

CARE SERVICES PDS COMMITTEE
13th September 2016

ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE CARE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Oral Questions to the Care Services Portfolio Holder received from Mrs Kay Miller

1. Manorfields – Secure by Design certificate. Will the Portfolio Holder please provide, as promised on 10 March 2016, the certificate which confirms that the Secure by Design requirements were met before the residents began to be accommodated in the hostel?

Reply:

Prior to first occupation, all required inspections were undertaken to ensure that the necessary standards were met in terms of Secure by Design, Building Control and Health and Safety. A copy of the Secure by Design certificate subsequently issued will be provided to the questioner following the meeting and will be appended to the minutes as Annex A.

Supplementary question:

No supplementary question was asked.

2. Manorfields - front wall. Has the Portfolio Holder agreed the solution to raise the height of the front wall to stop the problems of cars lights shining into the houses opposite and to deter residents sitting on the wall, and if so what is it and how quickly will this be implemented?

Reply:

Options were initially considered such as parking vehicles the other way round or changing the direction of the exit and entrance to the car park, however these were not feasible due to the risk posed to residents exiting and entering Manorfields. Due to the recurring issues local residents have reported regarding headlights, a further options appraisal has been conducted to consider options to raise the height of wall at the front of Manorfields. The options and quotes have just been submitted and are currently under consideration, and following a meeting with Officers yesterday, extra wall height will be added to resolve the issue with headlights.

Supplementary question:

No supplementary question was asked.

3. Will the Portfolio Holder please instruct Orchard and Shipman not to allow any new residents to move into Manorfields later than 9.00pm at night? There have been instances of individuals moving in at 2.30am which disturbs the elderly local residents and is against the assurances previously given.

Reply:

The vast majority of new residents will move in during the day or early evening and every effort is undertaken to avoid residents moving in after 9.00pm. Having checked records, Orchard and Shipman confirm that the latest entry to date has been 6.00pm. However it is necessary to take into consideration the individual circumstances of each household e.g. an individual may not have had assistance to move or with childcare arrangements, and work or other commitments may have restricted them. Therefore on occasion it will be necessary to allow a household to move in at a later hour to ensure that they have accommodation for that night. All staff at Manorfields remind new residents of the need to have consideration for surrounding residents and comply with the expected behaviour during their tenancy, including the need to minimise any possible disturbance whilst they move their belongings into Manorfields.

Supplementary question:

Can you confirm what the Committee intends to do regarding a survey of local residents which was due to be undertaken six months after the first residents moved into Manorfields.

Reply:

Any commitment to undertake a survey will be fulfilled. It is intended to undertake a review of Manorfields at an appropriate interval which will include feedback from local residents and residents of Manorfields.

Additional note: At the Chairman's request, a report on Manorfields which includes feedback from local residents and residents of Manorfields will be added to the Work Programme for Care Services PDS Committee for the meeting on 10th January 2017.

Oral Questions to the Care Services Portfolio Holder received from Mr Bob Thatcher

1. Manorfields Refurbishment audit. The report demonstrates that a number of the Council individuals involved with the refurbishment failed to meet the standards and controls expected. Please confirm a) what action has been taken against and b) what education has been provided to those individuals responsible for the shortcomings?

Reply:

All recommendations arising from the audit report have been actioned. Where this has resulted in updates or revisions to practice and procedure, this has been followed through to update procedures for any future schemes. Where the recommendations relate to guidance for actions not yet having occurred, this has been built into procedures to ensure the guidance is followed as this stage of the project is reached.

Supplementary question:

No supplementary question was asked.

2. Manorfields – Refurbishment works. As per section 67 of the Report, is the Authority (and who precisely does that mean?) planning to compose the suitable response to the public, by which we assume they mean the AAAG?

Reply:

It was decided in the interests of transparency to publish the Manorfields report which covered everything in terms of a response.

The report was not only sent directly to Mr Miller, but also placed on the internet for the public to see. The Portfolio Holder understood that representatives of the AAAG would also be meeting with the Chief Executive and Assistant Director: Housing Needs shortly to discuss a range of issues relating to Manorfields.

Supplementary question:

No supplementary question was asked.

3. Manorfields - Boiler replacement. The response from the auditors is appreciated but the AAAG remain unconvinced that Bromley were not overcharged for the base cost of the two boiler units (without installation or other costs). Can the Portfolio Holder confirm the precise cost of these items including VAT, please?

Reply:

The Audit report confirms in paragraph 25 that the final cost in relation to the boiler works was £65,800 (excl. VAT). The works included provision of one new boiler and overhaul of the second (£40,575) and associated building works to ensure full compliance with the relevant regulations. The audit conclusion was that whilst source documentation had not been seen at that stage, it appeared that tendering was carried out and that the contract was awarded to the lowest tenderer. Copies of the documentation relating to the quotes obtained have since been submitted by Orchard and Shipman as part of the final verification and close down of works.

Supplementary question:

Independent research suggests the cost of the boiler should have been no more than £7-8k. Is the Portfolio Holder concerned the Local Authority may have been overcharged?

Reply:

As shown in the Audit report, documentation has been provided which shows the three quotes received for undertaking this work, and that the contractor proceeded with the lowest quote received.

Oral Questions to the Care Services Portfolio Holder received from Ms Chris Pecover

1. Manorfields – Drain problems. The ‘sludge-gulper’ continues to make regular appearances. Will the Committee please confirm that a drains/sewer survey has been or will be undertaken and share the findings and the longer term solution, please?

Reply:

Workmen were required to attend Manorfields and clear the drains servicing the building that were blocked due to the building being empty for some time. The workmen were present for four days completing the job on 19th May 2016. No further drainage issues have been experienced at Manorfields and as such no further works have needed to be undertaken.

Supplementary question:

No supplementary question was asked.

2. Manorfields – incidents. Please confirm what incidents of anti-social behaviour or other disturbances have been reported to the management or to the emergency services and what learnings from these have been used to improve the welfare of the residents at the hostel?

Reply:

On receipt of any complaint or following any incident, Orchard and Shipman conducts a full investigation, taking statements from those involved alongside a full review of CCTV footage. If behaviour is deemed a breach of tenancy, Orchard & Shipman serves an appropriate warning reminding the tenant that they are risking their future tenancy. Should there be a continual repeat of this behaviour then the tenant involved will be served notice ending their tenancy. To date, Orchard and Shipman have served notice on two tenants for anti-social behaviour and both tenants left amicably.

There have been a total of 20 individual complaints received since the opening of Manorfields across 10 complaint reasons, with some complaints being received from a number of residents regarding the same issue. The main reasons for complaints were in relation to noise, car headlights and parking. All complaints were responded to within 48 hours unless they were submitted via a Councillor or the Local Authority which might have caused a slight delay. All complaints have been investigated if required and actions taken to minimise any reoccurrence. The Manorfields Complaints Register will be provided to the Questioner following the meeting and will be appended to the minutes as Annex B.

Supplementary question:

Does the Committee accept there are a growing number of incidents at Manorfields, that Orchard and Shipman is losing control and that the out of hours contact number is not being manned.

Reply:

The Local Authority does not accept Orchard and Shipman is losing control, but does agree that there have been a number of occasions where the emergency number has not been staffed. Orchard and Shipman are currently in negotiations with the provider of this service to resolve this issue.

Oral Questions to the Care Services Portfolio Holder received from Mr Bill Miller

1. Manorfields – please confirm when the last reconciliation was attempted in respect of the sums due from Orchard and Shipman to Bromley Council in respect of rental and other income from Manorfields and what discrepancies arose. Also how are the council, pursuing this discrepancy?

Reply:

Reconciliations are undertaken on a quarterly basis for all tenancies ending within the previous quarter as set out in the contract. This reconciliation process is up to date and there are no discrepancies.

Supplementary question:

Were there any arrears at the end of the Quarter?

Reply:

The arrears collection rate is currently running at 98% which is within the target set.

2. Please confirm the current situation in respect of monies due to Bromley Council from Orchard and Shipman (not just in relation to Manorfields). Specifically are there any outstanding sums due and are there any difficulties in reconciling the monies due or owed?

Reply:

There are no outstanding sums due and reconciliations are up to date.

Supplementary question:

No supplementary question was asked.