.2 Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

4 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

4.1 (Item 1 – Start and end dates for repairs and improvements)

4.2 Residents stated various concerns and requests:

- Length of time spent on end dates
- Communications issues
- Request to clarify details highlighting timetables for upcoming work, including a letter updating reps of progress during various stages through scaffolding programs

4.3 Officers addressed resident's concerns and requests by:

- Noting that the issue of length of time spent on end dates has been on the agenda for a long time.
- That communication is key and will be looked at over time.

- Have identified that Mears had identified comms and scaffolding as 2 areas where recurring issues are brought up.
- Will look into possibility of providing letters including details in future.

4.4 (Item 2 – Scaffolding)

4.5 A resident stated concern that the same response had been brought up year after year.

4.6 The Officer for Housing stated that Mears understood the issue and agreed that management will bring an update on progress and development to the next area panel.

4.7 (Item 3 – EDB Fencing)

4.8 Residents stated the following concerns and statements:

- Issues regarding communication remained prevalent.
- Residents would be happy to be contacted via internet or letter to groups.
- Concern surrounding work on fencing still outstanding since last December.

4.9 The Resident Involvement Manager responded to the concerns and statements with the following:

- EDB is currently being reviewed.
- Comms is currently part of the review.
- Mears have seen a change to how they are managing this.
- Encouraged residents to use Mears' EDB phone number or email address in future.

4.10 (Item 4 – Review of Resident Involvement Officers)

4.11 Residents stated positive response towards Resident Involvement Officers.

4.12 (Item 5 – Pricing Policy)

4.13 Residents stated the following:

- Concerns surrounding prices when presented with EDB budgeting.
- Should receive costings before attending EDB meetings.
- Residents to go around with Mears to see exactly what residents want when Mears begin pricing work.

4.14 Officers addressed resident's requests by the following:

- Agreed with resident's concerns regarding pricing and despatch of information regarding costings prior to EDB meetings.
- Depending on whether there's enough time there may be scope for residents to join Mears to visit assessment of works to take place.

4.15 (Item 6 – Washing Machines)

4.16 Residents expressed the following concerns and enquiries:

- Consultation was a waste of BHCC's time.
- Residents voted against the card system due to the high cost required to modify the machines.
- Enquired how much officer time was spent on this.
- BHCC should have consulted residents to begin with.

4.17 The Chair and Officers responded to the concerns with the following:

- Chair stated that the report brought to next Area Panel should quantify the amount of officer's time spent on this.
- Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement, stated that consultation with members at either time would have been met with scepticism.

4.18 (Item 7 – Future of homing in)

4.19 Residents expressed positive comments:

- Stated happiness with sign up of BHCC online whilst retaining option for hard copy of information.
- That the ease of access and wealth of information online including option to receive hard copy information should be further publicised.

4.20 Officers responded to resident's concerns by stating:

- Residents could save money on postage and printing by viewing publication online.
- BHCC introducing "my account" online to allow residents to look at rent accounts and 'homing in'.
- Under this scheme it will be easier for tenants to opt in and out.

4.21 (Item 8 – Sub-contractor Overcharging)

4.22 Residents expressed the following concern:

- Enquired if anyone had been charged by the police.

4.23 Officers allayed concerns by stating:

- The money owed has been paid back, £500000 was paid back. All outstanding money was paid back.

4.24 (Item 9 – Wheelie Bins and rubbish)

4.25 Residents stated the following concerns and enquiries:

- That Chair received special treatment due to the position of being a Councillor and that residents do not receive the same quick response time.
- If BHCC could make it a bylaw to take out the rubbish.

4.26 The Chair and Officers responded to resident's concerns:

- Chair refuted the claim that position as Councillor had been the reason for quick response time.
- Chair clarified that a decision to make the removal of rubbish by BHCC would need approval by Privity Council a function removed by national government.

4.27 (Item 10 – HMOs)

4.28 Residents stated this would be a good subject for LATs.

4.29 (Items 11+12 – Fumes from boiler outlets)

4.30 A resident requested if K&T could attend Area Panel meetings in future for questions and answers session.

4.31 Officers stated that will ask in future, suggested residents should email K&T directly for a quicker response to any questions.

4.32 (Item 13 – Window replacement on Bates Estate)

4.33 Residents expressed concern regarding previous request to bring in planned window replacements, however instead receiving deviation and change. Residents enquired why the schedule had slipped.

4.34 Officers stated the plans were based on the premise that there was going to be work in to 2017.

4.35 (Item 14 – Front door at Dudeney Lodge)

4.36 Resolved that the report be agreed.

4.37 (Item 15 – Health and safety regulations in senior housing)

4.38 Agreed that the report be kept for the next meeting.

4.39 (Item 16 – Three star items)

4.40 All items taken as read and noted.

5 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

5.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement introduced the report and explained that it was a brief report due to the despatch times of the agenda. It was agreed that the residents would be informed when the full report was available on the website and hardcopies could be sent to residents who did not have internet access. The following points were highlighted:

- Rent arrears had reduced and it was believed this was due to the welfare reform work that had been completed.
- The phone line issues with the Customer Services & Complaints team had been resolved and the figures had therefore been improved since the last performance report.

- The letting time for properties had been improved; however, there had been problems with senior housing lets. It was explained that current work was being completed and this had brought down the average turnaround time for senior housing.
- A high number of repairs had been completed and there had been an improvement with appointments being kept with Mears and tenants.
- There had been two cases of antisocial behaviour where legal action had been sought.
- Work was being done to prevent tenancy fraud and two properties had been re-let in the last quarter. Residents were encouraged to report suspected fraudulent cases and these would be investigated. The Head of Tenancy Services added that 37 properties had been returned to the Council in the last year.

5.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement clarified:

- Data collected from the estate inspections could be included in the next Quarter Performance report.
- The Officers agreed to look into including the satisfaction of the EDB Budget in a future Quarter Performance report; however, noted that it would be difficult to gather the data.

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

6 DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT

6.1 The Resident Involvement Manager introduced the report and stated the following:

- The Code of Conduct was developed as part of the Everyone Counts report that was agreed by the Housing Committee in December 2012.
- The Code of Conduct had not been rewritten; however, a shorter set of ground rules for meetings had been developed, which was similar, to make them more user friendly.
- The residents should decide whether a section in the constitution should be added to include the protocol for when a resident behaves poorly at a number of meetings.
- Residents had added a section called “Length of Withdrawal from Resident Involvement” after a previous breach.

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

7 CITY WIDE REPORTS

7.1 **AGREED** – to note the reports.

7.2 Head of Income, Involvement and Inclusion confirmed the wrong report was provided.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 An election was held to appoint panel to attend Home Service Improvement Group.

8.2 Ray Metcalf unanimously voted for.

The meeting concluded at 21:20pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of