

CENTRAL AREA PANEL MINUTES

16/02/2022

ATTENDEES:

Councillors: Cllr Hugh-Jones (Chair), Cllr Shanks.

Residents:

David Spafford

Barry Hughes (Chair - Sylvan Hall Residents Association),

Carl Boardman (Warwick Mount Residents Association Rep.),

Theresa Mackey (Highcroft Lodge Residents Association Rep.).

Officers: Ododo Dafe, Hannah Barker, Thomas Bald, Keeley McDonald, Janet Dowdell.

Press: Sarah Booker-Lewis.

1 - WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies from Gary Jones and Eileen Stuart.

2 - ACTIONS & MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 The Chair raised that there were 3 actions taken from the previous meeting as well as an additional one where Gary Jones had requested a fire safety plan for disabled residents accessing Hove Town Hall. The Chair confirmed she would ensure Martin Reid provided this information.
- 2.2 Janet Dowdell gave an update on the action regarding weeds in Prestonville and Highcroft Villas, stating that Estates are looking to clean up the worst areas but some of the areas may be handled by Cityclean.
- 2.3 Barry Hughes stated that item 4.1 in the previous minutes was relating to residents chairing Task and Finish Groups, rather than Housing Area Panels.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3 - RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

- 3.1 Barry Hughes cited that he had not yet received a response from Martin Reid regarding window repairs at Sylvan Hall, Craven Vale or Bristol Estate and stated that falling windows now pose a danger to residents.
- 3.2 Barry Hughes was informed by Ododo Dafe that repairs are likely to start in the financial year commencing April 2022.
- 3.3 Ododo Dafe stated that managers need to review funds attached to issues regarding windows and return a more detailed repair plan to residents.
- 3.4 Cllr Shanks said that a report from August 2020 stated that a detailed survey of windows would be conducted the following month, but that she heard nothing further regarding this matter. Cllr Shanks cited the importance windows needing to be fixed before somebody is harmed.
- 3.5 The Chair requested an update on window repairs before the next area panel.
ACTION - Cllr Hugh-Jones to receive an update on window repairs in Sylvan Hall before the next area panel.

4 - AREA PANEL REVIEW OUTLINE

- 4.1 Keeley McDonald presented the meeting with a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) analysis of area panels and stated that a draft-scope of the review is able for to view, but that it is subject to change after the results of SWOT analyses from Area Panels.
- 4.2 Cllr Shanks stated as a weakness that they are unclear as to the role of a Councillor in Area Panel meetings and asked for more clarity regarding this.
- 4.3 Barry Hughes suggested that the constitution be amended to ensure that the Chair of the Area Panel meeting is a Member of the Housing Committee.
- 4.4 David Spafford stated that residents are appreciative of Councillors attendance to Area Panels and emphasised the direct link between Housing Committee and Area Panels as a result of Councillor attendance.
- 4.5 Theresa Mackey highlighted the usefulness of having a Member of the Housing Committee attend Area Panels. Theresa Mackey also stated that having relevant Ward Councillors in attendance would be useful in allowing residents to directly communicate their concerns.
- 4.6 The Chair suggested the creation of a standing item for Ward Councillors to raise matters in Area Panel meetings.
- 4.7 Keeley McDonald suggested allowing residents, tenants, and leaseholders to make representations in Area Panels whether they are elected representatives or not.

- 4.8 David Spafford suggested residents should attend resident only meetings rather than Area Management Panels as they may consider it a forum to raise individual issues rather than area-wide issues.
- 4.9 The Chair suggested inviting residents to attend Area Panels initially as spectators to give them an idea of what is covered in the meetings before promoting their engagement.
- 4.10 Theresa Mackey stated that if Ward Councillors and other residents attend it could be difficult to keep the Agenda on the topic of housing, The Chair agreed and stated that it would be the responsibility of the chair to manage this.
- 4.11 Ododo Dafe stated that it is also important to allow residents to share their concerns regarding items other than housing, such as wellbeing, communal areas and tackling isolation.
- 4.12 The Chair stated that a focus on wellbeing would be an opportunity to look at cross-generational interaction within the community to help residents get to know each other better, particularly those of differing ages.
- 4.13 Carl Boardman stated that Area Panels are focused on delivering information rather than allowing resident representatives to contribute and suggested more activities like the SWOT analysis. Carl Boardman also communicated concerns in having issues repeatedly return to Area Panel meetings and suggested that there may not be systems in place capable of permanently resolving recurring problems.
- 4.14 Theresa Mackey welcomed a presentation regarding the progress of the social housing white paper and the focus on residents' wellbeing. Theresa Mackey also stated that the Older People's Council are looking at putting on sessions for younger and older members of the community to meet one another and share their views.
- 4.15 David Spafford expressed concerns with the amount of time it takes the Council to deal with issues, stating that there is a difference between what residents and the Council consider to be their priorities.
- 4.16 The Chair stated that this discussion highlighted the potential changes that can be made to Area Panels going forward and suggested the addition of a relevant slot in the Agenda for residents to discuss more general items.
- 4.17 David Spafford stated that each Area Panel works differently and expressed concerns towards making them uniform with one another.
- 4.18 Keeley McDonald invited the Panel to email the Community Engagement team with any further comments for the SWOT analysis.
- 4.19 Ododo Dafe stated that it would be useful for the titles of attendees to be included within the minutes of the meeting.
- ACTION** - Democratic Services to include resident and councillor titles in future minutes.

5 - HOUSING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2021/22

- 5.1 Ododo Dafe gave an update on the workplan progress update and housing performance report for quarter 3 2021/22 (seen on page 23 of the Agenda). Ododo Dafe highlighted that work is being done to keep homelessness in the city down but stated that performance regarding the number of unoccupied council homes has not been ideal and outlined future plans to improve this.
- 5.2 Barry Hughes commended the Council on its 92% figure of lifts restored to service within 24 hours of fault.
- 5.3 Cllr Shanks raised concerns with short-term repairs for long-term issues, citing recurring boiler issues in Mayflower Square and windows in Sylvan Hall.
ACTION - Ododo Dafe to raise persistent issues with heating in Mayflower Square with relevant colleagues.
- 5.4 David Spafford raised concerns regarding relet times, stating that properties requiring major work can have a turnaround time of 8 months. David Spafford was informed that this is a result of circumstance rather than design after repairs services were insourced and issues with Covid and that relet times would be improving in future.
- 5.5 David Spafford was informed that the list of major works on blocks can return for future Agendas.

6 - POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 6.1 David Spafford shared that CCTV cameras are being installed in his area.

7 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 15:40.