

EAST AREA PANEL
13 DECEMBER 2022
MINUTES

Attendees:

Residents: Chris El-Shabba (Chair), Alan Cooke, Rosemary Johnson, Ben D'Montigny,

Councillors: Cllr Simson

Officers: Martin Reid, Grant Ritchie, Sam Warren, Keeley McDonald, Francis Mitchell, Emma Thomson, Justine Harris, Geof Gage, Natalie Beckwith,

Press: Sarah Booker Lewis

1 – WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies from Cllr Platts and Janet Gearing.

2 – MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Rosemary Johnson raised several corrections to the previous minutes.

2.2 Cllr Simson stated that the discussion seen in items 3.17 through to 3.21 of the previous minutes was actually in relation to the shared gardens in Langley Crescent, rather than Craven Vale.

2.3 The panel agreed, pending minor amendment, that the minutes of the previous meeting were correct.

3 – ACTION LOG

EA1 – Martin Reid stated that a written response would be given to this at a future meeting of the East Area Panel.

ACTION – Martin Reid to contact Rosemary Johnson to ascertain what information she requires regarding the housing first scheme.

EA2 – Justine Harris stated that she had been unable to meet with Janet Gearing but hoped to do so before Christmas.

ACTION – (continued from previous action log) Justine Harris to meet with Janet Gearing regarding the points raised about rubbish and issues with fencing in Langley Crescent.

EA3 – Martin Reid stated that although the land was showing as Council owned, the Planning Department had ascertained that the land being built on was not in fact owned by the Council. Cllr Simson stated that she was informed it was Council owned land. Martin Reid stated he would follow up on this.

ACTION – Martin Reid to confirm to the next meeting whether land being built on in Langley Crescent is owned by the Council.

EA4 – Action completed – Chris El Shabba listed as Chair on agenda front sheet.

EA5 – Action completed – Details of new amenities included in latest issue of Homing In.

EA6 – Action completed.

4 – ASB POLICY

4.1 Justine Harris provided an update on ASB policy stated that the new policy had been drafted and would be going to Housing Committee in January for approval.

4.2 Alan Cooke was informed that staff had already been trained on how to deal with ASB and that improvements were being made to proactively prepare for the implementation of the policy.

5 – BUDGET SETTING

5.1 Martin Reid delivered the report on this item.

5.2 Alan Cooke was informed that there is a service charge split between residents who live in blocks where communal heating and lighting is present.

5.3 Martin Reid stated that inflation is increasing labour, material and contract costs which is causing significant pressures.

5.4 Ben D'Montigny was informed that impact assessments will be undertaken to ensure that protected groups are maximising their income through support such as benefits to support residents through cost increases. Justine Harris stated that advice will be given to residents on ways they can save on energy within their homes and providing them with information on supportive services. Justine Harris stated that the Low Income Family Tracker will use data from rent accounts and the housing benefits system to enable the Council to identify households that are eligible for unclaimed benefits.

5.5 Rosemary Johnson raised concerns regarding residents who pay fix rates not being able to achieve savings by economising on energy usage as per recommendations.

ACTION – Justine Harris to provide more information regarding how fixed rates are calculated for accommodation and communal areas.

6 – BREAK

A five-minute break was taken.

7 – RESIDENTS’ QUESTIONS – 3-STAR ALL 4 AREAS

- 7.1 Rosemary Johnson reflected that it appeared there were persistent issues of anti-social behaviour across the city.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

- 7.2 Alan Cooke stated that while the sentiment of the response was satisfactory, he was not confident that sufficient action had been taken in a timely manner to prevent anti-social behaviour. Alan Cooke stated that, despite the time and effort it took, anti-social behaviour had decreased in Craven Vale.
- 7.3 Ben D’Montigny stated that publicising action that had been taken to combat anti-social behaviour had a knock-on effect on offenders which decreases the number of anti-social incidents.
- 7.4 Rosemary Johnson stated that she felt as though the Council was claiming the reduction in anti-social behaviour in Craven Vale as their success when in actuality it was the result of residents working with the Police.

Contact Telephone Number for Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour:

- 7.5 Rosemary Johnson was informed that the out-of-hours noise-nuisance telephone number is no longer in operation as noise nuisance is now dealt with by field officers.

7.6 Estate Walkabouts on Council Estates:

- 7.7 Christine El-Shabba was informed that an update on the role of field officers would be given to Area Panels once the Field Officer Service Review is complete.

Maintenance Costs of Incomplete Aerial Systems:

- 7.8 Alan Cooke stated that he believed some Aerial Systems have been installed, but not commissioned and connected, citing concerns regarding residents paying for inoperable aerials.

- 7.9 Rosemary Johnson stated that it seemed residents were being charged for aerial systems that nobody uses.

ACTION – Geof Gage to investigate aerial systems through service contract with SCCI to ascertain whether there are aerials that have not been connected in Craven Vale.

Mutual Exchange Scheme:

- 7.10 Justine Harris stated that the Council was completely up to date with mutual exchanges and informed Cllr Simson that there are approximately 36 mutual exchanges a month.

Poor Maintenance of Verges, Pavements and Parks:

- 7.11 Ben D'Montigny shared that on Bristol Estate, trees have been planted where verges have been damaged to prevent footfall causing further damage.
- 7.12 Chris El-Shabba stated she had seen brambles growing across pavement and raised concerns regarding improper maintenance of communal lawns, citing the appearance of large numbers of dandelions. Chris El-Shabba communicated disappointment with the quality of service provided.

ACTION – Justine Harris to contact estates regarding poor maintenance of verges, pavements, and parks.

Disposal of Bulky Items:

- 7.13 Cllr Simson was informed that abandoned vehicles should be reported to Justine Harris or Martin Reid.
- ACTION** – Justine Harris and Martin Reid to follow up with Cllr Simson regarding abandoned vehicles.
- 7.14 Ben D'Montigny stated one reason that bulky items are not disposed of properly is due to the cost of proper disposal being higher than the fine for improper disposal and suggested an amnesty day where residents can drop off bulky items at no cost. Ben D'Montigny cited examples of this being successfully implemented in other areas of the city and was informed that this had previously been funded through that areas EDB.
- 7.15 Rosemary Johnson agreed with Ben D'Montigny's proposed amnesty day. Rosemary Johnson also requested that authors of responses to residents' questions do not include hyperlinks as they are inaccessible on printed copies of agendas.
- 7.16 Ben D'Montigny questioned whether recycling services were adequately advertised to residents.

ACTION – Justine Harris to ensure information regarding recycling services is included in Homing In.

- 7.17 Justine Harris outlined measures being taken to prevent fly-tipping.

8 – RESIDENTS’ QUESTIONS – 2-STAR LOCAL AREA

Dangling electric cables in Craven Vale:

- 8.1 Alan Cooke stated that he had been relaying information to Grant Ritchie regarding the issue of electric cables in Craven Vale.

9 – POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 9.1 Ben D’Montigny shared that £6,000 had been secured to support the Community Fridge Project and further stated that progress had been made on the Veolia bid fund, which if successful, would grant up to £75,000 to renovate, upgrade and modernise the community centre which would provide safeguarding for vulnerable residents.
- 9.2 Alan Cooke shared that the Craven Vale fiesta went well and stated that planning had begun for the Coronation party.
- 9.3 Rosemary Johnson shared that a crib sheet had been prepared to help residents who are experiencing ASB with the goal of creating a network of ASB victims who might be able to support one another.
- 9.4 Cllr Simson expressed thanks for Janet Gearing’s EDB bid for benches and applauded their hasty installation.
- 9.5 Sam Warren shared that the Resident’s Christmas Gathering went very well and thanked residents for attending.
- 9.6 Rosemary Johnson invited leaseholders of residential properties to the Leaseholders Summit being held at Hove Town Hall on the 28th of January at 09:30.
- 9.7 Chris El-Shabba shared that the recently completed painting at Robert Lodge is ‘beautiful’ and commended the work of the painter.
- 9.8 Rosemary Johnson invited attendees to the Rottingdean Pantomime but expressed that while she would unfortunately be unable to provide free beverages, a fun time for all was guaranteed.

10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 There was no other business.

