





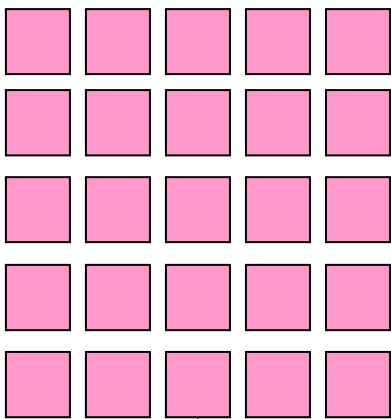
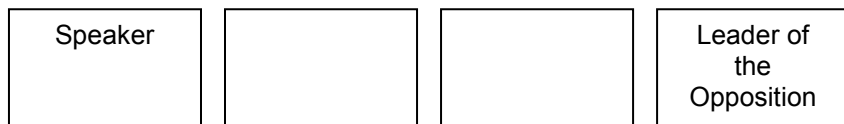
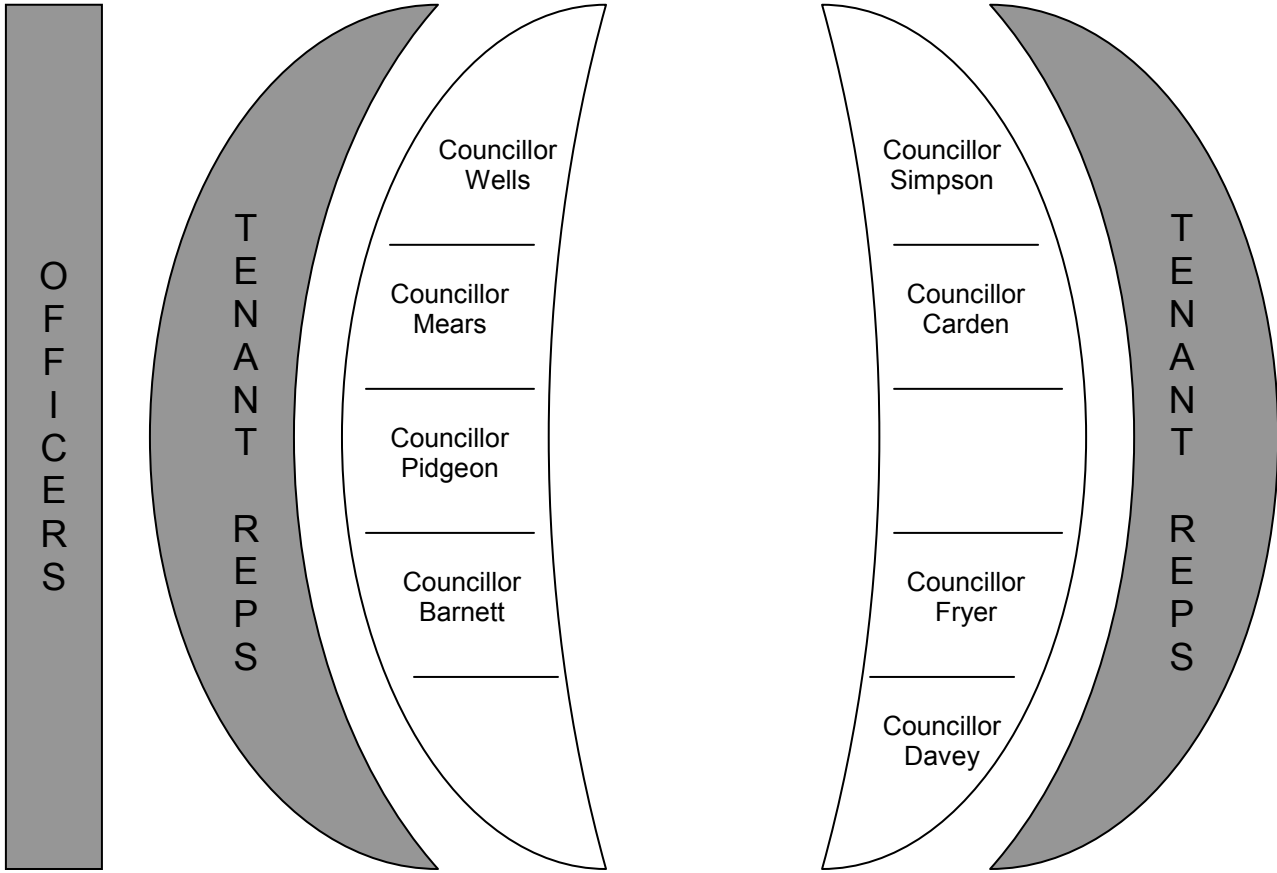
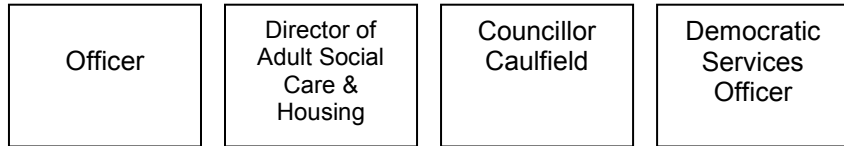
**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Title:	Housing Management Consultative Committee
Date:	22 June 2009
Time:	3.00pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillors: Caulfield (Chairman), Allen, Davey, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson), Simson and Wells
Contact:	Caroline De Marco Democratic Services Officer 01273 291053 caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

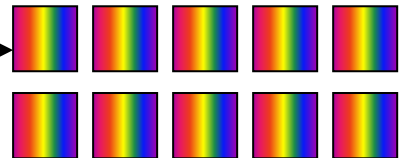
	The Town Hall has facilities for wheelchair users, including lifts and toilets
	An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter and infra red hearing aids are available for use during the meeting. If you require any further information or assistance, please contact the receptionist on arrival.
	<p>FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts; • Do not stop to collect personal belongings; • Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move some distance away and await further instructions; and • Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



Public Seating

Members in Attendance



Press



Tenant Representatives:

Chris El-Shabba, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Stewart Gover, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Ted Harman, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Heather Hayes, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Chris Kift, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Beryl Snelling, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Beverley Weaver, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

Muriel Briault, Leaseholder Action Group

Tom Whiting, Sheltered Housing Action Group

Colin Carden, Older People's Council

John Melson, Hi Rise Action Group

Sue Hansen, Tenant Disability Network

AGENDA

1. 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 by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (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 2 of the Agenda states in its heading either that it is confidential or 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 categories of exempt information is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 10

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2009 (copy attached).

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

4. CALLOVER

5. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received by the date of publication.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 15 June 2009)

No public questions have been received by the date of publication.

7. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 15 June 2009)

No deputations have been received by the date of publication.

8. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

9. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No written questions have been received.

10. HOUSING REPAIRS REFURBISHMENT AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT 11 - 30

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Nick Hibberd Tel: 293756
Ward Affected: All Wards;

11. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2009/10 REDUCTION IN RENT INCREASES 31 - 36

Report of Adult Social Care & Housing and Director of Finance & Resources (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Sue Chapman Tel: 29-3105
Ward Affected: All Wards;

12. AUDIT COMMISSION - ADVICE & ASSISTANCE VISIT 37 - 70

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Diane Freeland Tel: (01273) 293202
Ward Affected: All Wards;

13. LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN FOR SHELTERED HOUSING 71 - 76

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Helen Clarkmead Tel: 293350
Ward Affected: All Wards;

14. LOCAL LETTINGS PLANS - GENERAL STOCK 77 - 86

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Helen Clarkmead Tel: 293350
Ward Affected: All Wards;

15. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT (END OF YEAR REPORT) 87 - 100

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: John Austin-Locke Tel: 29-1008
Ward Affected: All Wards;

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

The closing date for receipt of public questions and deputations for the next meeting is 12 noon on the fifth working day before the meeting.

Agendas and minutes are published on the council's website www.brighton-hove.gov.uk. Agendas are available to view five working days prior to the meeting date.

Meeting papers can be provided, on request, in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on disc, or translated into any other language as requested.

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Caroline De Marco, (01273 291053, email caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Friday, 12 June 2009

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 2
Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 24 MARCH 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Caulfield (Chairman); Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson), Allen, Davey, Mears, Pidgeon, Randall (Opposition Spokesperson), Simson and Wells

Tenant Representatives: Chris El-Shabba (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Stewart Gover (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Chris Kift (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Beryl Snelling (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Beverley Weaver (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Muriel Briault (Leaseholder Action Group), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group), Colin Carden (Older People's Council), Sue Hansen (Tenant Disability Network) and John Melson (Hi Rise Action Group)

PART ONE

61. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

61.1 Declarations of Substitutes

61a.1 Councillor Randall for Councillor Fryer

61a.2 Jean Davis noted that she was in attendance to support Beryl Snelling and would take no part in the meeting.

61b Declarations of Interest

61b.1 Councillors Simpson, Wells, and Randall, Tenant Representatives; Ted Harman and Heather Hayes declared personal interests as Board Members of 'Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes'.

61c. Exclusion of Press and Public

61c.1 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

61.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

62. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

62.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2009 be approved and signed by the Cabinet Member.

63. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

63.1 The Chairman informed the meeting of an announcement from Government about a reduction to the guideline rent increase for 2009/10. The announcement had been made without supporting guidance and at an awkward time. While the Chairman supported any initiative to reduce rent increases for tenants, it was not possible to determine how to respond to the announcement. Therefore the current rent increase of 5.45% approved by Cabinet on 12th February and by Council on 26th February remained until further notice.

63.2 The Chairman reported that Local Lettings Plans were being developed. These would be drafted in three phases; the initial Plan would be for Sheltered Housing, with plans for better balanced communities and age restricted lettings developed later.

63.3 The Chairman welcomed a proposal from the High Rise Action Group that the council publish its procedures for the handling of emergencies during 'out-of-hours' periods. Officers had been instructed to review the emergency procedures to ensure that they were robust and consistently applied. Information on the procedures would be included in the revised Tenant Handbook and Tenant Representatives' Handbook.

63.4 The Chairman noted that the Audit Commission had visited earlier in the month to advise and assist on assessment. They had examined resident involvement and income management arrangements, and reviewed the HRA business plan. The inspector had been impressed with the commitment of the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group and had praised the work of residents following visits to meetings of the Asset Management Panel and the 'Our Neighbourhood' local base steering group. A full report on the visit and the recommendations made by the audit commission would be presented to a future meeting.

63.5 The Chairman reported that the Area Panels had confirmed their tenant board members to 'Brighton & Hove Community Seaside Homes'. Further project developments including a number of key elements would be settled by end of March; including drafting legal documents, incorporating the company, and appointing a number of independent members to the board.

63.6 The economic situation had made it more difficult to secure funding within the original timeframe; however a number of funders had expressed interest. Consent was required from the Secretary of State to allow the council to lease properties to the company and meetings with the Communities for Local Government) had been held to progress this.

63.7 The Chairman paid tribute to Ted Kitchen and John Jolliffe both of whom had recently passed away. The committee observed a minutes silence in respect.

63.8 The committee noted that the Senior Democratic Support Officer was taking a secondment to the Policy Team for a few months. In wishing him well they noted that Caroline De Marco and Kirsty Walker would be covering his work in the interim.

64. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

64.1 All items were reserved.

65. PETITIONS

65.1 There were none.

66. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

66.1 There were none.

67. DEPUTATIONS

67.1 There were none.

68. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

68.1 There were none.

69. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

69.1 There were none.

70. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

70.1 There were none.

71. ALLOCATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY REVIEW

71.1 The committee considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that detailed amendments to the current Allocations and Adaptations policy (for copy see minute book).

71.2 Heather Hayes noted that many families were overcrowded. Some families with children were living in one-bed roomed accommodation yet rated as 'Band C'. The parents could be working and find it difficult to find time to bid for a new home.

- 71.3 The Chairman noted there was not enough housing stock to cope with the current volume of tenants. Officers added that there were be separate strategies to assist working families and overcrowded families. This would include training for Housing Officers.
- 71.4 Stewart Gover felt that tenants needed to be informed that there were differences between the old Brighton Council Tenancy Agreements and the more recent Brighton & Hove City Council Tenancy Agreements. He also felt it important that tenants realised that policy debarring persons from becoming housed due to poor behaviour could be annulled by the council's duty of care under the Children's Act.
- 71.5 John Melson felt it inequitable that some retiring council employees should be afforded 'Band A' status because their tied accommodation ceased with their employment. He noted that many non-council employees in a similar position did not benefit from similar schemes.
- 71.6 Officers and Members noted that this point had been widely consulted on and had also been custom and practice for many years. It affected only a small (and reducing) number of staff.
- 71.7 John suggested that the 'downsizing' policy should include some flexibility that recognised the size of the property being relinquished.
- 71.8 John felt that the practice of holding multiple viewings for properties could be difficult for home seekers who were less confident or uncomfortable in the presence of others. Officers explained that those attending a viewing with others were made aware that there was a 'priority' homeseeker and that they had first choice. The viewings were carefully handled so as not to cause discomfort and arrangements could be made for 'one-to-one' viewings if requested. The benefit of multiple viewings was that it saved time and increased the letting rate of properties.
- 71.9 John was concerned about the six-month review that was carried out if persons in 'Band A' had not been successful in finding a home. Officers commented that the review was undertaken to see if there were reasons deterring the homeseeker from finding appropriate accommodation.
- 71.10 Councillor Simson noted that there had been occasions when the 'priority tenant' had not attended the viewing and others present felt that they were therefore afforded priority. Officers recognised the situation and had dealt with this in the past. These were exceptional circumstances and had demanded a deal of diplomacy and sensitivity in speaking to the affected parties.
- 71.11 Councillor Wells was concerned about the proposal to change the age-threshold for sheltered housing. He also felt that there ought to be an age threshold for bungalows.
- 71.12 The Chairman noted that these issues would be considered when developing Local Lettings Plans.

- 71.13 Ted Harman was concerned that, as a Tenant Representative, he received no information about people moving in or out of the area. Communication from the local housing office was very poor.
- 71.14 The Director noted that the issue of communications was being addressed. This would be discussed with the Area Panels.
- 71.15 Sue Hansen asked for clarification on the role and communication for the Tenant Disability Network Representative. The Assistant Director offered to put Sue in touch with the Accessible Housing Officer.
- 71.16 Councillor Randall welcomed the policy but noted that it didn't provide any additional housing. He noted that there had been an estimated ninety thousand fewer lettings nationwide last year because of the chronic shortage of properties. He hoped that the policy would be enacted with sympathy and sensitivity to client groups.
- 71.17 Councillor Randall welcomed the proposals for Local Lettings Plans and noted the need to develop 'bespoke' lettings plans also.
- 71.18 Councillor Randall noted work carried out by Islington Council. They had upgraded a block of flats, making it more attractive to people in their fifties. This had acted as a catalyst to encourage many to downsize and free their under-occupied homes for families.
- 71.19 Councillor Randall reported the appreciation of the Women's Refuge for the work the council carried out in response to domestic violence. He reported that incidents of domestic violence were increasing in relation to the economic downturn. There would be pressure on the council to provide accommodation for victims, and for those suffering other forms of abuse.
- 71.20 Councillor Randall recognised the work of Tenant Representatives in welcoming new residents to their communities. He suggested this ambassadorial role be capitalised upon and given greater support.
- 71.21 Councillor Simpson was concerned that the council were unable to respond adequately to overcrowding issues. She also felt that more assistance should be offered to those who found the bidding process difficult; she felt that this was an under-reported problem.
- 71.22 Councillor Allen noted that the new policy proposed that *'an applicant with outstanding rent arrears or other housing-related debts owed to the City Council or to other social landlords in Sussex will not be allocated housing if there are other applicants eligible for housing under this policy'*. He asked if this was legal.
- 71.23 The Senior Lawyer advised that a policy which precluded a tenant with rent arrears or other housing related debts from ever being re-housed would be unlawful. However, the inclusion of the words, "In exceptional circumstances" prevented the proposed policy from being absolute. As such, there would be no unlawful fettering of the Council's discretion.

- 71.24 Beryl Snelling felt that Sheltered Housing should be removed from the Choice Based Letting system. She noted that there already existed an Assessment Officer for sheltered housing.
- 71.25 The Assistant Director replied that the Choice Based Letting system was the most transparent system that the council had used (to date) for letting properties.
- 71.26 Heather asked if the six-month review applied to those people willing to downsize. Officers explained that it did not apply to them.
- 71.27 Tom Whiting felt that Choice Based Letting was a more costly and less efficient way of allocating properties. He felt it should be at least as efficient than the previous system.
- 71.28 Tom supported Councillor Wells' in monitoring the age threshold of some properties, noting that social compatibility could be managed in this instance, leading to greater harmony amongst communities.
- 71.29 John Melson noted that age restrictions might be difficult to manage in blocks where flats had been sold. The council had no right to limit the rights of leaseholders as to whom they sold their property to.
- 71.30 Stewart noted the comments made by Councillor Randall at a previous meeting that alluded to the fact that Choice Based Letting worked well when there was a surplus of housing but was less successful when housing was at a premium. Stewart felt the latter scenario was relevant to Brighton and that Choice Based Lettings should be discontinued.
- 71.31 Chris Kift felt that the proposed opportunity for sheltered housing residents to move within their own schemes should be extended citywide. This would enable tenants to free-up properties but benefit from the support networks they had developed within their communities.
- 71.32 Chris was frustrated by the slow progress of the proposals developed by the Chairman's Allocations Working Group. The Chairman noted that progress was being made and that some of the delay was due to the requirement to consult with Registered Social Landlords in the City.
- 71.33 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Housing Management Consultative Committee accepted the following recommendation

(1) That the Allocations and Adaptations Policy be endorsed as amended.

72. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 72.1 The committee considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that provided information on the performance of Housing Management (for copy see minute book)

- 72.2 Councillor Randall noted that the information relating to empty properties did not include those undergoing major works.
- 72.3 John Melson asked if future reports could include information about anti-social behaviour and the persistence of perpetrators.
- 72.4 John praised the work of officers in respect of works carried out at Wiltshire House and Somerset Point. He felt that the consultation with residents had been excellent and hoped the stance taken by the project managers could be adopted wholesale for all large repairs works.
- 72.5 Officers suggested that as well as reporting on prescribed targets, future reports could include information specifically requested by the committee.
- 72.6 Heather asked why empty properties were not being bought up to Decent Homes Standard while they were unoccupied. Officers commented that this was done where possible, but had to be affordable.
- 72.7 Heather felt that all repairs should be surveyed to ensure quality and value for money. Officers noted that this was being addressed; one option being considered was to include Tenant Representatives in the process.
- 72.8 Councillor Allen noted the improvement in rent arrears. He felt however that the 7.6% target for persons in more than seven weeks arrears was too low. Officers agreed to revisit this target.
- 72.9 Councillor Davey noted that there were lots of complaints about quality of work. He asked when this situation was likely to improve. The Chair noted that recent figures indicated that performance was improving and the trend was positive. She was sure that the new repairs contracts would be more robust than present and that quality would improve.
- 72.10 Ted Harman felt that there was plenty of evidence that current repairs work was poor. He was frustrated that reports of poor work did not appear to be responded to.
- 72.11 Chris noted that reports of poor work at St. James House had been responded too. He was pleased with the officer response and hopeful that the problems would be rectified. Councillor Mears had visited St. James House and was aware of the situation. She praised officers for their response.
- 72.12 Stewart asked if a new stock survey was taking place. Officers explained that specific surveys were taking place to examine particular issues; this alongside a general 'rolling' survey examining the fabric of buildings.
- 72.13 John felt that information should be provided about the maintenance of buildings alongside information about their repair.
- 72.14 Beryl asked how the council were affected if contractors downsized due to the recession. Officers explained that the 'partnering arrangement' with contractors meant that the recession had a negligible impact on the council in this respect.

72.15 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

73. SHELTERED HOUSING FOCUS GROUP UPDATE

- 73.1 The committee considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that reported the work of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group. This group had examined issues raised by tenants concerning council owned sheltered housing in the City (for copy see minute book).
- 73.2 Stewart was concerned that there remained several empty flats at Ainsworth House. Officers commented that these were difficult to let because of the shared facilities on site.
- 73.3 Beryl suggested that, should the building be used for other purposes in future, consideration should be given to a safe space for women.
- 73.4 Councillor Simson noted that there were residents in situ and that any discussions about the future use of the property would need to include them and be mindful of the sensitivities demanded by the situation.
- 73.5 Tom welcomed the report and the visits to Sheltered Schemes that officers and Members had carried out.
- 73.6 Tom requested a written record of the jobs yet to be carried out in respect of sheltered housing.
- 73.7 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Housing Management Consultative Committee accepted the following recommendation

(1) That the progress of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group, following visits to sheltered housing schemes detailed in the report, be noted.

74. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - UPDATED 2009/10 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 74.1 The committee considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that sought approval for the revised 2009/10 Capital Programme for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), this took into consideration the current resources available and investment priorities (for copy see minute book).
- 74.2 The Chairman asked if issues identified by the current electrical survey could be incorporated into the Capital Programme. Officers explained that this was possible.
- 74.3 The Chairman asked if it would be possible for a rough timetable noting the proposed dates for the installation of new kitchens, bathrooms and front doors, this would help Councillors and Tenant Representatives deal with queries from tenants. Officers offered to provide a 6 month programme.

- 74.4 Councillor Simson suggested that better use could be made of the car park at St. James House, though it was available for public use there was little knowledge of this fact.
- 74.5 John asked how recent Decent Homes improvements were being paid for, he understood that these were to be funded by the LDV. Officers explained that there was a budget for the current work. The monies raised by the LDV would be in addition.
- 74.6 John felt that greater emphasis was required on sustainability. The Chairman noted that the 'Energy Efficiency Group' had recently held its first meeting and would be focussing on such issues.
- 74.7 Stewart was concerned about the lack of fire risk assessments being carried out. Officers commented that progress was being made, though it was recognised that more needed to be done. Heather and Chris noted the need for appropriate fire signage in buildings; many were dangerously out of date or gave incorrect advice.
- 74.8. Stewart asked how the salaries of those managing the Capital Programme were paid. Officers explained that this was funded from the Housing Revenue Account.
- 74.9 Ted noted that the new front doors provided were very heavy and difficult for some people to manage. The Director noted that there were solutions available.
- 74.10 Councillor Simpson requested that any slippage was reported back to the committee.
- 74.11 Councillor Simpson asked if there was a programme of works waiting to be launched as and when the LDV was bought into being. The Chairman explained that there was a plan in place.
- 74.12 Beryl noted that Capital Works were sometimes carried out by moving them to the Estate Development Budget. She felt this was inappropriate and asked if it could be monitored.
- 74.13 Officers commented that the increased Capital Programme would remedy some of the bids to EDB and that discussions had been held with the EDB project team to monitor the situation.
- 74.14 John suggested that Tenant Associations be given better information as regards the Capital Programme. This should be supplied as appropriate to each block and would help Tenant Associations in making more appropriate bids to the EDB.
- 74.15 The Assistant Director noted that improved training for those involved was available and might be appropriate for new Tenant Representatives.
- 74.16 Councillor Randall asked about the budget for Adaptations was committed if there were enough Occupational Therapists. The Assistant Director noted that the budget was fully committed and that O/T capacity was good.
- 74.17 Chris suggested that solar panels should be placed on the roof of St. James House; it was the largest roof in Brighton and was south facing.

74.18 The Chairman noted that funding had been set aside to investigate solar energy for appropriate buildings.

74.19 Ted noted that there were at least two Major schemes in Coldean that remained incomplete; one from 2003. The Chairman requested officers investigate.

74.20 Ted felt that if the current poor quality of work was not addressed it would negatively impact on the aspirations of the LDV.

74.21 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Housing Management Consultative Committee accepted the following recommendation

(1) To recommend to Cabinet approval of the HRA revised capital programme of £20.613 million for 2009/10.

The meeting concluded at 6.15pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

Subject: Housing Repairs, Refurbishment and Improvement Strategic Partnership Recommendations Report

Date of Meeting: 22 June 2009

Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing

Contact Officer: Name: Nick Hibberd Tel: 29-3756
E-mail: nick.hibberd@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Key Decision: Yes Forward Plan No: CAB10165

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 The Procurement Strategy for Housing Revenue Account housing stock which was approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 03 April 2008 included approval to tender for a 10 year Housing Repairs, Refurbishment and Improvement Strategic Partnership for the delivery of comprehensive repairs, maintenance and associated services to the council's housing stock. This report details the procurement process, the outcome and seeks authority to award this contract.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Housing Management Consultative Committee recommend that Cabinet:

2.1 Approve the selection of Mears Limited for the Repairs, Refurbishment and Improvement Strategic Partnership contract covering the whole city.

2.2 Authorise the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in consultation with the Director of Finance & Resources and Cabinet Member for Housing to develop and implement a partnering contract over time to deliver the target pricing framework as outlined in 3.11.4-3.11.9 of this report.

2.3 Authorise the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 including those necessary to effect the commencement of this contract on 1 April 2010, to run for up to ten years, and any staffing issues associated with the proposals.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Following the outcome of the tenants' stock transfer ballot, officers reviewed strategic housing options to reflect the decision that the stock will be retained by the council. A strategy was developed to bridge the investment gap to achieve Decent Homes Standard and meet tenant aspirations for improvements to the stock.

3.1.2 A key measure to address this gap was the development of a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Procurement Strategy that was approved in April 2008. The Strategy focused on the development and benefits of longer term partnering agreements for the repair and maintenance of the council's housing stock. A key element of this strategy was to tender for a Repairs, Refurbishment and Improvement Strategic Partnership which would provide a 10 year agreement for the delivery of a comprehensive maintenance service. The contract for the whole city is for approximately £20 million per annum; £200 million over ten years.

3.1.3 The new contract will deliver the key aims of the Procurement Strategy:

- **Improved Value for Money:** reduce unit repair and planned maintenance costs and consultancy fees delivering significant financial savings
- **Improving residents' homes:** ensuring that residents' homes are well maintained and meet the Brighton & Hove Standard (exceeding the Decent Homes Standard)
- **Improved service delivery:** providing excellent customer service, getting repairs 'right first time' and demonstrating high levels of customer satisfaction
- **Improved sustainability:** a service which has minimal impact on the environment, and improves the energy efficiency and sustainability of the housing stock
- **Community regeneration and added value:** bringing additional benefits for local communities (e.g. apprenticeships & community initiatives) and supporting established local businesses

3.1.4 This contract excludes gas installation and maintenance and service contracts such as lifts, water tanks and pumps, fire safety equipment, ventilation fans, lightning conductors, door entry systems and CCTV which will be tendered separately, although it is an intention to align the duration and key outputs of these contracts with this new contract.

3.2 The Procurement Process

3.2.1 An Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) advert and pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) were published on 03 September 2008. Six Service Providers were selected from those who returned the PQQ to reply to the Invitation to Tender which was released on 18 December 2008. Bidders were required to submit their completed responses on 18 February 2009. Four organisations complied with this request (two withdrew from the process).

3.2.2 The evaluation team comprised of Housing Management Maintenance managers, key support services (e.g. Procurement, Human Resources, Finance, Health & Safety and ICT) and the Project Manager. Expert advice from specialist officers was also sought for the evaluation of, equalities/diversity, sustainability, energy efficiency, waste management and community regeneration.

Resident involvement in the evaluation process

3.2.3 The council has established a resident Asset Management Panel which has met over the course of procurement programme. All residents were invited to express interest in becoming a member and panel members were selected to make the group broadly representative of the demographic profile of all residents.

3.2.4 Residents from the council's Asset Management Panel were trained in evaluation techniques by specialist trainers. They collectively identified areas for focus and developed their own questions for bidders that were then fully integrated into the overall bidder questions. They fully participated in each stage of the evaluation process, playing an active role in the teams who undertook the written evaluation interviews/presentations, site/head office visits and final evaluation workshops.

3.2.5 Residents worked with the trainers to develop a clear definition and understanding of what they considered to be excellence in relation to each of the evaluation criteria listed below. This enabled them to ensure that the preferred bidder met or exceeded their expectations in each of these areas when evaluating the written submissions, questioning bidders at interview, and visiting sites/offices.

Evaluation process

3.2.6 The bids have been evaluated using a framework agreed by the Housing Procurement Programme Board. The evaluation was based on a 60:40 balance between quality and cost. Quality was evaluated using six evaluation criteria. The evaluation team agreed a consensus score for each evaluation criterion for the bidders' written submissions. The six quality criteria were:

- Future service and resourcing
- Quality and value for money
- Partnering
- Diversity & Sustainability

- ICT
- Health & Safety

3.2.7 The financial evaluation was based on the bidders' financial submissions and evaluated the economic cost over the 10 years of the contract, the profit and central office costs and cost sensitivity analysis.

3.2.8 Tenders were also assessed against a combination of the following elements:

- Written Submission, Presentation/interview
- Two site office visits for each of the four final bidders
- One head office visit for each of the four final bidders

3.2.9 The award of this contract is based on the most economically advantageous tender received, based on the above objective quality/cost criteria which were communicated to the bidders.

The Preferred Bidder

3.2.10 The preferred bidder is Mears Limited ('Mears'). Their bid has been judged to be most economically advantageous and offer the best quality of service based on the criteria outlined above.

3.2.11 Mears Limited is a large UK repairs and maintenance company who focus on the social housing sector. Mears sales turnover was in excess of £420M in 2008/9. They have in the region of 5,000 direct employees in the UK. Mears operate the current responsive repairs contract for the east of the city, and the gas maintenance and servicing contract for the same area.

3.3 Meeting residents' aspirations

3.3.1 The award of this contract will bring a number of benefits and innovations to meet resident expectations and deliver an excellent level of service.

3.3.2 The proposals from the preferred bidder are set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.8 will be incorporated into the new contract so that the council will be able to monitor realisation of the proposals and benefits. A contractually binding Partnering Timetable will be agreed containing key tasks and milestones for their achievement.

3.4 Future service and resourcing

3.4.1 ***What bidders were asked:*** Bidders were asked to outline their proposed organisational structure, proposals for co-locating with council staff and how they ensure technical competence.

3.4.2 ***What residents' expect:*** Residents from the Asset Management Panel said they expect a structure that is clear, understandable and efficient that has 'the right people, with the right skills and experience'. They want staff

who are well trained in their trades and customer service, who can get jobs right first time. Residents want high quality and effective supervision that ensures all works are carried out to the highest quality.

3.4.3 **What the new partnership will deliver:** The preferred bidder exceeded the council's requirements in this area and proposed a structure that was felt to be efficient, effective and fit for purpose. The new contract will include the co-location of council officers and contractor staff including fully integrated customer access. They will ensure that all staff have the required skills and experience to undertake their work. All staff will have an individual development plan to ensure their training is continued and skills are kept up to date.

3.4.4 The preferred bidder has promised to ensure that all works are completed to an excellent standard. They have pledged that quality control and assurance will be central to working practices, and are committed to providing effective monitoring structures and processes. There will be a rigorous monitoring and inspection regime with 100% of jobs being post-inspected for the first 3 months of the contract. They are also committed to using high quality material throughout the contract. They will require all operatives take personal responsibility for quality to ensure that at least 85% of works are completed 'right first time' in line with their contractual obligations.

3.4.5 It is proposed that the new partnership will be based in a 'supercentre' which will enable a fully integrated service to be provided with operatives, customer service and council staff based in the same location. The centre will bring a number of benefits including:

- Onsite training academy
- Kitchen manufacturing workshop
- 'Resident Action Zone' where residents can hold meetings and access resources.
- Onsite supply stores
- White goods recycling facility
- Potential for other services such as the Police and voluntary sector organisations to co-locate

3.5 Quality and value for money

3.5.1 **What bidders were asked:** Bidders were asked to explain their approach to continuous improvement and to demonstrate how they will ensure excellent customer service, how they will meet the council's value for money objectives, and to submit a works in occupation method statement.

3.5.2 **What residents expect:** Residents from the Asset Management Panel 'want to be wowed' by a service that exceeds expectations and improves on current standards. The service should be flexible and efficient offering extended opening and operating hours. They expect high standards of workmanship with a 'right first time' approach and quality outcome. They expect high standards of behaviour from operatives who should respect

people's homes, and understand diversity and cultural differences. Residents want an excellent standard of customer service which is accessible, effective and efficient.

3.5.3 **What the new partnership will deliver:** The preferred bidder has exceeded the council's requirements in this area. They have offered to improve on the current service and ensure that all works are carried out efficiently and to the highest standard. This will include at a minimum:

- 8am to 8pm weekday and 8am-12noon Saturday service
- 24 hours reporting including non-emergency repairs
- Appointments offered to all customers (without asking) at first point of contact
- A minimum of 85% of jobs are completed on first visit
- Repairs are completed in accordance with repairs priority timescales (97% of emergency and urgent repairs completed on time, 97% of non-priority repairs)
- Defects identified and remedied within the repairs priority timescales
- High levels of customer satisfaction with the service

3.5.4 A new fully integrated repairs desk and 'one stop shop' will be developed in order to provide an excellent standard of customer service. This will be supported by effective Information and Communications Technology (ICT) which will enable the electronic reporting and tracking of repairs, with operatives able to receive 'real time' information whilst in homes. The recent Whitehawk local area office project will be rolled out to other areas of the city to provide local access points.

3.5.5 All operatives will work to an agreed code of conduct and strict rules for operating within people's homes. These will ensure that operatives focus on the job, and are polite, courteous and respectful. All staff will be trained in customer service to a minimum of NVQ Level 2 and customer service staff to a minimum of NVQ Level 3.

3.6 Partnering

3.6.1 **What bidders were asked:** Bidders were asked about their approach to partnering, including how they will contribute to the partnership and involve residents.

3.6.2 **What residents expect:** The Asset Management Panel want residents to be at the heart of the partnership, playing an active role in both the strategic and operational management of the service. They want to be seen as equal partners with opportunities to participate in key decisions, service planning and development of the capital programme. The partnership should engage with residents groups and representatives, as well as communicating and consulting with all residents through a variety of channels.

- 3.6.3 ***What the new partnership will deliver:*** The preferred bidder has promised to build on their existing work with the council to create a flagship partnership which is leading in the UK and seen as national best practice. We want to ensure that the partnership involves residents, the council and the service provider as equal partners, working together to deliver a service which is regarded as excellent by all.
- 3.6.4 The council is committed to ensuring that residents are at the centre of the partnership and participate as equal partners in the management of the contract with the council and service provider. The preferred bidder has demonstrated that they understand the benefit of engaging with residents and are committed to positively responding to their views by adapting practices and systems. They are committed to communicating and consulting with all residents through a variety of channels.
- 3.6.5 Residents will be directly involved in the strategic management of the new contracts. Residents' will also be represented on the operational groups, working collaboratively with the service provider and the council on the performance and quality of the partnerships. Specific short term local Project Panels with residents will also be established as required. The work of the Asset Management Panel and the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group will feed into the wider the tenant participation structure through regular feedback to Area Panels and Housing Management Consultative Committee.
- 3.6.6 The preferred bidder has a Corporate Social Responsibility policy which enables staff to take two days leave each year to help the local community. They have offered to link this to schemes such as the Estate Development Budget which would enable more to be achieved within the available funds.

3.7 Diversity, Sustainability and Added Value

- 3.7.1 ***What bidders were asked:*** Bidders were asked to provide innovative proposals and commitments to the council which would bring 'added value' to the partnership. They were specifically asked for proposals about apprenticeships, training, supporting local businesses, reducing carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty. Bidders were also asked to demonstrate how they would meet the differing needs of the council's diverse residents.
- 3.7.2 ***What residents expect:*** Residents from the Asset Management Panel want a contract of this size to bring significant additional benefits to the city. They would like to see opportunities for local employment and to ensure that local businesses are supported. Residents would like a service which minimises its own impact on the environment, and supports residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and to reduce fuel bills. They want a workforce that is representative of the wider profile of the city, and which understands and respects the wide diversity of residents.

3.7.3 ***What the new partnership will deliver:***

Community Regeneration

3.7.4 The preferred bidder has offered to bring significant added value benefits in this area. They will provide:

- 200 apprenticeships over the 10 years of the partnership (twice the industry average)
- A variety of other training and work experience opportunities
- A kitchen manufacturing workshop
- A training academy

3.7.5 The partnership will bring additional jobs to Brighton & Hove and these will be targeted at local people. 95% of the preferred bidder's current local workforce lives within the city.

Local Businesses

3.7.6 The council believes that the partnership should benefit as much as possible the local business community, and in particular the wider range of established small and medium size contractors, who, because of their size, would not be able to undertake the role of a principal partnering service provider. The preferred bidder will be required to provide opportunities for small businesses (less than 50 employees) based in Brighton & Hove and they have agreed to support small and medium sized enterprises to ensure their representation within the supply chain.

3.7.7 The preferred bidder has agreed to utilise local companies for specialist sub-contracting and to work closely with smaller companies to ensure they meet the approval criteria for select lists. The council will work with the preferred bidder to ensure they:

- Participate in the Local Labour Scheme and notify them of sub-contracting opportunities
- Work with Business Link to provide workshops and help develop sub contractors capacity to bid for work
- Use local sub-contracting and labour to cover peaks and troughs
- Develop an Employment Plan which includes use of local labour and sub-contractors

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

3.7.8 The preferred bidder have offered innovative proposals in this area and have pledged to exceed the council's own carbon reduction targets, with an aim to be 'carbon neutral' by 2013. They have also offered to work with the council to develop a carbon reduction plan for the housing stock. They have agreed to provide information packs and advice to all residents to help reduce their fuel bills.

3.7.9 The preferred bidder will be required to comply with the council's 'Housing Repairs & Maintenance Sustainable Building Guidance' and

local regulations in connection with recycling of waste on site. They will be required to produce waste minimisation plans to reduce use of landfill sites and materials waste, and are committed to onsite separation of waste into recycling streams. This will be continually reviewed over time to reduce site waste to an absolute minimum. They have offered to introduce a white goods recycling facility which will enable domestic appliances to be refurbished and provided at low cost to residents.

Diversity

- 3.7.10 Bidders were asked how they will ensure that their services will identify and meet the differing needs of our residents and how they will meet specific needs (e.g. disability and language). The preferred bidder has put forward good proposals in this area and agreed to employ a workforce that reflects the profile of the local community. They actively invest in the marketing of the Women in Construction programme throughout their branches to encourage more women to take up employment in trade and operative roles. They have also pledged to provide diversity training for all their operatives and to provide a flexible service which meets the needs of more vulnerable residents.

3.8 Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

- 3.8.1 The council wishes to maximise the potential of ICT in terms of providing excellent customer service, improving efficiency, and improving the quality of information about our assets. Housing Management's ICT strategy is under review and the service was therefore interested in what innovation service providers could bring to these contracts. It is also essential that the partner's systems are compatible and able to interface with current and future information systems used by the service.
- 3.8.2 The preferred bidder's ICT systems, infrastructure and offer to the council were evaluated by a team of ICT and service professionals. They have effective, fully integrated Information Systems that are capable of successful interface with council systems. They have a fully ICT enabled end to end process with innovative hand held technology, and electronic management of works, materials and invoicing from day one of the contract.

3.9 Health & Safety

- 3.9.1 The preferred bidder will be required to maintain compliance status with Contractors Health & Safety Scheme (CHAS) for the duration of the contract. The council will demand that the highest standards of health and safety are implemented and maintained throughout the contract, ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation, particularly the Construction Design Management (CDM) Regulations.
- 3.9.2 A council Health & Safety Officer has attended sites run by the bidders to test the application and recording of health & safety as part of the evaluation process. The preferred bidder was found to have good and

effective systems that are put into practiced on site. They have won the ROSPA Gold Award for 7 consecutive years and have a health and safety record that is 40% better than industry average.

3.10 Improved Contract Management

3.10.1 The council recognises that there is a need to improve on current standard of service delivery and increase levels of resident satisfaction. Strong contract management is essential to ensuring that the new contract is to be effective and efficient, and delivers the service that residents deserve.

Improving the service and managing quality

3.10.2 The new contract will embrace collaborative partnership working which will deliver a leaner staff structure that is focused upon managing the performance, customer service, and quality of work. Frontline services will be delivered more efficiently through a more streamlined process.

3.10.3 Extensive analysis of the client and contract side functions under the new partnering arrangements was undertaken to establish which existing client functions should transfer to the selected service provider, under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) arrangements. This has resulted in the proposed transfer of some staff in surveying and customer service functions from the council.

3.10.4 The transfer of these functions will enable the successful bidder to provide a fully integrated service, both reducing duplication and improving service delivery. This will include fully integrated customer service and surveying functions which will create an end to end repairs service, with work no longer being passed between the council and contractor. The council's Performance and Quality Team (see below) will focus on monitoring customer service, quality and finances to ensure that the service is to a high standard and only legitimate charges are made. If problems do arise the team's dedicated focus on these areas will enable them to investigate and resolve issues quickly and effectively.

3.10.5 The retained Repairs and Maintenance service will be restructured to ensure that staff roles and responsibilities enable effective management and monitoring of the new contracts. The service will strengthen contract management skills during the mobilisation period to ensure that the partnership gets off to the best possible start. The council will be working with a leading workforce development service (Impart Links) in order to ensure that officers' skills are developed to support the improved service.

Clerk of Works

3.10.6 The new Quality and Performance Team will focus on monitoring works and ensuring that repairs are carried out to an excellent standard. This team will include Clerk of Works whose role will focus on ensuring that quality standards for the new contract exceed expectations.

3.10.7 The Clerk of Works role will make a difference in how we manage the contract overall, improve the service, interact with residents and manage the preferred bidder. Clerk of Works will have delegated powers to make operational decisions to change things that are not working and to instruct our partnered contractor to do things differently. The role will have the following attributes:

- strip out bureaucracy and get directly to what is important to residents
- be trained to a high level of surveying competency and certification, as well as having good strong managerial/supervisory skills and experience
- establish clear and simple communication lines with both the contractor and residents
- manage, monitor and control repair trends, ensuring that objectives and goals are met
- allow the council to act quickly to put things right
- police the quality and usage of material by contractors
- making it clear to the contractor that only excellent quality is acceptable

Mystery Shoppers

3.10.8 Residents are currently being trained to be 'mystery shoppers'. They will play a key role in rigorously testing performance and customer service to ensure that they are of an excellent standard.

Performance penalties

3.10.9 The preferred bidder will be measured against Key performance indicators (KPIs) (see appendix 1) that have been prepared in consultation with the Asset Management Panel. Where appropriate these KPIs will be included with the contracts to ensure the performance requirements are converted into contractually binding commitments. There will be penalties should the preferred bidder not meet the targets we have set. In addition to these we will introduce a range of other performance indicators for the council's function as a client, such as service provider satisfaction with the client services.

Contract Termination

3.10.10 The contract provides for swift termination of the contract for default/breach of the agreements, as well as for other 'standard' reasons (bankruptcy, collusion, etc.) In addition, the term partnering contract is to be drafted to allow for a 'no fault' termination of six months' notice on either side.

Continuous Improvement

3.10.11 The preferred bidder will be required to work collaboratively to deliver efficiency and service improvements. Linking profit to efficiency and performance provides a greater incentive to service providers and the

council to work together to deliver an improved service to customers. Cost savings will not be achieved at the expense of quality with processes to be implemented to ensure quality is maintained. These will include:

- The benchmarking of costs and performance data with other providers of social housing. Benchmarking will be carried out annually and will involve repairs service providers of a 2 or 3 star-standard
- The sharing of risks and financial rewards linked to performance
- The ability to demonstrate value for money viewed from the perspective of reduced cost and creating service improvements to for the council
- Close monitoring of the contract KPIs to ensure proactive contract management

3.10.12 The council intends to embark upon work to gain Construction Client's Charter (CCC) status as a means to drive forward the measures to improve performance and effectiveness. Working towards CCC status:

- Provides the methodology to create an improvement programme
- Forms a framework for improving the council's management of projects
- Forms a framework for creating a rigorous partnering relationship with the service providers which will ensure they continuously improve their performance
- Allows external auditing of the council's progress against an agreed programme with increasingly demanding targets.

3.11 Financial Management and Pricing Framework

3.11.1 The preferred bidder will be required to provide robust monthly capital and revenue financial forecasts in line with the council's corporate Targeted Budget Management timetable which will be open to scrutiny and verification by council officers. The annual capital and revenue budgets will be agreed with them before the start of the financial year, with the opportunity to revise the programmes as required during the year.

3.11.2 In line with the long term collaborative working arrangement embedded in the partnering arrangement it is envisaged that there will be a move to a target pricing framework, based on either a fixed cost or target price in years two or three of the contract.

Initial Pricing Framework

3.11.3 The partnering contract has been tendered on fixed prices for capital elements and using the NHF (National Housing Federation) Schedule of Rates for Repairs. These fixed prices are likely to contain risk amounts as the preferred bidder will need to ensure that the project is viable (profitable). Further, whilst the contract remains on fixed pricing the council is less able to share in efficiencies made by the service provider

and limited routes will be available for reducing costs i.e. through reducing volumes of work or the specification of repairs.

- 3.11.4 The timing of any move to a target pricing framework will be at the council's discretion and this is envisaged as being in the second or third year of the contract. The methodology for the target pricing framework has been detailed within the Invitation to Tender. The target pricing framework is a methodology that will allow the partnership to deliver the key aspirations of performance and efficiency. If implemented and managed successfully this will assist in the delivery of a true value for money service. This form of pricing framework also fosters the true spirit of partnership between the council, residents and the preferred bidder.

Target Pricing Framework

- 3.11.5 Bidders were asked to tender profit and overhead amounts which will be ring-fenced and paid annually for the duration of the contract and has been considered in the evaluation,
- 3.11.6 The preferred bidder's actual costs for responsive repairs will be compared to the target rates and adjusted on an annual basis. The reward model will support the aims of high satisfaction, cost effectiveness and reducing volume.
- 3.11.7 The proposed pricing framework for programmed works will be based upon annually setting a target cost for elements (kitchens, bathrooms etc.) based on the actual cost of those elements in the previous year. Overruns (costs above target) are shared on a decreasing basis up to 20% thereafter the service provider bears all the cost. The preferred bidder is therefore incentivised to both save money and to manage the process to prevent over spending.
- 3.11.8 The preferred bidder's share of any saving will be linked to the achievement of agreed KPI benchmark targets. These will be weighted in conjunction with the Asset Management Panel to ensure that resident priorities are represented. Where the targets for these performance indicators are not met, the service provider's savings share will be reduced.
- 3.11.9 Non achievement of performance targets will reduce any savings apportioned to the preferred bidder.

3.12 Next Steps

- 3.12.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, it is anticipated that a contract will be entered into with the preferred bidder at the as soon as is reasonably practical, with work commencing under the new contract from 1 April 2010. This allows for a maximum mobilisation period so the preferred bidder has sufficient time to set up local offices, staff, ICT systems etc. to be able to successfully deliver their obligations under the partnering

agreements of this scale from 2010. This timetable would also give the council the time to comply with any obligations under the TUPE Regulations, complete the necessary training of staff, embed new processes, produce new tenants' guides etc.

4. CONSULTATION

Residents

4.1 The Housing Procurement Strategy was considered by tenant Area Panels and Housing Management Sub-Committee prior to approval.

4.2 Residents have been actively involved through the Asset Management Panel as detailed in paragraph 3.2.3. Asset Management Panel members have presented to Area Panels and Housing Management Consultative Committee to update them on progress with the procurement. This resident involvement was highlighted as best practice by the Audit Commission in their 'Advice and Assistance' visit in March 2009.

Staff and Trade Unions

4.3 Briefings have been held with staff and trade unions in October 2008 and June 2009. Officers will be supported through the changes outlined in the report and it is the council's aim to have open and honest communications with staff and their trade union representatives throughout this period. Prior to the conclusion of the procurement process, staff were provided with information regarding the process and the potential changes envisaged.

4.4 Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations, formal consultation will begin with staff and unions.

Leaseholders

4.5 It is a legal requirement under Section 20 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 that Leaseholders are consulted on new contracts. A notice has been sent to all leaseholders and details of the successful bid have been placed in council offices. The consultation period will close on 7 July.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

5.1.1 The Repairs, Refurbishment and Improvement Strategic Partnership contract for the whole city is for approximately £20 million per annum; £200 million over ten years.

5.1.2 Approximately 65%, (£13 million p.a.) of the contract covers capital works and the remainder covers responsive repairs, cyclical maintenance and voids works. An analysis of the preferred bidder's tender shows that they will overachieve by £7 million, the required level of savings to capital works unit costs, as set out in the HRA Business Plan 2009-2038. The projected savings over 30 years on capital works compared to current costs is £46 million.

- 5.1.3 In addition, the preferred bidder's proposal includes a consultancy rate of 5% (which is a combination of their profit and the central office overheads) which exceeds the target reductions in consultancy fees from contracts from 9.75% to 5.5% as set out in HRA Business Plan.
- 5.1.4 The HRA Business Plan also includes target reductions in unit rates for responsive repairs, voids and cyclical maintenance. The preferred bidder's commitment to continuous improvement and Value for Money evidenced during the evaluation should enable the council to meet the target reductions in the Business Plan, delivering at least 4% efficiency savings annually, as required by central Government. Also, the preferred bidder's tender provided the greatest level of discounts to the schedule of rates used for responsive repair works.
- 5.1.5 The preferred bidder's has committed to providing a comparable pension via Admitted Body Status for all transferring staff. This means that these staff will have access to the same legislative pension benefits as they do now. The preferred bidder will be required to enter into a bond or indemnity to protect the Pension Fund against any permanent financial loss which may arise on early termination of the contract (if for example the business ceases).
- 5.1.6 The council will need to fund any deficit which exists in the Pension Fund in respect of accrued benefits of the transferring staff at the date of contract commencement (1 April 2010). The potential liability is unknown at present, as it is dependant on the individual's pension circumstances and value of the fund at that time. A provision has been included in the HRA general reserves to cover this

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 26/05/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The contract to which this report relates is well in excess of the relevant thresholds over which such contracts are subject to the EU Procurement Directive and corresponding UK Regulations. The method of procurement undertaken and outlined in this report accords with both. In addition, the requirements to formally consult with staff and residents about the new contract are referred to in the body of the report. Contracts over £75,000 must be in a form approved by the Head of Law. The Council must take the Human Rights Act into account in respect of its actions but it is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights would be adversely affected by the recommendations in this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Alison Leitch Date: 24/05/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Equalities and diversity proposals are included in the winning bid and have been assessed by the council's Head of Equalities & Inclusion (see under point 3.7).
- 5.4 An equalities impact assessment (EIA) workshop has been carried out with staff as part of the preparatory work prior to the procurement process. A further EIA will be undertaken during the mobilisation process.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 A new contract of this size has potential to impact on the city's environment and carbon emissions. Proposals on energy efficiency, sustainability and waste management are included in the bid and have been assessed by council officers with an expertise in each of these areas (see under point 3.7).

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.7 A comprehensive risk register is maintained for this project by the project manager. The successful bidder has submitted a draft Risk Register as part of their written submission and this will be developed in the mobilisation period for inclusion in the contract.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The contract has the potential to bring significant benefits to the city and its residents. It is also important that a contract of this size does not have a negative impact on established local businesses. The bidder has provided proposals addressing these issues and offering added value benefits to the city (see section 3.7). These have been evaluated by officers from the council's Economic Development team.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Alternative options including frameworks, consortia and supply chain clubs were considered as part of the development of the Procurement Strategy. The outcome of the procurement process has been assessed against the costs of keeping contracting arrangements as they are now (i.e. doing nothing) and establishing an in-house Direct Labour Organisation.

Do nothing

- 6.2 Continuation of current contracting arrangements will not enable the HRA to have a sustainable Business Plan and meet Decent Homes requirements. Current repairs and maintenance procurement arrangements include:

- annual tendering of capital contracts with specified supply chains;
- two responsive and empty properties revenue repairs partnering contracts of 5 years with an option to extend for a two further years;
- two gas install and maintenance contracts for 5 years with optional extension;
- with the exception of gas servicing and repair, repairs to services such as lightning conductors and water tanks are on an ad hoc basis.

- 6.3 Annual re-tendering of capital contracts is relatively costly and inefficient and gives service providers no incentive to invest in additional benefits. Supply chains specified by the council do not allow access to service providers' own supply chains, which can be of the same standard but more cost effective. This also leads to inconsistent customer service, materials and levels quality.

Direct Labour Organisation (DLO)

- 6.4 An analysis of the costs of setting up and running a DLO have been produced by independent consultants in order to provide a comparison with the bidders proposals. A direct comparison of the economic cost over 10 years shows that the DLO option would significantly more expensive than the preferred bid. The following factors make it difficult for the DLO to be competitive:

- The salaries for council staff are generally higher due to employer's pension contributions.
- The DLO has the disadvantage compared to the established bidders, of incurring set up costs for establishing a new organisation, as well as the mobilisation of the contract.
- Programmed works, which represent approximately 60% of the contract, materials costs are generally higher due to the council not achieving economies of scale for purchasing that national companies can achieve.

These factors are partly offset by savings from:

- The DLO option does not include an allowance for profit. Any under-spend is automatically reinvested within the HRA Budget.
- The DLO seeks to maximise directly employed staff and therefore reduce costs for specialist sub contractors.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The award of this contract will enable Housing Management to meet the key objectives of the Procurement Strategy which was agreed in April 2008. The new contract is key to enabling the council to have a sustainable 30 year Business Plan for the housing stock and bring the maximum number of homes to the Brighton & Hove Standard (exceeding the Decent Homes standard).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Key Performance Indicators
2. Comparison of Lots

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. Invitation to Tender Housing Repairs, Refurbishment and Improvement Strategic Partnership
2. Housing Revenue Account Procurement Strategy 2008

Appendix 1

Key Performance Indicators

Indicator	Description	Year 1
Programme Work		
P1*	Works started and completed in line with agreed plan	95
P2*	Resident satisfaction with programme work	95
P3*	Post inspection pass rate for programmed work (defects)	97
Responsive Repairs		
R1*	% of urgent (right to repair) repairs completed within target	97
R2*	Number of days to complete non-urgent repairs	15
R3	% of emergency (1 day or less) repairs completed within target time	97
R4	% of urgent (3 working days or less) repairs completed within target time	97
R5	% of routine (20 working days or less) repairs completed within target time	97
R6*	Resident satisfaction with responsive repairs service	95
R7*	Post inspection pass rate for responsive repairs (defects)	95
R8	% of repairs completed right first time	85
R9	% of appoint-able responsive repairs where appointments are made and kept	95
Empty Property Repairs		
E1*	Average construction time (days) in re-let process (excluding major empty property repairs)	12
E2	Post inspection pass rate for empty property repairs (defects)	97

Comparison of Lots

To enable the council to come to an objective decision as to which is the most economically advantageous tender a comparison needed to be made between bids for individual lots and bids for combined lots. In addition to this, options where the council provided functions relating to surveying and customer service ('the Functions') were evaluated against options where the bidder provided the Functions.

For the Purposes of the contract the city was split into two (Lot 1 and Lot 2) this was geographically based East/West although the individual Lots were not allocated in the tender document.

Table 1 below shows the final whole city comparison where the internal costs for the various options have been added in. The highest score is the most economically advantageous.

Table 1

Option	Lot 1 + Lot 2 (no TUPE)	Lot 1 + Lot 2 (TUPE)	Whole city (no TUPE)	Whole city (TUPE)
Contractor	Contractor A	Contractor A	Mears	Mears
Total	66.85	67.40	73.52	73.88*

*Most economically advantageous

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Agenda Item 11
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Revenue Account Budget 2009/10 -
Reduction in Rent Increases

Date of Meeting: 22 June 2009

REPORT OF: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
Director of Finance & Resources

Contact Officer: Name: Sue Chapman Tel: 29-3105
E-mail: sue.chapman@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Key Decision: Yes Forward Plan No. HSG 10422

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2009/10 was approved at Cabinet on 12 February 2009. This report included increases to rents in line with the Government's Subsidy Determination in January 2009. To support tenants, in light of the current economic climate, the Government has now issued a revised Subsidy Determination allowing Council's to reduce rent increases. This report is for noting and provides details of the revised rent increases for 2009/10 in line with the Government's proposals.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee note the Cabinet approval on the 11 June 2009 for the amendments to individual rent increases and decreases in line with rent restructuring principles as determined by the latest Government Subsidy Determination issued in May 2009.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rents 2009/10

- 3.1 Rents are calculated in accordance with the government's rent restructuring guidelines. Target rents for each property are calculated based on the relative property values, bedroom size and local earnings. The act of moving tenants' current rents to the target rent is called rent convergence. In order to limit increases in current rents to reach target rents, the guidance specifies a maximum rent increase equivalent to inflation + ½% + £2 per week.

- 3.2 The original subsidy determination 2009/10 required Local Authorities to use the September 2008 RPI (Retail Price Index) of 5% for setting rent inflationary increases. The Government acknowledged that this level of RPI would set high rent increases and in order to minimise these, the determination proposed to set a 'provisional' rent convergence date for the future. This meant that the date for rent convergence will now change yearly depending on the level of inflation for that year. Therefore, the rent convergence date has now been extended from 2011/12 to 2023/24 and this resulted in an average rent increase of 5.45% for Brighton & Hove, against a national position of an average guideline rent increase of 6.2%.
- 3.3 The government then announced in March, that as a result of the unprecedented global downturn that they would like to offer real help to council tenants by reducing the national average rent increase for this year from 6.2% to 3.1%.
- 3.4 In May 2009, the Government issued a revised Housing Subsidy Determination. This proposed that for 2009/10, rent convergence would remain at 2023/24 but actual rent increases for Brighton and Hove would increase by an average of 2.37% or £1.52 per week compared to the current approved increase of 5.45% or £3.50 per week. This amends the average weekly rent, from £67.70 to £65.72. The reductions to the rent increases will be back dated to 6 April 2009.
- 3.5 However, all rents are moving towards their individual targets which means that although the average increase is £1.52, some rents will be increasing by more than the average and others reducing. The maximum increase will now be £3.94 and the maximum reduction will be £0.71 per week.

Housing Subsidy Determination 2009/10, issued May 2009

- 3.6 The HRA is part of the national housing subsidy system through which Council Housing Rents are standardised across the country. The subsidy system uses a national formula to set guideline rents for each property together with allowances for management, maintenance and capital charges based on notional costs. The current subsidy system was introduced in 1990 and relies on the Secretary of State publishing annual 'Determinations' which set out the basis of subsidy. Full details of the original subsidy determination are detailed in the HRA Budget Report 2009/10 approved at Cabinet on 12 February 2009.
- 3.7 The council will be compensated for the loss of rental income from the reductions in rent increases by an increase in housing subsidy. The net effect means that the HRA Budget will remain in balance. The table below provides shows the revised subsidy position taking into account the latest determination. The revised subsidy results in an overall subsidy position (taking into account the capital element) of a reduction in subsidy payable to the Government of £0.696 million.

Housing Subsidy	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	Change £'000
<i><u>'Notional' Revenue Items</u></i>			
Management Allowance	(7,638)	(8,041)	(403)
Maintenance Allowance	(14,526)	(14,869)	(343)
Capital Charges	(7,065)	(6,240)	825
	(29,229)	(29,150)	79
Less Guideline Rent	40,723	40,233	(490)
Net revenue subsidy payable to the Government (exc. MRA)	11,494	11,083	(411)
<i><u>Capital Items</u></i>			
Major Repairs Allowance	(9,067)	(9,352)	(285)
Overall subsidy position – net payment to the Government	2,427	1,731	(696)

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Tenants are consulted during the year on the HRA Budget and the Estate Development Budget. After Cabinet approval, tenants will receive notification of their individual rents and charges for 2009/10.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The government will compensate the council for the loss of rental income from these reductions in rents by increasing housing subsidy so the HRA Budget will remain in balance. However, the council will need to fund any additional costs such as printing of letters and ICT changes required to amend the rents from within existing budgets. These additional costs will be monitored as part of the Targetted Budget Management process for 2009/10.

Sue Chapman, Head of Financial Services

7 May 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By section 24 of the Housing Act 1985, local housing authorities such as the Council may only make such reasonable charges as they may determine for the tenancy or occupation of their houses. From time to time they are required to review rents and make such changes as circumstances may require. The

reduction in rent increases proposed by the report is consistent with that duty. Rents for secure tenancies can only be lawfully varied in accordance with the terms of the secure tenancy (section 102 (1) (b) of the 1985 Act). The Council's standard secure tenancy agreement requires 4 week's written notice of any variation in rent to be given.

Liz Woodley, Lawyer

12 May 2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no equalities implications from reducing tenants' rents. Tenants' rents are based on a formula determined by the Government.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications from reducing tenants' rents.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications from reducing tenants' rents.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Financial risks have been assessed throughout the development of these proposals.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The reduction in tenants' rents should improve their affordability in the current economic climate.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Rents are set in accordance with the Government's rent restructuring guidance and increases are in line with the Housing Subsidy Determination. The Housing Subsidy Determination controls rent setting by removing resources from local authorities through non compliance. The current 2009/10 Rents have been approved based on the original determination which calculated an average increase of 5.45% for Brighton and Hove tenants. This report recommends reducing the 2009/10 increase from 5.45% to 2.37% based on the revised subsidy determination received in May 2009. The alternative option would be to remain with increases at the current level, which would make rents less affordable to tenants in the current economic climate.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The council's constitution requires that the council seeks approval for the setting of tenants' rents in line with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. 2009/10 HRA Subsidy Determination January 2009 and revised Subsidy Determination May 2009
2. 2009/10 HRA Rent Restructuring Working Papers

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Audit Commission – Advice & Assistance Visit
Date of Meeting: 22 June 2009
Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
Contact Officer: Name: Diane Freeland Tel: 29-4650
E-mail: Diane.Freeland@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To provide the Housing Management Consultative Committee with the results of the advice and support work provided by the Audit Commission during March 2009.
- 1.2 To provide the Housing Management Consultative Committee with an action plan to take forward the recommendations made by the Audit Commission following their visit in March 2009.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the contents of this report and endorses the action plan to meet the recommendations from the visit.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 The Council recognises the need to demonstrate strong housing management performance in order to ensure an effective service for both new and existing tenants, increase confidence among stakeholders, and maximise potential investment opportunities. In an environment of wider resource constraint, maximising housing income collection and reducing levels of arrears is also recognised to be of importance.
- 3.2 Within this context, the audit commission agreed to provide Brighton & Hove City Council with advice and support work during March 2009. The purpose of this work was to provide advice and support in three distinct areas:

- To ensure that current policies, procedures and performance management arrangements for housing income management and related debt and welfare benefits advice reflects current good practice.
- To review tenant and resident participation activities to determine how well they contribute to wider work to improve housing services, inform strategic decision making and promote engagement of the wider tenant base.
- To review the council's housing revenue account business plan to highlight any headline issues and/or omissions.

The auditor also considered the overarching issues of value for money, access and customer care and diversity within these three areas.

3.3 Housing income management support work

3.3.1. Local councils who retain their housing stock rely heavily on their rental income to fund the management and maintenance of their homes and other housing services. The Council's performance has previously identified housing income collection as a comparatively weak area, with performance outturns in 2006/07 placing the Council in the worst quartile nationally. The Council has substantially improved performance over the past two years, but overall outcomes are yet to place the Council among the best performers.

3.3.2 Against this background, the Audit Commission's role was to carry out an independent assessment of the Council's approach to housing income collection, with recommendations for improvement based upon good practice. This included:

- Assessing whether current policies and procedures for housing income management reflect good practice and are implemented effectively; and
- Looking at how easily tenants and residents can access welfare and benefits advice and any broader work to promote financial inclusion.

3.4 Tenant and resident participation support work

3.4.1 The Council's Housing Service has developed a wide range of informal and formal mechanisms to promote tenant and resident involvement. There has been considerable success in promoting different levels and styles of involvement, with recent initiatives including the development of the City Assembly, the Chairman's focus groups and the Asset Management Panel. The Council now aims to build upon this success and focus upon the effectiveness and outcomes of involvement.

3.4.2 Against this background, the Audit Commission's role was to carry out an independent assessment of tenant and resident participation activities, acting as a 'critical friend', with recommendations for improvement based upon good practice. This included:

- Assessing how well formal tenant participation activities work, with a focus on role clarity and their overall contribution to service improvement, strategy development and decision-making (outcomes);

- Looking at how effectively tenants and residents can get their views across.
- Some analysis of how current arrangements promote the engagement of, and reflect the views of, the wider tenant base, including more marginalised groups; and an assessment of the performance management arrangements for monitoring impact of tenant and resident involvement.

3.5 Review of Housing Revenue Account Service Improvement Plan

3.5.1 The Housing Revenue Account Service Improvement Plan provides the main improvement plan for the Housing Management Service, focusing on both proposals to improve the quality of the housing stock and its overall delivery of housing management services. As such, it is important that the plan reflects the principles of effective service planning and the full range of housing management challenges faced by the Council.

3.5.2 Against this background, the Audit Commission's role was to review the content of the Improvement Plan to highlight any headline issues/ and or omissions.

4. **OUTCOME OF ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE VISIT**

4.1 In advance of the visit we prepared a self assessment on these aspects of our service and submitted a series of documents in support of our work. During the on site visit the auditor met with a variety of members, staff and residents and attended two resident meetings, the 'Our Neighbourhood' repairs pilot in Whitehawk and the Asset Management Panel.

4.2 The feedback from the auditor was very encouraging and included the following strengths:

- we've made solid progress and improvement and have strong self-awareness of the areas that need to improve.
- our Service Improvement Plan sets out a clear three year programme for management of the housing stock and is built on strong links to residents priorities.
- relationships between tenants and councillors are mature and productive.
- we have committed staff who demonstrate a professional and caring approach towards customers.
- diversity awareness among staff and customers is generally good.
- resident involvement is well resourced and supported with residents consulted on a wide range of issues.
- rent arrears are reducing and former tenant arrears are being actively managed.
- staff are aware of the importance of preventative work to reduce evictions. There is a focus on financial inclusion.

The auditor also suggested areas where we could improve, which included:

- developing an overarching resident involvement strategy.
- developing a financial inclusion strategy.

- exploring ways of increasing the diversity of resident involvement as the profile of some tenant representative bodies does not reflect the profile of the local community.
- putting in place clear and measureable service standards on all aspects of our service.
- utilising our website to its full potential.
- looking at our ICT arrangements, which at the moment can be a barrier to improvement.

Overall the auditor recognised that we have built strong foundations to improve the service and that good progress is being made in these areas. In considering our prospects for improvement the auditor identified:

- we have a high level of self awareness about where our service is and what needs to be done.
- the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan reflects principles of effective service planning and the full range of housing management challenges faced by the council.
- trends in performance indicators are generally positive.
- significant progress has been made in rebuilding/strengthening trust with tenants since the stock transfer ballot.
- it will be easy for residents to hold the council to account over its Service Improvement Plan 2009-12. There is a clear list of success factors.

4.3 Attached at appendix 1 is a copy of the presentation given by the Audit Commission at the end of the on site visit. To help the service improve the auditor also made a number of recommendations. These recommendations are outlined in the action plan at appendix 2. We will report back to Housing Management Consultative Committee and Housing Cabinet on our progress in meeting these recommendations.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Audit Commission feedback presentation – City Assembly, 6 May 2009
The draft resident involvement recommendations have been approved by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 Financial Implications:

It is anticipated that the action plan can be progressed within the existing HRA Revenue Budgets for 2009/10. Some of the key actions, as they are progressed, may result in efficiency savings being identified.

Any financial implications arising from the implementation of the action plan will be monitored and reported through the HRA Target Budget Monitoring during the financial year, as well as being included in the

update report back to Housing cabinet and housing Management consultative Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen *Date:* 30 April 2009

6.2 Legal Implications:

By virtue of the Local Government Act 1999, the council is under a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The action plan, based upon recommendations from the Audit Commission will assist the Council in complying with that duty. No individual's human rights are thought to be adversely affected by the report's recommendations.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley *Date:* 30 April 2009

6.3 Equalities Implications:

The recommendations will be implemented with due regard to equalities and diversity issues. Both the income management and resident involvement services are subject to an Equalities Impact Assessments which will be completed during Summer 2009.

6.4 Sustainability Implications:

Not applicable to this report

6.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Not applicable to this report

6.6 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

Not applicable to this report

6.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Not applicable to this report

7. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The report provides information on the advice and support work visit completed by the audit commission during March 2009. The report also contains a copy of the Audit Commission's presentation and an action plan for meeting the recommendations made by the Audit Commission.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Presentation by the Audit Commission

Appendix 2: Action Plan for meeting the Audit Commission recommendations

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

Brighton Housing A&A

6th March 2009

Martin Symonds – Housing Inspector



Key messages

- Positive relationships built with residents since 2006
- Strong self-awareness of current service delivery and areas that need to improve
- Solid progress in improvement
- Effective improvement planning
- Understanding of costs and use of benchmarking is an area for development

Access and Customer Focus

Strengths

- Committed staff who demonstrate a professional and caring approach towards customers
- Sign up / settling in visit encourages involvement
- Late opening of HIMT (6.30 p.m. M-Th)
- Informative website - rents payable on line
- Effective use made of newsletters
- Information about rents is comprehensive - easy to understand
- Helpful advice leaflets
- Home visits and office interviews provided with 5 days of request

Access and Customer Focus

Areas for improvement

- **Some staff not fully engaged in RI – could be clearer part of induction e.g. for income management staff**
- **Clear and measurable service standards not in place**
- **Tenant handbook does not explain RI well**
- **Website not being used to full potential**
- **Interview room facilities at Bartholomew House do not support the Income Management service**
- **Innovative methods of communication e.g. texting not being used to full potential**
- **Residents not fully involved in complaints monitoring**
- **Satisfaction surveys not coordinated**
- **Telephone systems do not enable analysis of answering performance in the HI team**

Diversity

Strengths

- **Diversity awareness among staff and customers seen is generally good**
- **Some good examples of wider engagement outside of traditional structures (AMP)**
- **Clear progress being made on EIAs for both HIM and RI**
- **Information available in a range of languages and formats**
- **Some good (and emerging) work with component communities - youth, BME**
- **Meeting venues are generally accessible (but not all offices meet DDA)**
- **Wide range of payment methods enables people with diverse needs to pay in a convenient way**

Diversity

Areas for improvement

- **The profile of some tenant representative bodies does not reflect the profile of the local community**
- **Participation by different methods is not monitored by diversity**
- **Not monitoring all diversity strands in rent recovery activity. (the IT system has a facility to record this)**
- **Gaps in information about tenant vulnerability on the IT database is a barrier to arrears prevention and income generation**

Value for Money

Strengths

- **Good understanding of various payment transaction costs and promotion of cost effective method**
- **Making some good use of additional resources – contractor input**

Areas for improvement

- Understanding of costs of different elements of RI is not as strong as it could be – making benchmarking difficult
- There is little commentary and analysis on those benchmarking reports seen
- Management costs are higher than those for your peers
- Cost and quality is not clearly linked - e.g. levels of satisfaction v cost of service

Resident Involvement

Strengths

- Resident involvement is well resourced and supported
- Relationships between tenants and councillors are mature and productive
- Residents consulted on wide range of issues - various WGs etc
- Short term tenants focus groups are a useful way of engaging on policy issues
- There are many examples of the council, residents and partners working to build community capital and cohesion – e.g. Our Neighbourhood
- RI integrates well with other partners
- Devolved budgets for residents associations play an important role in encouraging and maintaining interest in resident associations
- Tenants are an integral part of planning processes - they inform the SIP
- Residents play an active role in performance monitoring
- Effective use is made of the independent resource centre - builds capacity
- Annual feedback provided on RI impact

Resident Involvement

Areas for Improvement

- **There is no over-arching resident involvement strategy**
- **The TP compact does not spell out clearly what to expect from the council. It does not list the resources available nor service standards**
- **There is not a clear menu of options for engagement – including informal ways**
- **The formal structures work but may now be too heavy**
- **There is no database of preferred method of consultation on the computer system**
- **More steps could be taken to tap into existing representative bodies in the city to encourage a wider representation**

Housing Income Management

Strengths

- The establishment of a dedicated HI team has had a positive impact
- Rent arrears have reduced to around the median for unitaries
- Staff are aware of the importance of preventative work to reduce evictions – focus on financial inclusion
- Evictions have reduced significantly
- Good, quick access to money advice
- Liaison between the Income Team and HB is strong
- The introduction of E-benefits has enabled faster HB processing
- Effective use is being made of DHPs to reduce any HB shortfall for vulnerable tenants
- Staff are provided with clear procedures and policies in relation to rent collection and recovery
- A broad range of initiatives are used to promote a rent payment culture (eg signs on vans)
- Service charges are disaggregated and are shown clearly on rent increase letters
- FTAs are being actively managed - use made of prompt tracing

Housing Income Management

Areas for improvement

- There is a lack of a financial inclusion strategy
- Training arrangement for Income Management staff are not robust - Staff need more guidance on which agency to sign post people
- Rent reports do not allow sufficient analysis of performance (e.g. how many agreements have been broken)
- Interview rooms do not include appropriate IT facilities
- Mobile technology is not available to assist Income Managers when carrying out home visits
- Integration and communication between area offices and HIMT may not be as effective as it should be
- There is no weekend or late evening working for the HIMT
- Payment by DD could be further promoted
- It can still take too long to set up rent accounts
- Targets have not been set for reduction in FT arrears

Future prospects

- Significant progress has been made in strengthening / rebuilding trust with tenants since the ballot
- Trends in PIs are generally positive
- High level of self awareness
- The HRABP reflects the principles of effective service planning and the full range of housing management challenges faced by the Council
- The SIP sets out a clear 3 year programme for management of the housing stock and is built on strong links to residents priorities
- Staff have been widely consulted over the development of the SIP 2009-12
- It will be easy for residents to hold the council to account over its SIP 2009-12. There is a clear list of success factors
- But some aspects of draft service BPs could be clearer – eg milestones
- Budget provision allows for IT capacity to be built
- High staff turnover and sickness is a barrier but is being addressed

Recommendations

Recommendations will follow

Business Plan 2009/10 - Audit Commission Recommendations			
Directorate Name		Adult Social Care & Housing	
Responsible Manager		Diane Freeland	
Date		20/05/09	Version Draft
Corporate Priorities		Directorate Objectives	
1	Protect the environment while growing the economy		<p>Please insert the Directorate Objectives, as stated in the Directorate Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing Homes to meet the needs of the city. 2. Improve Housing Quality in the City to ensure all have access to decent homes. 3. Deliver high quality and personalised services. 4. Deliver Value for Money services. 5. Work in partnership to improve the commissioning and provision of services 6. Reduce Inequality. 7. Deliver excellent customer services. 8. Develop our workforce in line with the corporate objectives.
2	Better use of public money		
3	Reduced inequality by increasing opportunity		
4	Fair enforcement of the law		
5	Open and effective city leadership		

Service Objectives:

1. Improve services to an excellent standard, working with (and responding to) the diversity of our customers
2. Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes and neighbourhoods
3. Deliver value for money services and a sustainable business plan
4. Make best use of our housing stock to address housing need
5. Promote social housing as a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity
6. Develop our workforce in line with our service objectives

Work Plan								
Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 1 – Improve services to an excellent standard, working with (and responding to) the diversity of our customers								
3	3,7	Develop SMART service standards with residents for income management, resident involvement and other service areas where not in place.	Reviewing existing charters with residents – Summer 2009. Agree charters with area panels - Autumn 09. HMCC paper Dec 09. To be launched April 2010.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke, David Rook, Heads of Service as required
2	3,4,7	Develop facilities on website – rent statements on line.	First project group meeting due Spring 2009. Project plan to be produced thereafter. Implementation date end of January 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income generation	Service: ICT risk due to security issues	David Rook/ Vicky Williams/ Philippa Toogood

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
3	3,4,7	Develop facilities on website – on line surveys.	Scoping exercise on immediate changes to the website to be completed Spring 2009. Identified changes to be put in place Autumn 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings	Resource & Capacity	John Austin Locke
5	3,7	Develop facilities on website – place minutes from key meetings.	Add link to HMCC minutes – April 2009	Complete		Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland
3	3,7	Develop facilities on website – provide feedback on mystery shopping.	Scoping exercise on immediate changes to the website to be completed Spring 2009. Identified changes to be put in place Autumn 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency	Resource & Capacity	John Austin Locke
4	3,7	Involve residents in monitoring of the formal complaints system.	Develop a series of focus groups on citywide panel – Spring/Summer 09. Link into customer satisfaction survey in October 2009.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		Brian Foley/John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
3	4,7	Streamline current resident satisfaction surveys and co-ordinate reporting on all surveys.	Review existing mechanisms – Summer 09. Develop and introduce new process 1 February 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Annette Kochnari/ John Austin Locke
2	3,4,6,7	Expand use of telephone surveys as a way of gauging resident satisfaction with the service.	Review existing mechanisms – Summer 09. Develop and introduce new process 1 February 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency	Service: Financial and ICT risks	Annette Kochnari/ John Austin Locke
2	3,7	Ensure interview rooms have adequate IT facilities.	Review provision at Barts House - Spring 2009. Ensure all offices have public access computers by June 2009.	Completed		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings	Directorate restriction on use of rooms	David Rook/ David Hoy
2	3,7	Undertake routine analysis of telephone answering performance and use the information to improve service delivery.	Work with corporate centre – (customer services) to develop a robust system.			Improve quality Improve efficiency	Financial risk Corporate risk	John Austin Locke
2	3,6,7	Develop IT systems to produce detailed reports on all	PID's to be produced by end of			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Steve Corbett/

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		stages of rent recovery procedures.	July 09. Implementation date January 2010.					David Rook/Lynn Yule
2	4	Set targets for reducing former tenant arrears.	June 09		Local	Income Generation		David Rook/Lynn Yule/Irene Van Breda
5	3,7	Ensure 'successful outcome descriptions' within improvement plan are SMART.	To be completed June 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland
3	3,4,5,6,7	Produce a Resident Involvement Strategy (which sets out what the council and its residents want to achieve in terms of service delivery and wider community development matters).	Strategy to be drafted with TCMG April-September 09 Cabinet sign off – Dec 09. Implement Feb 2010			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke
3	3,4,6,7	Develop a menu of options for engagement which includes informal methods.	To be completed in conjunction with Resident Involvement Strategy.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		John Austin Locke
5	3,7	Ensure there is a clear understanding of our resident involvement structure (clear	Section to be included in new tenant			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		definition and understanding of the roles).	representatives handbook (launch date Summer 09), tenant handbook (launch date January 2010) Section to be included in resident involvement strategy and tenant compact.					
2,3	3,4,5,6,7	Produce a new tenant participation compact (explain the various options for consultation and engagement, the resources available to support this, the service standards we are committed to and arrangements for monitoring the delivery of the compact).	New Tenant Compact in place and approved 1 October 2009 with target for taking to Cabinet 1 December 2009 Milestone: Launched at Tenant Compact Monitoring Group.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke
3	3,6,7	Include a clear section on resident involvement in the new tenant handbook/leaseholder handbook.	Focus group established April 08. Due to be launched January 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland
3	3,4,5,6,7	Develop a record of all residents preferred method of consultation and engagement	Develop a facility on OHMS to record information.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings	Service: ICT capacity	John Austin Locke/ Heads of

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		and use this to ensure service delivery reflects residents' needs.	Tenant Census form in place to gather information. Spreadsheet set up March 2009 to record tenant representatives preferences.					Service/ Steve Corbett
2,3	3,5,6	Work with partners to engage a broader range of resident's i.e. Children and Young Peoples Trust to develop links with groups representing young people.	Project to address under representation by young people. Consultation with younger people and organisations to be completed by September 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Jane White
2,3	3,4,6,7	Expand use of innovative methods of communication in Housing Income Management Team i.e. texting.	Texting currently in use – analysis of effectiveness to take place Summer 09.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Sue Baker
2	4,5	Improve analysis of benchmarking reports and add sufficient commentary.	Housemark workshops planned 15 May 09 and principles to be rolled out to all teams.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Income Generation		John Austin Locke/ All Heads of Service

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
			Higher profile at GMT through new performance report. New reporting tool to be produced for HMCC (June 09).					
2,3	5,7,8	Strengthen integration and communication between Housing Income Management Team and local housing offices.	Introduce pilot surgery at local housing office – Summer 2009 New income management staff to spend time at local housing office and vice versa as part of induction – May 2009. Relaunch of Rechargeable Repairs procedures – staff conference June 09.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Income Generation		David Rook/ Housing Managers
2	3,7	Introduce ebenefit mobile technology for on site visits	To be introduced July 2009			Improve quality Improve efficiency		David Rook/Sue

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		(Housing Income Management Team).				Financial savings Income Generation		Baker
2	7	Reduce the length of time it takes to set up a rent account from 10 days to 5 days	To take effect from May 2009. Monitored monthly.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		David Rook/Helen Batchelor/ Julie Renvoize

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 2 – Deliver value for money services and a sustainable business plan								
2	4	Take steps to further promote payment by direct debit.	Seeking good practice from Audit Commission – April 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook
3	3,6,7	Evaluate whether evening/weekend working for Housing Income Management Team would be cost effective and improve collection rates.	Survey to be sent to 3000 tenants April 2009 – Question on extended opening times. Analyse findings Summer 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Lynn Yule
2	4	Develop a detailed understanding of the	Scope VFM benchmarking			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		component costs of service delivery.	project & produce project plan June 09.			Financial savings		
2	4	Undertake robust benchmarking with peers using our understanding of our costs.	Housemark relaunch May 09. Launch of Performance Management Framework April 09.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		All Heads of Service
2	3,4	Make clear links between cost and quality of/satisfaction with service delivery.	Housemark relaunch, May 09 Teams to benchmark their service thereafter. Ongoing review of satisfaction to justify costs through STATUS surveys.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		John Austin Locke/All Heads of Service

Please insert additional rows as required

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk References Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 3 – Promote social housing as a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity								
3	6,7	Monitor and analyse performance in rent recovery activity by diversity.	Six reports written – February 2009. Further improvements needed to reporting tools. Change request May 09. Anticipated implementation date January 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		Steve Corbett/ David Rook/Lynn Yule
3	6,7	Monitor effectiveness of different forms of participation by diversity.	Survey sent to TRA's - March 2009. Analysis to take place.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Steve Corbett/ John Austin Locke
3	3,6,7	Ensure the new Tenant Compact addresses the needs of minority communities.	New Tenant Compact in place and approved 1 October 2009 with target for taking to Cabinet 1 December 2009 Milestone: Launched at Tenant Compact			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk References Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
			Monitoring Group.					
3	6,7	Develop a comprehensive understanding of vulnerable tenants and ensure this is accessible to staff.	Information to be gathered via service wide exercise Summer 2009. Further information to be gathered by Tenancy Checks – 25% of properties to be visited by July 2009. Ongoing financial inclusion interviews to generate information on new tenants.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		Heads of Service
3	3,6,7	Develop a financial inclusion strategy which addresses how we aim to reduce inequality and maximise income for tenants.	Current financial inclusion trial ongoing. Draft strategy to be produced July 09. Review financial inclusion strategy with IMWG – Summer 2009. Cabinet/HMCC Autumn 2009. Launch Dec 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Lynn Yule/Vicky Williams

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 4 – Develop our workforce in line with our service objectives								
4	3,7,8	Develop a clear induction training programme for staff on rent recovery procedures.	End of July 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker
3	3,6,7,8	Train HIMT staff to provide advice on energy efficiency.	End of September 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker
3	3,6,7,8	Provide HIMT staff with clear guidance on the most appropriate route for referring residents to money advice.	End of June 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker
3	7,8	Ensure resident involvement is part of induction training for all new staff.	End of June 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke/ Community Participation Officer's

Please insert additional rows and tables as required

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Agenda Item 13

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Local Lettings Plan for Sheltered Housing

Date of Meeting: June 22 2009

Report of: Director of Adult Social Care and Housing

Contact Officer: Name: Helen Clarkmead Tel: 293350

E-mail: Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The proposed Local Lettings Plan is at the request of tenants through the Chairman's Focus Group [2008] and Sheltered Housing Action Group.
- 1.2 It is envisaged this local lettings plan will help make more efficient use of the council's sheltered housing stock, and improve support for vulnerable older people who need to move within sheltered housing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) **That HMCC recommends to the Cabinet Member for Housing that; The proposed Local Lettings Plan for Brighton and Hove city council Sheltered Housing is adopted:**
- (2) That when allocating vacant Brighton and Hove City Council sheltered housing units, priority is firstly given to BHCC sheltered housing tenants who need to move within the same scheme and secondly to existing BHCC sheltered housing tenants who need to move to another scheme. Where a flat has significant disabled adaptations, the incoming tenant must be in need of these. This would apply with up to 30 units of sheltered accommodation in the 12 months following implementation, after which a review will take place. The review would include equality impact assessment of this local lettings policy.
- (3) That where there are no bids for two bedroom sheltered housing from eligible households assessed as needing two bedrooms then the unit can be offered to qualifying two person households with an assessed need for one bedroom. Where no such households bid, then the unit may be offered to a single person eligible for sheltered housing.

- (4) That the restriction preventing letting of sheltered flats to people with resident younger carers is removed. A sole tenancy would be offered to the person who is eligible for sheltered housing.
- (5) That a new process of assessment to better ensure risk is appropriately managed, that support needs of new residents can be met fully and promote greater balance of support need within and between schemes, is introduced in September 2009.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Brighton and Hove City Council manage more than 800 units of sheltered housing for older people in need of housing related support. These proposals relate only to sheltered housing, not general stock.

3.2 Priority for existing BHCC sheltered tenants

Some sheltered housing tenants need to move within the Scheme they already live in to a different flat. Reasons may include reduced mobility, the need for level access, or needing another bedroom for a carer. Sheltered housing schemes are sociable, supportive environments. Many tenants who need to move would prefer to stay with their friends, Scheme Manager, support network, GP and in an area with which they are familiar. Consultation with tenants has clearly evidenced a need for this. Whilst numbers are expected to be fewer than 30 each year, the impact and potential benefit for these people is very high. Where the appropriate type of accommodation is not available at the same scheme, it is proposed that existing tenants are afforded priority to move between schemes. This will help tenants move to neighbouring schemes where they can maintain social, medical and support networks and remain in a familiar area.

The impact for other people seeking to move into sheltered housing would be minimal, as fewer than 30 lets are anticipated under this policy each year, and there would not be a net reduction in the number of sheltered flats offered to Homemove users. Instead of the original vacant property being available to all eligible Homemove users, that vacated by the tenant who transfers would be offered instead. The scheme would be constantly monitored and reviewed quarterly to identify and evaluate any disadvantage to non-tenants.

3.3 Removal of age restriction for carers and partners

Many people who would benefit from the support and social aspects of sheltered housing are being prevented from applying because they have a younger residential carer. It is proposed that this restriction is removed.

The tenant would of course be responsible for ensuring the carer behaves appropriately within the scheme.

Where the tenant dies, leaving the younger person in occupation, if there are succession rights, then the survivor would be expected to move to a general needs property.

3.4 Letting two bedroom sheltered property

Some 2 bedroom property does not attract bids from households assessed as needing two bedrooms. This can mean the property remaining empty for long periods and loss of income. It is therefore proposed that, if no households assessed as needing 2 bedroom property bid, then households assessed as needing one bedroom can be considered – two person households would take priority over single people within this category.

3.5 Prevention of anti social behaviour, risk management and meeting support needs

Residents have asked that measures to minimise the risk of anti social behaviour, especially that related to drug and alcohol use, are put in place. The new assessment process will involve through risk assessment of potential residents and ensure support needs can met within sheltered housing. People whose behaviour is thought likely to pose a risk to the health, safety and welfare of other residents, or who have support needs that cannot be met, will not be able to bid for sheltered housing. The new assessment process will also help build a sustainable, more balanced, community in each scheme in terms of individual support need and avoid concentration of people with high support needs in particular schemes.

CONSULTATION

- 4.1 These proposals emerged from consultation with representatives of sheltered Housing tenants and were formally endorsed by tenant representatives at the Sheltered Housing Action Group on April 8 2009.
- 4.2 Partner Registered Social Landlords and Community groups representing the interests of older people have been consulted, and are generally supportive of the proposals.
Concern has been raised that in giving priority to exiting tenants the council may be placing Homeseekers and those wishing to transfer from other

landlords at a disadvantage. Any disadvantage is likely to be insignificant given the expected low volume of internal transfer activity, and that the net supply of units available generally will not be reduced.

Concern has been raised that disabled people needing a ground floor unit may be disadvantaged if existing tenants have priority for all units. Designated Mobility standard units would still only be let to those assessed as needing this type of unit, and priority would only be afforded to tenants who fall within this category.

- 4.3 The council's Supporting People team have been consulted and some changes made to recommendations around equality of access to the service.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Any proposals which make more efficient use of the councils stock and reduces the amount of time that properties lie empty, increases the amount of annual rent collected for the Housing Revenue Account. If implemented, careful monitoring will then be needed to quantify the effects of these changes and to ensure that income from rents does indeed increase or at least stay the same.

Monica Brooks, Principal Accountant, 8th April 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 A local housing authority is only entitled to allocate accommodation in accordance with its Allocation Policy. The Council's Allocation Policy is the recently revised Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL). The proposals in this report constitute a departure from the existing lettings scheme. CBL does include provision for the adoption of local lettings plans by the Housing Management Consultative Committee and Cabinet Member for Housing. Once adopted, the Plan will override the existing letting criteria. It is not considered that any individual's human rights will be adversely affected by the report's recommendations."

Liz Woodley, Senior Lawyer, 18 March 2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There is potential for some negative impact for people who are not existing BHCC sheltered housing tenants, but need low level flats. This impact is anticipated to be minimal as the number of flats lets under this scheme is expected to be relatively low. Where a flat meets defined mobility standards, this will not be let to a tenant not in need of an adapted property – this reduces the potential for negative impact upon disabled people. Although it is proposed that existing BHCC tenants would have priority bidding for vacant flats, the net number of flats available for general bids would remain

unchanged as units vacated by tenants who transfer will be advertised in place of those originally vacant.

The removal of barriers to letting two bed properties is a positive move as it extends access to a wider range of people.

This scheme will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated against equality impact regularly and amended to counter any significance bias that emerges.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Enabling older people to stay within the same block or neighbourhood will help sustain communities and reduce population change.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The arrangements for assessment of new tenants will reassure residents and it is envisaged to reduce anti social behaviour in sheltered schemes.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 These proposals reduce the risk of 2 bed flats remaining vacant.
These proposals reduce the risk of alcohol and drug related anti social behaviour in sheltered housing schemes
These proposals increase opportunity for older people to remain within settled Communities whilst meeting changing needs.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 There are none

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The main alternative is not to set up a local lettings plan for sheltered housing. This has not been recommended as it would not help meet the objective of best use of council housing stock and would not meet the expressed aspirations of tenants.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To make most efficient use of the council's sheltered housing stock
- 7.2 To meet the aspirations of tenants in making it easier and less stressful for existing BHCC sheltered housing tenants to transfer when their current flat no longer meets their needs.
- 7.3 To ensure people entering sheltered housing are risk assessed and any risks managed to reduce the likelihood of anti social behaviour.
- 7.4 To ensure incoming sheltered housing tenants' support needs are assessed, that these can be met by the sheltered service and to create balanced communities of people with high, medium and low support needs in each scheme.

- 7.5 To allow people who are over 60 with support needs but a resident carer who is not yet 60 to apply for sheltered housing.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. Equalities Impact Assessment for proposed Local Lettings Plan, Sheltered Housing, April 2009

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 14

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Local Lettings Plans – General Stock
Date of Meeting: 22 June 2009
Report of: *Director of Adult Social Care and Housing*
Contact Officer: Name: *Helen Clarkmead* Tel: 293350
E-mail: Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The council has to regularly review and adopt Local Lettings Plans in order to be legally compliant and ensure that the plans meet the council's stated objectives. A requirement of Allocations and Adaptations Policy as approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing on 11 March 2009 was that all Local Lettings Arrangements currently practised by Brighton and Hove City Council in respect of its permanent council housing stock are reviewed to assure legal compliance and alignment with the council's policy objectives. Current arrangements were reviewed, and new proposals considered. There has been extensive stakeholder consultation, the outcome of which is included in the report.
- 1.2 A local authority may implement a Local Lettings Plan [LLP] to make better use of housing stock or to meet other local need. Authorities must demonstrate a need for the LLP that cannot reasonably be met through alternative measures and regularly review both need for and effectiveness of the LLP. However, authorities must ensure that allocations demonstrate 'reasonable preference' to those groups defined as having priority in section 167 (2) of the 1996 Housing Act (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Moreover, authorities must not discriminate either directly or indirectly on any equality grounds. Each LLP should be monitored to ensure it meets the original aims and objectives.
- 1.3 The council operates a variety of local lettings practices, some of which have been formally adopted and others not. The council's current practice is not conversant with legislative requirements in terms of justifying need or review. Some practices are not compliant with current equalities requirements.

Current Brighton and Hove City Council Local lettings practice and policy includes:

- Giving preference for some properties to child free households or those with children over 10, in a number of blocks.
- Restricting the granting of tenancies in some blocks to persons over 50 years.

- Preventing granting of tenancies to single people in small number of properties formerly managed by Hove Borough Council – this remains council policy but is no longer implemented.
- 1.4 A review considered the fitness for purpose of existing practice in respect of meeting council objectives, lawfulness and against current equalities standards. Essentially, are the plans actually needed, do they deliver what is expected, are they fair and lawful.
 - 1.5 The review also considered designating a proportion of lets in some areas of the more deprived neighbourhoods for households where at least one adult works a minimum of 16 hours, in order to create greater community balance in areas of multiple deprivation where there is a high level of often multi generational benefit dependency. This policy would operate within existing priority bands; so a property would still go to the bidder in the highest band [A, B, C, D], but, if any of the bidders within that band and working, they would have priority over those in the same band with a later priority date who are not working.
 - 1.6 The review considered the views of tenant representatives who have requested that tenants who need to move to a lower floor within blocks of flats are afforded some priority to remain within the same block in order to retain social and support networks. People need to move to a lower floor as a result of decreasing mobility and less ability to manage stairs. Where this is assessed as placing them at risk as they would not be able to evacuate the building, then they need to move. People have often lived in the same block for many years, and increased frailty leads to more dependency on support networks and a desire to remain within the same block.
 - 1.7 Where it is thought more information as to the potential impact of proposed LLPs is required, the pilot schemes, with flexibility to vary the terms, are proposed for a limited period for review by HMCC in 12 months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee recommends to the Cabinet Member for Housing the following:
 - (1) That the restrictions favouring households without young children are removed. Where problems associated with child density exist in a specific block or estate, then temporary Local Lettings Plans of up to 12 months may be agreed by the Cabinet member for Housing. The impact of this will be reviewed after 12 months operation.
 - (2) That all restrictions preventing letting of one bedroom property to single people are removed. This policy, no longer implemented, still formally applies to a few blocks and therefore should be formally revoked.
 - (3) That a pilot Local Lettings Plan of 12 months duration be agreed whereby up to 25% of property with two bedrooms or more in eight key deprived areas are designated for households where at least one adult has been in paid employment for a minimum of 16 hours a week for at least three months. Mobility standard flats are excluded. The eight areas are: South Whitehawk, Central Whitehawk, North Whitehawk, Central Moulsecomb, East

Moulsecoomb, Knoll, Hangleton, Hollingdean (see appendix for data). This will help increase economic balance within the most deprived communities where few people work and benefit dependency is viewed as the norm.

- (4) That a pilot Local Lettings Plan over a 12 month period be agreed whereby up to 20 ground and first floor flats are identified as lets where preference will be given to tenants in the same block who need to move to a lower floor to meet needs associated with lessening mobility and/or for personal safety as part of a Personal Evacuation Plan. Mobility standard flats are excluded unless the transferring tenant has a specific need for that type of property. This will be reviewed after 12 months.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Restrictions on letting high-rise property to households with children under ten years of age

3.1.1 The objectives of the review in regard to properties with current restrictions are as follows:

- a) to comply with the legal requirement to review restrictions
- b) to review the practices against meeting the council's objectives
- c) to review the restrictive practice within the context of choice based lettings
- d) to review the current practice against current equalities standards

3.1.2 It likely that the current policy developed due to noise transmission, child density concerns, and fears over child safety. Because practice has evolved without formal adoption, interpretation and implementation has varied over time and by location. In March 1998 the Housing Committee did authorise a pilot to allow allocations to children under 10 in high rise buildings but the scheme was not implemented. The current restriction on children under ten applies to the 29 blocks within the authority (see 3.3). There were 114 lets, 52 of which were to two bed properties with such restrictions from April 2008 to April 2009.

3.1.3 High rise blocks which currently have restrictions to children under ten.

Barclay House	Heron Court	Saxonbury
Clarendon House	Highcroft	St James House
Conway Court	Highleigh	St Johns Mount
Courtlands	Johnson Bank	Swallow Court
Ecclesden	Kestral Court	Theobold House
Ellen House	Kingfisher Court	Thornsedale
Essex Place	Napier House	Tyson Place
Falcon	Normanhurst	Warwick Mount
Goldstone House	Park Royal	Wiltshire House
Hereford Court	Richmond Heights	

3.1.4 It is recommended that the age restriction is lifted for the following reasons:

- (a) The practice restricts the council's ability to make best use of existing housing stock in order to meet housing need. This may result in longer periods of temporary accommodation for families with associated financial and social cost.
- (b) The practice undermines the principles and spirit of Choice. A choice based letting scheme should try and offer the maximum choice.
- (c) This practice cannot be justified from an equalities perspective
- (d) This restriction cannot be applied to resident or absentee leaseholders, or to mutual exchange. It does not contain organic growth within households, so is therefore not effective to prevent occupation by young children generally, but potentially discriminatory towards council tenants.
- (e) There is inconsistency in that people placed by the council in temporary accommodation with children under 10 are often housed within high rise buildings. This is potentially confusing for applicants, tenants and advocates.
- (f) This restriction may actually disadvantage applicants with young children, who are more likely to be housed in low rise blocks without lifts.

3.1.5 Consultation with residents and stakeholders resulted in the following feedback:

- (a) Objections were raised by some members of the North Whitehawk Residents Association about child safety. If a parent chooses high rise, then they are responsible for taking steps to ensure the safety of their child[ren]
- (b) Several residents associations and Guinness Trust noted that child density may need to be monitored. The review accepts the need to monitor this issue. Where child density becomes an issue, then it is recommended that there is provision for the Cabinet member for Housing to agree a temporary 12 month Local Lettings Plan for a specific block as part of a management package.

3.2 Restrictions on children in low-rise properties.

3.2.1 These policies were formulated by Hove Borough Council to prevent issues of child density in certain areas. At the time the borough had a policy of placing families with babies or young children in one bedroom flats – this policy no longer applies within BHCC.

3.2.2 The properties to which the policy applies are:

- The Ingram Crescent Estate which has a policy of no children under 10.
- 385 Kingsway which has a policy of no children under 11.
- Tozier Court which has a policy of no children under 11.
- Vale Court which has a policy of no children under 11
- Vale Road has a historic practice policy of no children at all - however this has never been formally adopted as policy and is not currently implemented.

3.2.3 Consultation with residents resulted in the following feedback:

- Ingram Estate. Tenant representatives said they did not know the policy existed, as there are many families with young children on the estate. There are a relatively high proportion of resident leaseholders, many of whom have children, and leaseholders as private sector landlords who let to families.
- 385 Kingsway. The Chair of the Tenants Association raised concern about young children living there as all flats have one bedroom.

- Tozier Court, Vale Court and Vale Road: do not have a residents association – however, the area representative agreed the restrictions should be lifted.

3.2.4 It is recommended that the restrictions on these blocks are lifted for the following reasons:

- (a) The policy cannot be applied to leaseholders. In some blocks, Benson Court, for example – leaseholders represent over 50 percent of the residents. For this reason the policy is not effective.
It discriminates against council tenants as only that tenure faces restriction, and is potentially confusing.
- (b) The council no longer has a policy of housing families with one child in one bedroom flats.
- (c) The exclusion of all children in Vale Road is a form of social exclusion and can not be justified against current equalities standards.
- (d) That a choice based lettings scheme should offer the maximum choice.
- (e) No objections were raised to the lifting of restrictions by tenant representatives.
- (f) The increased flexibility would enable BHCC to better use of its housing stock to meet citywide need.

3.3 Practice of not letting designated one bedroom property to single people.

3.3.1 These policies were implemented by Hove Borough Council in three blocks – 385 Kingsway, Vale Court, and Tozier Court. The reasoning relates to a long superseded allocation policy which gave preference to couples. This policy is no longer implemented, but needs to be formally revoked.

3.4 Working Household Local Lettings Plan

3.4.1 The review examined the possibility of creating a working household LLP. The objectives of this policy are:

- To economically strengthen communities with high levels of unemployment and benefit dependency.
- To create a more balanced and sustainable mix of households.
- To ease pressure on public services in the most deprived neighbourhoods

3.4.2 Key strategic housing challenges faced by the Council include provision of more family homes, in particular for low income working households, and reducing inequality through delivery of more mixed communities on our housing estates.

3.4.3 Our most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (July 2008) identified that average house prices in the City tripled between 1997 and 2007 and that first time buyers required a household income of £45,000 to enter owner occupation. However, two thirds of households in the City earn less than £35,000 per annum. While the average house price in the City has fallen since the study it is still 25% higher than nationally. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment also identified that future delivery of new housing in the City is limited by the availability of sites and while there is a high demand for all types and size of accommodation in Brighton and Hove the most acute need is for family homes. Our Council Housing Register

also reflects this. In terms of population projections the SHMA identified a net out-migration of families from the City, in particular, economically active families.

- 3.4.4 In response to this, in addition to promoting future planning policies which deliver a greater proportion of new affordable family homes on available sites, we have also concentrated on making best use of our existing council stock. In parallel with our successful under occupancy initiative, which has released over 80 family homes in each of the last two years by supporting households to downsize, a review of LLPs to allow for more family homes to become available for those on the Housing Register will allow us to meet the housing needs of more families in the City.
- 3.4.5 The availability of these and other homes through LLPs targeted working households will not only enable us to provide homes with subsidised rents to those in low income employment but will also enable the Council to tackle some of the challenges presented by the findings of the Reducing Inequalities Review (2007). The Reducing Inequalities Review identified that residents of some of our council estates were not sharing in the prosperity of the City as a whole and that some of the most disadvantaged households were being concentrated in the same areas of council housing. Allowing for targeted housing of low income working households in these areas will help us to deliver the strategic housing and Reducing Inequality Review priorities of creating more mixed and balanced communities.
- 3.4.6 Consultation with tenants resulted in the following feedback:
Tenants consulted were wholly in favour of the policy as they were keen to see the economic regeneration of their estates. Some members of associations in areas not considered for the LLP noted that blocks of flats are just as much communities as housing estates.
- 3.5 Priority for tenants who need to move to a lower floor to remain within the same block
- 3.5.1 The council is working with tenants to agree emergency Personal Evacuation Plans for people in flats with sensory and/or mobility needs. This has further highlighted problems where tenants can access and leave their homes easily when using a lift, but cannot when a lift is not available, for example in the event of fire. Therefore, some tenants need to move to a flat on a lower floor where they are able to leave more easily if there is an emergency. Many tenants have strong support networks within the block and are reluctant to move. Therefore, it is proposed that a limited number of flats are designated to be let with preference being afforded to people in the same block with a need to move to a lower floor.
- 3.5.2 This local lettings policy has been requested by tenants, during the consultation period, including those represented by the High Rise Action Group.
- 3.6 Blocks designated for the occupation of people over 50 years of age
- 3.6.1 The council has a number of blocks designated for people over 50 years of age. A separate review about the future of these blocks is underway, including extensive

consultation with residents and other stakeholders. The current arrangements have equalities implications and may prevent the council from making best use of its stock. It is envisaged this work will be completed and a report presented to HMCC in October 2009

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A wide of range of consultation was undertaken about all the recommendations. Tenants, Homeseekers and community interest groups were consulted. In addition, many community groups were asked to submit opinions. Our Registered Social Landlord partners were consulted. There was extensive dialogue with other departments within the authority. Consultation outcome, and responses to concerns raised, is contained within the body of the report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 " There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in this report. The changes to the LLP will be made within the existing 2009/10 Housing Revenue Account Budget. "

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen

Date: 02/06/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By virtue of section 169 Housing Act 1996, the Communities Secretary is entitled to issue guidance to local housing authorities in connection with the exercise of their powers under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 - allocation of housing accommodation. Local Authorities are required to have regard to this guidance when exercising their allocation functions. In pursuance of this section, in August 2008 CLG issued a guide entitled, "Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings - Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities." The guidance includes a section on local lettings policies. The recommendations in the report are compatible with that section."

Lawyer Consulted:

Liz Woodley

Date: 29/05/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed in respect of these recommendations. To summarise the findings;
Current age restrictive practices discriminate against people under 50 years old, people with children and people with children under 10 years old as they are either prevented from bidding, or afforded lower priority, for certain property. Removing age restrictive lettings practices would effectively remove barriers to equality as all transferring tenants and Homeseekers would be able to bid for any general needs property that meets their needs.

Although economically inactive groups will not be eligible to bid for property designated for working households, the number of lets would be very few and therefore render potential impact insignificant.

The number of properties removed from general use under the working household and same block move LLPs would be counterbalanced by the number added to the general use pool by the removal of child age restrictions.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The Working Household and same block moves LLPs aim to increase sustainability and stability in creating balanced neighbourhoods.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are none

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Adopting these recommendations would remove the risk of equalities based challenges related to age restrictive lettings practice.
Removing age restriction from general needs letting would better enable the council to make best use of existing housing stock in order to help meet housing need

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The working households LLP would, albeit on relatively small scale, ease local pressure on services working with multiply deprived benefit dependent households within the areas of the city where these households live in greatest concentration.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix:

- 1. A table of areas with high deprivation within the authority

Documents In Members' Rooms

- 1. There are none
- 2.

Background Documents

- 1. The council's Housing Allocations Policy as adopted by the Council at Cabinet Member for Housing Meeting 11 March 2009.
- 2. Local Letting Plan – General Needs – Equalities Impact Assessment

An introduction to the proposed Local Lettings Plans

What is a Local Lettings Plan?

A Local Lettings Plan [LLP] is a formal agreement allowing the council to vary the criteria by which some of its housing is let in order to meet local need. Local Lettings Plans can apply to a block of flats, estate, neighbourhood or to certain types of property.

What must the council do in order to have LLPs?

The council must show there is a need for the plan. This includes a clear statement as to what we hope the plan will achieve and why we think this is the best way to achieve that objective.

We need to consult with partner Residential Social Landlords [RSLs] and people the LLP is likely to affect.

We need to undertake an equalities impact assessment to ensure the plan does not unjustly discriminate against any particular group[s].

We must review all our LLPs regularly.

Does the council have any LLPs now?

The council has various arrangements in place allowing variation in lettings arrangements for certain property types and locations. Some of these arrangements were formally adopted; others have developed through custom and practice. However, as we have not until now followed a formal process, these cannot be classified as LLPs. That is why we are reviewing these arrangements and proposing formal LLPs.

What arrangements are in place now?

There are age restrictions on letting property in some blocks. Some flats cannot be let to people under 50, others not to people with children under 10 or 11.

Are any new LLPs proposed?

Yes.

General Needs Housing

Priority for working households for up to 25% of lets in the more deprived neighbourhoods. Some areas of the city have a high proportion of unemployed or otherwise benefit dependent residents. In order to create greater community balance and increase local economic prosperity, it is proposed to let some vacant property to households where at least one adult is in paid employment for a minimum of 16 hours a week. This will not mean working households are prioritised outside bands, as allocation will still be within the existing priority bands.

For example, if 50 people bid for a property, 10 of whom are in band A, then the property will go to the person in band A with the earliest priority date who is working. This is proposed on a pilot basis in order that the impact can be carefully analysed and assessed.

People who need to move within the same block

Where someone needs to transfer because they would not be able to use stairs in an emergency, then it is proposed that they are given priority to move to a lower floor within the same block in order to retain support networks. It is anticipated fewer than 20 such lets will be necessary each year. This is proposed on a pilot basis in order that the impact can be carefully analysed and assessed.

Sheltered Housing

The proposals for sheltered housing include giving people who need to move within the same block priority, and easing restrictions on the letting of two bedroom sheltered flats which are sometimes difficult to let using standard eligibility criteria. It also allows people over 60 who would benefit from sheltered housing with a carer who is under 60 to move into sheltered housing. These proposals are based on requests from tenants, and have the full support of the Sheltered Housing Action Group and other community groups we consulted.

Did we consult?

Yes. We consulted our Registered Social Landlord [RSL] partners, community groups, people on the Housing Register and current council tenants.

What about blocks for people aged over 50?

There are many blocks in Brighton and Hove where property is only let to people who are 50 or older. We are speaking to residents and other stakeholders, and hope that a report about these blocks will be presented to HMCC in October 2009. In the mean time, these will continue to operate as blocks for people over 50 years of age.

Any Questions?

Please contact Helen Clarkmead, Head of Housing Management.
Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk 01273 293350.

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 15

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing Management Performance Report (End of year report)		
Date of Meeting:	22 June 2009		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	John Austin Locke	Tel: 29-1008
	E-mail:	John.austin-locke@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This is the end of year report for Housing Management Performance for the year 2008-2009.
- 1.2 Following a number of suggestions from Members and customers the layout and presentation of the report has changed. The new style report is aimed at providing clearer information on targets and future policy set against current performance, recent performance and comparison with other groups and service providers. We are seeking to make the report more responsive to interest in specific areas of performance and can adapt the report and the information provided to what might be requested quarter to quarter. This report also follows the categorisation used by the Audit Commission. This should make performance comparison, at the time of inspection, more harmonious with the methodology suggested and used by the inspectors. These changes have been made possible by the development and introduction of a Performance Management Framework across all Housing Management areas of service. Managers and staff now have comprehensive access to a range of active figures allowing comparison of performance, both internally and externally, on a scale that was not possible previously. The development of this initiative is continuing.
- 1.3 There has also been a reduction in the volume of text with the aim being to focus on current developments and future objectives rather than repeating information provided previously.
- 1.4 In many cases the contrast made is with the Audit Commission top twenty five per cent (known as the top quartile) of authorities, nationally, across England. Where sections in Housing Services are members of specialised benchmarking

clubs, such as HouseMark, or what is known as the “Major Cities”, this may also be shown. However the performance figures from the Audit Commission, for 08-09, will not be published until the autumn, while HouseMark figures are updated during the course of the year. The origin of each comparative figure and to whom it is attributed is made clear in the report.

1.5 HouseMark is a national organisation dedicated to improving performances across all providers of housing in England. Their services provide a comprehensive context and comparison within which a housing provider, managers and staff, can learn, improve and grow through contact with other providers. There has been a significant development in our relationship with HouseMark in the last six months. This has enabled us to post our performance on a national website which then permits comparisons to be made across the sector. Brighton & Hove Housing Services has become an active participant in HouseMark service improvement and the organisation has visited Brighton & Hove for a presentation to all managers across the services provided.

1.6 While it is acknowledged that the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) have been replaced by the National Indicator Sets (NIS) there remains a standing instruction from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to continue collecting the BVPIs. This is to ensure that all concerned can continue to make comparisons with past performance, and across the various providers, as before. It is also the case that HouseMark, for the same reason, still continue to refer to the indicators as “BVPIs”. In this report we continue to refer specifically to “BVPI” and “NI” in order to draw the distinction. It is our intention to develop this aspect of the report in order to ensure even greater clarity as to whether aspects of performance are related to national or local figures.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee comment on the contents of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1.0 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

3.1.1 End of year figures show a collection rate of 98.16% against last year’s performance of 97.75% and an 06/07 performance rate of 96.44%.

3.1.2 We remain aware of the importance of keeping to a minimum the number of customers with more than seven weeks of arrears on their account. Targets have now been set for the next three years as follows:

2009/10	4.96%	(<600 tenants with >7 weeks rent arrears)
2010/11	4.13%	(<500 tenants with >7 weeks rent arrears)

2011/12 3.72% (<450 tenants with >7 weeks rent arrears)

3.1.3 The indicator reported on below, 66c, refers to the use of Notice of Seeking Possessions (NOSP) as a recovery tool while ensuring that possession is a last resort. Brighton & Hove will continue to use the Rents Arrears Pre-Action Protocol and work with customers to address issues prior to requesting possession proceedings.

3.1.4 Last year Brighton & Hove were granted 178 possession orders, by the courts, and have never had a case refused. This, combined with our low eviction rate, suggests that we are working within the pre-action approach that is adopted prior to commencing legal proceedings. The courts have indicated support for the protocol as proof of our efforts to work with customers prior to possession orders being granted.

3.1.5 Notwithstanding the above it is our intention to set challenging targets for the next three years to reduce the percentage of NOSP's served.

2009/10 26.46%
 2010/11 23.80%
 2011/12 22.39%

Income Management	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures (07/08)	Future Targets
	06/07	07/08			
BV66a Rent Collection	96.44%	97.75%	98.16%	Audit Commission Upper Quartile (07-08) 98.6% HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 98.04	98.50%
BV66a Rent Collection (Central housing area)	97.30%	98.21%	98.35%	n.a.	98.79%
BV66a Rent Collection (East housing area)	95.44%	97.08%	97.73%	n.a.	97.99%
BV66a Rent Collection (North housing area)	97.27%	98.08%	98.43%	n.a.	98.66%
BV66a Rent Collection (west housing area)	96.19%	98.09%	98.43%	n.a.	98.88%
BV66a Rent Collection	93.06%	93.8%	97.07%	n.a.	96.95%

Income Management	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures (07/08)	Future Targets
	06/07	07/08			
(Temporary Accommodation)					
BV66b Those with arrears of more than 7 weeks	8.73%	7.85%	6.39%	Audit Commission Upper Quartile 3.5% (07-08) HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 4.88	4.96%
BV66c The NOSP figure	20.11%	27.23%	30.36%	Audit Commission Upper Quartile 14.8% (07-08) HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 16.25	26.46%
BV66d The Eviction Figure (% tenants evicted for rent arrears)	0.15%	0.17%	0.16%	Audit Commission Upper Quartile 0.2% HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 0.27	This is < than 35 evictions per annum: 0.29%
Volume of former tenant arrears (Inclusive of Temporary Accommodation and Travellers Site)	£1.9 million (£210k)	£1.7 million (£237k)	£1.7 million (£270k)	n.a.	To be set
% leaseholder recovery rate	72%	72%	80%	n.a.	82%
% Leaseholder Recovery Rate on Recoverable arrears	86%	89%	90%	n.a.	90%

3.2.0 Empty Property Turnaround Time

3.2.1 The Lettings Team has met many challenges and has let 878 council properties during 2008/09 within the overall annual target time of an average of 28 days per property. This total figure included sheltered flats and temporary accommodation – some of which have been very difficult to let.

3.2.2 Lessons have been learnt over the past year, and there have been many minor changes to processes that the team has made in order to manage workloads during difficult periods as well as continuously improve performance. The Lettings Team would like to thank the council's contractors and the various teams within Adult Social Care & Housing that have contributed to the council achieving this important target.

3.2.3 Looking to the year ahead, the team has set a challenging turnaround target of 26 days on average.

3.2.4 The Lettings Team is looking forward to achieving the objectives on its service plan for the coming year, which include:-

- Making improvements to our customers' experience of the letting's service
- Involving customers more in the work of the team
- Improving communications in order to improve the service delivered
- Taking extra steps to ensure tenancies get off on the right footing and are sustainable
- Hitting the target of 26 days

Void Turnaround	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
BV212 average re-let times in days (all properties)	35	31	28	Audit Commission Upper Quartile (07-08) 25 HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 29.23 BHCC	26
General needs	35	29	25	n.a.	26
Sheltered	35	39	38	n.a.	26
TACC	n.a.	n.a.	42	n.a.	n.a.

3.3.0 Stock investment and asset management – Performance 2009/10

3.3.1 Performance on the completion of all repairs priorities has improved in the last twelve months and, as a consequence, stretching targets have also been set for 2009/2010. This improvement has been delivered in line with an increasing proportion of repairs that have been identified as emergencies. In past Audit Commission reports this has been identified as an area for improvement. The responsive repairs partnership is now regularly raising 70% of repair work as a routine priority in line with good practice.

3.3.2 Repairs & Maintenance: Similar improvements have been delivered in the completion of Right to Repair orders over the last year and routine repairs are now typically completed within 15 days.

3.3.3 Decent Homes & Energy Efficiency: Investment in decent homes work has delivered an 8% improvement in the number of properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard, this equates to approximately 1,000 homes made decent in the last year.

3.3.4 BHCC's performance on SAP ratings (energy efficiency of stock) remains in the top quartile.

3.3.5 Gas Servicing. The end of year performance of 99.61% of properties with a current gas safety certificate shows another year of improvement on last year's figure of 99.06%. There are currently 41 properties across the city with an overdue service, none of these are more than a year overdue and the status of all properties is known.

Stock investment and asset management – Performance 2009/10	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
Emergency Repairs Completed in time	n.a.	88.36 %	96.76 % 98.48 % (Mears) 94.49 % (Kier)	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 99.37 BHCC ranked 5 th (Current)	99 %
No of Emergency Repairs completed	n.a.	8,299	7,755 4,414 (Mears) 3,341 (Kier)	n.a.	n.a.
Urgent Repairs Completed in time	n.a.	87.40 %	92.53 % 95.35 % (Mears) 89.18 % (Kier)	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 98.05 BHCC ranked 4 th (Current)	98 %
No of Urgent Repairs completed	n.a.	8,938	4,393 2,388 (Mears) 2,005 (Kier)	n.a.	n.a.
Routine Repairs Completed within target time	n.a.	88.63 %	96.01 % 97.86 % (Mears) 93.53 % (Kier)	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 93.67 BHCC ranked 2 nd (Current)	98 %

Stock investment and asset management – Performance 2009/10	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
No of Routine Repairs completed	n.a.	13,892	19,724 11,305 (Mears) 8,419 (Kier)	n.a.	n.a.
BV72 Right to Repair orders completed within target time	n.a.	89.14 %	96.87 %	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 97.72 BHCC ranked 5 th (Current)	97 %
BV73 Ave time to complete routine repairs	n.a.	16 days	15 days	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 13.76 BHCC ranked 6 th (Current)	14 days
RR5 % of appointments kept	n.a.	n.a.	98.4%	n.a.	99%
NI160 satisfaction with home	n.a.	n.a.	78.9% (part of STATUS survey)	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 83.18, Median 78.5 (Current)	83.18%
NI158 % of council homes that are non-decent	57.7 %	56.65 %	48.89%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 10.7 Lower Quartile 39.22 BHCC ranked 4 th of 4 who submitted data (Current)	36%
BV63 - Energy Efficiency (SAP Rating)	74.6	75.4	75.7	Audit Commission Upper Quartile (07-08) 73 HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 72.78	76.5 (using 2001 SAP formula. This remains the formula in current use)
Citywide % of stock with up to date gas safety checks	98%	99.06%	99.61%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking:	100 %

Stock investment and asset management – Performance 2009/10	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
				Upper Quartile 98.58	
Mears Area	n.a.	98.91%	99.49 %	n.a.	100 %
PH Jones Area	n.a.	99.27%	99.78 %	n.a.	100 %

3.4.0 Estates Service

3.4.1 Staff consultation on the new Estate Services structure will start in June and last for four weeks. This will formally confirm the cleaning service as one based on site specific cleaners, with a small number of mobile cleaners for the dispersed housing stock and some of the outlying parts of the city.

3.4.2 A review of how the work of the Estate Services is monitored is currently taking place, with the aim of reporting on a wider range of activities and providing qualitative information on the work carried out.

3.4.3 The bulk refuse removal team saw a marked increase in the number of jobs they received in the final quarter of the year from 173 requests in December to 318 in March. This increase in work led to a dip in performance in the last quarter of the year. The number jobs for this team will be closely monitored so that any changes in demand for the team can be matched by further enforcement action to deter fly tipping and a review of the way this work is carried out so to ensure the targets for removal in the coming year are met.

3.4.4 The monitoring review will look at ways information on the work of the bulk removal team can be presented on a geographical basis, and used to develop local initiatives to tackle fly tipping and the dumping of bulk refuse.

3.4.5 The staff consultation is also examining the work of the graffiti removal team. The consultation document proposes that Mobile Wardens are trained in this area of work to ensure business continuity in the future. This would ensure reliability of response in the event of future absence, due to illness, within the small team that carries out this work.

Estate services	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
Completion of cleaning tasks	Figures not recorded against current definitions	87	96%	n.a.*	98%
Bulk refuse removal Targets met within timescale		95%	Emergency 77% Routine 84%	n.a.*	Emergency 100% Routine 95%
Graffiti removal Targets met within timescale		95%	Emergency 100% Routine 88%	n.a.*	Emergency 100% Routine 95%
* Work will take place with HouseMark in the coming year to develop comparative figures					

3.5 Satisfaction

3.5.1 The figures on satisfaction, diversity and Value for Money are taken from the Government sponsored STATUS survey conducted every two years. The most recent ones have been 2006 and 2008.

3.5.2 The Government sets the questions, in the STATUS survey, and no alteration, amendment, addition or subtraction is permitted. However there are frequent changes to the way questions are asked and some questions asked in 2006 were excluded in 2008. This makes precise comparisons, survey on survey, problematic. In Brighton & Hove the Analysis and Research Team conduct the survey, on our behalf. This ensures independence in the analysis of the results

3.5.3 It is our intention to conduct a STATUS style survey in the alternate years when a STATUS survey is not due. In those cases we would be permitted to add additional questions, suitable to Brighton & Hove. This work is scheduled for the autumn. The initiative will allow a snapshot of customer satisfaction to be taken across the City on an annual cycle.

Satisfaction	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
Overall satisfaction "very or fairly satisfied with your landlord"	72%	No survey	72.4% (data from STATUS survey 2008)	Unitary top quartile 71.25 from 2006	75%
% of tenants satisfied with Tenant Participation Compact	65%%	No survey	74.6% (data from STATUS survey 2008)	Precise comparison not available *	80%
% of involved residents represented by RA/TA.s	75%	86.5% (our own figures)	86.5%		90%
* Work will take place with HouseMark in the coming year to develop comparative information					

Diversity

Diversity	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
BV75b% BME tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate	No Survey	76%	Satisfaction survey scheduled for September	Audit Commission Upper Quartile (07-08) 71*	80%
BV74b Satisfaction of BME tenants with overall service provided by their landlord	67%	66%	Satisfaction survey scheduled for September	Precise comparison not available*	70%
* Work will take place with HouseMark in the coming year to develop comparative information					

Value for Money

Value for Money	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
% tenants satisfied with the value for money of their rent (STATUS survey question)	New question for 08/09	No survey	81.1% satisfied 42.9% very satisfied 38.2% quite satisfied	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 40.7%	85% satisfied
% of repairs	Figure not	82.1%	98.2%	95.04%	98.5%

Value for Money	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
completed 'right first time'	kept against that definition				
Cost per week £ of housing management services	£17.09	£17.28	£17.28* Lower Median	CLG (2008 Business Statistical Appendix) £11.81* Upper Quartile.	£15.00
* Please note that this comparison is very problematic owing to the substantial variation in the ways housing providers calculate their management costs					

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 3.5.4 Policies dictate that, at the point of signing, lettings officers go through the tenancy agreement and specifically discuss the types of behaviour that will be regarded as a breach of the tenancy agreement.
- 3.5.5 There is a further visit, by the local Housing Officer, at fourteen days after the commencement of the tenancy. Prior to the visit the file will have been scrutinised for information on vulnerability or circumstances that might be likely to cause a problem; for example, information on substance misuse, known care issues or mental health problems. If issues are identified or occur then appropriate warnings will be issued in conjunction with ensuring appropriate support is in place. Further visits are undertaken, as a matter of routine, at four and eight months and more regularly if issues occur that need pragmatic intervention.
- 3.5.6 A register is maintained of those tenants who have had action taken against them or been evicted for anti-social behaviour. This ensures consistency in the even that the individuals are referred back for re-housing or referred to us by social services.
- 3.5.7 In cases where concern becomes apparent over conduct or behaviour during the first twelve months, the introductory tenancy can be extended for a further 6 months. Where problems are persistent and serious during the Introductory Tenancy a notice to terminate is served which results in the tenancy being lost.

Anti Social Behaviour	Past Performance		End of Year Performance 08/09	Top 25% of Performing Authorities	Future Targets for Brighton and Hove
	06/07	07/08			
% of Introductory Tenants reported to be involved in anti-social behaviour	This is a figure requested by a tenant representative so this is a new figure for 08/09		15.51% 548 lets in the year 85 cases	Figure not recorded by other authorities in this way	12%
Number of ASB complaints closed due to no further action required and/or the case being resolved	This is a new area of monitoring	951	826	n.a.*	n.a.*
Number of evictions		12	10	n.a.*	n.a.*
*Area currently under development with HouseMark					

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Following the presentation to Housing Management Consultative Committee, this report will be presented at the next available round of Area Panels. In addition it will be provided, as appropriate, to the customer lead working groups involved with reviewing performance, policy and future prospects across the service.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications which will be included in the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) forecast. For example, any improvement in turnaround times or reductions in empty property numbers increases the amount of rent collected. Similarly an increase in energy efficiency will result in a reduction in outgoings. Improvements in performance will, in general, lead to more resources being available for tenants' services in the future.

Finance Officer Consulted: Gary Driver Date: 27 May 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are none

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 7 June 2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Equalities implications are included within the body of the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Sustainability implications are included within the body of the report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct risk and opportunity management implications arising from this report

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct Corporate or Citywide implications arising from this report.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Not applicable to this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 These are contained within the body of the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

