

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 7 JANUARY 2021

VIRTUAL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Mary Mears, Gill Williams, Dee Simson.

Representatives: Chris El-Shabba (Chair), Alan Cooke, Janet Gearing, Rosemary Johnson.

Officers: Glyn Huelin, Martin Reid, Sam Warren, Indi Hicks, Keely McDonald.

Guests: Simon Hughes, Sarah Booker-Lewis.

17 APOLOGIES

17.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Nancy Platts, Councillor Moonan and Councillor Brennan.

18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

18.1 Minutes of the meeting held on the 5th November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

19 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

19.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“We would like to acknowledge the feedback that residents and staff took time to give us about the last round of Area Panels.

There are challenges with using the internet particularly with software, different devices and networks. I recognise that this can make the meeting more complicated to follow and we hope that these issues can be gradually resolved.

We also know that online meetings can be difficult for some and the community engagement team are working with residents to support as many people as possible to access them.

It was very useful to learn how people felt about having a large single online meeting and you can be reassured the feedback, both negative and positive, will be used to help improve the way meetings are organised in the future.

I would like to remind everyone that the Area Panels are for future planning and issues that affect everyone, they are not the forum to raise individual issues, or repairs that have not been dealt with. If you do have an individual issue that is stuck in the

system, please do speak to your Community Engagement Officer who will be able to put you in touch with the right service or person.”

20 EAST AREA PANEL AGENDA

- 20.1 Item 1 – Draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy
- 20.2 Residents stated that the event was still due to take place. It was noted that some members of LAG had attended the pre-meeting to look at what should be in it.
- 20.3 An officer stated that they would wait for members’ comments at the next LAG. -Keely to look into this?
- 20.4 **RESOLVED** – that the response was noted.
- 20.5 Item 2 – Estate Development Budget
- 20.6 Councillor Mears disagreed with the decision to put money in to a pot to be shared around the city. Concern was expressed with regard to issues with the draft HRA budget process and that tenants required clarity on what was happening at this time of the year.
- 20.7 Councillor Simson sought clarification on whether the process involved a decision to be made either Housing Committee or Budget Council.
- 20.8 Councillor Williams sought a brief clarification on this due to myriad ongoing projects and enquired about the possibility of submitting bids in short time.
- 20.9 An officer referred to the reallocation of the budget and confirmed that the process had always been the same. It was stated that in the past a budget surplus would be added to a pot to be spent across the year. However it was noted that there would be a second round for main bids.
- 20.10 An officer clarified that quick bids were currently being submitted.
- 20.11 Councillor Simson sought further clarification as to the current situation.
- 20.12 An officer stated that following the EDB Review in 2018, 1 recommendation was to have 2 main rounds per year. It was noted that people sought this as sometimes money was bid for a year in advance and that where it to up to 18 months for works to go ahead, 2 rounds would speed up the delivery.
- 20.13 A resident noted that the West ward had not been offered a second round and sought further clarification on the current status of East area monies.
- 20.14 An officer agreed to bring figures to future meetings.
- 20.15 Councillor Simson referred to bids submitted in November and sought information on this.

- 20.16 Councillor Mears noted the pressure officers had been put under as a result of Covid this year.
- 20.17 Councillor Williams requested that the following take place:
- A brief be provided including information on what was currently available and what needed to be completed.
 - That a resident be contacted.
- 20.18 **AGREED** – that the response was noted.
- 20.19 Item 3 – Leaseholder Charges Relating to Antisocial Behaviour
- 20.20 **AGREED** - That the response was noted.
- 20.21 Item 4 – Leaseholder
- 20.22 **AGREED** – That the response was noted.
- 20.23 Item 5 – 2 star East – Covid-19 and Service Provision
- 20.24 A resident stated that they had yet to meet field officers.
- 20.25 Councillor Williams requested a report on the status of field officers, it was noted that estate visits were important.
- 20.26 Councillor Mears provided an example of field officer request taking 18 months before appearing, it was noted that HRA was paying a contribution to this and that housing was not in receipt of the level of service required.
- 20.27 **AGREED** – that the response was satisfactory.
- 20.28 Item 6 – Craven Vale Windows
- 20.29 A resident expressed concern of the conditions of windows at specific households.
- 20.30 An officer noted that a window surveyor was in the process of looking at this, it was noted that the condition of windows were consistent across estates apart from those being considered separately.
- 20.31 **AGREED** – that the response was satisfactory.
- 20.32 Item 7 – Maintenance and Installation of External Security Doors in Blocks
- 20.33 **AGREED** - that the response was satisfactory.
- 20.34 Item 8 – Improving Communication about Covid-19.
- 20.35 **AGREED** - that the response was satisfactory.
- 20.36 Item 9 – Problems with Windows and Roofs Contract.
- 20.37 **AGREED** - that the response was satisfactory.

20.38 Item 10 – West Area – Area Panel Process

20.39 **AGREED** - that the response was satisfactory.

20.40 Item 11 – Upkeep of Estates of Maintenance of Green Areas

20.41 **AGREED** - that the response was satisfactory.

20.42 Item 12 – Review of Council Policy on anti-Social Behaviour

20.43 **AGREED** - that the response was satisfactory.

20.44 Item 13 – Support for Elderly and Vulnerable Residents

20.45 **AGREED** - that the response was satisfactory.

Door Installation and Maintenance

20.46 The panel welcomed a report on the status of door installations and maintenance from the Head of Housing Repairs and Improvement, it was stated that each main entrance door was a standalone piece of work. BHCC had been to market following members' consideration of future delivery, however BHCC didn't receive enough successful bids to proceed with a longer contract. The officer specified that when BHCC had gone out to market, it had many additional functions to take in to account and that it was hard to get the right solution for everyone, it was further stated that some smaller blocks would have smaller doors. It was further noted that there were complex components with doors including electrical systems.

20.47 **AGREED** - that the update was noted.

Items for Housing Committee

20.48 The panel welcomed an update on the Housing Committee workplan progress, it was stated that there were still some issues with people being unable to move house which had an impact on repairs as well. It was further stated that the main concern was to the safety of residents and staff. It was noted that some residents did not want any works due to Covid-19.

20.49 Residents had the following statements, enquiries and concerns:

- A resident referred to an agreement made many years previously at Housing Committee which stipulated that where a property was well kept, BHCC was not to renovate and replace anything.
- A leaseholder stated referred to Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) cases within the performance report an noted that figures of ASB for Q1 – Q2 were yet unknown but that victims were pleased with actions that had been taken. Clarification was sought with regard to the number of resolved cases.

20.50 The Head of Housing acknowledged a rise in ASB during the Covid period though figures were not yet available.

- 20.51 Councillor Simson stated that this ought to have been dealt with by Field Officers. Reference was made to a question brought to Full Council regarding circa 200 open properties and clarification was sought regarding the status of these.
- 20.52 The Chair gave an example of BHCC helping with this issue, it was noted that the issue lay with communicating with police and following the process.
- 20.52 The Assistant Director of Housing stated that the issue of turnaround was highlighted during the Covid-19 era
- 20.53 The Head of Housing Repairs and Improvement stated that the 1st phase had a large effect on housing which left a large backlog on repairs and maintenance.
- 20.54 Councillor Mears noted the horrible status of properties that were exceptionally high standard which had been renovated with out need and yet remained empty.
- 20.55 Councillor Williams referred to empty properties and requested that this was investigated including a report on what had happened.
- 20.56 **AGREED** – that a report be brought and that the update was noted.

Performance Report Q2

- 20.57 The Assistant Director of Housing gave a brief overview of the Housing Performance Report Q2. It was noted that BHCC were still buying back a lot of properties under the home purchase scheme.
- 20.58 **AGREED** – that the report was noted.

Adult Learning Offer

- 20.59 The panel considered a vocal update on the Adult Learning Offer which was presented by an invited guest, Mr Hughes, it was stated that despite Covid-19, some service was still available, it was noted that the Whitehawk Inn was a large space which could be used by people.
- 20.60 Councillor Williams enquired if the Whitehawk Inn could be used by residents who had little access to technology.
- 20.61 Mr Hughes stated that residents could use the Whitehawk Inn as there was technology available for use.
- 20.62 Councillor Simson enquired how long the HRA was for.
- 20.63 Mr Hughes stated that it was ongoing and that it was still available till next March. It was noted that it was not a great deal of money however the impact was large.
- 20.64 **AGREED** – that the update was noted.

Positive Community News

- 20.65 A resident thanked BHCC for finding a property for a foodbank.

20.66 Councillor Simson stated that residents were happy with the provision of 2 park benches especially residents in sheltered housing scheme.

20.67 **AGREED** – that the update was noted.

AOB

20.68 An officer clarified that though bidding for EDB was a difficult process, there was still £19,000 available.

21 AREA PANEL PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2020-21 V2

22 HRA GRANT - BRIEFING PAPER

23 COMMUNITY LEARNING INFOGRAPHIC

24 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at 9.16pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of