

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

7.00pm 14 DECEMBER 2021 - VIRTUAL - ZOOM

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Mears, Simson, and Williams.

Residents: Chris El Shabba (Chair), Alan Cooke (Chair), Rosemary Johnson.

Officers: Martin Reid, Ododo Dafe, Keely McDonald, Janet Dowdell, Thomas Bald, Pien Kuipers.

1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies from Councillor Steve Bell.

2 ACTIONS AND MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

8.1 A resident raised the following amendments to the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 12 October 2021:

- There should be an attendance list in the minutes with members correct titles.
- Minutes should only record the salient points.
- Subheadings should be included to identify different discussions.
- A reply regarding graffiti in point 3.9 should be provided and in the actions table.
- Paragraph 2.1: should read "... asked whether it was a change of policy, or an error, that residents' names were given by their contributions, as it had previously been council policy to give residents' names in the attendance list only and not against anything they said."
- Paragraph 3.14 should include a line saying that the HRA is also funded from leaseholder's service charges.
- Para 3.18 should say "... pointed out that the response should say 'herbicides' not 'pesticides' and asked if they were any non-glyphosate herbicides that could be used instead."
- Paragraph 4.14 should be deleted, and the location of the crew club should be included in paragraph 4.3.
- Paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4 duplicate paragraph 3.13 – words should be deleted all after "constructed" in para 5.3 and 5.4 should be removed.
- Paragraphs 5.13 and 5.14 should be in Section 4 about the skatepark.
- Para 6.2 should read: "... stated she had raised the issue of flats that had been leased to the council, for use typically by temporary accommodation tenants, and ASB had taken place there. It was stated that the council would repair any physical damage to flats leased to them."

8.2 A resident raised the following corrections to the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 August 2021:

- Para 2.3 "consistent" should say "competent"

- Para 1.6 "maintenance of estates" should say "council communications"
- Para 1.13 should say "...raised that households should not be included in the figures for 'arrears' until it has been checked that their payments have not been made and misfiled in the Finance Department's Suspense Account by mistake, and that...."
- Para 1.16 Should read: "Rosemary Johnson reported that a special meeting with leaseholders on this topic was being held by Cllr Hugh Jones; any leaseholder who would like to come to this should contact the Leaseholders Action Group. She stated: " and then the existing bullet points.
- Para 1.19 last line should read "the charging point was on the right-hand side of a one-way street and cars had been seen parked on the pavement to charge as their leads would not reach to a charger on the off side. She asked for this to be relayed to the department responsible for charging points, suggesting that putting them on the right-hand side of one-way streets may not be sensible."
- There should be a line saying that the above minutes of 17.8.21 were agreed as an accurate record.

8.2 Councillor Mears was informed that work would be started on the terms of reference for Area Panels in January.

3 ESTATE DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

There was no discussion.

4 RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

Task and Finish Groups

10.1 Residents commented that going forward, each response should list who the author was for transparency, and it was agreed that this would be taken forward in future responses.

10.2 A resident raised that the response on page 15 is offensive to residents that already Chair meetings. Councillor Mears added that a number of task and finish groups were set up under the Conservative administration that were Chaired by tenants who were more than capable. Councillor Simson added that the wording in the response it what was offensive as it didn't specify that the training was optional.

10.3 Councillor Williams raised that training should be available for residents that wish to partake in it. Keely McDonald added that the focused nature of the task and finish groups mean that new Chairs may request additional training to ensure consistency of meetings.

Role of Field Officers

10.4 A resident was informed that if a professional witness is required during an anti-social behaviour case, the officer dealing with it should be contacted and will organise it.

Sustainability

10.5 A resident raised that window fixing should be prioritised as a way to reduce the carbon footprint of the city instead of new equipment such as ground source heat pumps and solar panels. The Chair suggested that this issue be raised at the next East Resident's meeting with a view to raise it at the next Area Panel.

Chair of the East Area Panel

10.6 Councillor Simson and residents were informed that the second stage of the review which includes the structure of meetings will be going ahead in January 2022 which will include consultations with both residents and Councillors.

10.7 Residents raised that the Chair of the East Area Panel should be dealt with as a separate issue than the general review. Martin Reid confirmed that he'd seek legal advice and give a written response at the next Area Panel.

10.8 Councillor Mears advised that Vice-Chairs should be informed in good time if they are Chairing, and Keely McDonald confirmed that the Vice-Chair is informed that it is likely they will have to Chair at the resident-only meetings.

10.9 A resident advised that a vote of no confidence should be taken against Councillor Brennan to stop her Chairing any future meetings if she were to attend.
Communal Gardens in Langley Crescent, Woodingdean

10.10 Councillor Simson was informed (in a resident's absence) that the £7,000 was authorised to be spent on a project to look at clearing the moss, however the locations of the missing gates would be provided in an email response.

Officer Attendance at Area Panel Meetings

10.11 A resident was informed that the aim for Area Panels is that there is sufficient senior attendance to provide coherent responses to questions from residents and Councillors.

Allergies

10.12 Residents requested that tenants be informed beforehand about moving beehives and provision made for tenants to make comments in the future. Martin Reid confirmed that this would be looked at going forward.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in High-Rise Blocks

10.13 A resident raised that there are numerous instances of anti-social behaviour (ASB) near to their home. Justine Harris added that it is helpful if residents report each instance of ASB if they can to help the Police and the Council plan for tackling it.

10.14 Councillor Mears was informed that the Estates Team would focus on the Kingfisher block in Whitehawk to ensure landings were clear.

10.15 A resident commented that serious anti-social behaviour needs to be dealt with by the law and isn't down to tenant behaviours. Janet Dowdell confirmed that serious ASB such as drug dealing are dealt with swiftly.

Repairs

10.16 Councillor Simson and residents raised that repairs are being started but not completed. Ododo Dafe confirmed the specific cases of unfinished repairs would be followed up after the meeting, and that repairs may have been left unfinished due to the urgency of

some repairs taking priority across the city and being left unfinished until these were all completed.

Estate Development Budget

10.17 A resident raised information regarding the Estate Development Budget being available online in the first instance can alienate a lot of people that aren't comfortable using the internet. Ododo Dafe responded that a lot of residents request that information is available online in the name of accessibility but information can be provided separately.

Service Improvement Groups

10.18 Keely McDonald raised that discussions have been started regarding this, but discussions about the terms of reference haven't been started.

RESOLVED:

- Authors of responses to resident's questions would be named.
- Martin Reid to come back to the next Area Panel with a response regarding the Chair of the East Area Panel.
- Janet Dowdell to email a response to a resident and Councillor Simson regarding the communal gardens in Langley Crescent.

5 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT

11.1 Ododo Dafe summarised the report starting on page 27 of the Agenda.

11.2 A resident was informed that the reason Council homes sold via right to buy (RTB) has dropped due to various factors such as COVID-19 and diminishing discounts to long term residents.

6 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

12.1 A resident updated the panel that a disused bin store may be becoming a community workshop in Craven Vale and that the 2nd Wassail is happening on January 8th 2022.

12.2 A resident raised that a christmas party is going ahead on the 18th December at Craven Vale.

12.3 The feeding kitchen is providing over 200 meals a day Robert Lodge, with aspirations to set up a cookery school at Kingfisher Court.

12.4 A resident raised that the Leaseholder Action Group are holding a reunion meeting.

12.5 A resident raised that there is an acre site in Whitehawk being used for allotments.

12.6 Councillor Williams raised that St George's Church are planning lots of community events in the new year such as Pelican Parcels.

12.7 A resident raised that St Georges Church has put in an order for a new screen to be put in the church to offer cinema facilities for the community.

7 FUTURE FORMAT OF AREA PANELS

13.1 Keely McDonald raised that this item was placed on the Agenda before the guidance was given from Central Government to work from home where possible, meaning that Area Panels will be going ahead remotely for the foreseeable future.

13.2 A resident raised that it would be a good idea to continue using hybrid meetings to ensure that it is accessible for residents.

8 BUDGET UPDATE

14.1 Ododo Dafe gave a presentation regarding the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2022/23.

14.2 Councillor Williams was informed that there is money set aside to support elderly and disabled people move homes and areas, as well as to make arrangements to existing homes to ensure accessibility.

14.3 Councillor Mears was informed that residents would have sight of a more detailed Housing Revenue Budget before the next Housing Committee, as well as more meetings to go through it.

14.4 A resident was informed that the capital investment in existing homes (£28.949m) is about the same as the previous year.

14.5 A resident raised that the charts shouldn't be printed in black and white, and was also informed that:

- Not everyone will have all service charges applicable to them wherever they live.
- These are estimated charges based on previous data and known costs.
- There are contracts that increase in cost each year, meaning the estimates are based on the amount of money the Council will pay for those contracts.
- The service charges are to recoup the money already spent.

RESOLVED: A resident would be provided with an update in the January meeting regarding the increase in costs of individual contracts.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no discussion.

This Meeting concluded at 21:34pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

Day of

