

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

2.00pm 12 OCTOBER 2021

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Allcock, O'Quinn and Pissaridou.

Representatives: Janet Dowell, Claire Johnson, Ian Graham, Allison Gray

Officers: Justine Harris, Grant Richie, Robert Keelan, Richard Weller, Lesley Campbell

Guest: Sarah Booker- Lewis (Local Democracy Reporter)

1 WELCOMES APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 ACTION AND MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Resident Representatives asked that going forward minutes should be proof-read before presented at meetings, and the action log to be numbered.

- Graham Dawes asked whether the word notes should not be used in minutes, and that language should be explored.
- It was agreed that note takers can interject meetings and ask for clarification on items they might be unsure of.
- Corrections to be made on previous minutes that Councillor Pissaridou's apologies were not recorded at previous meeting
- Minutes should be proof-read before presented at meetings
- At the previous meeting specific questions were asked around the EDB audit and only one question had been answered.
- Action log to be crossed referenced against minutes.

2.2 Rob Keelan and Justine Harris provided an update on solutions for plant watering on estates.

2.3 Points highlighted

- On the 10th September three taps were installed.
- Clarke Court will need a long hose to top up water butts

- Three keys are readily available
 - Justine Harris to contact Allision to arrange hand over of keys for butts
 - The other two taps will be installed in spring 2022
 - Justine Harris to carry out a site visit inspections
- 2.4 **Action** - Keely McDonald to send Rosemary a brief letter / email copy of EDB report.
- 2.5 **Action**– Keely McDonald said a EDB report will be provided to representatives at the end of the year around ongoing work.
- 2.6 On Thursday 21 October 2021, the Task and Finish group meeting will be held, an update will be provided at the next meeting.
- 2.7 The meeting heard representatives concerns around EDB scoring bids by officers.
- 2.8 The Chair said that representatives should be updated with EDB progress at the next meeting.
- 2.9 The meeting heard around resident’s dissatisfaction of the management of EDB process, and there were several action points that were recorded in the minutes that needed to be addressed under EDB. The Chair acknowledged residents on going dissatisfaction with EDB process. However, this will be reviewed at the Task and Finish Group with participation from tenant representatives.
- 2.10 The meeting heard that gardening bins are needed for some estates.
- 2.11 It was agreed that the allocating keys for water butts would be resident lead.

3 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 3.1 The meeting heard around how tenants reported repairs. Grant Richie said tenants can email or access the customer service repair team through the website all call the help desk where all calls are transferred to relevant department. Repairs are prioritised as a matter of urgency tenants are allocated a time and date for repair when operative will attend. A new computer system will be installed in March 2022, which will record historical repairs.

RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS’ QUESTIONS

- 4.1 In response to question Graham said that all voids’ properties are inspected before handed back housing colleagues prior to re letting. The meeting heard if housing colleagues were not satisfied with property the voids team would be contacted. Due to Covid additional new contractors are used, and concentrated is more around post inspection. Housing supervisors are aware of rubbish left in communal areas by contractors, however, contractors are

asked to properly dispose of rubbish. The meeting also heard around tenants who had experienced problems with their hot water tank and delays in carrying out repairs. In addition, it was stated that resident inspectors had not visited empty properties.

- 4.2 The meeting heard some valuable criticism from residents around contactors leaving rubbish in communal areas, also outside empty properties. Furthermore, a contractor had entered a property with residents' keys while tenant was at home. Representatives emphasized the importance of work carried out by resident inspectors.

Action

- 4.3 Justine Harris will shortly have a meeting with resident inspectors.

Representatives suggested empty properties should be called empty and not void properties.

- 4.4 Ododo Dafe said the group should not share personal confidential information and individual circumstances in a public meeting.

2nd Question Impact residents vaping in properties

- 4.5 The meeting heard that the Council contacted resident that vaped in communal areas. Also vaping in hallways and communal areas had negatively affected some residents, However, as a landlord the Council acknowledged they did not much derestriction in this area.

Action

- 4.6 Justin Harris said she would talk with Rob Wheelan to investigate Muriel's concerns around how she was treated when she called customer services to report her concerns around tenants vaping in communal areas.

Maintenance Schedule

- 4.7 The meeting heard that cynical programmes are not in place due to budget constraints. Representatives were alarmed that the Council did not have resources for planned works. In response, Justine Harris said that this issue has been raised in other forums with residents. The Council are looking how they can improve on reporting areas that need repairs. Discussion took place around the Council using estate development money that is targeted for cleaning communal areas, it was not considered appropriate to use EDB funds for maintenance works.
- 4.8 The meeting heard that the Council want to allocate some money for catching up on delayed repair works, However, there is a lot of work that needs to be carried out, unfortunately funds are not available. The Council plan to engage with residents to identify priority areas that can be addressed. The environment improvement budget is designed to quickly support communal repairs.

- 4.9 **Agreed that** -The Council need to prioritise where money is being spent, and to engage more with residents. It was stated that environmental improvement budgets can be used for ad hoc improvements, as there are no cynical budgets available.
- 4.10 The meeting heard that Tenant representatives were saddened to hear the Council did not have a maintenance budget since was a central government. The Council should be aware of the decorating needs of their properties to remain at a decent standard.

Overgrown paths on estates.

- 4.11 In response to the question, Justine Harris said she was in regular communications with City Parks and acknowledged overgrown paths is a concern across the city.
- 4.12 The meeting heard that managing weeds were challenging as staff can only operate weed grabbing machine for short periods due to staff having injuries due to repetitive task. Further challenges were that weeds were only pruned, and increased weed growth during the summer months. In addition, the Council now use private contractors who do not use Glucophage weed treatment. Muriel Brault said that the Council had not tackled overgrown weeds around alley ways near her property and all block needed to be treated.
- 4.13 It was agreed that grass will be cut before the winter, and hard surface weeds to be removed.
- 4.14 **RESOLVED:** That EDB would be included as an item at the next meeting.
- 4.15 **RESOLVED:** That overflowing bins at Clarke Court.
- 4.16 The Chair provided an overview of three-star questions from residents and asked representatives to read the paper that had been circulated.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 5.1 There was no other business

Action List from October West Area Panel

Ref	Action	Officer	Response
2.1	Answers to Questions from the August meeting on the EDB to be provided		
2.4	To send Rosemary a brief letter / email copy of EDB report.	Keely McDonald	
2.5	EDB report will be provided to representatives at the end of the year around ongoing work	Keely McDonald	
4.3	Meet with Resident Inspectors	Justine Harris	
4.6	To speak to Rob Wheelan about concerns around treatment by customer services when reporting vaping in communal areas.	Justine Harris	

