

Housing Committee

Date: **17 November 2021**

Time: **4.00pm**

Venue **Hove Town Hall**

Members: **Councillors:** Gibson (Joint Chair), Hugh-Jones (Joint Chair), Hills (Deputy Chair), Williams (Opposition Spokesperson), Mears (Group Spokesperson), Barnett, Fowler, Meadows, Osborne and Platts

Contact: **Shaun Hughes**
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AGENDA

32 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declaration of Substitutes: Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.

(b) Declarations of Interest:

- (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests;
- (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
- (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare

- (i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;
- (ii) the nature of the interest; and
- (iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.

If unsure, Members should seek advice from the committee lawyer or administrator preferably before the meeting.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: *Any item appearing in Part Two of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.*

A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

33 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

7 - 32

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2021.

34 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

35 CALL OVER

- (a) All agenda items will be read out at the meeting and Members invited to reserve the items for consideration.

- (b) Those items not reserved will be taken as having been received and the reports' recommendations agreed.

36 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by members of the public:

- (a) **Petitions:** to receive any petitions presented to the full council or at the meeting itself;
- (b) **Written Questions:** to receive any questions submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 11 November 2021;
- (c) **Deputations:** to receive any deputations submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 11 November 2021.

37 ITEMS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

To consider the following items referred from the Council meeting held on the 21 October 2021.

- (1) Petition - none
- (2) Deputation – none
- (3) Notice of Motion - none

38 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

33 - 34

To consider the following matters raised by councillors:

- (a) **Petitions:** to receive any petitions submitted to the full Council or at the meeting itself;
- (b) **Written Questions:** to consider any written questions;
- (c) **Letters:** to consider any letters;
- (d) **Notices of Motion:** to consider any Notices of Motion referred from Council or submitted directly to the Committee.

39 CARBON REDUCTION IN HOUSING

35 - 50

Contact Officer: Martin Reid
Ward Affected: All Wards

Tel: 01273 293321

40 PROCUREMENT OF CONTRACT FOR DOOR ENTRY SYSTEMS AND CCTV (HRA)

51 - 56

Contact Officer: Miles Davidson
Ward Affected: All Wards

Tel: 01273 293150

41 LEASEHOLDER PAYMENT OPTIONS - UPDATE

57 - 62

Contact Officer: Martin Reid
Ward Affected: All Wards

Tel: 01273 293321

42 HOUSING REPAIRS UPDATE

63 - 68

Contact Officer: Martin Reid
Ward Affected: All Wards

Tel: 01273 293321

**43 MOULSECOOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD HUB & HOUSING SCHEMES:
UPDATE REPORT**

69 - 84

Contact Officer: Sam Smith

Tel: 01273 291383

44 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL

To consider items to be submitted to the 16 December 2021 Council meeting for information.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 24.3a, the Committee may determine that any item is to be included in its report to Council. In addition, any Group may specify one further item to be included by notifying the Chief Executive no later than 10am on the eighth working day before the Council meeting at which the report is to be made, or if the Committee meeting take place after this deadline, immediately at the conclusion of the Committee meeting.

PART TWO

45 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

To consider whether the items listed in Part Two of the agenda and decisions thereon should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

**46 MOULSECOOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD HUB & HOUSING SCHEMES:
UPDATE REPORT**

85 - 92

Part Two confidential appendix to Part One report.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Shaun Hughes, (01273 290569, email shaun.hughes@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

4.00pm 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Gibson (Joint Chair), Hugh-Jones (Joint Chair), Hills (Deputy Chair), Williams (Opposition Spokesperson), Mears (Group Spokesperson), Barnett, Fowler, Meadows and Osborne

PART ONE

17 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declaration of Substitutes: None for this meeting.

(b) Declarations of Interest: Councillor Mears declared she was on the board of Seaside Homes. Councillor Williams declared she was a member of ACORN and on the board of Seaside Homes. Councillor Osborne declared he was a member of ACORN.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public: To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

The Press and public were not excluded from the meeting.

18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

18.1 Councillor Meadows requested that the questions they had asked about items not called for discussion to be added to the minutes. Following agreement that the questions would be added to the minutes of the Housing Committee held on 23 June 2021 they were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Item 11: Private Sector Housing Update

- *Community engagement – landlords and ACORN. Is the implementation by ACORN?*

Item 12: Leasehold Payment Options & Updates

- *Equity loans – what happens if the leaseholder doesn't live in the property and dies and leaves to a relative? Is this a loss to HRA? Is there a time limit on equity loans?*
- *64 new rough sleepers – are these listed under COVID 1 or COVID 2? Why are there so many? Are the council robust enough in re-connecting?*

Item 14: Housing Committee Workplan Progress Update & Housing Performance Report - Quarter 4 & End of Year 2020/21

- *Performance report (p.207 of agenda) – 1.2: 92 properties from Kings House. Is this correct?*
- *(p.213 of agenda) – 4.1: £4.010m for making the city carbon neutral by 2030. Is this possible, as there seems to be a long way to go. Will the HRA pay for this? Does the council have the EPC for all properties? This would allow calculations to be corrected made and the true spending.*

Once responses have been collated, they would be sent to Councillor Meadows and committee Members.

19 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

Please note that 'Captions' is being used in Teams for the web cast. This will enable better accessibility for those with hearing difficulties although it is not a 100% accurate.

I'd like to take a moment, just to remind all members of the decision all councillors voted to introduce on 15th July in regard to mask wearing during the meeting. All councillors were asked to exercise their democratic right to decide on the process for council and committee meetings in light of the continued pandemic and the councillors took a decision on how to proceed, taking into account public health advice, not only for members, but also for the best protection of the public and others who also have to attend the meeting in person.

Unfortunately, unlike in other settings – or in our private lives – due to a change in legislation members now have no choice whether they can attend these meetings in person, as the right to attend it virtually has been rescinded by the government. Therefore, we are aware many members and others have no other option to protect themselves once in meetings such as these. Can I ask in line with the protocol agreed and voted for by all political groups at full council on July 15th to keep mask wearing in public committee meetings, that you do put a mask on? Thank you very much. We will be taking regular breaks throughout the meeting, more than we usually would, and if you would like to ask for a break at any point, please do so and we can adjourn the meeting.

Private rental

Tenants and campaigners are understandably frustrated by the slow rate of progress. We are looking to pick up on improvements to active Private Sector Housing enforcement and recruitment which was not possible during most of 2020 due to the restrictions owing to the Covid 19 pandemic. On the positive side, new PRS enforcement officers will be in post by November, and we are proposing to turn our highly regarded direct lets scheme into an embryonic council-run lettings agency with enhanced landlord standards.

Selective licensing is moving more slowly than we would like (although, of course, we already license over 4000 HMOs). As is clear from the first report on the agenda, officers indicate we do not have the evidence to apply for a scheme yet. We believe there is a need for a scheme, but we have to be straight with campaigners and highlight

the fact, even if we had the evidence now, it would still remain impossible to bring in a scheme by the end of the year. What we are doing is finding resources to research where licensing schemes have been successfully brought in since the Secretary of State withdrew consent to the last one proposed for Brighton and Hove. We shall also look at what councils who have been unable to set up licensing schemes have done instead.

We have offered to meet campaigners and look with them at the standard of evidence needed to justify a scheme. We are also proposing a joint amendment, with Labour, to the officer report to make clear our shared commitment to achieve licensing. Finally, we are working hard to develop more support packages for tenants in arrears to prevent them losing their homes and becoming homeless. This is vital if we are to avoid a surge in homelessness as the eviction ban lifts. Where there are problems, we urge landlords to contact us and see how we can work with them to avoid evictions.

Leasehold Payment and Options

This has been the subject of some in-depth consultation with leaseholders and Area Panels, and we are grateful to them for their engagement and their numerous suggestions. Unfortunately, given that our last meeting to discuss these with leaseholders was in August, it has not been possible to obtain definitive legal and financial advice on the proposals ahead of today's Committee, so this will need to come back to November Committee for a decision.

Next Steps

Another important report highlights the progress with the "Everyone In" programme which we hope will leave a lasting legacy of reduced rough sleeping in the city post pandemic. The report makes clear that, in line with the aspirations in the recently adopted Homeless Bill of Rights, the Council will continue to seek to offer accommodation to all verified rough sleepers where this is permissible within its powers in order to consolidate the reductions in rough sleeper numbers, which so far have been greater than most other councils across the country. To continue to succeed and make progress towards ending the need for rough sleeping we need to expand further longer-term move-on accommodation. Partly in recognition of our record of delivering an additional 30 properties for Housing First under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, the government have awarded us funding towards 60 further units for rapid rehousing and Housing-Led support accommodation for clients. This is a big step towards a lasting solution and is contingent upon the ability to prevent new homeless people becoming entrenched through our expanded "No second night out" service.

Officers have worked hard in difficult circumstances to move the many people housed under Everyone In and deserve our thanks. However, despite these efforts, the move on will not be completed as planned by the end of this month and we need some of the council's emergency funds to manage the additional cost of this and of the high numbers of households to whom we owe a duty under homelessness legislation placed in our remaining emergency accommodation. Finally, during the pandemic the Homeless Reduction Board has been meeting frequently and after its first year in operation we intend to review its effectiveness in achieving its aims. This will be reported to a future Housing Committee.

Workplan Progress

We continue to perform particularly well on key areas of service delivery including rent collected; repairs appointments kept; tenant satisfaction with repairs; gas safety compliance; and waiting time for housing adaptations.

Though the pandemic is still very much with us we are attempting to provide an improved service with more face to face access. To this end, Barts house is now operating a face to face appointment-based customer service offer for those who need to be placed into emergency accommodation.

We have also maintained delivery of our supply of additional council homes, including through our successful Home Purchase Policy, and provided our first new council owned short term and emergency accommodation, as well as letting council new-build schemes at Hawkridge Court and Buckley Close.

In terms of some other key indicators where we are seeking to improve performance and are currently below target post pandemic, we are now emerging into a recovery period and some areas of backlog may take time to clear.

As part of our recovery measures our performance on average relet time is improving post pandemic and was 88 days in the first quarter of this year – still far too high but moving in the right direction.

The service has made considerable efforts to increase resources to reduce the backlog of empty homes through approved procurement routes, including through maximising use of our existing sub-contractor framework and accessing two new procurement frameworks to increase our contractor capacity.

The reported data for days to complete routine repairs does not take into consideration our work to tackle the backlog of repairs that have built up over the Covid period. The Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service is prioritising repairs firstly by urgency and secondly by age and therefore this backlog does consist of many older jobs. As the backlog of older jobs is addressed and works completed, the average days to complete figure reported will increase temporarily.

We have put in place additional senior management capacity and commenced recruitment to new permanent staff vacancies in the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service which, over time, will increase our in-house capacity for direct delivery of works.

As part of our recovery work, we are committed to reducing empty temporary accommodation, with some turnaround times impacted by the speed at which we can complete repairs. We are intent on reducing this figure month by month over the next quarter.

I should say it was my pleasure to visit the Housing Centre a couple of weeks ago, to meet members of the team and get their views on the electric vehicles and e-bikes that are gradually being added to the fleet. I was very impressed by the supervisor who says he gets to vastly more sites on his e-bike than he would in a van.

Homemove: Following issues arising with the implementation of our new ICT system we have been working to resolve matters raised that have had a negative impact on customers. We have increased our staffing levels, with additional officers appointed to resolve customer enquiries as soon as possible and improve our service delivery. We have also been working closely with the system provider to review system functionality, up-grade and staff training.

I would like to thank the Housing team for all their continued hard work in very challenging circumstances.

Evictions

The annual evictions report makes for grim reading. While it is a very atypical year and, with more emergency housing provision, there are bound to be more evictions, the reported increase is nevertheless concerning and requires a deep dive into the details - in particular, the variations in performance, with the worst private provider evicting 400% more than the best one. There is clearly variation between providers who accommodate families as opposed to single vulnerable clients, which is most clearly demonstrated by provider D who provides mostly 1-4 bed family size properties.

There was a reduction in cancellations from 132 to 109 by our longer term contracted accommodation providers (A, B, C & D) between 2019/20 and 2020/21. The largest rise in cancellations in 2020/21 was by hotel and short term 'spot purchase' providers of accommodation provided as part of the 'Everyone In' initiative. It is worth noting that no-one has been evicted from the new council-run emergency accommodation.

The next emergency accommodation contract will both include higher standards aligned to the emergency accommodation charter and will for the first time be awarded 50% on quality and 50% on cost. To allow this to happen, the 2021/21 budget includes £0.230m extra investment to enhance the level of service in the re-procurement of emergency accommodation. We hope this will lead to improvement in both conditions and practice.

In the pandemic the reviews of deaths in emergency accommodation stalled. It is imperative we learn from any deaths that occur in our emergency accommodation. Now the pandemic is easing, and we are moving back to our more usual services, officers are reviewing the re-commencement of homeless mortality reviews with Health & Adult Social Care colleagues in order to ensure there is a detailed inquiry into each situation. The outcome of that review should be reported to this Committee in due course.

To finish, I should briefly mention the Citywide Housing Conference which I attended on Saturday and which took as its theme "sustainability and the carbon neutral city". Unfortunately, this needed to be held on Zoom which I have no doubt had an impact on the numbers of residents attending. I am grateful to the many officers who gave up their Saturday to attend and present at that event.

20 CALL OVER

20.1 All agenda items were called for discussion by the committee.

21 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

21.1 To consider the following matters raised by members of the public:

(a) Petitions: None

(b) Written Questions: One written question was received:

David Spafford: Question to Housing Committee

Would you give an update on the progress which has been made over the summer with the Review of Arrears Policy, part of Alleviating Poverty in the work plan, and reported to be slightly off track in the first Quarter report 2021/22?

Response: Thank you for your question regarding the review of the arrears policy.

For Quarter 1 2021/22 our rent collected from council tenants remains 'green' above our target of 95.68% at 96.38% (£51.3m of £53.2m). We have not evicted any tenants due to rent arrears.

The work programme was established prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and a formal review of Arrears Policy has not been completed at this time.

However, we have informally reviewed our working practices to make sure we have been in line with government Covid guidance. For example, in line with pandemic guidance no arrears cases have gone to court to formalise a repayment agreement. The work we have undertaken over the summer to take action at the earliest stage and to support tenants include:

- Making telephone or other contact with all tenants in arrears to fully understand their situation and offer support, and to make sure they know what to do if for example their income has been reduced or they have lost their job
- Ensuring money advice is available to residents who need it
- Striving to prevent arrears from increasing and causing anxiety to residents
- Applying to the Department for Work & Pensions for 'alternative payment arrangements' meaning rent is paid directly to the council where applicable and the tenant is on Universal Credit
- Ensuring our colleagues are supported well and are equipped with the resources to provide a good service to residents

The way of working resulting from Covid-19 has helped strengthen relationships between ourselves and our residents and has emphasised our willingness to help reduce the burden of debt.

Supplementary question: Is the same service offered to temporary accommodation tenants?

Response: Not exactly the same service, but support is offered.

(c) Deputations: One deputation was received:

Title: Council fails to keep tenants free from harassment & anti-social behaviour.

Spokespersons: *Tony Graham and Martin Gray*

Introduction: I've been Chair of the Nettleton Court & Dudeney Lodge Residents' Association since Nov 2019. From 2002 till 2013, I worked in B & H Neighbourhood Housing Offices. The Council fails to keep tenants free from harassment & anti-social behaviour. It's a system failure.

*So-called 'Noise Nuisance' for too many tenants is a life-disrupting nightmare. One couple in Nettleton Court have kept over 4 years of Diary entries: two Officers at different times have suggested that **they** move from their home of 18 years.*

Environmental Health & the ASB Team are Court-focused. Lacking serious support, perpetrators with mental health problems often 'fail to engage': the victims are left to suffer the consequences.

Main text: Part 1 - Personal account, an eye-witness statement.

My name is (redacted), and I am (redacted) years old. Last year I had open heart Surgery and have spent most of this, and the last year, shielding from covid-19.

I became unintentionally homeless after my long-term relationship broke down in Aug.2019. After being assessed, I was found to be in housing need. I was sent to Kendal Court, Railway Road, Newhaven that was/is part of B&H emergency Housing allocations. I was accommodated in a single room, without bedding, cooking equipment, or electricity. (I bought an electric card from the caretaker later) The mattress was urine and blood stained from the previous tenant who, from reading a summons, delivered to me by mistake, from the Brighton Magistrates court, (redacted).

The caretaker refused to change the mattress until the following day as he said his shift was over, and therefore, I slept on the floor for the first night. Within the first week, the other tenants in my block were fighting, screaming and shouting at each other over drugs and alcohol. It is no surprise to me that there were five unnatural deaths in the building, shortly before my arrival. I was scared to leave my room and kept the door locked at all times. The police were called many times in the time that I was there, due to constant disturbances.

Finally, I was moved to Dudeney Lodge, Upper Hollingdean Road, Brighton. In a flat that was let by Sea-side homes. The tenant below me suffered from mental health problems and the slightest noise made him react irrationally. I was chopping a carrot for a soup that I was making in the daytime, when he came up to my flat, shouting abuse, and because I did not open the door to him, he kicked the letterbox off my door. His bullying behaviour, constantly banging on his ceiling, carried on for months and despite constant phone calls to housing, nothing effectively happened.

I was then moved to my present flat which is a permanent tenancy in the same building. I thought that I had escaped from the unstable neighbour below me, only to find another one above me. This person used his flat as a workshop, drilling, electric planing, hammering, etc. sometimes until midnight. Again, after many complaints to housing, nothing happened, and he continued to make unbearable noise until he left the flat, without my being told, after one year.

This is my short living experience in social housing, I simply ask, what changes do we need to make in order to improve our housing service? I have some ideas to put forward to this committee today, I hope you will consider them.

Part 2. A way forward. The 'Housing first programme' currently includes levels of support for the vulnerable that are significant and sustained. Where is the comparable support for those in temporary accommodation currently housed by Seaside Homes in council properties like ours? There will be risks (and some failures) in assessment and allocation, still, effective monitoring and support must be delivered. The damage up to now, sometimes prolonged and extreme, is borne by neighbours, whose tenancy rights are abused without effective redress.

As you know, High-rise blocks are echo chambers and amplify noise many times over. A simple way to reduce this excessive noise pollution, would be to install, in every uncarpeted flat within High-rise buildings, a 20-25mm foam underlay with hardwearing fitted carpets. There are many elderly and vulnerable residents in our senior High-rise blocks who cannot afford, or do this upgrade by themselves, yet they unknowingly, cause a great deal of noise disturbance to other tenants. The cost of this carpeting to me was around £800 in total.

I believe that you are beginning to do this in sheltered accommodation, so I ask you to extend this important upgrade to all the other senior housing stock. Leaseholders who sublet their flats in High-rise blocks, especially to families with children, should be made to do this under the conditions of their leasehold, and it should be followed through by B&H housing officers until the work is done. Indeed, it should be a condition of the "Right to buy scheme".

Also, there must be a better flow of information from each department within the housing system. First, in the assessment process, and then in the support that is given to long-term tenants. I also believe that Tenant Resident Associations should be encouraged to play an active role in this undertaking.

We must continue to develop new integrated pathways from homelessness, through to secure accommodation, with housings' higher management, monitoring the support and guidance that is given to new tenants in both emergency accommodation and in their first secure tenancy's probationary year. (Kendal Court should never happen again).

Finally, there must be a better recording system, with inbuilt accountability for the way placement and decisions are made. Decisions that can ultimately affect our tenant's physical health, mental health, and emotional wellbeing.

(On behalf of the Nettleton Court and Dudeney Lodge Residents' Association)

Response: Thank you for your deputation.

We take issues of harassment & anti-social behaviour and the impact of such behaviour on our residents very seriously.

I am aware, from having met Tony previously, of the impact antisocial behaviour is having on some of the residents at Nettleton Court and Dudeney Lodge and that you have been in contact with the area Housing Manager for your area and met with him recently.

I am sorry to hear of the experience outlined in the deputation of our emergency accommodation at Kendal Court from when you were placed there in August 2019. We have undertaken a range of measures to review and improve our emergency accommodation standards both at Kendal Court and elsewhere. This includes increasing our Welfare Officer provision. In addition, our forthcoming emergency accommodation re-procurement of contracts seeks to further enhance tenancy support and sustainment of emergency accommodation. The 2021/21 budget includes £0.230m extra investment to enhance the level of service in the re-procurement of emergency accommodation.

In addressing anti-social behaviour, the council currently adopts a twin track approach, this is in line with Equality Act duties. Where the perpetrator is identified we are obliged to try to bring about a change in their behaviour by introducing enhanced support. The success of this is reliant upon an individual's commitment to engage. Our approach to anti-social behaviour is to take any reports at face value. However, in order to take enforcement action, we do need evidence to take to court. In noise cases, this can be very difficult in the absence of professional witness testimony or a victim witness statement.

When undertaking enforcement action, the council is required to determine what is reasonable and proportionate, and at what stage to escalate the matter. Escalation can include issuing formal warnings, serving an abatement notice and/or seeking an injunction or, in more extreme cases, seeking possession of a person's home.

All cases of anti-social behaviour that have not been resolved at Nettleton and Dudeney have been referred to Housing's Complex Case team to review and explore remedial options available. Once this review is complete, we will let residents know the types of remedial action we have taken, without identifying individual residents.

We are also very keen to improve how we respond proactively to reports of anti-social behaviour.

In light of this, we are reviewing our antisocial behaviour policy and will be involving residents in this review, I understand that a number of residents have already been invited to participate.

I am unable to make reference to any specific household in order to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned. However, I can confirm that if we have failed to prevent anti-social behaviour and do not have enforcement options open to us, if a tenant wants help to move, we will generally help facilitate this.

We are also reviewing our provision of support to our most vulnerable tenants. This includes reviewing how we better support residents who are moving from temporary accommodation into settled accommodation. We wish to ensure that perpetrators of anti-social behaviour receive the support they need to sustain their tenancy without their behaviour impacting on others. In addition, as you outline, we have also significantly increased our provision of Housing First and Housing Led support accommodation for clients with multiple and complex needs moving from rough sleeping into more permanent homes.

In relation to the point made about carpets, we agree that simple remedial measures such as provision of carpeting with good underlay can help prevent such issues escalating. We no longer routinely remove carpets from empty properties if they are in good condition unless we need to remove them to carry out other work. We also have a small budget for carpets for use in general needs housing. The Housing Estates Service run a furniture recycling service for residents, and we will consider whether we are able to expand this to include underlay when it is in good condition.

I hope this information is useful and the residents can continue to work with officers to respond to the issues arising and to participate in our antisocial behaviour policy review.

Following the response:

Martin Gray stated that all residents are equal and that they trust councillors. However, support has broken down and this was indicative of the poor responses. Those who complain are told to fill in a form and go away. The councillors are asked to create an oversight committee with an eight member task force to articulate on behalf of residents. Residents have low expectations. The committee needs to make real decisions.

The Chair noted the further comments and stated that setting up committee would be looked at.

Councillor Fowler considered the issue upsetting and had contacted officers on this matter before relating to Nettleton residents. A report on anti-social behaviour would be welcomed.

Councillor Platts thanked the speakers and stated they had experienced the same in their ward and also called for a report.

Councillor Williams thanked the speakers for the deputation and noted they knew of residents who had waited fourteen months for a carpet.

Councillor Barnett considered that some residents were not getting the care they needed. The councillor noted that the Brighton Fund can help residents, however some residents were being ignored. The councillor stated they had photographic evidence of drug dealing at some properties.

Councillor Mears thanked the speakers for the deputation and stated they were aware of these serious issues and the need for 24/7 support. This was a matter of urgency and the timescales are important as drug dealing was ongoing.

Councillor Gibson considered the matter an important issue and endorsed support for residents. The council need to work hard and be clear about housing. The level of frustration is understood and how anti-social behaviour can destroy lives.

22 ITEMS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

22.1 There were no items referred from full council.

23 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

23.1 To consider the following matters raised by councillors:

(a) Petitions: There were none for this committee.

(b) Written Questions: The following questions were received from Councillors:

From Councillor Meadows: *When senior officers or managers of services for vulnerable people asked to from home during Covid; were their positions considered for example, managing the services for our rough sleepers? And how could they manage local services if working from home, especially if 'home' is say in Scotland?*

Response: Thank you for your question about services to vulnerable people during the Covid lockdowns.

The Housing service continued to provide a high level of service to our most vulnerable residents throughout the pandemic, both in person and virtually, in line with Government and Public Health instruction and guidance.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the Council worked within strict Government and Public Health parameters, including for people to work from home unless involved in delivering essential services. In addition to provision of essential services, the Council also had a responsibility to protect the health and safety of our residents, staff and contractors.

Assessments were made of which services were essential as well as an assessment of which staff members were vulnerable themselves (for example owing to underlying health conditions, age or pregnancy) and needed to be shielded or lived with a vulnerable person that required shielding.

Subject to risk assessment, we identified how best to use available resources to maintain critical face-to-face service provision including:

- Providing essential emergency and urgent repairs services.
- Accommodating rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping under Everyone In. Including in person assessment and support and food for these vulnerable clients.
- Maintaining our Estates Service throughout the pandemic, including additional cleaning of common areas.

Where residents were particularly at risk, we quickly developed alternative service delivery models where appropriate, including supporting thousands of vulnerable tenants and residents in their homes through phone and other virtual contact.

Some managers and senior staff directing delivery of essential services worked from offices following a thorough risk assessment. In line with Government guidance, most council staff worked from home, with the council moving quickly to make use of technology to support home working which includes effective management of services.

In this respect, the location of managers' homes or the reasons why they may have been working from home, has not adversely impacted the responsive and important work we were able to successfully provide to rough sleepers and other vulnerable residents.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Meadows considered that managers should have checked where 'home' was when sending senior officers to work from 'home' and considered what would be a reasonable commuting distance to work. The councillor stated they understood the issues surrounding working from 'home' but considered that frontline services had no reason to work at 'home' and should be within a reasonable commute.

From Councillor Barnett: *I would like to know why it is taking so long to relet houses. I have 7 at least in my ward that have been empty for months and at least 1 has been empty for 2 years (that is what I know about) with the great deal of residents that are waiting for a home it is not acceptable.*

Response: Thank you for your question about the time taken to let empty council homes.

As previously reported to Housing Committee, one of the most significant negative impacts of the pandemic has been upon our turnaround time for empty homes, meaning we have an unacceptably high number of void properties at this time.

As advised, this was caused by pandemic restrictions on what works the Council, and our contractors were able to undertake on our empty properties to meet the standard for re-letting, which has led to a backlog of empty council homes. As part of our Covid recovery plan we are committed to improving our empty homes re-let time.

As outlined in the 'Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 1 2021/22' being considered at Housing Committee on 22 September, as part of our recovery measures our performance on average relet time is now improving post pandemic.

Our recovery measures to continue to address this issue include:

- Provision of additional senior management capacity in the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service.

- Approval of additional procurement options to increase our contractor base and the empty homes work contractors can carry out on our behalf.
- Commencement of significant recruitment campaign for additional permanently employed skilled trades staff within the Housing Repairs Maintenance Service. Over time this will increase our in-house capacity for direct delivery of works.

I am advised that you have had responses to earlier queries about specific empty homes in your ward. If you could provide details to officers of the empty homes referred to in your question, they can check whether there are any responses outstanding or update you on those properties.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Barnett wondered why properties were still empty, with approximately 7/9 properties in their ward. The councillor thanked the Assistant Director of Housing for their assistance.

From Councillor Mears: *Following the changes made by the Administration to Brighton and Hove City Councils Allocation Policy, which placed homeless people at the top of the priority list for council housing, we have seen many vulnerable clients being moved into Sheltered Housing in the city.*

There have been some very serious issues that are now being experienced by residents and staff in our sheltered schemes. Many homeless residents placed in sheltered housing under the administration's priority policy have Drug, alcohol, and Mental health issues affecting their lives but are being allocated in to our sheltered blocks without 24 hour support.

This is having a very serious effect on other elderly and vulnerable residents living in sheltered blocks and our staff trying to deal with the problems.

1. *What steps are the administration taking to address these serious issues and protect all residents of sheltered blocks.*

Response: Thank you for your question about the Council's Allocation Policy and people who have recently moved into the Council's Seniors Housing schemes.

Since April 2020 there have been 85 lets to Seniors Housing schemes, of which 13 had a background of homelessness. Anecdotally there have been limited nuisance reports from residents. However, if there are known concerns at particular schemes, we take this very seriously and will investigate thoroughly. More information would be helpful in this respect.

In general terms, the Covid-19 emergency has had a profound impact on housing needs of the city, and the Council is looking at an appropriate response to meet these

challenges. In line with statutory duties, the Council is housing those in greatest need and has prioritised allocations for those facing homelessness over the pandemic period.

While some housing applicants will present with complex needs, not everyone who faces homelessness will have drug, alcohol or mental health issues, or indeed have those issues and then go on to cause a nuisance or annoyance to others. However, we do know that with an ageing population, and because of the pandemic, older people's needs are increasing across the board.

The Seniors Housing service has always worked closely with those residents with more challenging needs, often in partnership with health and social care colleagues, and / or more specialist organisations.

The Seniors Housing service is working closely with the Healthy Living Team to ensure that staff and residents have access to specialist advice and support. During the pandemic the team has provided a range of information to all residents on keeping well, either directly or through the post. This has also included information on accessing mental health support given the impact of the pandemic.

The Housing Service also has a Tenancy Support Team which helps those who are struggling to maintain their tenancy, including those living in seniors housing schemes. If there are problems in communities, we encourage residents to raise this directly with the scheme manager or the service as soon as possible.

The Housing service is careful to ensure that whatever action we take, we are sensitive to the needs of everyone, including those being complained against. We wish to avoid stigmatising those who have faced homelessness or have mental health or other health, care and support issues as this would be a serious failing in our equalities duties.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Mears noted that this was a serious issue and those in sheltered housing needed 24 hour support.

2. What is the current waiting list for housing repairs at council properties in Brighton and Hove?

Response: As of Friday 10th September, the number of outstanding housing repairs was 6960.

As outlined in the 'Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 1 2021/22' also being considered at Housing Committee on 22 September, as part of our recovery measures, our performance on completion of routine repairs is improving post pandemic.

The Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service is prioritising repairs firstly by urgency and secondly by age and therefore this backlog does consist of many older jobs. So, a percentage of the overall figure will be lower priority jobs that are responded to in 20 days and the remaining will be jobs of a lower priority which are effectively forming the

backlog. As the backlog of older jobs is addressed and works completed the average days to complete figure reported will increase temporarily.

As with our recovery plan to improve empty property turnaround times we are seeking to maximise use of our approved list of contractors for the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service to provide access to key resources. The Service has also commenced a large-scale recruitment process that will begin to address the backlog and ultimately reduce the time taken to complete routine repairs.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Mears considered that the issues around bring repairs in house were well known and residents were frustrated as the systems were not working at this time.

3. What is the current number of vacant council housing properties in Brighton and Hove, awaiting being let out to those on the housing list?

Response: As of Friday 10 September, the number of vacant general needs and Seniors Housing council homes is 277.

As outlined in our response to the question from Cllr Barnett, as part of our recovery measures our performance on average relet time for empty homes is now improving post pandemic.

Supplementary question:

There was no further question on this point.

4. Through the Homeless Reduction Board, I have asked for a financial breakdown of money the Council has received from the Government for Homelessness and rough sleepers. This information is still outstanding despite having been requested multiple times.

a) Please can the above information be provided.

Response: Thank you for your question regarding the financial breakdown of funding which the Council has received for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping. I apologise that you have not received a reply to your previous requests.

a) The funding is as follows:

- Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) funding received from Government has been regularly reported to Housing Committee. The Council were awarded NSAP shorter-term/interim accommodation and immediate support revenue funding of £3,428,766 to 31 March 2021. This was the highest sum awarded to any individual local authority in the country. In addition, the council were awarded a capital sum of £1.752m with revenue support of £669,600 (over four years) to deliver 30 Home Purchase Policy, Housing First homes for move on by 31 March 2021, and £609,939 to deliver 20 units of high support accommodation for 3.5 years

thorough partners St Mungo's and Clarion.

- Rough Sleeper Initiative 4 grant awarded for single homeless including rough sleepers for 2021/22 was £3,302,305. This covers supported accommodation for single people as well as floating support.
- The council was awarded £6,240,090 in 2021/22 for Homelessness Prevention Grant. This is a combination of the previously called Flexible Homeless Support Grant and Homelessness Burdens Funding. These grants are awarded by Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) based on previous figures of homelessness and temporary accommodation. It is primarily to fund the management element of temporary accommodation that was removed from the housing benefit several years ago. It is also for the prevention of homelessness.
- Grant to provide private sector accommodation to ex-offenders who may become or are homeless and to whom we do not have statutory accommodation duties towards was £64,000. This is a one-off award.
- Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP). Under the RSAP round 1 funding, the MHCLG awarded £0.700m towards a £2.800m scheme to enable the purchase of 12 new homes to be used for Housing Led Support for rough sleepers with complex needs. The council has also been awarded £511,800 to pay for the revenue support costs for these tenants up to the end of 2023/24. The RSAP round 1 funding also awarded £1.163m towards purchasing a further 30 properties under 10-year leases for Rapid Rehousing scheme aimed at lower need rough sleepers.
- More details are in the table below:

	Capital grant award 21/22 & 22/23	Grant for revenue support costs 21/22	Grant for revenue support costs 22/23	Grant for revenue support costs 23/24
Home purchase expansion to 30 properties to deliver Housing Led Support*	700,000	65,500	214,200	232,100
30x 10 year leased properties to deliver Rapid Rehousing Scheme	1,163,000	99,076	178,500	178,500
Totals	1,863,000	164,576	392,700	410,600

Supplementary question:

Councillor Mears requested that the answers and the above table be sent to the committee Members, as well as to those councillors who submitted questions.

b) Can the Council confirm if the programme to provide accommodation to all homeless people in the city as has operated during the pandemic still stands or has now finished?

Response: The service provision to homeless people and rough sleepers in the city during the pandemic has been subject to regular reporting to Housing Committee, including detailed reports in March and June 2021. There is a further report to Housing Committee on 22 September 2021. Key information includes that:

- The council continues to discharge its statutory accommodation duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- The council will continue to seek to offer accommodation to all verified rough sleepers where this is permissible within the Council's powers.
- In line with proposed easing and ending of national Covid-19 restrictions and opening up of the council's usual homeless prevention and housing options services, Housing Committee in March 2021 agreed that by 21st June 2021, the accommodation offer to those at risk of rough sleeping, (the Covid- 2 cohort), made for the duration of the pandemic is ended where no accommodation duty is owed by the council.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Mears requested that the Housing committee pre meets include all the reports in the agenda. The Chair stated although it was difficult to get all reports ready in time for the pre meeting, it is the endeavour to do better for the next committee.

(c) Letters: There were none for this committee.

(d) Notices of Motion: There were none for this committee.

24 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING UPDATE

24.1 The Head of Housing Needs introduced the report to the committee.

Questions

24.2 Councillor Williams was informed that the council were looking at the Local Government association advice programme.

24.3 Councillor Meadows was informed that the council are looking at resources to achieve the legal advice required for an ethical lettings agency by a review group. It was noted that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) is not relevant when engaging with groups as no personal information is shared. The report has been produced to make people aware of what the housing team can do. Resources will be needed to set

up a review group. The councillor was further informed that the council are engaging with landlord groups to help with energy certificates. It is not considered that the council would be unfair competition to the rest of the market, however, competition issues will be checked. It was stated that the £100,000 needed will need to be identified after the review. This information will be brought back to committee.

- 24.4 Councillor Mears expressed concerns regarding the council will be reviewing of houses of multiple occupancy (HMO), and the running of a business by the council. HMO figures should be seen by councillors. The proposed recommendation amendment is not required, and the housing stock does not meet criteria, nothing has changed. The councillor did not support the report or the proposed amendment.
- 24.5 Councillor Gibson was informed that the information supplied by the voluntary sector was of some assistance (it identified approximately 80 complaints across the city around disrepair), but the legal advice is that it would be subject to challenge as further detail is required to ensure it is robust if used to support consent for a selective licensing scheme and so has limited weight. The councillor was also informed that the evidence base is complex, and the evidence needs to be robust.
- 24.6 Councillor Williams proposed the amendment to the recommendations and stated that the council needs to commit to introducing selective licensing. The Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) can help the council with information and resources have been found, the landlords of the city will benefit.
- 24.7 Councillor Osborne seconded the amendment and stated that the amendment would make clear the way for selective licensing, bring groups together and work jointly.
- 24.8 Councillor Meadows expressed concerns regarding the finances and was informed by Councillor Gibson that the funds would be reviewed by the budget review group.
- 24.9 Councillor Mears expressed concerns stating that selective licensing has been around for a long time and it is a sensitive issue. It considered that officers will need resources to got to landlords who aren't behaving, and the timing is off, making the issues very difficult. The conservatives are aware of issues in the city and note the work not yet done.
- 24.10 The Chair stated that the amendment was to make clear what can and cannot be done.
- 24.11 Councillor Gibson stated that the review equals an improvement in conditions.
- Vote
- 24.12 A vote was taken on the amendment and by a vote of 7, with 3 abstentions, the amendment was agreed.
- 24.13 A vote was taken, and by a vote of 7, with 3 abstentions, the recommendations as amended were agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Housing Committee note the updates on progress against key elements of the Housing Committee Work Plan objectives to improve the quality and management of homes in the private rented sector as set out in this report.
- 2.2 Housing Committee restates its commitment in the joint housing and homelessness programme to work towards introducing selective licensing in the City of Brighton and Hove as soon as possible and to seek resources to support this.
- 2.3 Housing Committee note the expansion of the existing Private Sector Housing enforcement team, as outlined in paragraph 3.1, and that the service will assess the impact of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and new legislation in this area. 2.4 Housing Committee note that, as outlined in paragraph 5.1, officers will seek to support renters to understand what legal remedies are available to them under the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Strategy, including any provided by new legislation in this area.
- 2.5 Housing Committee request a review of the current national position with regard to selective licensing designations to better understand the current context within which any approvals are being given. Identifying the resources that are required to undertake this work to be considered.
- 2.6 That Housing Committee agrees the re-purposing and expansion of the Direct Lets scheme as an ethical letting agency incorporating Good Landlord standards. Any additional costs arising as a result of these changes will be brought back to committee for approval.
- 2.7 That Housing Committee notes the funding required to explore and scope the feasibility of a broader based ethical letting agency proposal. This will require an estimated budget of £0.100m.
- 2.8 That officers urgently develop options for sustaining tenancies where a tenant with arrears faces eviction and could become homeless.

25 LEASEHOLD PAYMENT OPTIONS AND UPDATES

- 25.1 The Assistant Director of Housing introduced the report to the committee.

Questions

- 25.2 Councillor Mears was informed that the council did engage with residents and plans for further engagement are going ahead. The councillor expressed concerns regarding the Mears contract and was informed by the Chair that an independent review of the contract had been carried out.
- 25.3 Councillor Meadows was informed that the information relating to those who die with an equity release loan will be looked into and shared with the committee. It was noted that no appeals have been heard regarding the discretionary reduction of service charges. The results of the satisfaction survey will be shared with the councillors and it was also noted that the work of Resident Inspectors compliments but does not replace the work

undertaken by our professional qualified council staff. It was confirmed that 100% of works are checked.

- 25.4 Councillor Williams was informed that the residents and leaseholders were engaged before COVID-19, however this was not possible during the pandemic. Resident inspectors are continuing to give feedback.

Vote

- 25.5 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed by a unanimous vote to accept the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That committee notes the outcome of the consultation with tenants and leaseholders on proposals to make changes to the leaseholder payment options.
- 2.2 That committee note that the full financial, legal and other implications of the points arising from the consultation will need to be considered and recommendations arising from consultation on changes to the leaseholder payment options will be brought to the next meeting of Housing Committee to enable an informed decision.
- 2.3 That committee notes the progress in other areas of leasehold management as detailed in section 5 of this report.

26 HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT IT SYSTEM REPLACEMENT

- 26.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement introduced the report to the committee.

Questions

- 26.2 Councillor Williams was informed that the process of procurement does not allow those applying to specify whether companies are local. It was noted that the system required would be specialised and local businesses are offered help and support to make a bid.
- 26.3 Councillor Mears was informed that the current contract cost was £66,000 and £69,000 and the new contract would be around £10,000 more. It was noted that the older systems need upgrading. The new systems will work within the IT programme with higher levels of accessibility and ability to 'talk' to each other.
- 26.4 Councillor Meadows was informed that the new system would not necessarily need to be geographically located at Moulsecoomb as it would be a system on IT only.
- 26.5 Councillor Osborne was informed that a great deal of testing has been done and a lot learnt from other councils. There would be on guarantee of no glitches and this would be a leap of faith to some extent. Romanwood will be able to bid for the work as the council must go to market when using public money. Standing orders state that procurement over £500,000 should come to committee for decisions.

Vote

26.6 A vote was taken, and by 8 to 2 the committee agreed the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Housing Committee agree and then recommend to Policy & Resources Committee:
- 2.2 That the Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities is granted delegated authority to:
- i) Procure a new asset management IT system for the councils' housing service.
 - ii) Award a contract with the preferred supplier for a period of five years, with an option to extend by two years subject to satisfactory supplier performance.
- 2.3 Approval of a £0.515m budget to be added to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme for the project's procurement and implementation activity.

27 NEXT STEPS - ROUGH SLEEPING AND ACCOMMODATION DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC AND RECOVERY

27.1 The Head of Housing Needs introduced the report to the committee.

Questions

- 27.2 Councillor Mears considered the finances should be totalled at the end of the report and was informed that the hotel acquisition was for 6 months only and cost £138,000. The 81 rooms referred to in the report were spread between hotels and hostels in the city. The funding comes from successfully grant funding bids. It was noted that the authority has a statutory need to help those in temporary accommodation. It was confirmed that the Contain Management Outbreak Fund (COMF) has funds remaining and costs would be neutral to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 27.3 Councillor Barnett was informed that the 45% of social housing lets were too homeless, 57 to transfers and 69 to home seekers.
- 27.4 Councillor Gibson was informed that written answers given to the committee regarding the questions relating to the calculations of move-on rates, out of the two groups in the report, what was the percentage of homes achieved for those moved-on, number of those suitable for re-connections and what assumptions are there about rent recovery.
- 27.5 Councillor Williams noted the 42% of social housing lets to homeless people and noted the government should stop the right-to-buy scheme.
- 27.6 Councillor Mears considered that the finances needed to be clear in the report. The councillor was informed that the written responses would be given regarding the funding from The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which covers all of Sussex and Brighton and Hove. The Executive Director - Housing Neighbourhoods & Communities stated that there isn't a separate pot for Brighton and

Hove and work would be needed before details can be given. The councillor welcomed a complex briefing on the matter.

- 27.7 Councillor Meadows was informed that the council have a statutory requirement to support to support homeless and those on the housing register. It was noted that many homeless have many and varied issues, which includes housing.

Debate

- 27.8 Councillor Gibson considered the table in the report regarding the social housing lets to be very useful, however the out-of-city placements were a concern where people would be isolated from services and support. It was considered good that the government want to end homelessness and wish that the right-to-buy scheme would be reduced. The government were also asked to repeal the £20 less in universal credit following the easing of pandemic regulations. It was considered that the report sets out many positives and highlights the huge challenges such as the lifting of the evictions ban and furloughing. It was noted that numbers of homeless have been reduced and are second only to London. No Second night out scheme was considered successful, and it was also considered good to prevent the revolving-door scenario for the homeless. The councillor commended the report and asked that the re-connections be monitored and for the committee to support the recommendations.
- 27.9 The Assistant Director of Housing that there has been a 40% fall in out-of-area placements. Currently 122 have been placed in Eastbourne compared to 75 before the pandemic.

Vote

- 27.10 A vote was taken, and by 7 to 3 the recommendations were agreed. (Councillor Meadows noted recommendation 2.1)

RESOLVED:

That Housing Committee:

- 2.1 That Housing Committee note the low number of verified rough sleepers and that the Council will continue to seek to offer accommodation to all verified rough sleepers where this is permissible within the Council's powers to consolidate this achievement.

That Housing Committee recommends to Policy and Resources Committee:

- 2.2 To approve a capital budget of £2.800m to be included in the HRA Capital Investment Programme 2021/22 financed by HRA Borrowing of £2.100m funded by the rental stream and an MHCLG contribution of £0.700m. This is for the purchase of 12 new homes to deliver a Housing Led Support scheme for higher need rough sleepers.
- 2.3 To approve a capital budget of £3.240m be included in the General fund Capital Investment Programme 2021/22 for the acquisition of 30 properties on 10-year leases to deliver Rapid Re-housing for lower need rough sleepers. This will be funded by a

contribution from MHCLG of £1.163m and will require borrowing of £2.080m, funded by the rental stream.

- 2.4 To approve the extension of emergency short term hotels from October until March 2022 in light of continuing pressures of those to whom the council owes a statutory accommodation duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act in emergency accommodation.
- 2.5 To agree to use the remaining 2021/22 Contain Management Outbreak Fund (COMF) grant (estimated at £1.615m) to support the continuing pressures caused by the pandemic of those in emergency accommodation to whom the council owes a Housing duty.
- 2.6 To agree to the acquisition of a hotel to deliver in the region of 15 - 20 rooms to enable provision for the SWEP between October 2021 and March 2022.

28 HOUSING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2021/22

- 28.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement introduced the report to the committee.

Questions

- 28.2 Councillor Meadows was informed that the total number of complaints was 83, 81% had been responded to within 10 days and the re-let timescales are being improved.
- 28.3 Councillor Mears was informed that the apprenticeship scheme had been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and new scheme would start soon. Residents with rent arrears are given support, but not a lax approach. When needed the council will go to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for full payments.
- 28.4 Councillor Gibson was informed that the air and ground source heat pumps are being installed, as well as solar panels, retrospectively.
- 28.5 Councillor Williams was informed that tenants in arrears are helped with discretionary house payments and given support by other council directorates, and back dated benefits can help. The council look at the whole picture, in the round and help residents to consolidate debts. The ability to move-on when in arrears depends on the situation, there is no general way forward to assist tenants move-on.
- 28.6 Councillor Osborne was informed that the number of days to resolve cases was to be improved, however it was noted that gathering evidence takes time.
- 28.7 Councillor Meadows was informed that the electric certificates were not needed legally for council stock, however, it is good practice.

Vote

28.8 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed unanimously to accept the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

2.1 That Housing Committee notes the report.

29 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION EVICTIONS ANNUAL REPORT

29.1 The Head of Housing Needs introduced the report to the committee.

Questions

29.2 Councillor Mears was informed that the after the options after the pandemic would include looking at reconnection options, private rental and possible move-on. Social housing would be allocated on a case-by-case basis.

29.3 Councillor Platts was informed that abandoned meant that the current occupier leaves accommodation provided by private or council with no notification. It was noted that not suitable was a different matter which is covered in the next steps report. Councillor Platts stated that a resident had been given an unsuitable property. It was noted that particular cases could not be discussed at the committee meeting, however, the matter would be looked into as soon as possible.

29.4 Councillor Meadows was informed that the majority of those evicted not receiving support found accommodation themselves.

29.5 Councillor Gibson was informed that the information relating to data comparisons with previous years, a tables update to include previous years, information on performance of providers and the council emergency account would be provided in an additional report to cover all the relevant information requested.

29.6 The Chair noted that no evictions from council accommodation have taken place as of the date of the meeting.

Vote

29.7 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed by a unanimous vote to accept the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

2.1 That Housing Committee notes the performance and end of placements by Emergency Accommodation providers reported.

2.2 That Housing Committee note that 2020/21 was an exceptional year in terms of both client placements and the complexity of client need.

- 2.3 That Housing Committee acknowledges the continuing efforts of staff within the service, our commissioned services and contractors to maintain tenancies throughout the Covid 19 period.
- 2.4 That Housing Committee notes that the forthcoming emergency accommodation re-procurement of contracts (unavoidably delayed due to Covid 19), seeks to enhance tenancy support and sustainment of emergency accommodation.

30 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL

- 30.1 There were none.

31 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

- 31.1 There were no Part Two proceedings.

The meeting concluded at 8.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

Housing Committee 17th November 2021**Labour Group****Notice of motion**

It is recognised that the majority of private sector landlords in the city make a positive contribution to housing in our city and this is valued. However, a recent report revealed that almost half of private renters in South East were victims of illegal acts by landlords. We have provided much needed extra funding for the PRS enforcement team and have recruited more staff to tackle this problem in our city. We are now in a position to do more to deter rogue landlord activity.

The NRLA chief executive states that rogue and criminal landlords puts tenants at risk and undermines the reputation of decent landlords. It is essential that Brighton and Hove send out a strong message that rogue landlords will not be tolerated in our city. Many council across the country have adopted a zero tolerance approach to rogue and criminal landlords. It is high time we do the same.

This motion moves that:

1. This housing committee declares an intention to adopt a zero tolerance approach to rogue landlords
2. This housing committee agrees that a database of rogue landlords where action has been successfully taken should be made available on Brighton & Hove council website in accordance with s 4.5 of Rogue Landlord Enforcement Guidance for Local Authorities

Proposer Councillor Gill Williams

Seconder Councillor Theresa Fowler

Sources:

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/homes/property/news/19582869.almost-half-private-renters-south-east-victim-illegal-acts-landlords/>

<https://www.nrla.org.uk/news/chronic-failure-to-tackle-rogue-landlords-puts-tenants-at-risk>

Housing Committee	Agenda Item 38 (d)
17 November 2021	Brighton & Hove City Council

Rogue Landlord Enforcement Guidance for Local Authorities, April 2019 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Subject:	Carbon Reduction in Housing		
Date of Meeting:	17 November 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Housing Neighbourhoods Communities and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Reid Miles Davidson	Tel: 01273 293150
	Email:	Martin.reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk Miles.davidson@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 In 2018 the City Council declared a climate and bio-diversity emergency. We have an ambition for the city to be Carbon Neutral by 2030 with a corporate wide Carbon Neutral 2030 Programme in place to support this. As part of our plans to become a more sustainable City, we will:
- become a carbon neutral city by 2030
 - create and improve public open spaces
 - reduce, re-use and recycle
 - develop an active and sustainable travel network
 - promote and protect biodiversity
- 1.2 In January 2021, Housing Committee requested “that a detailed costed retrofit plan, that includes revising Energy Performance Certificate targets for Council homes in line with the commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2030 be brought to Housing Committee in October/November 2021, in time for this to inform the budget setting process for 2022/23. Work on the plan has been subject to delay and is still in development and is aligned to the consultancy support referred to in 3.4. The report provides an update to Committee on progress in Housing to support the council’s ambition to be Carbon Neutral by 2030, and details current projects and future plans to reduce carbon whilst supporting residents to afford energy bills.
- 1.3 Housing Committee committed “to identifying resources from the Housing Revenue Account needed for reduction in carbon emissions from council homes to assist in achieving a carbon neutral city by 2030, noting that Housing Revenue Account reserves towards this are being built up as part of the budget-setting process, subject to approval by Policy & Resources Committee.” these resources will be outlined in forthcoming budget reports.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Committee note progress and planned action with regard to carbon reductions in housing.
- 2.2 That Housing Committee agree to the extension of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Housing Policy (Appendix 1) until 31st March 2022 and agree the expansion of the Warm Safe Homes Grant as detailed in the report at 3.11.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Council Housing

- 3.1 The council has historically invested in its housing stock as part of the Decent Homes programme. There has been significant investment in upgrading gas boilers to A rated appliances and over 400 solar PV systems are installed across the stock. There have been incremental improvements to the average SAP ratings of its properties (Average SAP rating 68 March 2021). SAP is the Standard Assessment Procedure, the calculation that is required in order to produce an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). A SAP calculation indicates a score from 1 to 100+ for the annual energy cost based on the elements of structure and the heating and hot water system.
- 3.2 We hold EPC data for approximately 30% of our stock, extrapolating from this data gives a breakdown of EPC rating;
 - B: 5 %
 - C: 72 %
 - D: 19 %
 - E: 3 %
 - F: 1 %
- 3.3 While this EPC performance appears relatively strong it is based on only 30% coverage of the stock and will often be based on assumptions that may not be completely accurate.
- 3.4 Consultancy support is being commissioned to develop an energy plan that will sit alongside the future Asset Management Strategy and inform future capital works programmes. We expect to commission this support in the coming months with the results available in the first quarter of 2022. This energy plan should establish the most effective and efficient way of undertaking a baseline stock appraisal to identify:
 - The current EPC status of the stock (and/or another appropriate measure of energy performance, to be agreed with the council)
 - The extent and type of measures possible (and their impact on carbon reduction and fuel bills)
 - The cost and value of works needed/possible to achieve specific performance requirements:
 1. Meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard requirements (EPC C by 2030)

2. Exceed the minimum EPC standard and achieve the best carbon saving as affordably as possible, in line with the councils carbon neutral target
 3. The trajectory for investment (including 'no regrets' options) aligned to the wider capital improvement and ongoing maintenance programmes
- 3.5 A Solar PV programme was agreed at Housing Committee in June 2020 for up to 1000 homes, with an ambition for a further 1500 installations pending further approval, delivery of this programme is planned to begin in 2022. Separately, the SOLARISE project is piloting ways that we can increase the benefit of solar PV to residents in communal blocks
 - 3.6 We are identifying opportunities to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities, including with local partners on a 'Retrofit Taskforce' within the Greater Brighton region led by Lewes and Eastbourne authorities and the University of Brighton.
 - 3.7 The scoping out of a new heating and hot water contract to offer low/zero carbon options from 2023 onwards is underway, this will be presented to Housing Committee in January 2022 for consideration.
 - 3.8 An options appraisal for low/zero heating and hot water at communal blocks in north Whitehawk currently served by gas has been completed, this could lead to 265 flats moving from gas to air source heat pumps over the next 2-3 years. The project would significantly reduce carbon emissions, give residents greater control and potentially reduce bills. Early cost estimates of the project are in the region of £2.5-3m.
 - 3.9 As part of the government's Local Authority Delivery scheme, of the Green Homes Grant funding of £963,000 is available to part fund measures for 'low-income' households with a lower EPC rating. Overseen by the Greater South East Energy Hub we are in the process of reviewing the options available to deliver this scheme and identifying opportunities in our own housing stock. This phase of funding requires work to be completed by 31st March 2022, it will be very difficult to meet this deadline and access the full allocation without an extension to the scheme.

Private sector housing

- 3.10 At Budget Council February 2021 it was agreed to expand the warmer homes initiative through provision of an additional financing budget to lever in capital investment, increasing the total programme to £5.200m. As part of the initiative, it is intended to develop a 'Warmer Homes Scheme' for private housing and research is being carried out into similar schemes elsewhere. A specification is currently being developed to enable support to establish the required policy framework and delivery options, once completed a timetable for delivery can be reported.
- 3.11 As an initial measure and in response to the expected increase in pressure on household energy bills over the coming months, linked to the increase in wholesale energy costs, impacts of the pandemic and the removal of the

Universal Credit uplift, it is proposed to expand the Warm, Safe Homes Grant scheme (as set out in the Disabled Facilities Grant Housing Policy 2017-2020) - to support low income home owners and private tenants where the household is in fuel poverty and/or in receipt of a 'passporting' benefit. It is proposed to;

- Allocate an initial amount of up to £400,000 of the Warmer Homes programme funding to support the Warm Safe Homes Grant scheme
- Reflect the revised national definition of fuel poverty – Low Income Low Energy Efficiency in the eligibility criteria;
- Increase the maximum grant from £7,500 to £20,000 to allow for the installation of air source heat pumps where appropriate and feasible, in addition to insulation measures
- Use an element of the Warmer Homes funding for outreach work by local partners in the Community Energy and Community and Voluntary Sectors to identify vulnerable/eligible households to benefit from the grant

The Disabled Facilities Grant Housing Policy will be brought back to Committee at a later date to include a review of the current assistance provided.

3.12 We are awaiting the outcome of Government consultation on the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015. The resulting proposals for reviewing the minimum energy efficiency standards will then shape our approach to enforcement going forward. A resource for enforcement of the standards is being recruited to in the meantime.

3.13 Solar Together Sussex the collective purchasing scheme for Solar PV systems and batteries, for Sussex local authorities has recently completed a second auction with over 7000 households across Sussex registering an interest in the scheme. To date 67 installations have been completed in Brighton & Hove from the first round of the scheme.

3.14 The Council is part of a consortium bid for the governments 'Sustainable Warmth' competition to fund improvements to private sector homes for households with low income and low EPC rated home. We are currently awaiting the outcome of this bid, led by Portsmouth City Council and Agility Eco.

3 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Officers are considering a range of options to assist the Council in meeting its commitment to become carbon neutral and are working alongside key partners locally and across the region. This is a particularly important workstream for the housing service and further specialist expertise will be used to formulate, review and evaluate a range of options as these programmes are developed and evolve over time.

4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

Discussions regarding housings plans to reduce carbon emissions are ongoing with residents through a range of fora, both strategically and on an individual project basis. Presentations and discussions have taken place at the Home service improvement group and the theme of this year's City Wide Conference was carbon reduction.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Homes are responsible for approximately 40% of the total carbon emissions in the city. Our own housing stock is estimated to make up approximately 10% of this, equivalent to 45,000 tCO₂ a year with approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of this from gas boilers.
- 6.2 Our current HRA Energy Strategy, agreed in 2018, aims to improve all properties where practicable to EPC C by 2030 in line with national fuel poverty targets. We need to go beyond this where we can as part of the housing contribution to making the City carbon neutral by 2030, this will be reflected in future plans.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Budget Council February 2020 agreed a budget of £2.600m towards a Brighton and Hove warmer homes investment capital fund (providing grants for insulation and other carbon saving investments). Budget Council February 2021 agreed to allocate £0.200m in recurrent funding from 2021/22 to the financing costs budget to fund a further £2.600m capital resources through borrowing towards a Brighton and Hove Warmer Homes Investment Capital Fund taking the total resources to £5.200m.
- 7.2 The report is recommending that £0.400m of this borrowing is used to expand the Warm Safe Homes Grant which is currently part of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Housing Policy. A variation to the capital scheme will be sought through the Month 7 Targeted Budget Management (TBM) report to 2 December Policy & Resources Committee to accommodate the proposed investment.
- 7.3 At Policy & Resources Committee February 2020 £0.010m was allocated a for a Warmer Homes feasibility study, to explore options for a funded, council-led programme (especially insulation) to tackle fuel poverty, this remains unspent and so can be used to support the studies required to bring forward the carbon reduction plans in Housing.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Monica Brooks

Date: 9/11/21

Legal Implications:

In order to agree the proposed Warm Safe Homes scheme, the Council is required to have a relevant policy in place for the provision of assistance. The proposed extension of the Disabled Facilities Grant Housing Policy will achieve this.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date: 01/11/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The transition to low/zero carbon housing has the potential to provide numerous benefits, however if not delivered with residents and in consideration of the impact on the end user it could be disproportionately impactful on some groups. The Committee on Fuel Poverty, an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has identified the potential greater cost to the fuel poor of policy proposals intended to address Net Zero. For example, the transition away from gas heating to an electric heat pump, comes at an estimated additional cost to the consumer of up to £160 a year based on current energy prices.
- 7.5 Fuel poverty can cause people to not adequately heat their home, the impacts of living in a cold home disproportionately impact on people with long term health conditions, disabilities and older people.
- 7.6 Equalities impacts will be carried out on strategic decisions, major procurements and specific projects to identify and mitigate impacts on specific groups.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 Sustainability implications are reflected throughout the report. Where programmes of work and specific projects are planned wider sustainability impacts and potential to increase benefits will be considered for example reducing water use and opportunities to promote bio-diversity.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.8 None identified at this stage.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 None identified

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 Risks will be managed alongside specific programmes and projects using the Council's risk management framework.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 Through improvements to homes energy efficiency and heating and hot water provision there is the potential to address cold homes and fuel poverty in vulnerable groups. This can contribute to the prevention of ill health and excess winter deaths, reduce health and social inequalities, and improve wellbeing and quality of life. Supporting and enabling residents to pay less for their energy can contribute to tackling fuel poverty and cold homes, this will play a key part of low carbon programmes and projects in the future, transitioning away from natural

gas based on current prices needs to be carefully managed to not inadvertently increase people energy bills.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 Housings plans to reduce carbon in both its own housing stock and across private sector housing will be a significant contributor to the city's objective to be Carbon Neutral by 2030 and to become a 'more sustainable city'.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Disabled Facilities Grant Housing Policy 2017-2020

Disabled Facilities Grant Housing Policy 2017 – 2020

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Policy implementation & review
3. Strategic aims
4. Key priorities
5. Capital resources
6. The assistance being offered
7. Additional charges or fees
8. Application process
9. Complaints and redress
10. Discretion on cases that fall outside of the policy
11. Key service standards

1. Introduction

This policy sets out how the local authority intends to use its powers under the Regulatory Reform Order (2002) to introduce a wider range of housing interventions to promote independent living and well-being. It sets out the assistance available for funding essential repairs to reduce injury and accidents in the home, to ensure homes are adequately heated and the scope of adaptations available under the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

Importantly it aims to provide greater flexibility in how the DFG is used to help deliver wider strategic projects to keep people warm, safe and well at home and to reduce bureaucracy in the grant's administration.

2. Policy Implementation & Review

The policy will be in place from October 2017 to end March 2020. This is in line with the government's commitment in Autumn 2015 to increase national funding to £500m by 2019/20 for DFG (compared to £220m 2015/16, £394m 2016/17).

The policy will be made available on the council's website and a summary document available on request

It is subject to funding and annual review in line with the Better Care Board funding decisions and confirmation of the transfer of funding to Housing via the DFG.

An annual report will report on performance, setting out the spend against each intervention and outcomes using the person-centred outcome measures below:

- I am enabled to remain independent for as long as possible
- I am supported to have social connections and feel happy

- I am enabled to stay well and maintain a good quality of life for as long as possible
- I am able to access a range of community support to help me maintain my resilience and wellbeing
- I have access to appropriate information and support to enable me to manage my long term health condition/s
- I have access to appropriate advice and support to help me to avoid harm or injury

An earlier review may be necessary if performance or take up falls below the expected level to ensure the policy is delivering what it is intended for.

Any changes to the policy will be published on the council's website and a summary document available on request.

The governance of the policy and the assistance given will be with Housing. Annual performance reports will be subject to scrutiny at Housing & New Homes Committee.

3. Strategic aims

The policy relates to national objectives for housing, as well as local strategies. These are summarised below:

National Strategic Context

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods ("Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society," Communities and Local Government, February 2008) based housing in an ageing society on two clear principles - being able to make choices that reflect lifestyle and circumstances and being able to remain living safely at home for as long as possible. The strategy with subsequent removal of the DFG ring fence enables local authorities to pool budgets and provide services that best meet local need.

The publication of the Government's Vision for Adult Social Care ("A vision for adult social care: Capable communities and active citizens Dept. of Health 2010) confirmed the Government's commitment to ensuring that personalisation will be at the centre of independent living for older and disabled people. Adaptation services and Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) are supporting the changes by adopting a more personalised approach and reducing the time taken to adapt as well as reducing costs through smarter procurement to help meet rising demand.

Funding for DFGs in England is now channelled into the Better Care Fund (BCF) One of the aims of the BCF is to achieve improved integration of care and support services. DFG funding in England for 2015/16 was £220m and increased to £394 million in 2016/17. The Autumn Statement 2015 contained a commitment to provide £500m by 2019/20 for DFGs and estimated that this would fund 85,000 home adaptations in that year, preventing 8,500 people from needing to move into a care home in 2019/20 (Autumn Statement 2015, para 1.109).

In the July 2012 White Paper, Caring for our future: reforming care and support, (HM Government, Caring for our future: reforming care and support, July 2012) the Government made a commitment to extend the work of HIAs and to work with Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies, to do more to reach out

to a wider population and extend their service to more people who fund their own adaptations.

The Care Act 2014 obtained Royal Assent in May 2014. Section 3(1) of the Act places a duty on local authorities to carry out their care and support services with the aim of integrating those services with local NHS and other health services.

Local

Corporate Plan (2015 – 2019)

The policy meets Corporate Plan principles:

- Public accountability - working with, and answerable to, citizens and partners; strengthening partnership delivery arrangements.
- Citizen focused - making services simpler, more connected and more personal.
- Increasing equality – better coordination of council and other public services to tackle inequality and protect the most vulnerable people in society.
- Active citizenship - moving to more collaborative and empowering relationships with our diverse communities.

Sustainable Community Strategy Brighton & Hove Connected and Housing Strategy 2015.

The policy contributes to delivery of Housing Strategy priorities:

Priority 2: Improving Housing Quality - work to improve housing conditions in private rented and owner occupied homes through renewal advice, assistance and enforcement; improving Home Energy Efficiency, improving thermal comfort and reducing fuel poverty and CO2 emissions.

Priority 3: Improving Housing Support – through investment in a range of housing interventions, helping people remain independent helps to mitigate pressures on the more intensive and costly services provided by Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Health.

Fuel Poverty and Affordable Warmth Strategy 2016 – 2020

The policy contributes to funding and delivery of Affordable Warmth Strategy priorities:

- Increase the energy efficiency of the City's housing stock.
- Support residents struggling to pay their energy bills - through work with local advice agencies to ensure residents have access to advice on housing, benefits, money and energy.
- Work together to tackle fuel poverty through partnership and learning - through building upon existing networks to promote available support to all sectors, relevant organisations and communities across the city.
- Increase effective targeting of vulnerable fuel poor households and those most at risk of the health impacts of cold homes.
- To maximise resources and opportunities for tackling the causes fuel poverty.

Better Care Plan 2016

The policy contributes to the Better Care plan priorities that future service provision is:

- **Person centred** - designed around the individual and delivered close to home.

- **Proactive and preventative** - helping people stay healthy and remain independent.
- **Responsive and co-ordinated** - provided in a seamless way that minimises admissions to hospital.
- **Supportive** - when someone is admitted to hospital the system will support them to recover and return home as soon as they are ready.
- **Integrated** - with organisations working together in innovative ways to provide health and social care services.

4. Key priorities

This policy sets out the local housing interventions in place to assist people with renewals, repairs and adaptations in their homes using DFG funding. The key priorities are to meet the needs of older people, disabled people or families with disabled children and to target accident prevention, relieving fuel poverty and assisting with hospital discharge.

5. Capital resources

The total amount of capital funding committed to the policy is up to £400, 000 in 2017/18. This funding comes from the central DFG allocation via the Better Care Board. Because long term commitments are not known there will be an annual review of the policy. Assistance is available subject to funding.

6. The assistance being offered

Assistance being offered	Eligibility criteria & conditions	Means test	Amount available
<p>Relocation Grants to support people eligible for a DFG where it is more suitable for them to move rather than remain in their current property</p>	<p>Eligible for DFG</p> <p>Available to owner – occupiers and private tenants where it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt to meet the disabled person’s assessed needs</p> <p>Conditions: 1. Before proceeding with the process of moving, the property proposed as the new home must be confirmed as suitable by the council’s Housing Adaptations Service. 2. Property to remain in owner-occupation for five years following the move. (not applicable for private tenants)</p>	<p>Subject to DFG means test</p>	<p>Maximum of £20,000 to cover the costs arising from the following: estate agents fees (limited to a maximum of 1.5% of the property value) stamp duty (limited to a maximum amount of £7,500) solicitors fees valuation fees mortgage arrangement fees removal costs necessary utility and service set up costs minor adaptations to make the property suitable</p>

<p>Hospital Discharge Grants to support any older or disabled person being discharged from hospital to include any older person or disabled person being discharged from intermediate care</p>	<p>Any older person aged 65 or over or disabled person being discharged from hospital or intermediate care to home - owner-occupier, private tenant or housing association tenant.</p> <p>Conditions 1. referral from the dedicated Early Response Worker within the Help After Hospital team supporting Brighton & Sussex University Hospital Trust (BSUHT) discharge teams, hospital rehabilitation/intermediate care teams, Health and Social Care teams or the Patient Liaison Service (PALS) 2. excludes packages of care funded by NHS continuing healthcare</p>	<p>Not subject to means test</p>	<p>Maximum of £2,500 The grant is not specified, so any work that supports the discharge from hospital to home is eligible under the criteria including: minor works, such as clutter clearance/deep cleaning urgent home repairs hazards removal heating systems repaired/emergency heating provided</p>
<p>Dispensing with the means test to cover the most common adaptations carried out i. e stair lifts and level access showers - a contribution of up to £5,000 toward the cost of works where the disabled person has an assessed contribution to pay.</p>	<p>Eligible for DFG Adaptations assessed as necessary and appropriate, reasonable and practicable supported with an Occupational Therapist/OT Assistant recommendation.</p>	<p>Not subject to means test</p>	<p>Maximum of £5,000</p>
<p>Warm, Safe Homes Grants to help low income home owners and</p>	<p>Available to owner-occupiers and private tenants where the household is in fuel poverty measured by the</p>	<p>Subject to means test</p>	<p>Maximum of £7,500 to cover costs arising from:</p>

private tenants to quickly access financial assistance for a wide range of minor adaptations and repairs to reduce risks of accidents in the home	Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator i.e. they have fuel costs above the national average & spending this amount leaves them with an income below the official poverty line, or the household in receipt of Housing Benefit or any of the other 'passporting benefit' for DFG		electrical and gas safety checks and repairs repairs or modifications to stairs, floors and steps safety and security repairs boiler repairs or replacement loft/cavity wall insulation, including loft clearance.
Handyperson services – to help with small building repairs, minor adaptations, general home safety checks and remedial actions, falls and accident prevention checks	Available to owner-occupiers and private tenants	Not subject to means test – <i>maximum amount available under £5,000</i>	Maximum of £2,500 Home safety checks falls and accident prevention checks Remedial works such as: repairing floor coverings installing locks, chains and spyholes.
Fast – track adaptations - to fund adaptations up to £5,000 using other housing professionals such as Private Sector Housing Officers (PSHO) or Trusted Assessors,	Eligible for DFG Adaptations assessed as necessary and appropriate by a PSHO or Trusted Assessor supported with a written recommendation	Not subject to means test	Maximum £5,000 Straight forward adaptations that do not need the specialist assessment of an Occupational Therapist (OT) such as external rails door intercom & automatic door entry systems
Making homes dementia friendly – to help people with dementia, to make changes to the home that would support them to live in their own home safely and for longer.	Any person diagnosed with dementia – owner-occupier, private tenant or housing association tenant Conditions 1 referral from adult social care or hospital teams, advocate, voluntary and community sector	Not subject to means test	Maximum £2,500

	2 excludes packages of care		
DFG Fees Grant	Eligible for DFG. To cover reasonable professional fees and charges associated with the grant application where these are incurred, such as private OT fees where engaged to advise on what works are required and specialist technical e.g Structural Engineer fees or similar to determine if a DFG project is feasible.	Not subject to means test	Maximum of £2,000
Funding in Excess of the Maximum Amount – to fund adaptations in excess of the DFG grant limit £30,000	Eligible for DFG Considered on a case by case basis	Subject to DFG means test on grant up to grant limit	Maximum of £20,000

7. Additional charges or fees

The assistance is given as a grant for a specific purpose and no repayment required. Where there are conditions attached to the grant assistance these are explained in the table above.

Where the work is required to go through the local Home Improvement Agency (HIA) the grant will include reasonable fees. The fees attached to the assistance will be paid to the HIA on completion of the relevant work.

For the handyperson services, charges for materials may be made or applicants may need to supply materials themselves.

8. Application process

Application will be by completing a short DFG application form and submitting this to the Housing Adaptations Service

- By email at: adaptations@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- post to: Housing Adaptations Service, Room G14, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, HOVE BN3 3BQ

Where eligibility for assistance requires evidence or consents this must be submitted with the application form.

The application for grant assistance must be approved before the work can start.

Advice and assistance with the application process is available from the Housing Adaptations Service and the home improvement agency.

9. Complaints and redress

If you're not happy with the way in which we have dealt with an application please contact the Housing Adaptations Service in the first instance.

If we cannot put things right you can contact the customer feedback team at:

Email address: customerfeedback@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Phone: 01273 291229

Address: Customer Feedback Team,

Hove Town Hall

Norton Road

Hove, BN3 3BQ

10. Discretion on cases that fall outside policy

Applications which fall outside this policy will generally be refused. However, the council recognises that in certain cases it may be appropriate to approve such an application. In such cases, decisions will be made by the Executive Director - Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing in consultation with the Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee.

11. Key service standards

Once the application is received we will notify the applicant of the decision as quickly as possible and in critical cases i.e hospital discharge cases, within two weeks. Assistance under the policy can be paid to the applicant, or to the Home Improvement Agency acting on the applicant's behalf.

Data protection, safeguarding procedures and equality standards will be fully complied with.

Subject:	Procurement of contract for the Servicing, maintenance and installation of Door Entry Systems and CCTV in Council Housing		
Date of Meeting:	17 November 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Housing Neighbourhoods and Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Miles Davidson	Tel: 01273 293150
	Email:	Miles.davidson@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report outlines the required services for servicing, maintenance and installation of door entry systems and CCTV in council housing and seeks delegated authority to the Executive Director for Housing Neighbourhoods and Communities to procure and award a contract for these services.
- 1.2 The estimated value of the works outlined in 1.1 and referred to in the recommendations below is £2.85M over 5 years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director for Housing Neighbourhoods and Communities to:
- (i) Procure and award contracts for Door Entry and CCTV systems services described below for a term of 3 years.
 - (ii) Approve an extension(s) to this contract for a period of up to two years following the initial three year term, subject to satisfactory performance by the provider.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Across the housing stock there are 744 Door Entry Systems (DES) serving 6342 homes, and 72 CCTV systems serviced and maintained through the existing contract. The current contract has provided for the servicing, repair, maintenance and installation of DES across housing sites since January 2015. The contract with the incumbent provider ends on the 4th January 2023 following the second 2-year extension to the contract allowed within the provisions. Since 2015, we've completed replacement or major modernisation works on 291 DES across the city.

- 3.2 The average value of the servicing and maintenance of our existing DES & CCTV is approximately £170,000 per annum. This covers planned maintenance and reactive repairs. Over the period of the existing contract the annual cost of repairs and maintenance has gradually declined as new systems have been installed at more sites.
- 3.3 There are 453 DES across the city that have not been replaced or modernised through the current contract. A draft outline programme of planned DES replacements/modernisation has been drawn up based on the expected 'life expectancy' of these systems. The upgrade programme is estimated to have a value up to £2million, with approximately 250 systems needing replacement over the 5 years of the proposed contract term (including extension). This service therefore must be procured under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 3.4 The programme of planned replacements/modernisations in the new contract will be refined and monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure prioritisation of those DES most in need of upgrade. The programme is monitored through the Council's own Mechanical & Electrical engineer and is based on age, availability of parts and history of breakdowns and repair. The aim is to have a proactive programme to try and avoid a DES having to be deactivated for long periods of time due to unreliability/failure.
- 3.5 Where a DES is identified for replacement, specific consultation will be carried out with tenants and leaseholders in the affected block at the appropriate time. This includes writing to all residents informing of the planned works and inviting their feedback.
- 3.6 CCTV – There is currently no planned programme for the installation of new CCTV systems for the proposed contract term, however it is anticipated that there may be requests for installation or upgrade of 2-3 new systems each year during the contract in response to requests from tenancy management teams responding to resident's security or anti-social behaviour concerns.
- 3.7 Consideration has been given to separating the different elements of the existing contract. In the following ways;
- Separating the CCTV and DES into two separate contracts
 - The servicing and maintenance elements in one contract and a separate contract for upgrades/installations
- 3.8 CCTV and DES works are commonly provided by one provider/specialist contractor. The value of the CCTV element is significantly lower than DES, so including the two services together in one contract lowers costs and increases efficiency in terms of contract management for the Council, and is likely to lead to lower costs from providers bidding for this contract, as they can provide a responsive repairs service for both elements as opposed to having separate providers for each.
- 3.9 The preferred option is to tender all works within one contract. The Council's experience indicates that better reliability and operation is achieved when the

provider responsible for the installation of a system is also responsible for the ongoing servicing and maintenance.

- 3.10 The current contract is managed by a dedicated Council officer and the performance monitored against a set of agreed Key Performance Indicators, including response times, first time fix and time to complete repairs. The dedicated contract management includes regular contract meetings and joint site visits to plan, inspect and sign off works.
- 3.11 Under a new contract, as with current practice, any new installation or upgrade of a DES or CCTV system would be specified by the Council and quoted by the provider which would be scrutinised by the Council's own engineer prior to approval and works being authorised.
- 3.12 The procurement of a new contract was discussed at Procurement Advisory Board (PAB) on the 18th October, the Board are supportive of the approach proposed to Housing Committee. Discussion at PAB focussed on whether delegated authority should be given to the Executive Director to approve the 2 year extension proposed or whether this should be referred back to Committee. The Board also gave feedback regarding the social value and sustainability elements and requested that these elements had greater detail in the report and possible weighting in the evaluation of bids, reflected below.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 DES and CCTV servicing, maintenance, repairs and installation is a highly technical and specialist area of work for which we do not have the skills and experience, beyond the contract management function, to deliver in-house.
- 4.2 Repairs and maintenance of these systems requires specialist supply chains that the Council does not have access to and may not have the resource and buying power of a specialist contractor. This presents significant risks to the ability to complete repairs quickly and therefore provide a good value for money service to residents.
- 4.3 When it was agreed that the Housing Repairs and Maintenance service would be 'brought in-house' at the end of the contract with Mears, it was noted at that time that some specialist works would continue to be delivered by specialist providers, such as the case here.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Appropriate engagement and consultation with residents including leaseholders will be carried out throughout the contract procurement exercise.
- 5.2 All planned modernisation works for Door Entry Systems include extensive consultation with all residents, including writing to residents with details of the planned works and providing a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document. The appropriate leaseholder consultation takes place on projects as required.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The servicing, maintenance and installation of these systems are essential to maintain both security and access for residents (and their visitors) in communal buildings. A proactive approach to servicing reduces the number of repairs and assists in the identification of systems that may require remedial works or replacement at an early stage.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The servicing, repair and maintenance costs are expected to be similar to those in previous years. The current HRA revenue budget is £0.180m, with a small underspend anticipated based on spend to date.
- 7.2 The installation costs in respect of HRA Door Entry systems and CCTV is met from within the approved HRA capital programme. The current capital budget is £0.440m and it is anticipated that budget/spend will remain at these levels throughout the contract period and this will be reflected in the upcoming 3-year HRA capital budget report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Michael Bentley Date: 17/09/2021

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The council's Contract Standing Orders require that authority to enter a contract valued at £500,000 or more be obtained from the relevant service committee prior to commencing any procurement activity. All CCTV and Door Entry Systems need to be operated with due regard to individuals' privacy rights and the Information Commissioners CCTV Code of Practice.

Lawyer Consulted: Name Liz Woodley Date: 20/10/2021

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 An Equalities Impact assessment is in place and reviewed for all modernisation and installation projects. The recommendations from this will form part of project planning with the contractor.
- 7.5 Residents with complex health issues and disabilities who rely on home care services or informal support require a functioning door entry system to give access to carers as required.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.6 Sustainability outcomes will form part of the evaluation of bids for the contract, forming 10% of the total quality score. This will include how contractors intend to reduce their own carbon emissions and what support they can provide to the council in its ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 7.7 Where possible reuse of material and modernisation of key components, in place of full replacements, will be considered where appropriate to support the Council's ambitions regarding creating a circular economy by reducing waste. Where a full upgrade is carried out any useable components will be retained for reuse in repairs of other systems.
- 7.8 Sustainability outcomes will be incorporated into the contract as a Key Performance Indicator.
- 7.9 Social value and community wealth benefits are a priority and therefore require significant consideration when being incorporated into the tender requirements. These will form part of the evaluation of bids for the contract in line with the council's Social Value Framework and will form at least 10% of the total quality score.
- 7.10 These could include seeking the use of apprenticeships for local residents through the contract or encouraging the use of local labour and/or supply chains. The specialist nature of this contract and the proposed route to market (open procedure) suggests that most of the specialist providers expected to submit bids for the contract are likely to be based locally, therefore the above objectives should be more practical to achieve.
- 7.11 The appointment of a local provider with directly employed staff is desired for this contract, and this would create significant social benefit - as would keeping as much of the supply chain local as is reasonably practical.
- 7.12 The Council would encourage the provider who is selected to deliver the contract to employ a workforce who is representative of Brighton and Hove's diverse community.
- 7.13 During the tender stage of the procurement process, potential bidders will be evaluated on how they will incorporate the Council's social value and community wealth objectives into delivering this contract. They will also be asked to demonstrate how they have delivered social value and community wealth benefits on previous projects to demonstrate their ability to deliver the commitments to the Council.
- 7.14 Furthermore, as part of the tender process, potential bidders will be given the opportunity to propose how they will demonstrate additional innovation in terms of contributing to social value and community wealth.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.15 There are no direct known impacts associated with Brexit.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 Door Entry Systems support the security of communal blocks and control the locking mechanism of main entrance doors. Servicing and maintaining systems effectively is important to ensure this aspect of the building security and allow residents control over who they allow in to communal areas.
- 7.6 The provision of CCTV can be a deterrent for crime and anti-social behaviour in some areas of the city and can give reassurance to residents about their own safety in these areas.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 The main risk associated with the procurement activity is that we are unable to mobilise a new contract within the time set aside for the activity however based on the current timeline sufficient time is available. If there are unexpected delays, we would review options of a waiver for a short-term extension to the current contract to maintain servicing and repair of DES.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 As above a door entry system supports residents requiring care at home, this supports independence and wellbeing.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

none

Background Documents

none

Subject:	Leaseholder Payment Options - Update		
Date of Meeting:	17th November 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Reid	Tel: 01273 293235
		Geof Gage	
	Email:	Martin.reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
		Geofrey.gage@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is responsible for keeping our residential blocks of flats in good repair including, where necessary, carrying out major works. Leaseholders are responsible for meeting the relevant costs of works under the terms of their leases so long as:
- The costs are reasonably incurred
 - The works are carried out to a reasonable standard
 - The consultation requirements have been complied with
- 1.2 Where substantial repairs and improvements are carried out to blocks this can mean that leaseholders contributions are significant. The council has a range of payment support options available to support leaseholders with payments for works. The current payment support options have been set out in previous reports to Housing Committee.
- 1.3 Following a report to Housing Committee on 23 June 2021, consultation with Area Panels (week commencing 16 August 2021) and Leaseholder Action Group meeting (19th August 2021) on potential changes that could be made to the current payment support options was undertaken.
- 1.4 Housing Committee on 22 September 2021 noted the outcome of the consultation with the Leaseholder Action Group and Area Panels on proposals to make changes to the leaseholder payment options.
- 1.5 Housing Committee noted the full financial, legal and other implications of the points arising from the consultation would need to be considered and recommendations arising from consultation on changes to the leaseholder payment options would be brought to the next meeting of Housing Committee to enable an informed decision.
- 1.6 This report sets out proposals for extension of the current payment options scheme to non-resident leaseholders for whom this is the only property they own where it has been demonstrated that all other options to meet the cost of the works have failed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Committee approve extension of payment options for non-resident leaseholders as set out in the report for whom this is the only property they own where it has been demonstrated that all other options to meet the cost of the works have failed.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council owns around 2,900 leasehold flats across the city. Under the terms of their leases, leaseholders are responsible for paying the service charge which is a proportion of the costs incurred by the council for the works and services at their building. This includes but is not limited to:
- Repairs to the exterior, structure or common parts
 - Major works and improvements, e.g. lift replacement, window replacement, refurbishment or insulation
 - Services to their building such as cleaning or grounds maintenance
 - Management charges
- 3.2 The term 'major works' normally refers to works that cost individual leaseholders more than £250. Where this applies the council is legally required to undertake a formal consultation process – Section 20 consultation under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. These are typically capital works undertaken to the block.

Extending the Payment Options

- 3.3 The current payment options were put in place to assist resident leaseholders who could not afford the major works charges and who may be put in a position of having to sell their property to meet these costs. The options were designed to particularly assist those who had sufficient equity in their properties but had low or fixed incomes to enable them to stay in their homes.
- 3.4 The scheme was not intended to provide the same options to all leaseholders as it was likely that those who sub-let and received market rate rents for the properties could fund major works through other sources. However, there has been some leaseholder consultation feed-back that this may not be the case for every non—resident leaseholder. It is also important to balance the interests of leaseholders with those of tenants in considering how to plan and pay for major works.
- 3.5 In recent years there have been enquiries from a small number of non-resident leaseholders regarding the possibility of extending the payments options to them as their circumstances were such that while non-resident they may be in financial hardship. An extension of the policy in these cases would be of benefit to those leaseholders. It is estimated this would be of benefit to a very small number of leaseholders, at most possibly 3-5 a year.
- 3.6 This report sets out proposals for extension of the current payment options scheme to any non-resident leaseholders for whom this is the only property they own where it has been demonstrated that all other options to meet the cost of the works have failed, including demonstrating that they have been unable to raise a

commercial loan. The intention of the policy is to support leaseholders where they are in genuine cases of hardship. Each case would need to be subject to an individual financial assessment at the time of the application. Payment options proposed for extension include those outlined below.

Equity Loans

- 3.7 The loan will be secured on the property to which the service charge relates and charged at the Land Registry. The charge on the property is expressed as a percentage of the value of the property. The loan will be paid back either when the property is sold or earlier if the leaseholder wishes to. The amount paid back is dependent upon the valuation at the time of sale of the property.

Maturity Loans

- 3.8 This is where a loan is agreed to fund the value of the works and a charge is placed on the property. The loan will attract interest. When the property is sold the value of the loan plus interest is repaid to the Council. There is no maturity date for the loan so it can carry on indefinitely. It will be paid either when the property is sold or earlier if agreed.

Long-term interest-bearing loans up to 25 years

- 3.9 These are interest bearing loans over 25 years offered by the council and work in the same way as any other commercial mortgage.

Interest-free repayment option

- 3.10 The interest-free repayment option from 12 months to a maximum of 5 years, depending on the loan amount. This is where the Council makes a formal agreement with the leaseholder to repay in monthly instalments over a specified period without adding interest.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 If payment options were extended to the group of leaseholders who own more than one property (e.g their permanent residence and their BHCC leasehold property) this would potentially apply to between 500-700 leaseholders. This option could therefore have significant financial implications for the HRA, as described in the financial implications at Section 7.
- 4.2 Another option discussed was to extend the period of the interest free loans (current maximum length of 5 years). However, this soon becomes prohibitively expensive as of the loss of interest increases each year. See example in the financial implications in section 7.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The extension of the current policy has been the subject of discussions with the Leaseholders Action Group, including following the report to Housing Committee on 23 June 2021. Officers have continued to work with the Leaseholders Action Group, Area Panels and the Home Service Improvement group on the items covered in this proposal.

5.2 As part of our consultation exercise, there was a presentation and discussion at Area Panels (week commencing 16th August) and Leasehold Action Group (19th August). The key points arising were fed back to Housing Committee on 22 September.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 As set out below, the recommended option provides for additional support to the small number of leaseholders who do not own other properties and have no other means to meet their financial obligations as set out in the lease but will have a minimal impact on the HRA.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Extending the payment options to non-resident leaseholders who own no other properties will allow a small number of leaseholders (possibly 3-5 per year) to access further payment options from the council. The option with the largest cost to the council is the interest free loans for up to 60 months. Based on 5 leaseholders with loans of £20,000 each, the council is foregoing interest payments of approximately £21,000 if they were to access this interest free option rather than an interest-bearing loan over 5 years. For those wishing to access the equity loan scheme, the council takes a risk for each loan of this type offered. Where the housing market is slow or declining then at the point of sale the equity share the council receives may not cover the loan amount with a nominal interest. However, if house prices increase, the council will make a small margin on the equity loan. Given that the number of non-resident leaseholders who own no other properties is small, this is very low risk for the council.
- 7.2 Extending the payment options to a wider group of non-resident leaseholders would have a significant financial impact on the HRA. If, for example these payment options were extended to a group of leaseholders where the property and potentially their permanent residence are the only properties they own, this would potentially apply to between 500-700 leaseholders. As mentioned above, every offer of an interest free loan of £20,000 costs the HRA an estimated £4,000 in lost interest over a 5 year period.
- 7.3 Another option would be that the council extends the interest free loan period from 5 years to 10 years, say. This could significantly increase costs to the HRA. For example, one loan of £20,000 over 10 years would cost the council approximately £10,000 in lost interest. If this was offered to 30 leaseholders, the costs to the HRA would be an estimated £300,000. The reason for the relatively short period of loan is that this facility was set up to be used for smaller debts that can be paid back monthly in instalments. It was never intended for longer term, larger debts due to the cost becoming prohibitive
- 7.4 The main risk of offering equity loans to a wider group increases the risk that more loans will not be fully paid at the point of sale due to the value of the equity share reducing in a slow or declining housing market. For example, if a loan of £20,000 is taken out on a property worth £200,000, the council would hold a 10% equity share in the property. If the property was sold 15 years later, then in order to recoup its borrowing costs on the £20,000 loan, the council would need to

receive £36,000 at the point of sale. (Over 15 years the loan would accrue approximately £16,000 in interest at an average rate of 4%). If the sale price 15 years later was £210,000, say, then the council would only receive 10% of £210,000 equating to £21,000 and would therefore make a loss of £15,000. The council therefore needs to use this facility with care and only offer such loans once all other options have been discounted.

- 7.5 The Leaseholder action Group also asked about the possibility of using a mix of payment options. So if the debt was £14,000 they may want to use a short term interest free loan and the remainder as an equity loan. This is not problematic but this would be a mix of the payment options that are open to that particular leaseholder.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 29/10/21

Legal Implications:

- 7.6 By virtue of sections 450A to 450D of the Housing Act 1985 and the [Housing \(Service Charge Loans\) Regulations 1992 \(SI 1992/1708\)](#) the Council has the power to make loans to its tenants/leaseholders in respect of service charges and therefore the Committee can authorise what is proposed by the recommendation in this report.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 02/11/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.7 Individual circumstances of leaseholders are carefully considered as part of the payment options process.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.8 There are none identified.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.9 There are none identified.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 There are none identified.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 These are outlined in the body of the report.

Public Health Implications:

7.7 There are none identified.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

7.8 There are none identified.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. There are none.

2.

Background Documents

1. There are none.

2.

Subject:	Housing Repairs Update		
Date of Meeting:	17 November 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Reid	Tel: 01273 29 6806
		Grant Ritchie	
	Email:	Grant.Ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All wards		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Housing Repairs & Maintenance staff have worked throughout the pandemic, including the lockdowns, to provide tenants with an essential repairs service. The service has managed to operate well despite these challenges, particularly in response to emergency repairs.
- 1.2 However, a backlog of routine repairs has been caused by a combination of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and staffing levels below the required level to complete the typical number of jobs raised each month. This has been subject to previous reports to Housing Committee and highlighted through our regular performance reports.
- 1.3 The last update on Housing Repairs and Maintenance performance was considered by Housing Committee on 22 September 2021, and at the preceding round of resident Area Panels. More detail on this report is provided in paragraph 3.14. There will be a further performance update report for consideration at January 2022 Housing Committee and preceding resident Area Panels.
- 1.4 In addition to quarterly performance reports there were substantive Housing Repairs & Maintenance service updates reported to Housing Committee on 16 September 2020 and 20 January 2021 which both addressed the issue of the repairs backlog.
- 1.5 This report is provided in response to member requests for a further update on progress and next steps on addressing the backlog of housing repairs.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Committee note progress and next steps with regard to addressing the backlog of housing repairs.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The insourcing of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service was completed on 1 April 2020 during the first national Covid lockdown. The service transferred with approximately 1500 repairs in progress. 132 Mears staff transferred to the council as part of the new Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service. This was fewer staff than anticipated would join the council.
- 3.2 In line with Government Covid-19 pandemic guidance during the first lockdown, the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service was only carrying out essential repairs to council housing, health and safety maintenance checks, and repairs to empty properties where possible until July 2020. A safety led approach was implemented to ensure that works were only carried out with the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), risk assessments were in place, and social distancing protocols followed for the safety of residents, staff, and contractors. Due to the delivery of a limited repairs and maintenance service owing to Covid-19, many staff were also furloughed.
- 3.3 During this period, repairs were still being reported and booked but due to Covid restrictions only essential works actioned. This created a backlog of routine repairs across most trades and was first reported to Housing Committee on 16 September 2020.
- 3.4 From July 2020 the definition of essential repairs was expanded for all trade teams to include repairs that, if left unattended in the long term, would have an impact on the residents and on properties. Examples were heating and hot water repairs, containable leaks, and condensation wash downs.
- 3.5 However, Covid 19 provisions continued to apply. Risk assessments were developed for all situations where work would be undertaken, and the identification of Covid-19 cases and vulnerable or extremely vulnerable occupants was undertaken by repairs desk staff asking several questions to identify the particular circumstances of the occupants before raising a repair. This enabled the service to operate different risk assessment protocols and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.
- 3.6 Operatives were not attending to any non-essential repairs in properties where the occupants were displaying symptoms of Covid 19 or had a current confirmed case of Covid 19. In addition, some residents were reluctant to have operatives in their homes to address non-essential repairs during the pandemic.
- 3.7 The pandemic also had a significant impact on the service staffing resources with operatives and office staff being off work as a result of positive Covid tests received by them or a member of their household or shielding because they or a family member were in a Covid vulnerable category.
- 3.8 Housing Committee on 20 September 2020 was advised that to clear the backlog, the service was seeking to recruit trade operatives and office-based staff to expand capacity to complete more repairs. Committee was also advised that recruiting the required calibre of staff, providing adequate training and staggering start dates (to accommodate supervisory training) would take some

time, with an estimate of up to 12 months to clear the backlog which would be negatively impacted by another lockdown if mandated by Government.

- 3.9 There was a further report to Housing Committee on 20 January 2021 where members were advised that following the second national lockdown the repairs backlog had increased, and that guidance and legal requirements relevant to the operation of the service during the pandemic had necessarily changed several times.
- 3.10 Housing Committee was advised that the identification of Covid-19 cases and shielding of vulnerable or extremely vulnerable residents and members of staff delivering service and/or their household continued to have a negative impact on the delivery of non-essential repairs.
- 3.11 As well as the impact of the pandemic, officers identified that the service required additional resources to deliver a full service and tackle the backlog of repairs. Committee were advised that the need to identify the desired calibre of staff had caused delays in having sufficient resources to address the backlog.
- 3.12 Service delivery had also been impacted by industrial action in autumn 2020. Pending resolution of the industrial dispute it was agreed that unfilled vacancies across operative, supervisory and support staff would only be filled with agency staff.
- 3.13 Due to the buoyancy of the local construction industry, the rates offered for agency staff have not been competitive to attract staff to fill all the vacancies, leaving a deficit across all principal trades, support and supervisory roles. There has also been staff turnover during this period.

Repairs current situation

- 3.14 As outlined above, the Housing Repairs & Maintenance staff have worked throughout the pandemic, including the lockdowns, to provide tenants with an essential repairs service. Performance Report information for the service reported to Housing Committee on 22 September 2021, which covered Quarter 1 2021/22, was as follows:
- Emergency repairs completed within 24 hours: 97.7% (3,129 of 3,204) against 99% target
 - Routine repairs completed within 28 calendar days: 69.7% (2,845 of 4,081) against 92% target
 - Average time to complete routine repairs: 36 calendar days against 15-day target
 - Appointments kept as proportion of appointments made: 97.9% (6,357 of 6,492) against 97% target
 - Tenants satisfied with standard of repair work 98% (889 of 903) against 92% target
 - Repairs completed at first visit 89.5% (6,522 of 7,285) against 92% target.
- 3.15 The backlog of routine repairs currently stands at over 8000 jobs and has been caused by a combination of the impact of Covid and a staffing level below the required level to complete the typical number of jobs raised each month.

- 3.16 With the current level of resource, the service is completing on average 2,413 jobs per month, resulting in a shortfall of approximately 950 jobs per month, or 39% of repairs reported. The current number of vacancies in the service's trade teams represent approximately 11.5% of the overall resource.
- 3.17 The service has commenced a large-scale recruitment process that will begin to address the backlog and ultimately reduce the time taken to complete routine repairs.
- 3.18 Now the council has completed the harmonisation of those Housing Repairs & Maintenance staff who wished to move to council terms and conditions and have agreed and evaluated council job roles, the service has been able to commence permanent recruitment to 51 posts. To date, the service has received a positive response and will be interviewing over the coming weeks and anticipate that this process will be complete around Christmas. At this time, the service still have around 35 vacancies still to fill.
- 3.19 In line with council commitments to encourage a diverse workforce the service has been reaching out to as many groups as we can in order to fill these roles. The service is advertising on the council website, Jobs Go Public, Indeed and other social media platforms, with the council's Communications Team helping publicise certain roles with photos and quotes. The service has reached out to Women in Construction and have also put an article in Homing In. In addition, the service has reached out to the Job Centre, local colleges and the Skills & Employment Team. Our Communications Team are designing posters which will be put in local cafes and trades shops. A link to the Housing Repairs job website will be included on our vans and provided to existing agency staff.
- 3.20 In addition to this large-scale recruitment of new permanent staff who can carry out works directly the service have increased contractor capacity. This includes recent appointment of a contractor to undertake roof repairs. They are currently mobilising and should start completing tasks by the end of November 2021. The service has also added additional senior management resource to Housing Repairs & Maintenance team to increase capacity to address the backlog.
- 3.21 Given the current progress the Housing Repairs and Maintenance service anticipate halving the current backlog within 6 months, with an estimate of 12 months to clear the backlog, based on the information available at this time. This projected timeline would be negatively impacted by another lockdown if mandated by Government.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report updates Committee on the progress of the Repairs and Maintenance service and therefore alternative options are not required.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Resident Area Panels are in receipt of regular updates on the performance of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report updates Housing Committee on the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service performance in relation to delivery of essential repairs and of a backlog of routine repairs that has built up over what has been a challenging time for the service, contractors and residents owing to the impact of COVID-19. The report outlines actions and anticipated progress with clearing the backlog.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There was an underspend of approximately £1.5m across the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service in 2020/21, largely due to reduced activity as a result of COVID restrictions. For 2021/22, there is a projected overspend of £1.409m forecast at TBM05 against contractor and material costs, largely due to catch-up works from last financial year, of which £0.816m is forecast to be funded from reserves set aside for this purpose.

There is also a forecast overspend of £0.760m as a result of harmonisation costs, which has been offset by an underspend of £0.373m as a result of the high level of staff vacancies. As set out in the HRA budget 21/22 report to Budget Council in February 2021, the harmonisation costs will be funded from HRA reserves and built into the budget for 2022/23.

The financial impact of clearing the backlog will continue to be closely monitored during the year and will also be reflected in the HRA budget report for 2022/23.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michael Bentley

Date: 03/11/21

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no significant legal implications to report in relation to this progress and update report for noting.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 01/11/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this update report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The work carried out through the council's Repairs and Maintenance service contributes significantly to the energy performance of the council owned housing stock.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.5 Any implications will be kept under review using the Council's risk management framework.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 None arising directly from this update report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 Any implications will be kept under review using the Council's risk management framework.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 None arising directly from this update report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 None arising directly from this update report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. There are none.
- 2.

Background Documents

1. There are none.
- 2.

Subject:	Moulsecoomb Neighbourhood Hub & Housing Schemes: Update Report		
Date of Meeting:	17 November 2021 Policy & Resource Committee, 2 December 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director: Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities Executive Director: Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Steve Hartley Laura Webster	Tel: 01273 290336 01273 292705
	Email:	Steve.hartley@brighton-hove.gov.uk Laura.Webster@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report provides an update on the Moulsecoomb Neighbourhood Hub and Housing Schemes initially presented to Housing committee and Policy & Resources committee in April 2020 with a further update at their meetings in March 2021.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval to proceed with the submission of a planning application for the Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing development.
- 1.3 The report shows how the masterplan has further developed following feedback from local residents and community groups through a series of Planning for Real sessions, as well as review by the Design: South East panel and pre-application planning advice.
- 1.4 The report also provides an update on the financial position of the programme, accounting for changes to the masterplan and design development.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Committee recommends to Policy & Resource Committee that Policy & Resources Committee: -
 - 2.1.1 Authorises officers to progress the submission of a planning application for the Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing development.
 - 2.1.2 Agrees the anticipated budget for this stage of £2.1m to be funded by HRA Borrowing and included as part of the 2021/22 HRA Capital Programme.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Programme Overview

- 3.1 Since the last committee report, the project has focussed on developing the design to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Plan for Work Stage 2 (light). This has incorporated feedback received from residents, planning and the Design: South East panel. Feedback from these consultations have resulted in changes to all three elements of the scheme: Housing, Neighbourhood Hub, and the Public Realm (including Sports Facilities).
- 3.2 The updated masterplan is included as an appendix to the report. The March Committee reports set out the changes within each element, and the rationale for those changes.
- 3.3 The table below shows the high-level milestones for the scheme:

Task/event	Date
Housing Committee	17 th November 21
P&R	2 nd December 21
Submit Planning	February 22
Submit Homes England Bids	February 22
Budget Committee agreement	March 22
Planning decision	June 22
Start on site (enabling works only)	September 22
Construction commences	May 23

- 3.4 It is still anticipated that the project will be delivered in two phases during the construction period which reflects the dependencies of decanting existing buildings and ensuring existing services can be maintained throughout the build. The project will be submitted as one full planning application opposed to the hybrid application set out in the previous report. This is due to design development being successfully completed across the whole site with sufficient detail in both phases.
- 3.5 The Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing scheme is a complex project, requiring a governance structure that ensures a co-ordinated approach to delivery, is aligned with the priorities of multiple stakeholders, and manages the various dependencies of the construction project. The project will be taken through a gateway review process before planning is submitted and final budget approval sought.

Housing

- 3.6 Following feedback from the planning authority, the design team have reviewed the proposals for Block G of the housing and amended the massing of this block to match the style of blocks J and K. This has reduced the height of this block and a small redesign of the terrace garden has been required. Due to the

reduction in height and tweaks in other blocks, the number of homes has fallen from 234 to 211.

3.7 The housing elements of the design as well as the wider masterplan are now “fixed” meaning there will be less design changes moving forward. This will allow the design team to work on more detailed proposals including elevational treatments and floorplans.

3.8 The revised schedule of accommodation for both phases of housing is below and subject to change:

Summary				
Type	Total	Total % of Scheme	Type	% by Bedroom Number
1B 2P	65	30.81%	1 Bedroom	33.18%
1B 2P WA	5	2.37%		
2B 3P	17	8.06%	2 Bedroom	38.39%
2B 3P WA	0	0.00%		
2B 4P	56	26.54%		
2B 4P WA	8	3.79%		
3B 4P	10	4.74%	3 Bedroom	23.70%
3B 5P	23	10.90%		
3B 5P WA	2	0.95%		
3B 6P	15	7.11%	4 bedroom	4.74%
4B 7P	10	4.74%		
Total Units	211	% of Scheme Per Phase		
Phase 2 [East] Total	95	45%		
Phase 1 [West] Total	116	55%		

3.9 There is high demand for all sizes and types of affordable rented homes in the city. The highest level of need on the city’s Housing Register is for one and two bed homes and this project will help to meet that need. There is also pressure on larger family homes and local residents asked that larger family homes be included at the Planning for Real consultations, particularly as a number of larger former family homes are now used for student accommodation in the area. The number of wheelchair accessible homes has increased to 15 homes bringing the project further in line with the affordable housing brief.

3.10 The council are continuing to discuss the project with Homes England in order to apply for grant under Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026. Indications are that grant levels have increased in this new funding programme to reflect increasing build costs nationally. Recent discussion suggest Homes England may be willing to consider providing grant for projects with rents set at locally defined rents, which may mean that living wage rent options can be considered as well as affordable and social rents if appropriately justified.

3.11 Homes England have emphasised support for the project and are willing to engage positively with the Council as the details are developed further. They have suggested that the council submit ‘shadow bids’ once the planning application is prepared to test different scenarios in terms of rent levels and tenure mix.

- 3.12 The council was notified in August that it has been successful in its bid to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities for Brownfield Land Release Funding of £1.694m as part of their One Public Estate Programme. This will support ground works and infrastructure costs associated with the project and off-set some of the high abnormal work's costs associated with the site. The grant is for the housing element of the project only.
- 3.13 The current designs have been costed by the council's cost consultants Potter Raper. The designs are now at the end of RIBA stage 2, known as concept design, and significant items such as the building frame have been decided. This costing has indicated that costs have increased, primarily due to increases in the wider construction market.
- 3.14 Potter Raper have advised that they are currently experiencing increases up to 5.8% on the build costs of projects they are involved with. They have therefore applied a figure of 6% risk to the housing and HUB build costs "within the cost plan". This excludes the preliminaries allocation and is based on the fact that materials prices are increasing.
- 3.15 Consideration should be given to the higher costs associated with this scheme due to the improvements to public realm and local infrastructure which bring significant regeneration benefits to the Moulsecoomb area. These costs impact on the average home and square meter build rates, whilst not being directly related to the housing blocks. The sustainability elements such as Ground Source heating that move the home towards the council's Zero Carbon 2030 target and also significantly increase project costs when compared to a traditional specification.
- 3.16 The original business plan in April 2020 outlined an initial construction cost which has increased and includes additional risk allowances factoring in a fluctuating construction market. This is a considerable increase and factors in rising material prices, limited materials supply, labour shortages and supply chain issues including transportation. These issues have been reported widely in the national press and are impacting construction projects considerably. Part 2 of this report outlines the differences in cost, the land appropriation has been funded using existing HRA resources.
- 3.17 As the construction market is currently volatile it is recommended the project is progressed to the planning submission and worked up to RIBA stage 3 with further works undertaken to de-risk the site. This would mean underwriting fees outlined in recommendation 2.1.2 to reach the planning submission with further budget approval sought later to provide a more accurate budget proposal. Although this is a change to the usual approval routes all housing projects are subject to planning permission and fees are "at risk" until that permission is achieved.
- 3.18 The financial viability modelling in Part 2 sets out to show whether the scheme can pay for the initial investment itself by using the new rental stream only and grant funding (net of service charges, management, maintenance, and major repairs and voids costs) over a 60-year period. Assessing the project viability over a 60-year period matches the estimated life of the homes post completion.

- 3.19 This demonstrates that the project is currently viable at rent set at Local Housing Allowance but would require additional investment from the HRA at other rent levels. A number of sensitivities such as increases in management and maintenance costs, increased construction costs and reduction in grant rates have also been tested which highlight potential for increased investment requirements should these risks be realised.
- 3.20 The rent levels are yet to be set for this project and will depend upon final detailed build costs and levels of grant received from Homes England. A rent decision for the project will consider housing need and investment required in tandem.
- 3.21 Brighton & Hove has been identified as an area with high affordability pressures meaning the council can apply for grant for socially rented homes. Social rents as defined by Homes England are higher than social rents charged for existing Brighton & Hove council homes and are roughly equivalent to 27.5% Living Wage rents that have been modelled for some previous council schemes and are included in part 2 of this report. The suggested grant levels from Homes England are not high enough to balance the capital costs of construction against the lower rents charged and therefore leave a significant investment requirement. However, the construction market is currently experiencing a peak in costs and if costs reduce in the near future there may be opportunity to explore this further.
- 3.22 The sensitivities can be found in Part 2 to this report, which sets out the Investment, financial appraisals results, assumptions and financial risks associated with the housing development. The sensitivities show that this project is highly sensitive to cost change and that is the key risk alongside support from Homes England in the form of grant. A 10% increase in costs would require additional investment at all rent levels.
- 3.23 This sensitivity analysis supports the need to keep reviewing the scheme proposal and costs associated with any change in the market conditions, scheme design changes and discussions with Homes England regarding the level of grant available following the shadow bids.

Neighbourhood Hub

- 3.24 Proposals for the Neighbourhood hub remain largely unchanged from the previous update report. In response to pre-planning advice, the location of the Hub building has been moved 10 meters to the North of the site, so that it is closer to Hodshrove Lane and helps to provide more active frontage for the entrance to the site. This also creates additional space in front of the existing children's centre for play facilities and outdoor seating for the proposed community café.
- 3.25 The hub accommodates a variety of services including:
- GP Surgery
 - Community Health Facilities
 - Pharmacy
 - Library
 - Youth Centre

- Adult Learning provision
 - Community space
- 3.26 To supplement the library space, the project is currently exploring the option of including a local Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) to act as a 'spoke' to the main service in Jubilee Library. The BIPC provides:
- Access to business information resources and IP support.
 - Face-to-face services and physical hubs where people can come together to learn, network and support each other in an easily accessible and inspiring space.
 - Non-judgmental, impartial support offered by library staff and carefully selected expert partners and local business support providers.
- 3.27 The addition of a Local BICP in the Neighbourhood hub will offer a strong response to the feedback received in the Planning For Real workshops held during the scoping phase of the project. Additional support for local businesses was one of the key themes to emerge from the early consultation exercise.
- 3.28 The financial position of the hub's business case is largely unchanged, and it remains a viable project. As previously reported, the hub will be funded through a combination of existing capital budgets, capital receipts associated with the appropriation of land from the General Fund to the HRA, and borrowing against the hub's income.
- 3.29 The existing Capital budgets are made up of £1.5m previously allocated to the project and three annual contributions of £0.7m (totalling £2.1m) from the Asset Management Fund over three financial years (21/22 – 23/24). The appropriation value is unchanged from the previous report and represents the opportunity cost of the project. Borrowing will be funded against new income from the hub.
- 3.30 Part 2 shows the initial high-level costs presented in the previous committee reports, alongside the costs associated with the current masterplan, up to RIBA stage 2.
- 3.31 The increase from the scoping estimates is within the tolerances of the programme's governance and risk contingency. Changes to the costs are a result of more refined designs allowing more confident pricing, additional elements being added to the scope of the project (skate park and new school toilets to replace existing facilities), and greater clarity of the various professional fees and survey costs payable.

Former Portslade Sixth Form Redevelopment

- 3.32 Following consent from the Department for Education's Secretary of State for a change of use of the former Portslade Sixth Form site, a tendering process was completed for a Design & Build contract. This resulted in Willmott Dixon being appointed as lead contractor for the redevelopment of the site into new council offices.
- 3.33 Willmott Dixon are on site and work is progressing to schedule and budget. The project is on track to complete in April 2022, after which the social work offices

currently based in Moulsecomb will be relocated, releasing the land for housing development.

- 3.34 The new offices will form a part of the council's post-Covid accommodation strategy, supporting the Future Ways of Working programme. Extensive consultation and engagement with staff groups has informed the design proposals. The site will be designed to enable hybrid and collaborative working.

Public Realm & Sports Facilities

- 3.35 A range of ideas were put forward by residents and community groups as part of the consultation process in terms of public realm facilities surrounding the new Hub and Housing scheme. New football pitches, a skatepark, children's play areas, and community gardens were the most popular suggestions. These suggestions have been incorporated into the masterplan (appendix 1).
- 3.36 The Public Realm working group are working with an Urban Design consultant (RegenCo) to finalise the scheme and ensure it aligns with the Hub & Housing developments, enhancing the overall area, and can be delivered within budget.
- 3.37 The public realm will emphasise biodiversity and landscape enhancements which will create a variety of external spaces for use by the residents and users of the new hub building. Early design concepts include pocket parks, children's play areas, and green parking.
- 3.38 The football pitches are proposed to be relocated from their current position near the school to the playing field opposite the leisure centre. This is following consultation with Moulsecomb Primary school who suggested the current location would overly impact upon the nurse provision.
- 3.39 This amendment is subject to a section 77 application to the Secretary of State which could take several months to decide. The schools existing governance arrangements have indicated they would support this application if submitted. Sports & Leisure also support this amendment as the relocation of the pitches would assist with their management of the pitches over the longer term.
- 3.40 Officers have taken these proposals to further pre-application meetings and received positive feedback from planning officers.

Risk analysis and management

- 3.41 The table below provides a summary of the strategic risks being managed by the programme governance, and an outline of the mitigation measures in place.

Risk Description	Potential Consequences	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Controls & Actions
Increasing construction costs due to impacts of Brexit, the pandemic and global supply chain issues	Impact on viability of project and need for increased funding	4	4	Morgan Sindall as construction partner is a Tier 1 company and have good stocks of materials and good access to supply chain due to their national buying power. Continue to monitor.

Covid pandemic is ongoing	A prolonged recovery may impact delivery timescale. Stricter controls on risk assessments may increase logistics complexity and cost. Limits the capacity of key stakeholders (particularly health) and compounds the complexity of additional risks included in this table	3	3	The strategic construction partnership comprises of organisations with a significant amount of experience delivering construction projects safely during the pandemic.
Housing scheme viability is uncertain at LHA/social rents	Unable to deliver scheme at 100% LHA/social rents. Homes England funding levels may be reduced.	4	4	Continuing discussions with Homes England regarding development and rent levels. Review scheme costs and potential savings.
May need to decide on rent levels before Strategic Housing Needs Assessment is complete	Agreed rents or tenure does not reflect or meet housing need	4	3	Work with Housing colleagues to ensure evidence based approach and undertake shadow bid exercise on different rent levels and mixes.
Health partnership business case is still in development	Health partners decide not to relocate into the new hub, impacting the hub's financial viability due to loss of rental income. The overall aim of an integrated hub will also not be achieved.	2	4	Council support being provided to develop and inform the health partnership business case. Letter of commitment in principle issued by SCFT's Director of Finance.
Relocation of sports pitches requiring S77 agreement and alignment with Sports England requirements	If the Secretary of State were to refuse permission to relocate the pitches to the school playing field it would lead to a fall-back position with reduced housing numbers (c. 20 homes) and planning complexities. If Sports England are not satisfied with proposals, they may object to Planning.	3	4	Ensure that the submission is detailed and through with school's input. Continue to engage with Sports England to ensure proposals align with their expectations.
Works to refurbish former Portslade Sixth Form site now underway despite a budget not being approved for the Moulsecoomb housing scheme.	Enabling works in Portslade are progressing at risk, and if the housing scheme in Moulsecoomb does not go ahead this will be a cost to the General Fund	3	3	Offices at Portslade will form an important part of the post-Covid accommodation strategy regardless of the Moulsecoomb project. Alternative options for the Moulsecoomb site will need to be identified if the scheme cannot progress under current proposals

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- The previous iteration of the masterplan has been superseded following consultation and engagement with community groups, residents, the Design: South East panel and planning officers. The options considered during the

scoping phase of the project were set out in previous committee reports and have not changed.

- 4.1 A range of alternative locations for the 3G sports pitches have been assessed with the playing-field being identified as the most favourable option.
- 4.2 The housing element of the scheme could be funded through Right to Buy receipts; however, these are currently allocated to other projects within the housing supply programme. Due to the construction value of the Moulsecoomb project it is unlikely enough would be available to fully subsidise the scheme as proposed and the council is not able to use them on a project in receipt of Homes England funding.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Changes to the masterplan were made following an extensive consultation and engagement exercise with residents and community groups. Consultation was based on the Planning for Real model.
- 5.2 Officers are currently developing content for the interactive website, which will provide access to the masterplan, the engagement reports and recommendations, and provide further opportunity for local residents to engage with the process. The website will incorporate learning from the recent successful Whole Estate Plan consultation process, as well as look to similar schemes such as Preston Barracks.
- 5.3 A quarterly community stakeholder group is being established to discuss the details of the project and ensure further local engagement with the project.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report provides an update to members on the Moulsecoomb Neighbourhood Hub & Housing scheme. Changes to proposals are based on the feedback received from local residents through a series of engagement sessions, and pre-application planning meetings.
- 6.2 Enabling the planning application to be submitted at this stage will allow further work to be undertaken to finalise design, assess funding options and ensure accurate cost, funding and viability information can be assessed to inform the final budget decision.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 As approved by Policy & resources Committee in April 2020 the land appropriation between the General Fund and the HRA is based on the funding gap for the General Fund. This is currently estimated to be £7.320m, which has been tested and validated by an external valuer.
- 7.2 The appropriation of the land will be carried out over three phases. The first appropriation has been actioned and was for £3.000m with the remaining amount

reviewed in line with the latest funding arrangements and appropriated in line with the programme delivery timeline.

- 7.3 The appropriation of land is to be funded from HRA borrowing, the cost of borrowing will be funded from existing resources as outlined in the committee paper from April 2020. The financing expenditure has been included in the HRA's 30-year business plan, which was noted by Housing Committee on 13 January 2021 as part of the 2021/22 HRA budget paper.
- 7.4 Financial appraisals have been undertaken on the latest indicative cost proposals from the council's Quantity Surveyor, Potter Raper. These have shown a significant increase in costs since the last iteration of them. Full budget is not being sought at this point for the Housing scheme in order to fully understand the costs once the design has been reviewed further by Planning and a Design South East panel. This will allow for greater cost certainty to request budget and to be able to submit a finalised bid to Homes England for grant funding. Currently only initial discussions have taken place with Homes England creating some uncertainty with the amount available to fund the project.
- 7.5 Part 2 to this report sets out the financial appraisal undertaken, accompanied by a sensitivity analysis on the project to provide an indication of the potential investment required.
- 7.6 On 18th March 2021 budget of £0.820m for costs incurred to that point and to bring the project up to the point of RIBA stage 2 was approved. Of this £0.710m has been incurred leaving a budget of £0.110m available to fund the next phase of costs to get to Planning. These have been considered within the professional fees allowance in the financial appraisals.
- 7.7 The estimated costs to bring the proposal up to planning and give more cost certainty is a further £2.210m. After considering the remaining budget of £0.110m a further budget of £2.100m will be required.
- 7.8 This budget will be included in the 2021/22 HRA Capital Investment programme and assumed to be funded by HRA borrowing. Any decision around the borrowing requirement for this project will be made in consultation with the council's Treasury Management team to ensure that it is undertaken in accordance with the council's borrowing strategy, authorised borrowing limits and prudential indicators. These costs will form part of the full budget approval. If the scheme does not receive full approval these costs will be sunk investment costs to the HRA.
- 7.9 One source of funding has already been secured in the form of the Brownfield Land Release Funding grant of £1.694m, this grant will contribute to funding the significant infrastructure and ground works required to bring the scheme forward. This has been included within the financial appraisals in part 2 of this report.
- 7.10 The cost to the General Fund, outlined in the part 2 report, for the Neighbourhood Hub, refurbishment of Portslade 6th form, sports facilities, skatepark and the school toilets, will be met from a combination of corporate capital funding, borrowing and the capital receipts value associated with the appropriation of the land from the HRA. The General fund scheme costs includes

professional fees, project management costs and risk allowances. The corporate capital funding will be met from annual contributions from the Asset Management Fund (AMF) which have had approval at this committee but will require future years AMF contributions to be approved at future years P&R Committees. The cost of borrowing will be met from new income generated at the Hub from rental of office and commercial space. Negotiations are ongoing with potential occupants of the new space.

- 7.11 The change of use consent for the former Portslade Sixth Form site development requires the provision of a new play area for children in the local area, and a financial contribution to local schools based on pupil numbers within the radius of the site. This cost has been factored into the latest cost assumption cost for the General Fund.
- 7.12 The annual premises running costs for the Neighbourhood Hub and the former Portslade sixth form site will be met from existing revenue budgets associated with the sites that will be vacated and appropriated to the HRA plus commercial and rental income generated from the new Hub.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen / Craig Garoghan Date: 22/10/21

Legal Implications:

- 7.13 There are no legal implications with regards to recommendation 2.1.1.
- 7.14 The budget approval recommendation in 2.1.2 must be in line with standing orders and in line with the statutory position on HRA borrowing. However, it is noted that this is an anticipated budget and should this change then further consideration will be needed by committee.

Lawyer Consulted: Simon Court

Date: 25/10/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.15 Equalities Impact Assessments will be completed for all elements of this project as part of the design and planning stage of proposals. Feedback from communities and residents gathered through the Planning For Real sessions that relates to Equalities issues has been incorporated into proposals
- 7.16 The housing scheme currently delivers 15 wheelchair accessible homes. This is under review to increase the numbers further as the scheme develops. Each fully wheelchair accessible home will have their own allocated parking space.
- 7.17 The new hub and the surrounding public realm spaces will all be fully accessible and designed for people with disabilities. Careful consideration is being given to colour and material selection for people with visual impairments both inside the building and in the design of external spaces, for example in providing raised beds for growing vegetables for people in wheelchairs.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.18 This project supports corporate sustainability priorities by investing in sustainable construction methods and low carbon energy supply such as solar panels, and ground source heat pumps avoiding the use of gas for heating. The project is also engaged in the Circular Economy work. Opportunities to promote bio-diversity are also being considered by the Design Team for example using recycled materials from the buildings which are being demolished in gabion walls to create 'insect hotels'. It is also proposed to use timber from the demolished buildings to create benches or other features in the new public realm areas.
- 7.19 A Whole Life Carbon Assessor has been appointed to the project so a full understanding of the carbon impacts of the project will be understood and strategies developed for meeting the council's Zero Carbon New Homes Policy. A carbon design calculator is also being used during the design process which will inform a more sustainable choice of building materials. As part of the planning submission a full energy strategy will be submitted and will be assessed against planning policy requirements.
- 7.20 Sustainable and low carbon elements of the existing infrastructure will be reused or repurposed. For example, the project is currently exploring the feasibility of relocating the solar panels on the roof of Moulseccomb Hub north & South to the refurbished former Portslade Sixth Form site.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.21 Construction and labour costs may be affected by Brexit and this risk is considered in the main body of the report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.21 Providing dedicated Community and Youth space in the new neighbourhood hub supports the local agenda to reduce antisocial behaviour.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.22 The project follows corporate guidance and practice in terms of risk and opportunity management. Risk registers are in place for all elements of the project, and project/programme governance is in place to oversee mitigation and escalation as required.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.23 Issues relating to Public Health are aligned to priorities in the Moulseccomb Bevendean Neighbourhood Action Plan and data from the Local Insight report relating to Moulseccomb & Bevendean. Additional risk assessments are in place where relevant and in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

The project is incorporating public realm spaces which will encourage exercise and promote a healthy lifestyle, for example the all weather football pitch, a skate park, children play area and various spaces for walking and cycling.

All relevant elements of the scheme are subject to full risk assessments to ensure covid-safe working environments for council staff, residents and contractors.

The design of the Health element of the new Neighbourhood hub accommodates the space required to support recovery from the current pandemic and safeguard against any potential future pandemics.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.24 These proposals support corporate and citywide priorities relating to Housing, Carbon Neutral targets, and Community Wealth building as described in the body of the report.

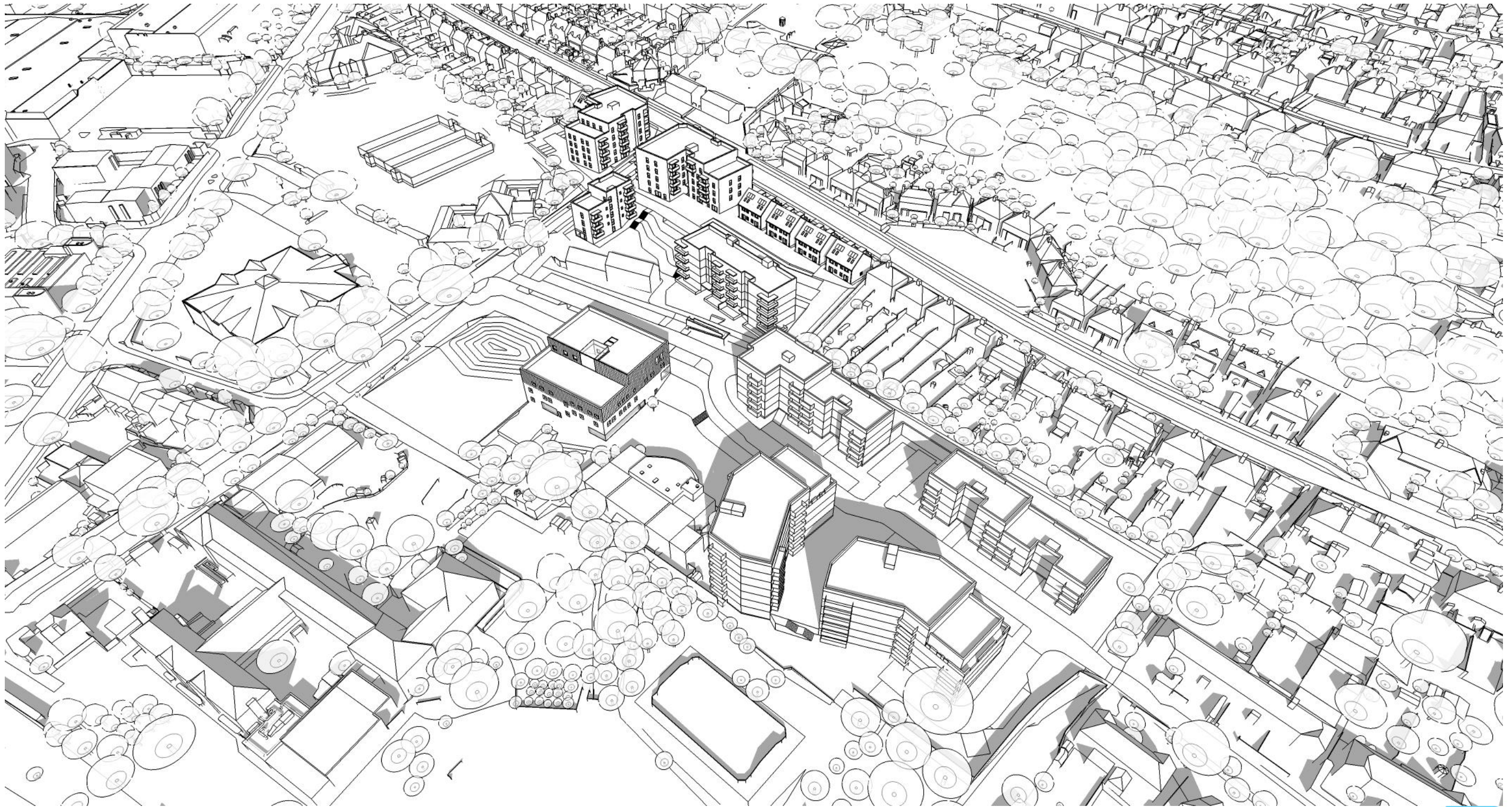
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Masterplan: Moulsecoomb Neighbourhood Hub & Housing Scheme
2. PART 2 Confidential Appendix – Cost Update and Financial appraisal of housing development

3.0 Site West Design

3.6 Aerial Views of Proposed Site – Completed Aerial View from South West



Completed aerial view from south west.

Document is Restricted

