

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 14 FEBRUARY 2023

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Hugh-Jones (Chair) and Shanks

Representatives: Jason Williams (Hereford Court Residents Association), Carl Boardman (Warwick Mount Residents Association), Theresa Mackey (Highcroft Lodge Residents Association) and Barney Miller (Sylvan Hall Residents Association)

Officers: Jan Dowdall (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), Geof Gage (Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management), Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), Hannah Barker (Senior Community Engagement Officer), Grant Ritchie (Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance), Matthew McCaw (Democratic Services Apprentice) and Emma Thomson (Democratic Services Officer)

Guests: Norman Williams (Essex Place), Cal Chester (Community Development Support Worker), Sarah Booker-Lewis (Local Democracy Reporter)

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Linda King (Essex Place Tenants Association) sent apologies.

2 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 Per Theresa Mackey's request, the Chair gave the following communications:

At the agenda setting meeting, residents questions were raised in West and North regarding street sweeping and poor maintenance of verges, pavements, parks & other conditions in the city. The issues raised are not directly in the remit of Housing, therefore while they are important points, it was decided that they were not for discussion at this meeting but that it was of interest for delegates to make note of them. In fact, this is something that is picked up in the Area Panel Review, that henceforth, the Area Panels will be more focused on housing issues as opposed to anything else, because there are other channels that residents can use to raise other issues.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 In relation to 3.5 of the minutes and action CA4, Norman Williams highlighted that the bin chute room padlock had been looked into, but the point raised was regarding the padlocks missing from the 15 individual landings.

- 3.2 Justine Harris advised she would take the issue up with the Estates Team.
- 3.3 The minutes from the meeting held on 13 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

4 ACTION LOG

- 4.1 Regarding the officer response for CA1, Norman Williams reiterated health and safety concerns, to which Geof Gage advised he would undertake peer review to investigate what other local authorities were doing, particularly to tackle tailgating.
- 4.2 In relation to CA6, Geof Gage advised Barney Miller he would follow up with the contractor regarding the removal of the scaffolding plank.
- 4.3 In response to ASB concerns relating to CA8, Jan Dowdell advised Norman Williams that she would follow up with the security company working in Essex Place to reiterate sweep instructions. Jan also advised she had made enquiries into where the signage had come from as her team had not ordered it. Further, Jan agreed she would request a clean-up due to needles and mess being left around the estate.

5 EDB REVIEW CONCLUSION REPORT

- 5.1 The Head of Tenancy Services, Justine Harris, introduced the Estate Development Budget (EDB) Report which sought discussion and comment on the recommendations for the EDB Review Group.
- 5.2 In relation to action 3, Norman Williams highlighted that issues which should theoretically be classed as a repair/ maintenance weren't always and residents were often told issues, such as the broken seat in Essex Place's lift, should go through on the EDB.
- 5.3 In response to Barney Miller's point about ground maintenance, Justine Harris advised she would be bringing a report on the issue to the next round of Area Panels.

6 HOUSING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2022/23

- 6.1 The Head of Tenancy Services, Justine Harris, and Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance, Grant Ritchie, introduced the Council Housing Performance report.
- 6.2 Barney Miller was informed that the Council was very conscious of providing support provision alongside collecting rents, including money advice, employment opportunities and ensuring resident's income was maximised. Further, Justine added that those who received housing benefits would not be impacted as their benefit would increase to reflect their rent rise.
- 6.3 Norman Williams was advised that 200 routes had been mapped out for the estate walkabouts, which would be published online, and the aim was for the walkabouts to be reinstated by April.

- 6.4 Norman Williams highlighted that the walkabouts were not aimed at elderly and disabled residents and recommended that a wheelchair was brought to the walkabout to allow officers and councillors to better understand accessibility issues which were often overlooked.

7 AREA PANEL REVIEW: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND REPORT

- 7.1 The Head of Tenancy Services, Justine Harris, introduced the report which outlined the proposed new terms of reference for Housing Area Panels.
- 7.2 Norman Williams was advised that there would be a designated drop-in prior to each panel to allow residents to discuss particular issues with officers so they could respond individually rather than in the panel.
- 7.3 Barney Miller suggested that the details of all residents and resident associations in a councillor's ward were supplied to them to improve communication, which Hannah Barker and Justine Harris confirmed they would look into.
- 7.4 In relation to membership and participation, residents and the chair highlighted that clarification was needed regarding leaseholders and that it was important that leaseholder landlords declared that interest as their interests would differ from residents.
- 7.5 With regards to councillor co-chairing, the chair highlighted that further considerations had to be given where there were no other councillors in the ward sitting on the Housing Committee.

8 REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - WHAT ARE PERMITTED USES? AND WHAT PROPOSALS DO RESIDENTS HAVE?

- 8.1 Justine Harris introduced the item, which was included as an appendix on page 95 of the agenda.
- 8.2 No comments or questions were raised.

9 RESIDENTS QUESTIONS - 3 STAR, ALL 4 AREAS

Refuse Collection at Sylvan Hall

- 9.1 Barney Miller stated that the response provided was inadequate and some of the information provided was inaccurate. Justine Harris advised that she would follow up with Melissa Francis to look into it further.

Laundry Room Review

- 9.2 Norman Williams was informed that the laundries review was being carried out to establish the number of tenants who use them and that a report would be brought to a future panel to discuss the issue further.

10 RESIDENTS QUESTIONS - 2 STAR LOCAL AREA

Window Replacements at Sylvan Hall

- 10.1 Barney Miller queried what criteria had been used to determine which blocks would have their windows repaired at Sylvan Hall, to which Geof Gage advised he would confirm and provide a response.

Parking Enforcement at Essex Place

- 10.2 Norman Williams raised confidentiality concerns regarding the implementation of digital permits and highlighted that residents had still not been reissued permits and that many residents had lost their permits due to hearsay rather than a legal basis.

11 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 11.1 No discussion was held.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1 No discussion was held.

The meeting concluded at 4.15pm