

# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 6 SEPTEMBER 2017

LEACH COURT (ENTER PREMISES VIA CALLING NUMBER 38)

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Gibson (Chair)

**Representatives:** Carl Boardman, George Coates, Martin Cunningham, Ann Ewings, Barry Hughes, John McPhillips, Tomm Nyuus, David Spafford, and Jason Williams

**Officers:** Emma Gilbert, Hillary Edgar, Sassy Crawford, Theresa Youngman, Delia Hills (Mears)

**Guests:** Edward Cope (Chair, Resident Inspectors) and Lesley Cope (Resident Inspector)

#### 1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Tony Worsfold, Theresa Mackey, Jane Thorp and Jeff Tourmentin

#### 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 The following errors in the minutes were noted; Tony Worsfold should have been listed as present and 'tenant only' in paragraph 37.5 should have read 'resident only'.

2.2 **RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.**

#### 3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 "The Housing team have requested that attendees complete a survey about their experience of today's Area Housing Panel and send it back in the prepaid envelope provided.

3.2 "There is an additional report on the agenda about a proposed Home Purchase Policy. Copies will be handed out. Comments on the report should be sent to Di Hughes whose details are at the end of the report."

3.3 The Chair also stated that working groups with Tenant Representatives, Members and officers would start running as part of the budget setting process. These groups would look how spending is split between the HRA and council budgets. In addition the Chair asked any residents interested in looking more at housing finance to contact him to arrange a session.

#### 4 PRESENTATION BY RESIDENT INSPECTORS

4.1 Mr Cope, Chair of the Resident Inspectors, presented the item to the meeting and highlighted:

- Resident inspectors are involved between a property becoming vacant and being let.
- Properties are inspected against the lettable standard, any work that has been done on the property is inspected and any work needed is flagged up.
- The Inspectors have checked 24 properties in 2017.

4.2 The Mears Representative welcomed the resident inspectors and said that any additional monitoring can only be a good thing. The Resident Involvement Officer stated that the resident inspector video which was not shown at the meeting due to technical difficulties would be available online.

4.3 **Action Point:** Resident Inspector Video to be made available online.

#### 5 ITEMS FROM RESIDENT ONLY MEETINGS

5.1 The Chair asked for any comments on the responses provided to the issues raised at resident only meetings.

##### 5.2 1) Tenants right to safety and security in their homes

- Residents felt that the allocation policy did not provide adequate safeguarding against antisocial behaviour often placing individuals with a history of antisocial behaviour with vulnerable residents. Individuals were moved from area to area rather than issues being addressed. Where legal action had been taken by residents there was often no help from the council.
- The Chair stated that a new allocations policy and letting plan had been agreed and this may see an increased number of individuals with complex issues moving from temporary accommodation in council properties. Dissatisfaction with antisocial behaviour was reflected in the STAR survey results. The Chair also suggested that antisocial behaviour could be an item for the next meeting's agenda.
- Officers responded that there was a choice based letting system in which bids were ranked by the allocations property and if families or individuals were moving it was due to successful bids. The council can direct lets but this is only done ever very rarely, two in the last 12 months. The police and council meet to discuss antisocial behaviour at regular cluster meetings but the conviction rate for antisocial behaviour is very low. The council does evict tenants and there had been 9 closure orders in 2017.

##### 5.3 2) Review of procedures for mutual exchanges

- Residents felt the response did not address the original question. The mutual exchange policy is flawed as there is no standard for the state of the properties being exchanged and individuals who had breached their tenancy agreements and had outstanding charges were able to leave them behind.

- Officers responded that a mutual exchange was a transaction between two individuals and the council could not require properties to be at a lettable standard. The council does however carry out health and safety and pre-termination checks on properties. An individual remains a tenant after a mutual exchange so any outstanding charges can be recharged.

5.4 The Chair asked the panel if they noted the other responses provided.

5.5 **Action Point:** 'Anti-social behaviour' to be included as an agenda item at the next meeting or as the subject of a special meeting

5.6 **RESOLVED: The report was noted**

## 6 ELECTIONS TO SIGS

6.1 The Resident Involvement Officer asked for nominations and the following were all elected unanimously:

### **Business and Value for Money**

Ann Ewings

David Spafford, Deputy

### **Home Group**

Jason Williams

Carl Boardman

### **Involvement and Empowerment**

Ann Ewings

Jason Williams

Barry Humphries, Deputy

### **Tenancy and Neighbourhoods**

Ann Ewings

Barry Humphries

### **Tenant disability network**

Martin Cunningham

Jason Williams

## 7 ELECTION OF RESIDENT VICE CHAIR

7.1 The Resident Involvement Officer asked for nominations to the position of Vice Chair. Ann Ewings nominated by Barry Humphries and seconded by David Spafford was elected unanimously.

## 8 TENANCY AGREEMENT REPORT

8.1 The Tenancy Services Operations Manager introduced the report and highlighted:

- There was a legal requirement to update the tenancy agreement which was last updated in 2009.
- There were additional sections added to cover senior housing and extra care and the sections covering fire arms and fire safety have been expanded with a 0 tolerance policy on using common ways for storage in both low and high rises.
- Joint tenancies could be ended by either party with the possibility of a new single tenancy being issued.
- All tenant rights were now listed together at the end of the agreement.
- Changes to succession rights were referenced but implementation of any changes has been delayed

8.2 In response to concerns raised by residents the Officers clarified:

- Fire safety could be added as an agenda item to a future meeting to enable a fuller discussion.
- Residents could contact East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to arrange for a free fire safety check of their homes. This was open to all residents and not restricted to council tenants.
- Alternative storage areas for scooters were being considered.

8.3 **RESOLVED: The report was noted**

## 9 HOME PURCHASE POLICY

9.1 The Home Purchase Policy report was tabled as an additional agenda item and presented by the Tenancy Services Operations Manager who highlighted:

- The council was seeking to spend up to £1 million on purchasing housing in the city.
- Individual properties could not be purchased for more than £250,000.
- If this policy is agreed it will be reviewed annually as part of the Housing Revenue Account budget.
- The council had first right of refusal on properties purchased under right to buy and there had been 15 eligible properties sold last year.

9.2 Residents agreed that this was a positive step but cautioned that there was a potential opportunity cost of maintain existing stock and building new housing to be considered.

9.3 **RESOLVED: The report was noted**

**10 STAR ACTIONS REPORT**

10.1 The Tenancy Services Operations Manager introduced the report and highlighted:

- The report followed the STAR survey and report last year
- An action plan was included as appendix 1 including a review of the bulk waste scheme
- A recurring theme of the survey was a lack of feedback and communication from officers

10.2 Residents felt it was important that the results were examined in greater detail and suggested a task and finish group should be established.

10.3 **RESOLVED: The report was noted**

**11 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

11.1 Officers introduced the report and highlighted:

- 46 indicators; 36 were on target, 4 were near the target, 5 were below target and 1 was still to be confirmed.
- New indicators were being developed for the Estate Development Budget but there was a difficulty around this as much of the work was seasonal.

11.2 **RESOLVED: The report was noted**

**12 FEEDBACK ON ANY SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS**

12.1 The Chair asked for any feedback about the agenda or meeting, residents responded:

- More feedback from resident only meetings should be included
- More time to read the agenda before the meeting
- Panels provide more interaction and focus than a larger city wide meeting.
- Breakout groups could be used at future meetings to allow more discussion.

**13 CITY WIDE REPORTS**

13.1 **RESOLVED: The city wide reports were noted**

**14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

14.1 Residents asked if they could be informed of the details of neighbour's funerals by officers. Officers responded that there may be data protection considerations and whether to invite neighbours to funerals may not be their decision to make but it was something that could be looked in to.

14.2 Residents were concerned that disabled residents who wished to move to a flat on a lower floor were not being allowed to move within their estate. Officer responded that they could not let directly so people were had to bid for properties, social workers could however recommend moves.

14.3 **Action Point: 'Party Houses' to be included as an item on the next agenda or at a special meeting on anti-social behaviour if one is called.**

The meeting concluded at 4.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of