

Housing Management Panel: North Area

- Date: 15 December 2021
- Time: 7.00pm
- Venue Hybrid Meeting – Zoom / In Person
St George's Hall
140 Newick Rd
Brighton
BN1 9JG
- Members: Councillor Fowler (Chair), Ward Councillors for the Area,
Delegates of Tenants Association in the Area.
- Contact: Thomas Bald
Democratic Services Officer
thomas.bald@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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AGENDA

PART ONE **Page**

- 1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS** **5 - 6**
5 Minutes – Verbal

Invitation Details Attached.

- 2 ACTIONS AND MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING** **7 - 12**
10 Minutes
Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 (copy attached).
Actions of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 (copy attached).

- 3 ESTATE DEVELOPMENT BUDGET**
10 Minutes - Verbal

- 4 RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS** **13 - 26**
40 Minutes – Responses to Resident’s Questions

- BREAK - 5 Minutes**

- 5 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT** **27 - 28**
10 Minutes – Verbal + Report Attached

- 6 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS**
5 Minutes – Verbal Updates from Attendees on Positive Things Happening in the Community

- 7 FUTURE FORMAT OF AREA PANELS**
15 Minutes – Panel to discuss in-person and hybrid meetings

- 8 BUDGET UPDATE**
20 Minutes – Verbal Update from Ododo Dafe

- 9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
5 Minutes - Verbal

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact , (01273 291354, email thomas.bald@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Date of Publication - Date Not Specified

North Area Panel – meeting invitation

Dear Resident,

On behalf of the North Area Panel, I would like to invite you to the next meeting. This will be a **hybrid meeting** with a limited number of people seeing face-to-face and others taking part on-line. You will be able to see and hear each other.

To book your physical place, please contact the Community Engagement Admin Team at 01273291518 / 07717302986 / communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk. **Please note** that due to limited capacity, physical places will be allocated on a first book first served basis.

When	Wednesday 15 th December 2021 – from 18:45 to 21:00
Where	<p>St George's Hall 140 Newick Rd, Brighton BN1 9JG</p> <p>and online on Zoom</p> <p>Please type the following address in your browser:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.tinyurl.com/NAP151221</p> <p>There's no difference between uppercase/lowercase letters. You won't need to enter meeting ID or password.</p> <p>If the link above doesn't work or you will join through the Zoom client instead, please use the following credentials:</p> <p>Meeting ID: 870 3698 1608 Passcode: 1ri4nT</p> <p>(no difference between uppercase/lowercase letters). You won't need to enter meeting ID or password.</p> <p>If you can't use a device able to connect to the internet, you can access the meeting through audio only, calling with a normal phone one of the following numbers and typing the meeting ID and passcode when asked:</p> <p>0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0203 901 7895, 0131 460 1196</p> <p>Meeting ID: 889 1124 2842 Passcode: 746912</p> <p>To mute and unmute yourself when calling by phone, press *6 (asterisk and 6)</p>

Please read the papers in advance of the meeting.

We can help with transport costs: please let us know **at least 7 days in advance** if you need the provision of bus tickets or taxi vouchers to get to the meeting, and we will send those to you in due course. If you drive, you can claim mileage and parking costs through your resident association grant. Taxi Vouchers can only be requested by people with mobility issues.

Please contact the Community Engagement Admin Team at 01273291518 / 07717302986 / communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk to get tickets or vouchers or to obtain more information.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

7.00pm 13 OCTOBER 2021

VIRTUAL - ZOOM

MINUTES

Present

Councillors: Fowler (Chair), Osborne

Tenant Representatives: Ian Beck, Des Jones, Tony Griffin, Heather Hayes, Tony Graham, Jim Hornsby, Catherine Lawrence

Officers: Clare Nichols, Keely McDonald, Michael Raywood, Justine Harris, Janet Dowdell, Francis Mitchell, Grant Ritchie, Ododo Dafe, Thomas Bald

Guests: Sarah Brooker-Lewis

1 WELCOME APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies from Cllr Knight and Cllr John.

2 ACTIONS AND MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting on the 13th October were agreed as an accurate record.

2.2 Michael Raywood confirmed that 6 portable units have been sourced for CCTV and Roedale Court has been identified as an area of concern.

2.3 Ododo Dafe confirmed that the issue raised by Cllr John in the last meeting regarding the out of hours repairs hotline has been resolved.

2.4 Heather Hayes and Jim Hornsby were informed Justine Harris would look into the weeds in Coldean and the mowing of the bank between Brentwood Road and Burstead Close.

2.5 Ian Beck was informed that Michael Raywood would look into more regular mowing in Hollingdean.

3 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

Hollingdean Window Replacements

3.1 Ian Beck was informed that there are Council houses across Hollingdean that will be included in the window replacements but only the ones that are in the most need of replacing.

Condition of Kitchen at 8 Dunster Close

3.2 Residents were happy with the response.

Security Lighting at Tavistock Down

3.3 Residents were happy with the response.

Storage Areas to the Flats in Tavistock Down and the Crestway

3.4 Grant Ritchie gave a verbal update and confirmed he would arrange a meeting with Ian Beck to discuss further.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in High Rise Blocks

3.5 Tony Graham was informed that:

- Residents should be involved in anti-social behaviour reviews.
- Tenants will be contacted who have identified ASB, and the causes of ASB will be looked at.
- New procedures will be made for staff and webpages will be updated as a result of the review.
- Central Government is looking at reducing ASB.
- When cases are closed its an agreement with the reporter and the Council.

3.6 Michael Raywood confirmed that tenants wouldn't be told to move to avoid ASB, but they are offered if they'd like to move.

Future of Gas Central Heating in Council Housing

3.7 Catherine Lawrence was informed that the Council are planning to be carbon neutral by 2030 but wouldn't tear out functional boilers in the meantime.

3.8 Jim Hornsby was informed that Keely McDonald would chase up if there was any information published from the last citywide conference regarding carbon neutrality.

4 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

4.1 Tony Graham was informed that Community Engagement would be in touch when the ASB review starts.

4.2 Justine Harris suggested that the review may be starting in March 2022.

4.3 Janet Dowdell raised that the review would include various information gathering such as surveying people that have experienced it, any previous complaints, and contacting the Ombudsman.

4.4 Des Jones was informed that Housing lead on any complaints where the perpetrator is a Council tenant.

4.5 Cllr Fowler was informed that ASB in parks would be taken on by Housing and the Community Safety Team if it's on Housing land.

5 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

5.1 Tony Graham raised that:

- The cleaner in his property is now full time.
- The gardener has done great things in the garden and there may be a greenhouse installed.
- A water tap has been installed and is really helpful.

5.2 Jim Hornsby raised that in in Burstead Close the grass areas around flats and trees are really pleasant, however the recycling bins overflow regularly so it might be helpful to add an extra cluster of bins, and if there is any possibility of having a guard to stop the bins from falling over in the wind. Michael Raywood responded that in some other areas a timber stand has been introduced.

5.3 Ian Beck asked if some wildflowers could be planted along the bank at the bottom of Davey Drive. Michael Raywood responded that there is a procurement process currently ongoing to remove the brambles due to health and safety issues, but residents would be consulted as to how to present the area aesthetically going forward.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Ian Beck raised that there was a fire at the Hollingdean Recycling Plant and that the fumes that come from the plant can be smelled from miles away. Ododo Dafe suggested that an answer could be provided at the next area panel but a representative might not be available. Councillor Osborne added that food waste being separate from other waste would be looked at over the next few years, and that the plant was able to deal with the fire themselves before the sprinklers even needed to be activated.

6.2 Ian Beck raised that he had received a complaint from a resident at Tavistock Down that the no entry signs are so rusty that they cannot be seen, and the one way system is now therefore ineffective. Cllr Fowler confirmed she would look into this.

6.3 Cllr Fowler read the ASB Policy Review to the Panel.

The meeting concluded at 8.43pm.

North

Actions of Area Panel Meeting October 2021

Action	Who	Response
Michael to chase up on grass mowing in Jim Hornsby's area (between Brentwood Road and Burstead Close). Particularly the fact that the bank is too steep for the mower to manoeuvre which leads to chunks being knocked off the wall.	Michael Raywood	Verbal update
Michael to meet resident (Ian) regarding access to storage areas for flats in Tavistock Down as Michael did not have access to interior of storage units.	Michael Raywood	Verbal update
Michael to ask housing officer to look at overflowing recycling bins on Burstead close, potentially adding extra bins and deploying a timber wind-guard to prevent bins blowing over.	Michael Raywood	Housing met with CityClean have met on site at Burstead Close and are going to be creating several new bin stores along the length of Burstead Close to provide more containment for recycling, removing and securing old bin stores and creating easier access for city clean operatives. Next step is to consult residents on the proposals which will take place over the coming weeks.
Ododo to try to get a response to resident (Ian) about how the council will manage health-impacts and fire-safety concerns at Hollingdean waste plant for the next meeting.	Ododo Dafe	

Central and West Area 3 Stars

Task and Finish Groups

Background

Structure of Task and finish groups Central: The Environment Task and Finish group and the Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish group should be chaired by residents and facilitated, not directed, by officers. These groups were established following requests from residents and focus on issues that have been consistently raised as problems of major concern. It's important that they are resident led and properly explore the concerns of residents, which can be more effectively done with a resident Chair. The officer's role is to facilitate and support this process.

West: These are all the task and finish groups, all services improvement groups and any other groups for example TDN. It has always been recognised that the reps are voted for on Area Panel meetings every two years and we would get a list of the groups and reps. The officer's role is to facilitate, enable, support, take minutes in this process.

Action

Request that the Environment Task and Finish group and the Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish group are restructured so they are chaired and led by residents and focus on the concerns of residents. Barry Hughes will also bring this issue to the attention of the Chairs of Housing.

West: Could we please be provided with a list of all current groups including task and finish with a list of the reason behind each group?

Response

The Residents Associations, Service Improvement Groups and Citywide Groups/Sub-Groups are chaired by residents and we're wary of overburdening individuals with additional meetings and responsibilities, however we would like to offer to trial this suggested approach for the calendar year 2022/2023. As Task and Finish Groups are set up with a specific purpose and are time limited, we would require chairs to undergo additional training in order for them to be able to guide these meetings to be as productive and focussed as possible.

We'd be happy to provide the West Area Panel Representative with the list of current groups

Central and West Area 3 Stars

Role of Field Officers

Background

Central residents would like an update on the role and function of Field Officers. Central residents do not have much contact with Field Officers and are unsure of their value and purpose. Residents Associations used to have regular Estate Inspections with Housing Officers, which formed a useful and important part of Resident Associations' work. It was hoped that Field Officers would take over this role.

West: When will there be Estate inspection dates? We understand Estate inspections seem to have started up again?

Action

Request a report (needs to include how many officers there are currently) on the Field Officer programme, covering what work they do, what this costs the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), what the benefits are to residents and Residents Associations and whether they can do Estate Inspections. Theresa Renolds should be invited.

West: Please provide a timetable of inspection dates.

Response

The Field Officer team consists of 6 x full time and 2 x Part time members of staff. Their core working hours 12pm-8pm. The team returned to carrying out visits in April this year. The HRA funds £51,000 per year towards the cost of Field Officers.

They have carried out witnessing tasks for Housing in the last few months and are currently working with Housing colleagues on linking their work to estate inspections. Currently we are planning to have two Field Officers carrying out inspections in each of the 4 Housing areas. This is so that they will get to know the Housing teams and build relationships with residents. This will also enable them to become familiar with the different areas. We are currently planning how we start up estate inspections and what staffing resource will be needed. We aim to get to a position where we are including information online in relation to the inspections as to when and how they will take place.

A further update will be provided at the next round of Area Panels.

Central and East Area 3 Stars

Sustainability

Background

Home Insulation: Central residents would like to see money allocated in the 2022-3 budget for a programme of home insulation. There is an urgency to reduce carbon emissions and a programme to insulate homes could be started on immediately. It is important that this is carried out to a high standard and problems currently experienced with poor retrofitting work are addressed. Practically, for example insurance about insulation in the roof and cooling in housing blocks during the summer.

Transfer to low-carbon heating: Information has not been circulated clearly to residents about how the Council proposes to manage a transfer from gas to air source or ground source heat pump technology for heating council housing stock. This issue was discussed at the Citywide Conference, but this discussion has not reached the majority of tenants and leaseholders. Leaseholders, in particular, need to be kept informed about plans that will incur costs to them.

Action

It was agreed to ask the council for a report detailing their plans for moving from gas heating to air source or ground source heat pumps for existing and new council housing properties.

Response

Please see the attached report, Carbon Reduction in Housing. This was considered at Housing committee on the 17th November and provides an update on actions and future plans to reduce carbon across the city's housing stock.

As you will see in the report it is acknowledged that the transition away from gas fired heating and hot water services to renewable sources. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) will have a significant role to play in this alongside more efficient forms of electric heating and new technologies as they are developed and scaled up. We have experience of installing ASHPs on a small scale but expect to see the installation of these significantly increase in the next few years. Housing is installing its first GSHP at the Victoria development in Portslade.

As you will see in the report over the coming months we will be developing a more detailed plan as to how Housing will improve our stock to contribute towards the 2030 carbon Neutral target, we will continue to update residents as this develops as we recognise how important this is to you and the key role residents will play in delivering on the plan. There will be further reports to housing committee in the next few months that will also give more detail and context as to how heating and hot water services will be provided in the future, in particular a new contract for these services from 2023 onwards.

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There is a budget allocation for 2022/23 for energy efficiency and renewable projects and this budget is likely to be increasing significantly over the coming years, these will be detailed in the budget papers to be considered by committee in the new year.

We recognise the potential impact on leaseholders and acknowledge the concern this may cause. As we develop workstreams and specific projects on blocks of flats or neighborhoods we will ensure that we engage at an early stage to gather views and address any concerns we can at an early stage.

East , North and Central Area

3 Stars

Grounds maintenance service and weeds

Background

The increasing weeds, overgrown shrubs and uncut grass are becoming a hazard for residents. The council's decision to stop the use of glyphosates has not been matched with an increase in staffing levels to ensure the city is kept tidy and safe. Residents felt that the council should investigate the option of using alternative, safe herbicides to address this problem. This issue was raised at the Area Panel on October 12th and the response was "We are now exploring use of a contractor, who is able to weed without use of chemical pesticides." Residents felt that this response did not address the question raised, which was about alternative (non-glyphosate) herbicides.

Weeds: There has been an ongoing problem with grass cutting and weeds growing over pavements since the council stopped using glyphosate. While the council have started to allocate more resources to this and that the grass has been cut, weeds have been left to grow on the pavements and along the kerbs.

This is a health and safety hazard: the weeds get slippery during wet weather, people are unable to see the edge of the kerb and likely to trip, and it's difficult for those with walking difficulties or disabilities to negotiate the pavement.

Action

It was agreed to raise this again at the Agenda Setting meeting and request a report from CityParks on non-glyphosate herbicides.

Residents would like to know what the Council's plan is for removing weeds on pavements and kerbs in the area on a regular basis.

Response

Thank you for your question. CityParks currently use two non-glyphosate herbicides. Icade: for the treatment of tough, invasive and woody vegetation; specifically used to treat outbreaks of Japanese Knotweed.

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Katoun Gold: a natural herbicide for hard surfaces and around obstacles. It is a 'contact' not a 'systemic' herbicide, meaning it kills surface vegetation it touches but is not transmitted through the plant's system to kill underground roots. The result being more rapid regrowth requiring more frequent treatments.

As set out in the response to the last Area Panel meeting, managing weeds is challenging without the use of glyphosate herbicide. Since the last Area Panel Housing have deployed the use of a private contractor to clear areas of Housing land where health and safety hazards. The hard surfaces team have also continued with weed clearance using mechanical means. I appreciate this is an important issue for residents, we will continue to monitor and respond to areas that may need more attention.

East Area

3 Stars

Officer attendance at Area Panel meetings

Background

Written responses to residents' questions are often not the best way to get information across. The meeting felt that it would be better to ask officers responding to residents' questions to attend the Area Panel meeting and give their responses personally. This would enable residents to clarify or ask additional questions. For example, the responses to two of the questions raised by East Residents at the October Area Panel (Grounds maintenance and Graffiti) misunderstood or didn't fully answer the actual questions submitted. Because the officers were not present at the Area Panel, residents have to repeatedly raise issues again, instead of being able to follow up immediately with further questions and clarifications

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and ask if officers giving responses could also agree to be present at the meeting (even if this is only for a few minutes) to ensure that their response adequately addresses the questions.

Response

I appreciate the feedback from residents on this part of the Area Panels meetings, I do recognise that there is sometimes difficulty in resolving an issue due to follow up questions not being able to be answered at the time the response is discussed. It is important to balance the opportunity for attendees to ask relevant questions and clarify points with the other topics on the agenda. Whilst it might not always be possible for the responding officer to attend, this will be looked at as part of the Area Panel review planned for early next year.

East Area

3 Stars

Allergies

Background

The allocations process should take into account issues in the immediate environment of properties being let, which may make them unsuitable for some tenants. Craven Vale Community Association has installed a beehive on the estate, following a process of full consultation with the Neighbours. Subsequently, a family moved into a neighbourhood property, who were unaware that the beehive was about to be installed, and were unhappy due to a phobia or allergy to bees.

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and ask if a note can be made on HomeMove of which properties have beehives (or other potential allergy triggers) nearby in order to make this information available to potential bidders.

Response

We have explored the possibility of including this information, I can confirm that unfortunately we cannot safely and reliably update the Homemove system with information regarding proximity to beehives or other potential allergens / phobic triggers.

North Area

2 Stars

Overgrown brambles at the bottom of Davey Drive

Background

The overgrown brambles on the bank between the bottom of Davey Drive and Horton Road are a hazard for local residents. While the issue was resolved over the summer, the brambles are starting to grow back. Other residents in the North area have also reported having issues with overgrown bushes in their area.

Action

Residents would like to know what the long-term maintenance plan is for the area.

Response

The bank at Davey drive to the side of Roedale court is in a prominent position and has been raised several times as a complaint at the area panel.

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The initial planting on this bank has been largely destroyed due to the colonisation of bramble plants which frequently encroach on the path and steps and gives the area an unkempt appearance. Maintenance of this area is challenging.

Housing are now working with colleagues in CityParks to explore the clearing the area and planting it with wild flowers. This will be done in consultation with the residents.

RW phone reply: We have already provided an answer to this question in previous Area Panels. There is not a long term plan for the specific area, although ordinary maintenance will be provided.

North Area 3 Stars

Tackling anti-social behaviour in high rise blocks

Background

Residents have been told by Council officers that nothing can be done about tackling the reported issues with anti-social behaviour, particularly in reference to the situation at Nettleton Court and Dudeney Lodge (See Minutes of North Area Residents Only Meetings: Item 4 from 24th August 2021). They have been told to report problems to the police. The police have been called on numerous occasions (Agenda Setting items from North Area Residents Meeting 26th October 2021 Page 2 of 5), but they are unable to resolve the problem in the long-term. The impact of years of daily antisocial behaviour is detrimental to other tenants' lives and well-being.

Action

Residents asked for a report on what immediate steps will be taken to resolve the issue at Nettleton and Dudeney Lodge. Residents are not satisfied with the council's response and lack of action with regards to tackling the issues of anti-social behaviour in blocks of flats: the council have a responsibility to all council tenants to keep them safe. Residents ask for a report on the steps the council is actively taking to:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour in council properties in the city;
- Improving allocations policies so that both the needs of the new tenant and existing tenants are taken into consideration;
- Improving tenancy support, including provision of support to vulnerable people;
- Better supporting residents moving from temporary accommodation into settled accommodation;
- Ensuring perpetrators of anti-social behaviour receive support, and are able to sustain to tenancy without their behaviour impacting on others.

Response

As discussed in the last Area Panel the points raised are being considered as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Review. This review is currently underway. In the last Area Panel response we set out how we are seeking to further enhance tenancy support,

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including consideration of provision of support to the most vulnerable tenants. This will include the transitional support residents receive when moving from temporary into settled housing. We have also significantly increased the provision of Housing First and Housing Led Support accommodation.

We currently have ten cases of ASB open at Nettleton and Dudeney. Immediate steps being taken include referrals for extra support for people who need to modify their behaviour and assigning each a dedicated Housing Officer to respond to the reported issues. The Housing Officers are pro active in engaging with the alleged perpetrators of ASB. There is an additional complicating factor in that there are currently a few properties within Nettleton that are void and the void works are also creating a noise nuisance which we believe are linked to at least one of these reports.

We hope residents continue to work with officers to respond to the issues arising and thank you those participating in the antisocial behaviour policy review.

North Area

2 Stars

Hollingdean window replacements

Background

Windows in many of the houses and flats in Hollingdean are in very poor condition and need to be replaced. The Council has carried out a survey of windows in blocks of flats in Hollingdean and these are on the list of repairs due. However, Council houses have been missed out. There are 6 streets on the list yet to be surveyed, but some streets are not included in the survey at all – e.g. Dunster Close.

See Minutes of North Area Residents Only Meetings: Items 8 from 12th November 2020 and Item 3 from 15th June 2021, Item 5 from 24th August 2021

Action

Residents are requesting:

- A survey of houses in Hollingdean (that have been missed out of the previous survey) to evaluate the condition of the existing windows.
- An updated schedule of window replacements due in Hollingdean for 2022-23.

Response

Housing are now working with colleagues in CityParks to explore the clearing the area and planting it with wild flowers. This will be done in consultation with the residents.

North Area 3 Stars

Repairs

Background

Residents are having to wait a long time for repairs to get done, and the Council has reported that this is because there is a backlog due to Covid.

Action

Residents would like to know why there is still a backlog to deal with both urgent and routine repairs, and asks to know what the Council is doing to resolve this problem.

Response

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.

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. 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. 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. However, Covid 19 provisions continued to apply.

In addition, some residents were reluctant to have operatives in their homes to address non-essential repairs during the pandemic. 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. The Service is seeking to clear the backlog and are currently recruiting trade operatives and office-based staff to expand capacity to complete more repairs. We have estimated it will take 12 months to clear the backlog.

North Area **2 Stars**

Empty Council properties

Background

There are many Council properties lying empty, and residents have been told this is because they are awaiting major repairs. Residents are concerned that properties are being left empty while there is a long list of people waiting for Council accommodation.

Action

North residents request to see a list of the empty properties (How many empty properties are there in Hollingdean?), the details of repairs that are waiting to be done on them, and the time it is taking to turn empty properties around.

Response

We currently have 15 Empty Homes in the Hollingdean Area. Each job is specific and can vary from small quantities of simple works to substantial works including re wire's, new kitchens, bathrooms, plastering and roof replacement. Due to the range and variety of works it is difficult to provide the information you have requested. We currently have 169 Empty Homes across the city and the Team is making steady progress at reducing this number. We are currently predicting a return to a more normal number of Empty Homes being worked on by Spring 2022.

North and West Area **3 Stars**

Communications between Council and residents

Background

North: Residents feel that the level of communication between the Council and residents is unsatisfactory:

- There is no follow-up by Council officers with resident reps after Area Panel meetings.
- Residents are not being informed in a timely fashion of changes that affect them: for example, the Repairs system, the Estate Development Budget process

West: Why is there a lack of communication? Officers very difficult to get in touch with. Phone calls go unanswered and messages/emails ignored. This is especially the case for EDB and Task and Finish groups.

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Action

North: Residents would like to see an improvement in how the Council communicates with them. They would like:

- Council officers to follow up on their actions after Area Panel meetings and contact reps with updates.
- To be consulted and kept informed in a timely fashion of any changes to Council Housing services that affect them.

West: What is the solution?

Response

Thank you for raising the matter of communications, and I am very sorry that tenant representatives have found some areas of communications between themselves and the Council to be unsatisfactory, and that some calls have not been returned. Your request for us to follow up on actions discussed at Area Panels and provide you with updates is perfectly reasonable, and we will make immediate improvements on this as well as addressing it as part of the Area Panel Review.

In the fullness of time, our ambition will be that any answers to questions raised at Area Panel, whether via resident's questions or during the meeting will be posted on the resident pages on the council's website.

This will enable any interested residents to easily see issues being raised on their behalf and the responses to them. Naturally, this can be extended to matters raised in other meeting – e.g. Task & Finish Groups. This will also be taken forward as part of the review of Area Panels.

With regard to consulting with you and keeping you updated on matters, again please accept my apologies if information is coming to you late. Where there are changes to areas of our service that we need to communicate, we will make sure that you receive a bulletin so that you are all updated.

Please do get in touch with the Community Engagement Team with any specific information you expected, as it's helpful for staff to understand where the communications failure has occurred and how it could be prevented in future.

North Area 3 Stars

Estate Development Budget

Background

There is a general lack of information and clarity around the Estate Development Budget forms, bids and overall process. There is only a 2020-21 EDB quick bid form available to download on the Council website. Residents have been told that this is out of date and is no longer valid. There

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are no other available downloadable forms. Residents have been told they have to fill these out online. The EDB task and finish group were told there would be simplified EDB forms, but have not yet been sent or seen these yet.

Action

Residents would like to know why the new 2021-22 Quick Bid forms are not available to download on the Council website yet, and when it will be available. Residents would like to see the new, simplified EDB forms. Residents would like to point out that not everyone has access to, or can easily fill out online forms, and would like EDB forms to be made more accessible.

Response

The council website sets out the process for EDB applications, including step by step pages taking residents through the process. It also includes a link to the downloadable form and contact details – email and telephone number for support. Estate Development Budget (brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Apologies that this year's downloadable forms were in not available, this is now resolved. We continue to explore the use of an on-line form similar to many council and grant funding processes and remain mindful of ensuring accessibility in its development. We will update residents when one is available to use via the EDB pages on the council's website.

The EDB Task and Finish group reviewed the existing EDB forms in August and suggested changes to simplify the form to make it more accessible for applicants. The draft simplified version is to be discussed and agreed by the Task and Finish Group in the new year and forwarded to Area Panel for approval as soon as possible thereafter. If the Area Panels approve it's use, it will be widely shared on the council web pages and with Resident Groups.

As always support through the EDB process is available from the Community Engagement Officer (CEO) for the relevant area and the EDB officer Lucy - Lucy.beasley@brighton-hove.gov.uk

To clarify the EDB bid form can be either filled in via downloading the form (Forms and guidance document for estate development budget bids (brighton-hove.gov.uk)) from the website or by requesting a paper copy from the Community Engagement Team. This can be through the CEO, EDB Officer or the Team's inbox community.engagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

North Area 2 Stars

Fire at Hollingdean Refuse & Recycling Depot

Background

The Hollingdean depot is unsafe and its current location is unsuitable. It puts the lives of local residents at risk. There has been another fire at the Hollingdean Refuse & Recycling Depot this month (reported in Argus <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/19628333.safety-fears-fireveolia-waste-site-hollingdean/>).

This has been the 5th fire in the last 3 years. There have been 2 fires so far in 2021. While residents have been told the fire was 'minor', smoke was observed billowing from the depot. There are residences and two schools close to the depot site which are directly affected. The last response residents received was that a sprinkler system had been installed at the depot. Residents have previously been told that these fires do not pose a health hazard as the depot only stores household rubbish. The last major fire resulted in 26 reports of breathing difficulties, and other health issues due to smoke inhalation, based on a survey carried out by local residents. The smell of fumes and smoke lasted one month after the fire. Household rubbish contains plastics, batteries and other materials that, when burned, are known to release toxic fumes. It is thought that chemicals are also stored at the depot. There was a huge opposition from local residents when the depot was originally built. Fires will continue to happen, and sprinkler systems are not sufficient to prevent damage to the health of local residents. See Minutes of 22nd October 2019, Item 2

Action

Residents are asking the Council to ensure the health and safety of Hollingdean residents and that the Council work to re-site the depot to a more suitable location outside of the city, and away from residential areas.

Response

Cityclean understands residents' concerns. The council is currently looking at options and will bring a report to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee in 2022.

West Area
3 Stars

Service improvement groups

Background

The is confusion about the different service improvement groups.

Action

Please provide clarification on when the four service improvement groups merged into two and copies of the minutes.

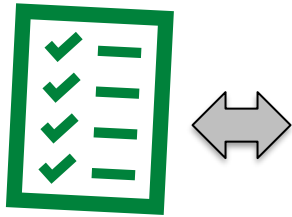
Response

The Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy approved at Housing Committee March 2021 includes a recommendation to reduce the four Service Improvement Groups to two, minutes of that meeting can be found on the council's website (<https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/g10054/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Mar-2021%2016.00%20Housing%20Committee.pdf?T=1>).

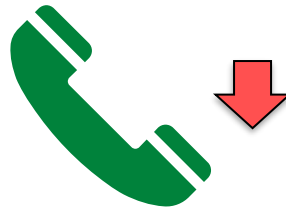
These groups will focus on 'People' and 'Buildings'. This will allow for time limited task and finish groups to focus on specific issues in detail and report back to Area Panels. Discussions have begun in the Home and Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Groups on a Terms Of Reference for the two new groups. Further discussion is required and the intention is to bring the draft Terms Of Reference for these groups to the Area Panels in the Spring 2022 for approval.

Council housing performance

Quarter 2 2021/22 (Jul to Sep 2021)



100%
Gas safety
compliance



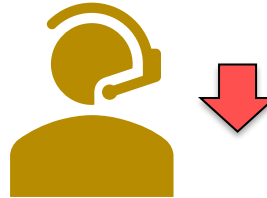
93%
Repairs calls
answered



66 days
Empty home
re-let time



92.9%
Dwellings
meeting Decent
Homes standard



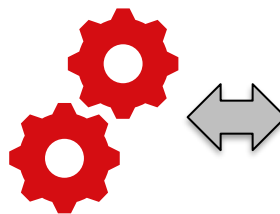
87%
Customer
services calls
answered



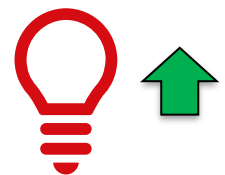
97%
Tenancies
sustained



85%
Complaint
responses within
10 working days



91%
Lifts restored to
service within
24 hours



68.1
Energy efficiency
rating out of 100

Performance since previous quarter is:



Better



Same



Worse



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Quarter 2 2021/22 council housing performance – key trends

Top scores (compared to target)

1. Calls answered by Repairs Helpdesk (93% vs 85% target)
2. Tenancies sustained following difficulties (97% vs 90% target)
3. Stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days (85% vs 80% target)
4. Council homes with a valid Landlord's Gas Safety Record (100% vs 100% target)

Bottom scores (compared to target)

1. Average re-let time excluding time spent in major works (66 days vs 21 day target)
2. Stage two complaints upheld (47% vs 18% target)
3. Lifts – average time to restore service when not within 24 hours (9 days vs 7 day target)
4. Energy efficiency rating of homes out of 100 (68.1 vs 76.8 target)
5. Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard (92.9% vs 100% target)

Biggest improvements (since previous quarter)

1. Average re-let time excluding time spent in major works (88 to 66 days)
2. Tenancies sustained following difficulties (92% to 97%)
3. Stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days (81% to 85%)
4. Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard (92.1% to 92.9%)
5. Energy efficiency rating of homes out of 100 (68.0 to 68.1)

Biggest drops (since previous quarter)

1. Stage two complaints upheld (9% to 47%)
2. Lifts – average time taken to restore service when not within 24 hours (9 to 12 days)
3. Calls answered by Housing Customer Services (87% to 82%)
4. Calls answered by Repairs Helpdesk (94% to 93%)

Please note there are fewer indicators to compare than usual because several are temporarily absent from this report while work is underway to develop new reporting systems following the switchover of our main housing management IT system since the start of July 2021. Please see the full version of the performance report for more information.