

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

2.00pm 5 SEPTEMBER 2017

SANDERS HOUSE INGRAM CRESCENT WEST HOVE, EAST SUSSEX, BN3 5NW

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Moonan (Chair) and Barnett.

Represtatives: Ann Packham, Alison Gray, Ann Tizzard, Roy Crowhurst, Joe Macrae, Vic Dodd, Pat Weller and Muriel Briault.

Officers: Pat Liddell (Resident Involvement Officer), John Currell (Housing Asset Strategy Manager), Keely McDonald (Resident Involvement Officer), Hilary Edgar (Housing Service Operations Manager), Emma Gilbert (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), Thomas McColgan (Democratic Services Assistant) and Cliona May (Democratic Services Officer)

Guests: Eddie Wilson (Operational General Manager – Mears), Jeff Tourmentin (Strategic General Manager – Mears) and Eddie Wilson (Resident Inspector)

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Peltzer Dunn, Tracey Angus, Gemma Powell and Ted Chapman.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 April 2017 be approved and signed as the correct record.

2.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous Special Area Panel meeting held on 25 May 2017 be approved and signed as the correct record.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“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.

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.”

A HOME PURCHASE POLICY

3.2 The Housing Service Operations Manager introduced the report and encouraged residents to send comments to Di Hughes, the Business Change Manager.

3.3 In response to queries raised by the Panel the Housing Service Operations Manager clarified the following:

- If a tenant purchased their property in the Right to Buy scheme then they could not resell it for five years.
- Properties would be sold back to the Council at market rates; however, there was a cap of £250,000 to spend on a property. The demand of the market and the need of a property would be assessed before buying.
- There was a budget of £1m to buy properties back in 2017.
- If the property the Council decided to purchase was in bad repairs then this would be reflected in the price.
- Social housing rent was calculated on the size of a property, rather than the location. Affordable rent could be up to the maximum of 80% of the market price.

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

4 PRESENTATION BY RESIDENT INSPECTORS

4.1 Eddie Cope, Resident Inspector, gave a presentation and showed a video that outlined the role of the resident inspectors. The following points were highlighted:

- The Resident Inspectors would compare the findings in the flat to a list provided by Mears detailing the work that had been completed.
- Mr Cope showed an example questionnaire that would be completed by the Resident Inspectors and this would then be sent to Mears.

4.2 In response to queries raised by the Panel Mr Cope highlighted the following:

- Serious matters, such as a water leak, would be classified as an urgent matter and this would be fixed before tenants moved in to the property. Other recorded works would be reported to Mears and these would not be prioritised.
- Non-urgent repair work could be completed once the tenant had moved in to the property.
- An occupational therapist would assess a flat before a disabled resident moved in to ensure the adaptations were completed.
- The Resident Inspectors did not know the resident who was to let the property that they were inspecting.
- Not all ground flats could be disabled access as there could still be accessibility issues. This was usually with the external entrance.

5 ITEMS FROM RESIDENT ONLY MEETINGS

5.1 The Housing Service Operations Manager explained that the previous system of “blue pages” had been updated and only three star items, which were city wide concerns, would be discussed at the Area Housing Panels.

5.2 (Item 9 – July question - Fire Safety in High Rises) It was suggested that evacuation procedures should be on the notice boards in the communal areas. The Officer explained that they would not publish evacuation procedures as all incidents would be different and the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service would have to assess each

individual incident. The Panel agreed with the Chair that it would be helpful to have a report regarding fire safety at a future Area Housing Panel as there was ongoing work concerning this.

- 5.3 (Item 11 – July question - Conditions of tenancy) In response to concerns raised by the Panel the Officer clarified that to end a tenancy a conviction was needed; however, the Housing department can use closure orders to close a property initially and then go through the court process to end the tenancy. It was noted that these were used and had been successful.
- 5.4 (Item 12 – July question - Upgrades to Sky TV and communal satellite dishes) The Housing Asset Strategy Manager explained to the Panel that the communal satellite dishes provided freeview channels and residents could choose to purchase add ons with Sky and this would not require new satellite dishes to be installed. Selected aerials were to be upgraded as some were not compatible with SkyQ; however, if residents had any further queries then they should contact Adrian Day, Mechanical & Electrical team.
- 5.5 (Item 4 – April question - Estate Development Budget (EDB) – costing of work) It was explained that the Woodingdean fencing cost of £15,000 was for 12 jobs rather than 12 individual fencing panels.
- 5.6 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the responses.

6 ELECTIONS TO SIGS

- 6.1 The following residents were elected to the groups on behalf of the West Hove & Portslade Area:

Home Group

Representatives: Alison Gray, Muriel Briault
Deputies: Vacant

Tenancy & Neighbourhood Group

Representatives: Ann Packham, Ted Chapman
Deputies: Gemma Powell

Involvement & Empowerment Group

Representatives: Alison Gray, Muriel Briault
Deputies: Vacant

Business & Value for Money Group

Representatives: Tracy Angus, Vic Dodd
Deputies: Vacant

Tenant Disability Network

Representatives: Alison Gray, Muriel Briault
Deputies: Ann Packham

7 ELECTION OF RESIDENT VICE CHAIR

7.1 **RESOLVED** – That the voting co-optees unanimously agreed for Roy Crowhurst to be the Resident Vice Chair.

8 TENANCY AGREEMENT REPORT

8.1 The Housing Officer introduced the report and highlighted:

- The Tenancy Agreement Report had been previously reviewed in 2009 and it needed updating due to the Housing and Planning Act 2016 being passed.
- A positive response had been received to the consultation and changes had been made to the draft report due to this.
- The Home Service Improvement Group had agreed the proposed changes.
- The key changes were: the layout; headings; phrasings; new sections were added, particularly about senior and extra care housing, “Your Rights”, and fire arms; and the rights and responsibilities section had been updated.
- The Fire Risk Management had been updated and it was emphasised that common ways needed to be kept clear as they were a severe fire hazard.
- Negative feedback had been received regarding eviction over rent arrears. It was noted that six tenants were evicted in 2016 due to rent arrears and there had been none evicted in 2017.
- The data protection and information sharing had been updated and followed the Brighton & Hove City Council’s policy.
- Either party could bring an end to a tenancy with notice provided. It was explained that negative feedback had been received regarding this; however, each case was reviewed individually.
- The Tenancy Agreement Report would be discussed at the Housing & New Homes Committee and would be implemented by January 2018.

8.2 In response to queries raised by the Panel the Officer clarified:

- The section regarding fire safety stated: “residents must contact us before purchasing a mobility scooter”. This was due to the fire risks as a mobility scooter could be an obstruction and a fire hazard. The Council would explore storage options and would not refuse a resident from purchasing one.
- Electric wheelchairs needed to be added to the report as it was a need for the individual.
- Sheltered blocks could be considered for storage as it was agreed that mobility scooters gave the individual a quality of life.

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

9 STAR ACTIONS REPORT

9.1 The Housing Service Operations Manager introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- 778 responses were gathered from the six open-ended questions residents were asked in the survey.
- The questions were designed to gather improvement suggestions; however, a lot of positive feedback was also received.

- Residents had reported that more detail and consultation was needed when the Housing Customer Service team were a case were dealing with a case.
- Action was to be taken in the two areas that the satisfaction rates had decreased from the previous survey completed in 2014. These were: 'your neighbourhood as a place to live' and 'the overall quality of your home'.
- The Officers encouraged feedback from the residents.

9.2 In response to a query raised by the Panel the Officer noted that 3000 surveys had been sent out and 778 were completed and received back.

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

10 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

10.1 The Officer introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- A narrative had been introduced under each indicator in the report.
- Three new indicators had been added regarding EDB focussing on the quality of work, performance and the delivery.
- A lot of the EDB work was seasonal; therefore, it was harder to record and set targets. The East Area Housing Panel had suggested that targets were discussed at the EDB Panel.

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

11 FEEDBACK ON ANY SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS

11.1 The following points were raised by the Panel:

- It would be helpful for the Area Housing Panel to see the results of the questionnaire being distributed as to why Representatives were not attending.
- Residents could contact the Housing department if they had a suggested agenda item to discuss at the Area Housing Panels.
- A rotation of the venues would be positive and may increase the attendance.

12 CITY WIDE REPORTS

12.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed the reports.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 There was none.

The meeting concluded at 3.57pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of