



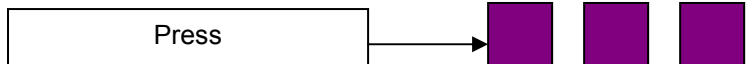
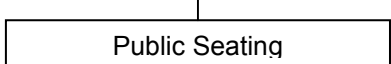
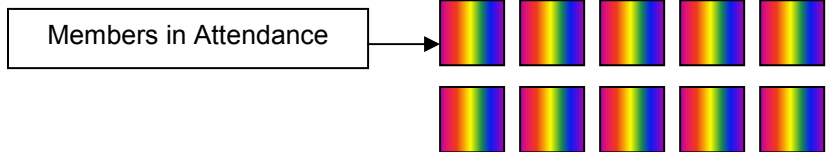
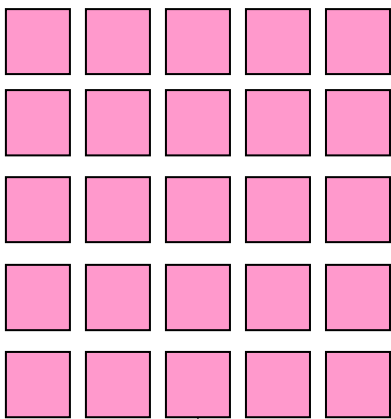
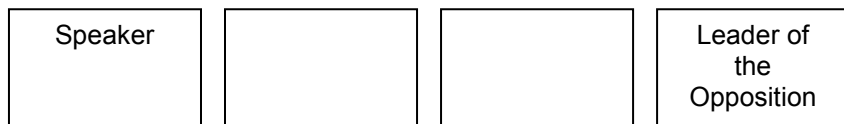
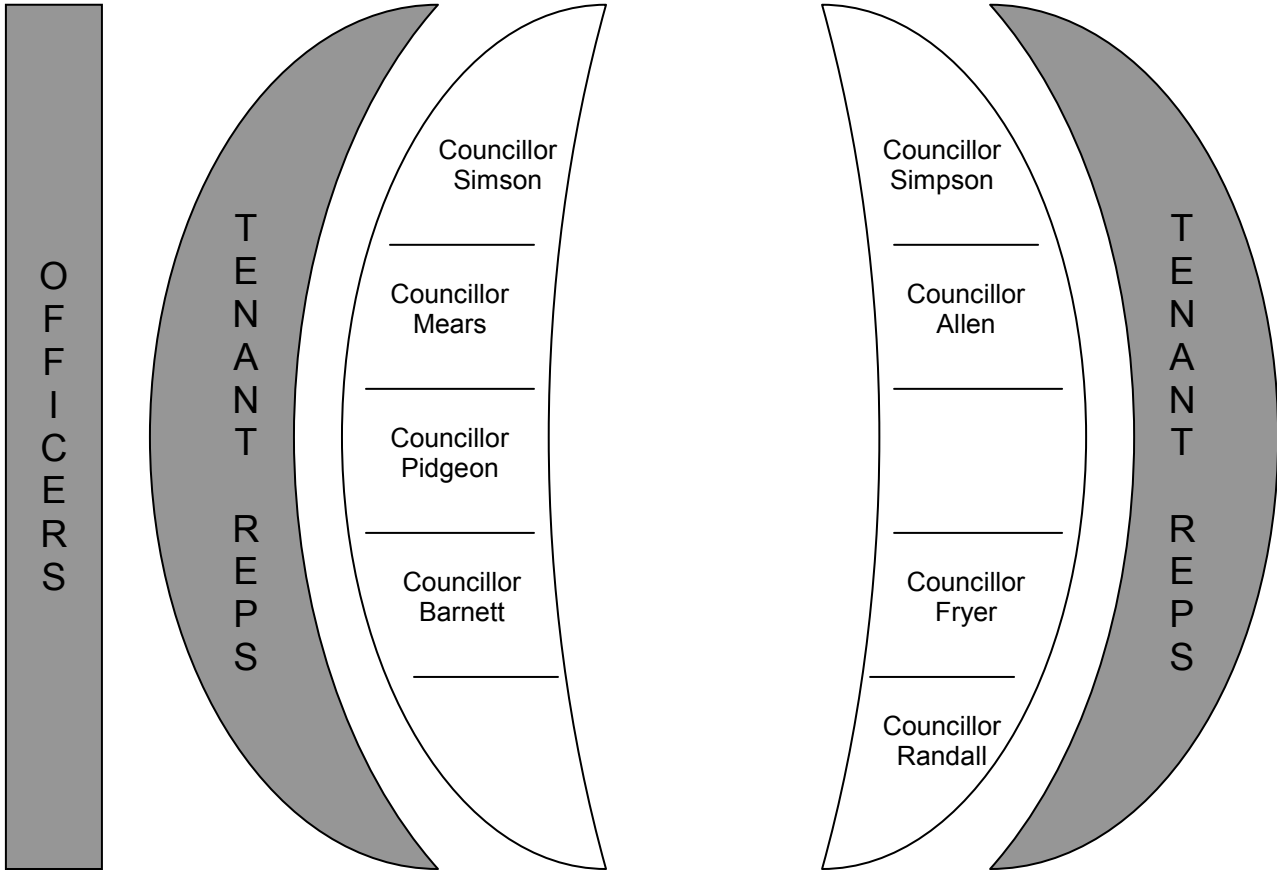
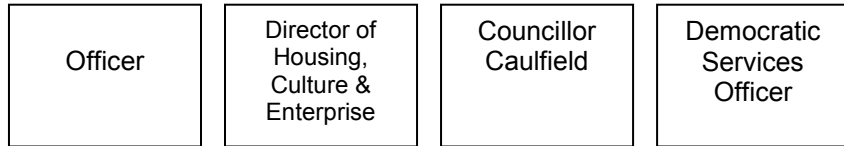
**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# Housing Management Consultative Committee

Title:	<b>Housing Management Consultative Committee</b>
Date:	<b>14 June 2010</b>
Time:	<b>3.00pm</b>
Venue:	<b>Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall</b>
Members:	<b>Councillors:</b> Caulfield (Chairman), Allen, Barnett, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Randall, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson) and Simson
Contact:	<b>Caroline De Marco</b> Democratic Services Officer 01273 291063 caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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# Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



**Tenant Representatives:**

Stewart Gover, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Ted Harman, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Heather Hayes, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

John Stevens, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Pat Miles, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

David Murtagh, Brighton East 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

Barry Kent, 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 - 8

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2010 (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 7 June 2010)

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

## 7. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 7 June 2010)

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. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT FROM DCLG: COUNCIL HOUSING: A REAL FUTURE 9 - 22**

Report of the Director of Finance & Resources and the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise (copy attached).

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

**11. HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE 23 - 54**

Report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise (copy attached).

*Contact Officer: Diane Hughes Tel: 01273 293841*  
*Ward Affected: All Wards;*

**12. TENANT HANDBOOK REVIEW 55 - 114**

Report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise (copy attached).

*Contact Officer: Diane Hughes Tel: 01273 293841*  
*Ward Affected: All Wards;*

**13. CONSULTATION DRAFT OF RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 115 - 154**

Report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise (copy attached).

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

**14. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2010 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS 155 - 160**

Report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise (copy attached).

*Contact Officer: Michelle Jenkins Tel: 01273 296271*  
*Ward Affected: All Wards;*

**15. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE 161 - 164**

Report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise (copy attached).

Contact Officer: *Graham Page*  
Ward Affected: *All Wards;*

Tel: 01273 293354

**16. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT - END OF YEAR 165 - 180  
(AND QUARTER 4)**

Report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise (copy attached).

Contact Officer: *John Austin-Locke*  
Ward Affected: *All Wards;*

Tel: 29-1008

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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 291063, email [caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) or email [democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Date of Publication - Friday, 4 June 2010

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 2

Brighton & Hove City Council

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**3.00pm 10 MAY 2010**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Caulfield (Chairman); Barnett, Carden, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson) and Wells

**Tenant Representatives:** 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), Pat Miles (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Beverley Weaver (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group), John Melson (Hi Rise Action Group) and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network)

Apologies: Councillor Davey, Beryl Snelling, David Murtagh, and Muriel Briault

### **PART ONE**

#### **85. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

##### **85A Declarations of Substitute Members**

85.1 Nicola Proud declared that she was attending as a substitute for Muriel Briault.

##### **85B Declarations of Interests**

85.2 Councillors Simpson and Wells, Heather Hayes and Ted Harman declared a personal interest in any discussion on the LDV as they are Board Members of Brighton and Hove Seaside Community Homes (the Local Delivery Vehicle).

##### **85C Exclusion of the Press and Public**

85.3 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.

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

## 86. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 86.1 Councillor Simpson referred to paragraph 83.9 of the minutes. She again raised the case of an elderly couple in poor health who had asked to downsize to a two bedroom property. They had now been informed that they could only bid for a one bedroom property. The couple needed a two bedroom property for medical reasons. An estates warden had visited and listed 6 items of works that needed to be carried out to their present property. These works had been carried out in spite of their health problems. Councillor Simpson considered that the couple should receive an apology and compensation and a swift decision on the number of bedrooms to which they were entitled.
- 86.2 The Chairman replied that it was not appropriate to discuss an individual case at the committee meeting. The Assistant Director, Housing Management agreed and stressed that officers had reviewed the case since the last meeting. There were special reasons why works were required and the case was complex. He would ensure that Councillor Simpson was briefed on this case, and that further action would be taken to resolve the issue.
- 86.3 Stewart Gover referred to paragraph 73.20 of the minutes. Chris Kift reported that he had still not received a reply from John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. As a result of the General Election, it would be necessary to wait until it was known who would be Secretary of State before a further letter was sent.
- 86.4 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

## 87. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

### City Assembly

- 87.1 The Chairman explained that the next City Assembly would be this Saturday, the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2010. The agenda included a presentation from the Tenant Services Authority, and would provide an update on a mobility scooter storage project, and a presentation on the law around succession. There would also be a panel discussion and an opportunity to meet other residents' representatives from across the city.
- 87.2 Chris Kift reported that there would be stalls at the City Assembly. Mears Limited, the Mediation Service and the Fire Service were some of the services to be represented.

### Meeting with the LDV Board

- 87.3 The Chairman reported that Members of the HMCC had been invited to a buffet lunch to enable them to meet with members of the Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes



Ltd Board. The lunch would be held on Monday 24 May 2010 at 13:30 at the Thistle Hotel, Brighton.

- 87.4 Councillor Simpson mentioned that the meeting would be an opportunity for members to meet the Board rather than a discussion about the specific offer. The Chairman agreed but stressed that members would like to raise issues with the Board.

### **Choice Based Review Meeting**

- 87.5 The Chairman reported that the first Choice Based Review Meeting had been held and had been excellent. The next meeting would be held on 17 May 2010 at 11.00 am to 1.00pm in Brighton Town Hall.

- 87.6 Councillor Simpson asked if other councillors could be invited. The Chairman replied that this was a tenant led group and was not a cross party group. Councillor Barnett would be in attendance as the new Deputy on Housing matters. Meanwhile, the Chairman was happy for members of the Allocations group to attend the Choice Based Lettings Group if they wished. As some members had not received invitations to the new group she asked the Assistant Director, Housing Management to investigate.

### **88. CALLOVER**

- 88.1 The Chairman asked the Committee to consider which items listed on the agenda it wished to debate and determine in full.

- 88.2 **RESOLVED** - That all items be reserved for debate and determination.

### **89. PETITIONS**

- 89.1 There were none.

### **90. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

- 90.1 There were none.

### **91. DEPUTATIONS**

- 91.1 There were none.

### **92. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

- 92.1 There were none.

### **93. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

- 93.1 There were none.

**94. HOUSING REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS REPORT**

- 94.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which informed members of the progress made on delivering the new Housing Management Repairs & Improvement Partnership with Mears Limited which commenced on 1 April 2010. The Committee also received a presentation with slides.
- 94.2 John Melson stated that he was impressed with the presentation and hoped the partnership lived up to its promise. Mr Melson mentioned that he had spoken to the response team at Mears about a problem with his window. The person he had spoken to did not respond satisfactorily and had not known what was meant by a clerk of works or a quantity surveyor. He stressed that these problems with the front desk staff needed to be resolved.
- 94.3 Members were informed that Mears Limited were carrying out training on the front desk. This would take a while to sort out. There would be a move away from surveyor teams. If a property was in a mess but did not need repairs carried out, a Customer Care Manager would visit. A team of supervisors would manage properties. The Head of Repairs and Maintenance reported that Brighton & Hove Council had a Clerk of Works, not Mears Limited.
- 94.4 Councillor Mears asked if it would be possible to have an update report to monitor the contract in 4 to 6 months. The Chairman replied that she had been assured by the Assistant Director Housing Management that there would be quarterly monitoring reports.
- 94.5 Beverley Weaver expressed concern that the system was not reporting complaints registered on the old system. The Mears representative replied to explain that routine jobs had not been issued to Kier in late March. Mears Limited had inherited these jobs. If they were not on the list, he would be happy to investigate the matter. He hoped his team could investigate historically and see which jobs needed to be completed.
- 94.6 Ted Harman asked about the Estate Development Budget. He was told that this years work was currently being carried out. However, Mears would complete outstanding work.
- 94.7 The Chairman emphasised that the EDB was now part of the repairs contract. There were outstanding repairs but Mears Limited had agreed to take on these jobs.
- 94.8 Councillor Wells asked if there had been positive feedback from mystery shoppers.
- 94.9 The Mears representative explained that Mears employed RICS trained surveyors. The day time satisfaction rates were going well. There needed to be more work on out of hours satisfaction rates.
- 94.10 John Melson requested that in future, tenants representatives should be given one months notice if there was to be a further presentation on the progress of the partnership. This would enable tenants to raise issues before the committee meeting.

94.11 The Chairman thanked The Head of Repairs and Maintenance and the Mears representative for their presentation.

94.12 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the progress made on delivering the new Repairs & Improvement Partnership be noted.

## 95. TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

95.1 The Committee considered a report of Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which set out the research findings from the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey carried out in December 2009. It also highlighted some ways in which the surveys would be used.

95.2 The Head of Housing Management reported that officers were keen to give information in a variety of ways. The survey had shown that there was an underrepresentation of involvement from people who were under 25 and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. There was overrepresentation from people who were 45 or over and from people with disabilities and long term illnesses. There had been a low response in relation to electronic media but it was still higher than expected.

95.3 John Melson was pleased with the results of the survey. He was surprised that the results relating to electronic media were considered higher than expected as this form of communication had been around for the last 20 years. He made the point that there had been an attempt to interest younger people over many years and this had not been successful. Mr Melson suggested concentrating on the things that could be changed rather than looking at matters which could not be changed.

95.4 Chris Kift stated that there was a need to nurture young people who were interested. He pointed out that people who responded to questionnaires did not always respond to follow up letters.

95.5 Stewart Gover referred to paragraph 5.5 which stated that the survey results had shown that anti-social behaviour was one of the main concerns of residents. He made the point that most noise was experienced at weekends or in the evenings when there was no-one available at the council.

95.6 Chris Kift mentioned that the ASBO Focus Group would be meeting on Monday 17 May for the first time. There would be discussions on antisocial behaviour and access to CCTV systems.

95.7 **RESOLVED** - That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to:

(1) Note the findings of the survey.

(2) Approve the potential ways in which interested people can become more involved than they are at present.

**96. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 3)**

- 96.1 The Committee had before them a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which set out the third quarter for Housing Management Performance for the financial year 2009/2010. The report included comparisons with the first and second quarter figures for this year, the end of year performance for the last financial year and targets for future years. The areas covered included key Best Value (BV) performance indicators, by which the government measure and compare the council's performance in key service areas.
- 96.2 **RESOLVED** - the report be noted.

**97. PROCUREMENT OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT - HOUSING MANAGEMENT LAND**

- 97.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which reported on the way the Housing Management parking controls were enforced and the outcome of the recent parking enforcement process. Clamping had been the preferred method for parking enforcement on housing land since 2004. Parking control by clamping was the recommendation of the Car Parks and Garages Working Group. The current contract expired at the end of 2009. Following the parking procurement process, the evaluation panel agreed that Ethical Parking Management had submitted the most advantageous tender on the basis of both quality and meeting the expectations and aspirations of residents.
- 97.2 The Housing Manager reported an error in paragraph 7.1. The report had been submitted to the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting on 21 April 2010.
- 97.3 Stewart Gover stated that he did not agree with clamping as a way of controlling parking. He considered clamping counter productive.
- 97.4 The Chairman reported that the council was looking to amalgamate the contracts for housing land with on street charges in the future. There would be discussions with the Car Parks and Garages Working Group about ticketing issues.
- 97.5 The Assistant Director, Housing Management reported that a transfer of the land out of the HRA and a Road Traffic Regulation Order would be needed in order to have the existing on-street ticketing system. A decision to proceed with clamping was taken to enable parking enforcement on housing management spaces. Staff in the car parks team had received complaints from people who were renting spaces and were not able to access them. It was necessary to ensure these spaces were made available. Renting spaces released a significant income which could be used to spend on peoples homes. Meanwhile, officers would be looking at the feasibility of moving to the ticketing system in the course of the contract.
- 97.6 John Melson considered that ethical parking and clamping did not go together. He asked if associations would be able to opt in or out if a ticketing system was introduced. The Chairman replied that there would be discussions about these issues.
- 97.7 Councillor Fryer reported that she had received complaints in her ward from people who had been clamped. Sometimes people were not clear on the regulations. For example,

a disabled driver had been clamped for not displaying the correct information. She considered that clamping was discriminating against people on low incomes. She felt it would be better to have a ticketing system.

- 97.8 Chris Kift mentioned a car park near St James's House which used to have a chain across it. This was now clamped. He asked why Amex staff were able to use this facility. The Chairman stated that this could be investigated. A number of tenants spaces were rented out to people who were not tenants.
- 97.9 Councillor Mears stated that she would only support the decision to award the contract if it were noted that she had concerns about the contract. Councillor Mears wished to see regular update reports presented to the Committee on the progress of the contract with Ethical Parking Management. Councillor Wells concurred with Councillor Mears and asked for his concerns to be noted.
- 97.10 John Melson mentioned that there was an underuse of some high rise car parks and he would be happy for these spaces to be rented out as it released revenue for the HRA.
- 97.11 The Chairman acknowledged that people did not want clamping. However, it would not be possible to combine the contracts for on street parking and housing management, until the on street parking contract was renewed in 18 months time.
- 97.12 Pat Miles informed the Committee that she had sat on the interview Board for the tendering process. Ethical Parking Management had submitted the best tender. The Car Park and Garages Working Group would set up a meeting with Ethical Parking Management every two months to review the contract. She questioned why concerns about the contract had not been raised during the tendering process. Beverley Weaver concurred. She stated that she was a member of the Car Park and Garages Working Group and she also questioned why concerns had not been raised earlier.
- 97.13 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

## **98. VOTE OF THANKS**

- 98.1 The Committee agreed that they wished to give a vote of thanks to the Chairman, for her work as Housing Cabinet Member and Chairman of the HMCC. They were pleased to note that she would be continuing to work in these roles.
- 98.2 Councillor Wells informed the Committee that he had welcomed working with the members of the Committee. After his year as mayor he would look forward to working with the Committee once more.

The meeting concluded at 4.59pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 10

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Response to the Consultation Document from DCLG: Council Housing: A Real Future</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14 June 2010</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b><i>Director of Finance &amp; Resources</i></b> <b><i>Director of Housing, Culture &amp; Enterprise</i></b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b><i>Sue Chapman</i></b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>29-3105</b>
	<b>E-mail:</b>	Sue.chapman@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Forward Plan No: CAB 161168</b>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the proposals to reform the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system as set out in the consultation document 'Council Housing: A Real Future' issued on 25 March 2010 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
- 1.2 This report highlights the likely financial implications, risks and benefits to the council from the proposal and provides the council's draft response to the consultation as attached in Appendix 1.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Committee

- (1) Support the proposals for self financing of the HRA as set out in the DCLG Consultation paper 'Council Housing: A Real Future' issued on 25 March 2010.
- (2) Recommend that Cabinet approve the council's formal response to the consultation as attached at Appendix 1 supporting the proposal to move to self financing for the HRA.

#### 3. COUNCIL HOUSING: A REAL FUTURE PROSPECTUS

##### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The current HRA subsidy system has been in operation since 1989 and serves 177 local authorities. It is subject to an annual settlement of housing subsidy where rents are effectively pooled nationally and the subsidy system subsequently reallocates these resources. Reallocation is based on a notional HRA and the repayment of historical debt. The system however has a number of flaws:

- The notional system is complex and difficult to understand, is based on assumptions and does not really take into account local situations.
- The annual nature of the process makes it difficult to develop a strategic approach to longer term planning.
- The requirement for the majority of local authorities to pay a proportion of their rents known as 'negative subsidy' back into the national pot is unpopular, particularly now that the national pot creates a surplus overall.
- For local authorities similar to Brighton & Hove where HRA subsidy debt is greater than HRA debt the system does not promote efficient treasury management. For example action to reduce the average cost of the council's debt portfolio results in a decrease in General Fund expenditure but an increase in HRA expenditure.

3.2 The review of the Council Housing Finance system was launched by Ministers in March 2008. Following the review the DCLG issued a consultation paper in July 2009 outlining proposals for the reform of council housing finance with responses due by the end of October 2009. The responses have now been reviewed by DCLG and their detailed proposals were then announced on 25 March 2010. These proposals are set out in a consultation prospectus document entitled 'Council Housing: a real Future'. The consultation is highly technical and the prospectus is supported by a number of technical documents and financial models.

3.3 This is the last step in the HRA review process and responses to the proposals in the consultation paper must be submitted by 6 July 2010.

### **SELF FINANCING PROPOSALS**

3.4 The consultation paper proposes a number of radical changes to the financing system of council housing which if implemented would have a significant impact on the local authority's HRA Business Plan. A summary of the main proposals are as follows:

#### **1. Self Financing & Investment in New Council Housing**

3.5 The government propose that self financing will put all local authorities in a position where they can manage their homes from their own income in the future and can sustain their stock in a good condition. All authorities will be better off financially as a result of the settlement and simply put, the majority of the future forecast surpluses in the system will be retained by local authorities (see also paragraph 3.8 below).

3.6 Self financing will be created by abolishing the HRA subsidy system, in exchange for a one off redistribution of housing debt. Under the new system annual subsidy determinations and associated payments will cease. Local authorities will be free to self finance, meaning all rental income will be retained, providing greater control locally, which will enable longer term planning to improve the management and maintenance of council homes.

3.7 The proposed debt settlement for each local authority is determined through a Net Present Value calculation based on estimating 30 year income and expenditure subsidy allowances using new evidence of spending needs.



- 3.8 The calculations in the model include significant increases to assumptions on spend on management, maintenance and capital investment ensuring every council will have at least 10% more to spend than at present. It should be noted however, that the assumptions do not take into account funding for any backlog of works local authorities may have, which the government advise will be funded through capital grants. In addition the prospectus is silent on future funding for aids and adaptations and other health & safety works.
- 3.9 The self financing model proposes a 6.5% discount factor rate (a rate typically used in housing transfer valuations) to determine the present net value of the housing stock. This will provide a level of sustainable opening debt for each authority which will be measured against that authority's Subsidy Capital Financing Requirement (SCFR), which is the amount of notional debt the subsidy system currently supports. If the opening debt generated from the model was lower than the SCFR, Government would pay that local authority a capital sum equivalent to the difference. If the amount was higher than the local authority would need to pay the Government.
- 3.10 The government also proposes that where councils are prepared to take on a greater role in developing and delivering new council housing they would provide some headroom in the self financing settlement to enable councils, after they have met the spending needs of existing stock, to deliver a substantial new build programme. This additional 'headroom' given by using a 7% discount factor rate is expected to reduce the net receipt to Government by around £1.2 billion and should enable councils to deliver 10,000 new homes each year from the end of 2014 when combined with Social Housing Grant.
- 3.11 The paper also suggests that local authorities should start to pay off debt from the first year of self financing creating additional borrowing 'headroom' up to the settlement debt level which could be used to fund further new build in five years.

## **2. Retention of National Rent Policy**

- 3.12 Under self financing local authorities will still be required to follow national rent policy and rent convergence. The current rent restructuring formula provides a mechanism for protecting public expenditure and rent increases by providing a cap on the level of Housing Benefit an authority will receive for its tenants.

## **3. Retention of All Capital Receipts**

- 3.13 The current rules determining what capital receipts local authorities may retain and what receipts must be pooled (i.e. paid over to the Government) are complex. Under the current system 75% of the capital receipt from the sale of council homes is paid across to the Government and local authorities only retain the remaining 25%.
- 3.14 The consultation paper proposes that authorities retain all their capital receipts from the sale of housing and land that fall within the HRA, providing that at least 75% of those receipts are used for affordable housing and regeneration projects. The remaining 25% may be used for any capital purposes.

- 3.15 This change represents a transfer of funds from central to local government and so would reduce the resources available for centrally funded housing programmes. Therefore a proportion of local authority expenditure which is currently supported by capital grant would instead be financed by a local authority's housing receipts.

#### **4. Financial, Accounting and Regulatory Framework**

- 3.16 The HRA operates as a separate ring fenced account and is a record of revenue income and expenditure relating to local authority's own housing stock. Items that must be accounted for within the ring fence are defined by Schedule 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and also a DoE Circular 8/95 published in 1995. This consultation proposes updated guidance on the operation of the ring fence which does not introduce any new issues of principle and restates Ministers established policy for the ring fence. However, this guidance is intended to bring clarity to some areas and highlights the need to ensure that there should be a fair and transparent apportionment of costs between the General Fund (GF) and HRA where appropriate.
- 3.17 It is also proposed to develop a memorandum balance sheet for the HRA. It will not be a statutory account but a requirement to report as part of the annual report of the council. This will identify clearly the assets and liabilities that support the HRA and help understanding of the way assets are used.
- 3.18 At present, local authorities hold all their debt in one single 'pool' across all services so the debt attributable to housing is part of each local authority's overall debt portfolio. Interest on the HRA debt is charged at the consolidated rate of interest (CRI). The current system of pooling debt allows for more efficient treasury management but leaves the HRA exposed to interest rate changes from treasury management decisions taken by the GF and visa versa. The consultation proposes to separate the housing debt from the single pool, thus offsetting the impact of GF treasury management decisions on the HRA and increasing transparency around the costs of debt charges to tenants.
- 3.19 The Prudential Code for Capital Finance (developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) prescribes the methodology to determine the levels of borrowing affordable for local authorities. This consultation proposes to add a further control by capping future housing borrowing at the self financing debt settlement level calculated for each authority. The consultation also states that local authorities would have a long term incentive to reduce debt but there is no obligation to do so. Any decision to reduce debt levels will need to be balanced against decisions to invest in major repairs.

#### **5. Timetable**

- 3.20 At this stage the consultation proposals are not an offer open to acceptance by local authorities. The figures used have yet to be validated for each council; any settlement figure provided will be subject to confirmation in the next Spending Review and the new Governments position.
- 3.21 The agreement for self financing will only be achieved if the majority of local authorities agree, in which case the changes are likely to come into effect from

2011/12, subject to the new government's agreement. Failing this, there would need to be new legislation and this is unlikely to be before 2012/13.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE**

3.22 This section outlines the implications arising from the proposals for Brighton & Hove and provides background information to Appendix 1, the council's formal response to the consultation supporting the self financing proposals:

### **1. Self Financing & Investment in New Council Housing**

3.23 The settlement debt calculation is based on increases in Brighton & Hove's allowances of 7.1% for Management and Maintenance and 21.5% for the Major Repairs Allowance creating a combined uplift of 11.3% in the self financing model. Although this increase confirms the authority's belief of underfunding in past years it does not address additional funding required to cover communal areas, improvements or backlogs which maybe addressed through grants

3.24 The council will need to recognise that all the risks inherent in running a housing business will now transfer to the local authority. In particular an increase in the cost of borrowing will no longer be matched by an increase in HRA subsidy. The government have made it clear that this settlement is a full and final offer and that the generous discount factor of 6.5% should provide room for movement in key variables such as inflation rates.

3.25 Using a discount factor of 6.5%, the settlement debt is calculated at £137.633 million, compared to the council's SCFR of £137.056 million. This means the council will need to make a one off payment of £0.577 million to the government. However, the council will no longer need to pay 'negative subsidy', currently budgeted at £3.321 million for 2010/11 although it would be prudent to allow for capital repayments of debt in the future.

3.26 In order to assess the long term viability of the 30 year Business Plan various sensitivities and scenarios have been tested through the model. The starting position incorporates the removal of the subsidy system, the redistribution of debt and amendments to assumptions reflecting the additional risks now carried by the Authority instead of central government.

3.27 All scenarios show that the revised financial position of the HRA is significantly improved when compared to the current position and therefore as set out in Appendix 1, officers recommend the council should support self financing as it currently stands. There must be some caution in relation to the fact that this is based on a consultation, which may change depending on the outcome of the consultation and is subject to the Spending Review and the new governments view on the prospectus. For example, based on a discount factor of 6% (rather than 6.5%) the payment due from the council increases from £0.577 million to over £7.0 million. The various discount factor scenarios are shown in Appendix 2.

- 3.28 The current HRA 3 year capital programme will enable the council to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2013. The consultation paper will provide additional resources for the HRA to deliver much more than previously anticipated including:
- Continue to maintain the Decent Homes Standard and also deliver the new warm homes standard based on the initial proposals for this standard.
  - Support the development and implementation of a longer term asset management strategy and associated redevelopment and regeneration schemes.
  - Invest in sustainability projects.
  - Deliver some environment improvements to estates.
  - Develop a debt management policy with provisions to repay existing historic debt and new borrowing over a long term period.
- 3.29 At a discount factor of 7%, the settlement debt is calculated at £131.7 million which means the government will need to make a one off payment of £5.389 million to the council. This payment would be used to repay debt and would provide headroom of £6 million for the council to start a new build programme. For the 7% factor to be applied the council will need to give a strong commitment to build new social housing. In addition the government expects the council to match this headroom with Social Housing Grant and to use available funds from the Business Plan to maximise the new build programme.
- 3.30 The council will need to continue with its current programme to meet the Decent Homes Standard before reducing any debt and therefore it will not be able to contribute from its own Business Plan within the first five years unless grant funding does become available to fund backlogs of work.
- 3.31 Projections show that the council could build 130 new homes over a five year period from 2014. It is not possible at this stage for the council to estimate the number of new homes it could fund from within its own Business Plan for the following reasons:
- It is unclear what funding will be available for backlogs, communal areas, disabled aids and adaptations and improvements.
  - Our longer term asset management strategy is being developed. This will include future regeneration proposals that will require funding from within existing resources at unit costs which will differ from standard new build unit rates. These costings will need to be evaluated before determining new build proposals.
  - The headroom imposed by the cap on borrowing may need to finance, firstly backlogs of works, improvements (identified as local priorities by tenants) and proposed new build from the 7% discount rate. These items combined will significantly limit the level of borrowing headroom available for other new build.

## **2. Retention of National Rent Policy**

- 3.32 The main assumption in the proposal is that rents will converge by 2015/16 and not by the current date of 2012/13. This means that rents will rise more slowly than currently anticipated. The prospectus continues to assume that formula rents will increase by 0.5% above inflation every year. The control of rental policy will remain with the government and it is currently proposed that the Tenants Services Authority will regulate our compliance with rent policy in the future.

## **3. Financial, Accounting and Regulatory Framework**

- 3.33 Brighton & Hove already operates the HRA within the ring fencing rules. The additional guidance within the consultation will provide further clarity in terms of allocating costs to the appropriate services.
- 3.34 The council operates a single pooled debt portfolio which is consistent with the Code of Practice issued by CIPFA. Interest paid on housing debt is charged to the HRA based on an average interest rate (CRI). The calculation of the CRI is based on the council's overall debt portfolio and therefore changes in the level of debt, either GF or HRA, can impact on the rate and hence the interest charged to the HRA. This can lead to an element of cross subsidisation between the GF and HRA and therefore the true cost of housing debt can not be identified. The proposal to have a separate pool for housing debt will eliminate any cross subsidisation – the link between housing debt and the charge to the HRA will be transparent. It will also ensure that the GF does not suffer from being unable to recover interest payments from the HRA due to changes in interest rates and the ratio of HRA debt to GF debt (which is possible under the current subsidy system).
- 3.35 The proposal to introduce a HRA borrowing ceiling at the settlement debt level should not cause much concern for the council. The council's actual housing debt at March 2010 is £92.6 million which is much lower than the self financing debt level (using the 6.5% discount factor) of £137.6 million thereby providing capacity to borrow a further £45m subject to affordability.

## **4. Retention of All Capital Receipts**

- 3.36 Brighton & Hove's Housing Strategy sets clear strategic objectives around improving housing supply, housing quality and housing support in the city. Allowing the council to retain their housing capital receipts will encourage regeneration and more effective and innovative asset management in response to locally identified priorities.
- 3.37 It is difficult to accurately determine the level of retained capital receipts resulting from this proposal as this is dependant on the extent of right to buy (RTB) take up to date, current housing market and the saleability of remaining stock. However, a proportion of the RTB receipts should be allocated to the HRA following disposal to recognise that the debt associated with the property no longer has an income stream to service it.

## 5. Summary

- 3.38 The government's intention is that the self financing settlement will ensure every local authority will have more money to spend and the freedom to manage their resources more efficiently through improved long term planning.
- 3.39 These proposals provide Brighton & Hove with significantly more funding which will enable the council to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2013 and develop and deliver a robust asset management strategy meeting the needs and local priorities of tenants. This settlement will also provide the council with the ability and flexibility to manage and repay debt and explore options for future redevelopment and regeneration.
- 3.40 However, it must be noted that these are only consultation proposals at this stage. The final settlement maybe subject to change as detailed in section 3.21 above.

## 4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This report will be presented to both Housing Management Consultative Committee and Cabinet.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The financial implications of the consultation are detailed in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.40. If a self financing settlement is agreed, the resulting financial implications will be included in the appropriate Budget Report and HRA Business Plan.

*Finance Officer Consulted:* Sue Chapman *Date:* 13/05/10

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Reform of the council housing finance system as described in the report could be achieved through reliance on existing powers in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 or by introducing new primary legislation. The consultation paper does not make it clear what approach is to be adopted. Further it is not yet known what effect the Decentralisation and Localism Bill with its commitment to "Review the Housing Revenue Account" will have upon the proposals. No adverse Human Rights Act implications are considered to arise from the report.

*Lawyer Consulted:* Liz Woodley *Date:* 27/05/10

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this consultation prospectus.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The self financing settlement will provide a framework within which all local authorities

can sustain their stock in a good condition in the future. This should enable the council to deliver a range of measures that will benefit and sustain the local environment.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this consultation.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The council will need to recognise that all the risks inherent in running a housing business will now transfer to the local authority and a more detailed risk management strategy will need to be adopted in preparing the HRA Business Plan. The key risks which will need to be managed and developed as sensitivities and scenarios within the model may include:
- Inflationary risk that expenditure inflation is greater than income, particularly with rental increases determined by national rent policy.
  - Managing interest rate fluctuations and debt portfolio
  - Long term capital and maintenance responsibilities cannot be met by available resources
  - Balancing regeneration and redevelopment needs with tenants priorities

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The self financing settlement will provide a framework within which all local authorities can manage and maintain their stock in a good condition in the future. This should create housing that improves the city's appearance and provide secure homes and communities that tenants enjoy living in.

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The option of not responding was discounted on the basis that it will deprive the Council of an opportunity of influencing the debate.

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The recommendation is to welcome the consultation proposals and to approve the formal response from the Council supporting self financing. This will enable the council to have a say in the process and thereby influence the outcome.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Formal Response to 'Council housing: a real future' from Brighton & Hove City Council
2. Brighton & Hove HRA Self Financing Prospectus Proposals

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. Council housing a real future: Prospectus, issued by CLG 25 March 2010
2. Modelling business plans for council landlords, report on model inputs assumptions and outputs, issued by CLG 25 March 2010
3. Working papers held with Financial Services.



**Brighton & Hove City Council  
Formal Response to Council Housing: A Real Future**

**1. What are your views on the proposed methodology for assessing income and spending needs under self-financing and for valuing each council's business?**

Brighton & Hove supports the proposed methodology for assessing income and spending needs under self-financing and for valuing each council's business. We support the use of the 6.5% discount factor and acknowledge that this rate would ensure that the self financing settlement should be robust enough to withstand a range of movements to key variables including interest and inflation rates.

The proposed methodology excludes backlog of works and remains silent in respect of communal areas, disabled aids and adaptation and improvements. We would welcome detailed proposals for grants to deal with existing backlogs of works and also further information concerning future funding proposals for communal areas, disabled aids and adaptations and improvement works.

We understand that the self financing settlement is a full and final offer and that there would be not future recourse to government for funding. However, the consultation prospectus highlights in paragraph 3.69 that if there were major policy changes then the government would consider the consequences for council landlords and deal with these as separate transactions. The proposed methodology assumes that rental income will increase by 3% per annum over the 30 year period. Our main concern is that rents will continue to be regulated by the government (or the TSA in future) and that any changes to the proposed increases would have a significant impact on the viability of our Business Plan. Therefore, we would expect that any departure from these assumptions to be recognised as major policy changes which would result in some recourse from government.

**2. What are your views on the proposals for the financial, regulatory and accounting framework for self-financing?**

Brighton & Hove supports the move to greater transparency in the operation of the HRA as part of a wider move to empower tenants.

Brighton & Hove agree with the principles of the operation of the HRA ring fence and find the revised guidelines detailed in Annex D of the consultation helpful. A separate memorandum balance sheet will provide more transparency for tenants and provide useful information regarding the assets and liabilities that support council housing. We would welcome further joint proposals from the Government and CIPFA to develop this idea further.

Brighton & Hove supports the improved transparency and clear accountability achieved through the use of two separate pools for the future management of the HRA and the General Fund debts. However, we do not support the use of the fixed interest rate over the long term for servicing residual debt and believe local authorities should retain flexibility locally to manage their debts.

Brighton & Hove holds historic debt premia in relation to the HRA which would have been funded through future subsidy settlements. This consultation does not appear to provide funding for these and we would welcome proposals for financing historic debt premia in the final self financing settlement.

Brighton & Hove believes that the proposed approach to impose a cap on borrowing undermines the principles within the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance and will constrain 'spend to save' types of investment where up front spending is repaid from future revenue savings. This is likely to restrict in the short term Brighton & Hove's future potential for delivering new homes and regeneration projects as detailed further in response to question 3. We would request that the government recognise that borrowing for self financing HRA's needs to be treated differently with a longer term approach to borrowing in a similar way to housing associations, which operate borrowing levels through the use of suitable ratios and covenants.

### **3. How much new supply could this settlement enable you to deliver, if combined with social housing grant?**

Brighton & Hove welcome the opportunities offered in the self financing proposals to offer 'headroom' to enable council's to deliver new homes and to enable retention of HRA capital receipts for affordable housing and regeneration projects.

The use of the 7% discount factor will provide Brighton & Hove with funding, when combined with 50% social housing grant, to deliver in the region of 130 new homes over a five year period from 2014.

It is difficult to determine at this stage how many additional homes could be delivered within the existing Business Plan due to the following factors:

- It is unclear what funding will be available for backlogs, communal areas, disabled aids and adaptations and improvements.
- Our longer term asset management strategy is being developed. This will include future regeneration proposals that will require funding from within existing resources at unit costs which will differ from standard new build unit rates. These costings will need to be evaluated before determining new build proposals.
- The headroom imposed by the cap on borrowing may need to finance, firstly backlogs of works, improvements (identified as local priorities by tenants) and proposed new build from the 7% discount rate. These items combined will significantly limit the level of borrowing headroom available for other new build.

We are prepared to take on a greater role in developing and delivering new council housing and have already pre-qualified with the Homes & Communities Agency as an Investment Partner (subject to procurement of delivery partners to provide requisite technical expertise) for future development of new council homes.

This is in the context of:

- Significant identified housing need in the city
- A relatively small council housing stock
- Overall citywide delivery target of 230 new affordable homes per annum
- A requirement to support delivery of more family homes (target mix of 30% one bed, 45% two beds and 25% three beds for new affordable housing).

**4. Do you favour a self-financing system for council housing or the continuation of a nationally redistributive subsidy system?**

Brighton & Hove favour a self financing system for council housing using either the 6.5% discount factor or 7% factor with new build. We strongly believe that this system will provide the opportunity for the council to develop a robust medium and long term strategy based on local priorities within a clear financial framework.

**5. Would you wish to proceed to early voluntary implementation of self-financing on the basis of the methodology and principles proposed in this document? Would you be ready to implement self financing in 2011-12? If not, how much time do you think is required to prepare for implementation?**

Brighton & Hove would wish to proceed to early voluntary implementation of self-financing on the basis of the methodology and principles proposed in this document in 2011/12.

**6. If you favour self-financing but do not wish to proceed on the basis of the proposals in this document, what are the reasons?**

This question is not applicable for Brighton & Hove.

## APPENDIX 2

### BRIGHTON & HOVE HRA SELF FINANCING PROSPECTUS PROPOSALS

<b>Discount Factor</b>	<b>Actual HRA Debt (*)</b>	<b>SCFR (**)</b>	<b>SF Settlement Debt</b>	<b>Payment / (Receipt) to/from Government</b>	<b>HRA Borrowing Headroom</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>6%</b>	92.6	137.1	144.1	<b>7.006</b>	51.5
<b>6.5%</b>	92.6	137.1	137.7	<b>0.577</b>	45.1
<b>7%</b>	92.6	137.1	131.7	<b>(5.389)</b>	39.1

(\*) as at 31 March 2010

(\*\*) SCFR - Subsidy Capital Financing Requirement

# **HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

## **Agenda Item 11**

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Management Service Improvement Plan Update</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14 June 2010</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Housing, Culture &amp; Enterprise</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name: Diane Hughes</b>	<b>Tel: 29-3841</b>	
	<b>E-mail: Diane.Hughes@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

#### **1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This report informs Housing Management Consultative Committee of the progress made in the delivery of the Housing Management Service Improvement Plan 2009-12.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the progress during year two of the improvement plan.

#### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 The Housing Management Service Improvement Plan presents a programme for managing and maintaining council housing over the next three years. It has been developed with the overall objective of achieving excellent housing management services for council tenants and leaseholders in Brighton and Hove.
- 3.2 The three year plan is being delivered through the operational business plan and Housing Improvement Programme. The Housing Improvement Programme co-ordinates the delivery of all of the large improvement projects contained within the annual business plan and is overseeing the transformation of the Housing Management division. The delivery of the programme is overseen by the Housing Improvement Programme Board. The programme is split into four core work streams (for full details, see appendix 1):

- Housing Investment
- Access & Customer Care
- Diversity, Inequality & Sustainability
- Business Improvement

3.3 In December 2009, a progress report for year one of the programme was presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee. This report provides a six monthly update on our progress towards meeting our priorities in year two.

### **3.4 Housing Investment**

#### Repairs & Improvement Partnership

3.4.1 The partnership got off to a good start on 1 April with Mears well prepared with additional operatives and van fleet. The new technology infrastructure worked effectively (ICT system, phone and data lines). All transferring council staff and operatives transferred successfully and are mostly positive about the transition.

3.4.2 Planning permission has been granted for a 'Supercentre' to house the partnership in the Fairway trading Estate on Moulsecoomb Way. This means we can now start work on this exiting development turning it into a state of the art operations centre for the partnership. The plan is to relocate the retained council staff to this building as well as Mears staff, and to be up and running during September 2010.

#### Local Delivery Vehicle

3.4.3 A formal commercial and financial offer was made to the LDV Board on 12 February 2010. The Board appointed financial advisors on the 24 May 2010 who will produce a business plan in order to hold negotiations with funders.

### **3.5 Diversity, Inequality and Sustainability**

#### Sustainability

3.5.1 A progress report on the work of the Energy Efficiency Working Group was discussed at Housing Management Consultative Committee in December 2009. Since then we have secured training through the Energy Saving Trust for tenant energy champions who will provide

energy advice on simple actions around the homes that everyone can take to reduce fuel bills. Further developments will also be taken through the Repairs & Improvement Partnership and Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) project.

### Turning the Tide

3.5.2 A report providing an overview of progress of the Turning the Tide pilot and strategy was considered by Housing Management Consultative Committee in March. The Social Exclusion Strategy is a work in progress, currently at the second draft stage. Feedback from key stakeholders, partners and council tenants will be sought before presenting a final draft to Cabinet for agreement later this financial year.

3.5.3 The pilot has focused on Moulsecoomb and Bevendean and has produced positive result so far. Successes include:

- Piloting the “surgery approach” to dealing with tenant enquiries at the housing office to re-dress the current 80/20 split of housing officer time between office based and community based work. Housing Management Advisors are now dealing with 95% of enquiries themselves with the remainder being passed onto Housing Officers to resolve
- Up-skilling Housing Management staff to be able to provide signposting and advice to tenants across a broader range of issues
- Working with other services and teams such as Homemove, the Lettings Team and supported housing providers to implement the Risk Factor Indicator List with new tenants. This triggers early intervention by Housing Management staff to prevent tenancy failure or negative behaviours impacting on other tenants and residents.

3.5.4 Next steps include:

- Continue to concentrate on the delivery of Housing Management services, with successful initiatives being rolled out to other housing offices from April 2010
- Amend Housing Management policies and procedures to reflect changes
- Improving resident participation and involvement
- Implementing the “Rate Your Estate” initiative and the Housing and Estates Forum; improving reporting information around estate inspections (“traffic light system”) repairs/maintenance to include profiling; use of Estate Development Budget and using the website to publish results etc.

### Financial Inclusion

- 3.5.5 The Housing Income Management Team has produced a draft financial inclusion strategy which was presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 29 March 2010. A series of staff workshops have been arranged in June 2010 to devise an action plan to support the strategy. A final draft will be brought back to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

### Home Ownership Strategy

- 3.5.6 A draft Home Ownership Strategy has been produced and consultation will be undertaken with the Leaseholder Action Group at their meeting on 13 July 2010. A copy of the draft strategy will be brought to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 27 September 2010.

## **3.6 Access & Customer Care**

### Customer Access Review

- 3.6.1 Work is underway on the second phase of this work stream to look at ways of improving the experience of residents contacting the Housing Management service. There are currently a number of telephone numbers, reception desks and teams that residents can contact about different issues. This project aims to ensure that it is clear who residents should contact about different issues and that their queries are resolved as quickly as possible when they do. The project should lead to an improved service to residents and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall service. Residents and staff will be involved in a variety of ways including through the resident 'Mystery Shoppers' and working groups.
- 3.6.2 The customer access review is also supporting the delivery of the council's accommodation Strategy which seeks to rationalise and make best use of office space and provide more flexible workspace. Opportunities to share access points and streamline access for joint customers are being explored to improve the customer experience by avoiding multiple contacts at different receptions.

### Website & e-access

- 3.6.3 A website survey was completed between January – March 2010 and 40 responses were received from residents. The feedback from this



survey will help inform improvements to the website, with the first set of changes planned for completion in July 2010.

### Resident Involvement Strategy

- 3.6.4 A draft strategy has been produced and the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group approved the draft for further consultation at their meeting on 27 April 2010. The strategy will be subject to comprehensive consultation with residents and an update on the strategy is included elsewhere on the agenda.

## **3.7 Business Improvement**

### 3.7.1 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Mo Lawless has been appointed project manager for the improvement of the housing ICT system. She is currently undertaking a scoping exercise to fully understand the ICT needs of the division. It is likely that this will result in improvements to the current system rather than a full replacement.

### Delivering a 3 star service

- 3.7.2 In March 2009 the audit commission carried out an advice and assistance visit on our income management service, our arrangements for resident involvement and the business plan. In June 2009 a report was presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee outlining the results of the visit and an action plan for delivering improvements. A progress report against this action plan is attached at appendix 2 for information.
- 3.7.3 Further work is currently now underway preparing the service for the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), the production of an annual report and development of local offers. A report on our annual report and local offers preparations is included elsewhere on the agenda.
- 3.7.4 Work is also underway to prepare for the Audit Commission 'Red Flag' review of the Repairs & Improvement Partnership which will take place between May and July this year.

### Value for Money

- 3.7.5 A cost benchmarking project group has been formed to analyse and understand the costs involved in delivering our service. This group has been undertaking benchmarking (comparing the council's costs and

performance with similar organisations) to enable a value for money assessment of operations across the broad range of services provided. This group has initially focused on tenancy management and estates service costs. It is intended that we will share information in future with residents through our performance reports and working groups.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Service Improvement Plan aims to meet the council's strategic housing and resident priorities. The plan was developed with residents through the wide range of working groups to seek views on how we achieve excellence in service delivery. Ideas promoted by residents at citywide groups, monitoring groups, area panels, the City Assembly and Housing Management Consultative Committee have also helped inform the priorities within this plan.
- 4.2 The plan has been informed by the Housing Strategy 2009-14. Extensive consultation was undertaken through a three stage process. Findings from this consultation and the strategy have helped inform our service priorities.
- 4.3 Residents will continue to be involved in the projects to deliver the plan and a bi-annual progress report will be brought to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 This report describes the progress of the Service Improvement Plan within Housing services and therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks*

*Date: 19 May 2010:*

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As the report is for noting only, there are no significant legal implications arising from it. Any strategies developed as a result of the initiatives outlined will need to be scrutinised to ensure that they are legally sound, and have been formulated with due regard for the Human Rights Act.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley*

*Date: 19 May 2010*

#### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Service Improvement Plan. The Service Improvement Plan also directly aims to positively address inequality through priority five 'ensure that social housing provides a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity'

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The programme will use the individual projects to help reduce carbon emissions from the service's operations and help improve the energy efficiency of resident's homes. The sustainability project includes the Housing Energy Efficiency Working Group which aims to identify ways of improving energy efficiency. Housing is also one of the 12 key objectives of the council's Sustainability Strategy which aims to ensure that everyone has access to decent, affordable housing that meets their needs. The Service Improvement Plan supports this aim.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Providing good quality housing and support is essential to help reduce anti social behaviour and other crime and to effectively support the victims. Specific actions within the Service Improvement Plan aim to provide safer communities through a balance of enforcement and support, for example with the 'Turning the Tide' project which focuses on tackling anti social behaviour and its causes.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct risk or opportunity management implications arising from this report.

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 We recognise that the drive to achieve excellence in housing management will not be a success if carried out in isolation. It must recognise and address the needs and aspirations of the city and therefore the plan aims to support the priorities and aims of the Corporate Plan 2008-11, Housing Strategy 2009-14 and the 2020 Community Strategy.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Programme Structure
2. Audit Commission Advice & Assistance Visit Action Plan

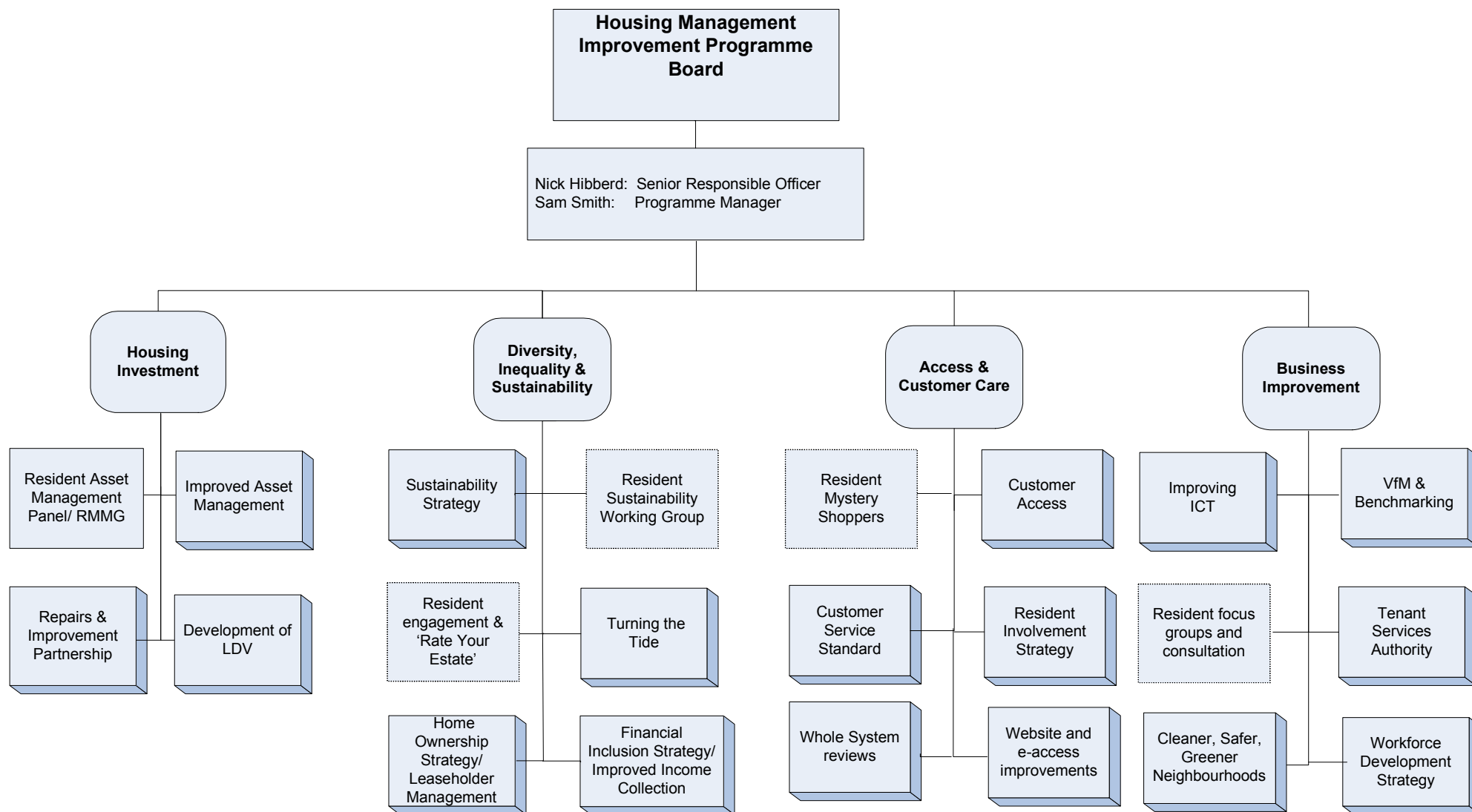
### **Documents In Members' Rooms**

1. None

### **Background Documents**

1. None

## Housing Management Improvement Programme: Programme Structure (April 2010 update)



← ————— There are links and connections across these projects and workstreams ————— →



<b>Business Plan 2009/10 - Audit Commission Recommendations</b>			
Directorate Name		Housing, Culture & Enterprise	
Responsible Manager		Diane Hughes	
Date		1 June 2010	Version <b>2</b>
<b>Corporate Priorities</b>		<b>Directorate Objectives</b>	
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"> <li>1. Providing Homes to meet the needs of the city.</li> <li>2. Improve Housing Quality in the City to ensure all have access to decent homes.</li> <li>3. Deliver high quality and personalised services.</li> <li>4. Deliver Value for Money services.</li> <li>5. Work in partnership to improve the commissioning and provision of services</li> <li>6. Reduce Inequality.</li> <li>7. Deliver excellent customer services.</li> <li>8. Develop our workforce in line with the corporate objectives.</li> </ol>
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		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
<b>Service Objective 1 – Improve services to an excellent standard, working with (and responding to) the diversity of our customers</b>								
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.	All customer service charters will be reviewed alongside local offers. Consultation to begin Summer 2010.	Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Hughes & Heads of Service
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.	Existing ICT facilities did not offer a long term option for developing this service. We are currently researching new options for introducing on		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		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
				line facilities with our software providers.				
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.	Two surveys have been placed on line – a website survey (Jan – March 2010) and a cleaning survey for the Bristol Estate (April 2010). Further surveys will be included.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		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 Hughes
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.	An article on the two mystery shopping exercises will be included in autumn 2010 edition of homing in. Copies to be available on the		Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
				website.				
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.	Feedback on our complaints performance and the outcomes will be published and scrutinised by tenants through the 2010 annual report. Complaints performance will be added to the HMCC quarterly performance report for scrutiny and review.	Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		Brian Foley/John Austin Locke
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.	A central record of all surveys has been developed and quality control is applied to ensure		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Annette Kochnari/ John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
				consistency in our surveys.				
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.	We will be expanding the remit of our mystery shopping group in 2010 to undertake telephone surveys to gauge satisfaction with our services.		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 Bartholomew 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.	Telephony equipment will be reviewed as part of the customer access review.		Improve quality Improve efficiency	Financial risk Corporate risk	John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
2	3,6,7	Develop IT systems to produce detailed reports on all stages of rent recovery procedures.	Project plan to be produced by end of July 09. Implementation date January 2010.	A number of improvements have been made to our reports – final adjustments are being made.		Improve quality Improve efficiency		Steve Corbett/ David Rook/Lynn Yule
2	4	Set targets for reducing former tenant arrears.	June 09	In 2008/9 the average collection rate for former tenant arrears was 9.12% (Rent Income Excellence Network national figures). The 2009/10 collection rate for Brighton & Hove was 22.88%.	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.	Completed		Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Hughes
3	3,4,5,6,7	Produce a Resident Involvement Strategy (which sets out what the council and	Strategy to be drafted with Tenant	Draft strategy agreed by		Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		its residents want to achieve in terms of service delivery and wider community development matters).	Compact Monitoring Group April-September 09  Cabinet sign off – Dec 09.  Implement Feb 2010	Tenant Compact Monitoring Group - April 2010. The draft will now be distributed for further consultation.				
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.	The draft resident involvement strategy outlines the variety of options for engagement.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		John Austin Locke
5	3,7	Ensure there is a clear understanding of our resident involvement structure (clear definition and understanding of the roles).	Section to be included in new tenant representatives handbook (launch date Summer 09), tenant handbook (launch date January 2010) Section to be	The new tenant representative handbook is in place.  The revised tenant handbook will be distributed in Summer 2010.		Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
			included in resident involvement strategy and tenant compact.	A section on our current involvement structure has been included in the draft Resident Involvement Strategy.				
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.	To be updated alongside the Resident Involvement Strategy.		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.	The Tenant Handbook includes a section on resident involvement. This is due to be distributed Summer 2010.		Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Hughes

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
3	3,4,5,6,7	Develop a record of all residents preferred method of consultation and engagement and use this to ensure service delivery reflects residents' needs.	Develop a facility on our housing management software system to record information.  Tenant Census form in place to gather information. Spreadsheet set up March 2009 to record tenant representatives preferences.	Resident Involvement Survey completed – December 2009. All information is now available on our housing management software system.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings	Service: ICT capacity	John Austin Locke/ Heads of 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.	Findings from the Resident Involvement Survey will be used to inform our Resident Involvement Strategy which will seek to address under representation by young people. There are also examples of		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Jane White



Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
				action that has been taken by individual tenant associations to successfully broaden the representation within their associations.				
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.	Texting still in place and is proving a successful method of communication. Further improvements to be explored through itexting.		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.  Higher profile at Group	Housemark workshops completed. Benchmarking reports on cost, performance and satisfaction are being produced in		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		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
			Management Team through new performance report.  New reporting tool to be produced for HMCC (June 09).	Summer 2010 for tenancy management and estates service.  New HMCC report template in place.				
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.	Job shadowing opportunities in place between all teams.  Relaunch of rechargeable repairs procedures complete.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Income Generation		David Rook/ Housing Managers

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
2	3,7	Introduce ebenefit mobile technology for on site visits (Housing Income Management Team).	To be introduced July 2009	Ebenefits very successful and has been expanded to include new claimants as well as new tenants. Technical difficulties have prevented the introduction of mobile technology during 2009/10 but further work is taking place to enable it to be operational in Summer 2010.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Sue 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.	To the end of the third quarter in 2009/10, our performance has improved to 84% of rent accounts being set up within	Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		David Rook/Helen Batchelor/ Julie Renvoize

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		Performance indicators	Value for Money Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
				ten days and an average time of five days.				

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.	The benefits of direct debit continue to be promoted by staff. Alternative payment methods are also promoted for example pay point where it is more convenient and suited to an individual tenant.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook
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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				
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.	Survey completed. 43% of those responding would like contact up to 8pm one evening a week, with 36% on Saturday mornings. These findings will be taken forward as part of wider customer access review.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Lynn Yule
2	4	Develop a detailed understanding of the component costs of service delivery.	Scope VFM benchmarking project & produce project plan June 09.	Initial benchmarking reports on costs, performance and satisfaction due Summer 2010.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Diane Hughes
2	4	Undertake robust benchmarking with peers using our understanding of our costs.	Housemark relaunch May 09.  Launch of Performance	Housemark relaunched with staff May 2009. Initial benchmarking		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		All Heads of Service

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				
			Management Framework April 09.	reports on costs, performance and satisfaction due Summer 2010.				
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.	Initial benchmarking reports on costs, performance and satisfaction due Summer 2010.  Next STATUS survey due 2010.		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				
<b>Service Objective 3 – Promote social housing as a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity</b>								
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.	Improvements to the level and quality of equalities and diversity data held on our housing management software system taking place in 2010. Diversity reports thereafter will be used to provide valuable information.		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 Tenant & Residents Association's - March 2009. Analysis to take place.	Complete. Data now included on housing management software system.		Improve quality Improve efficiency		Steve Corbett/ 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				
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 Monitoring Group.	Tenant Compact to be reviewed alongside the Resident Involvement Strategy.		Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke
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.	Tenant profiling project in place to improve the level and quality of equalities data held.  Financial inclusion checks taking place to gather further information. Tenancy checks taking place to gather further information.	Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		Heads of Service



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				
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.	Draft financial inclusion strategy presented to HMCC – March 2010. Action plan to be developed and brought back to HMCC & Housing Cabinet for agreement.		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				
<b>Service Objective 4 – Develop our workforce in line with our service objectives</b>								
4	3,7,8	Develop a clear induction training programme for staff on rent recovery procedures.	End of July 09	Induction procedure in place and reviewed regularly to ensure they are effective.		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker
3	3,6,7,8	Train Housing Income Management Team (HIMT) staff to provide advice on energy efficiency.	End of September 09	Financial Inclusion Strategy addresses issues of energy efficiency. Training has been secured through the Energy Saving Trust for tenant energy champions who will provide energy advice on simple actions around the home that		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker

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				
				everyone can take to reduce fuel bills.				
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	Variety of sources of referrals – HIMT staff are aware of the various options and will work with the most relevant provider for an individual tenant.		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	Individual inductions in place. Monthly meetings to introduce new staff to resident involvement will commence Summer 2010		Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke/ Community Participation Officer's

Please insert additional rows and tables as required



# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 12

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Tenant Handbook Review  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 June 2010  
**Report of:** Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise  
**Contact Officer:** Name: Diane Hughes Tel: 29-3841  
E-mail: [Diane.Hughes@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk](mailto:Diane.Hughes@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk)  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To present the results of the tenant led Chairman's Working Group review of the tenant handbook for tenants living in council housing.
- 1.2 To present a proposed draft of the new tenant handbook.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the conclusions of the working group outlined in this report and the tenant presentation.
- (2) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee endorses the new version of the tenant handbook attached at appendix 1 and forward to the housing cabinet member for approval.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

- 3.1 The Chairman's Working Group undertook a review of the tenancy agreement which was agreed at Housing Cabinet on 14 January 2010 and which was implemented in May 2010 for all council introductory and secure tenants.

3.2 The tenant handbook was last updated in April 2006 and the group wished to ensure that the handbook complimented the revised agreement, that tenants were aware of their rights and responsibilities and that tenants have updated and relevant information.

3.3 The group considered the current version of the tenant handbook and noted the following points:

- the handbook was in one document which made it easy to access and ensured all the information was held in one place
- the handbook had a logical, clear layout and covered the main areas of tenancy management
- the handbook had a useful contents and index section
- the handbook could benefit from more pictures and colour
- the handbook provided a good basis on which to expand upon.

3.4 The group also considered examples of handbooks from local housing providers and high performing authorities (including Southampton, Poole Housing Partnership, Derby Homes and City West Homes). The presentation of the handbooks varied. Some key areas included:

- separate booklets as opposed to a single document
- use of pictures and leaflets to break up the content
- good use of colour
- the level of detail varied considerably from basic information to very lengthy documents
- some examples used a 'question and answer' approach.

3.5 The group therefore decided to revise the handbook using the current handbook as a structure, whilst taking into account key features of colour, pictures and questions and answers from other examples. The group agreed to organise the handbook around the five sections of the tenancy agreement, whilst adding additional sections where appropriate to cover extra information, for example resident involvement.

The group reviewed the contents of the handbook and also included further information on issues that were important to tenants including resident involvement, succession, how to end the tenancy in the event of the death of the tenant, rechargeable repairs, sustainability issues and being a good neighbour. The group also agreed to begin each section with a photograph and use colour tabs to allow for easy navigation.

3.6 A draft of the tenant handbook is attached at appendix 1, which if endorsed will be forwarded to the housing cabinet member for approval. A copy of the new handbook will then be delivered to all tenants during summer 2010.

## 4.0 **CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 During the tenancy agreement consultation in August and September 2009, tenants raised a number of issues and questions where they wanted further information or advice. For example on permission for pets and succession. The group have ensured that these issues have been reflected in the draft handbook.

## 5.0 **FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The costs related to the production of the Tenant Handbook including design, printing and distribution will be met from the HRA revenue budget and included within the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) projections for 2010/11.

*Finance Officer Consulted:* Gary Driver

*Date:* 12/05/10

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Although not legally required to issue a Tenant's Handbook, a combination of powers in the Housing Act 1985 and Local Government Act 1972 provide sufficient authority for the same. 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:* Liz Woodley

*Date:* 19.05.10

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The development of the revised tenant handbook has been taken with due regards to equalities and diversity issues and will be available in a range of formats to meet to meet tenants needs. Feedback from the consultation on the tenancy agreement has been used to finalise the Equality Impact Assessment on the revised tenant handbook.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 An effective tenant handbook providing clear information on rights and responsibilities will contribute to the development of sustainable communities.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The revised tenant handbook will positively contribute to preventing crime and the fear of crime by stating the types of anti social behaviour and harassment that is prohibited and the enforcement action that the council can take should such behaviour occur.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The introduction of a revised tenant handbook will have citywide implications for council tenants.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Draft Tenant Handbook

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

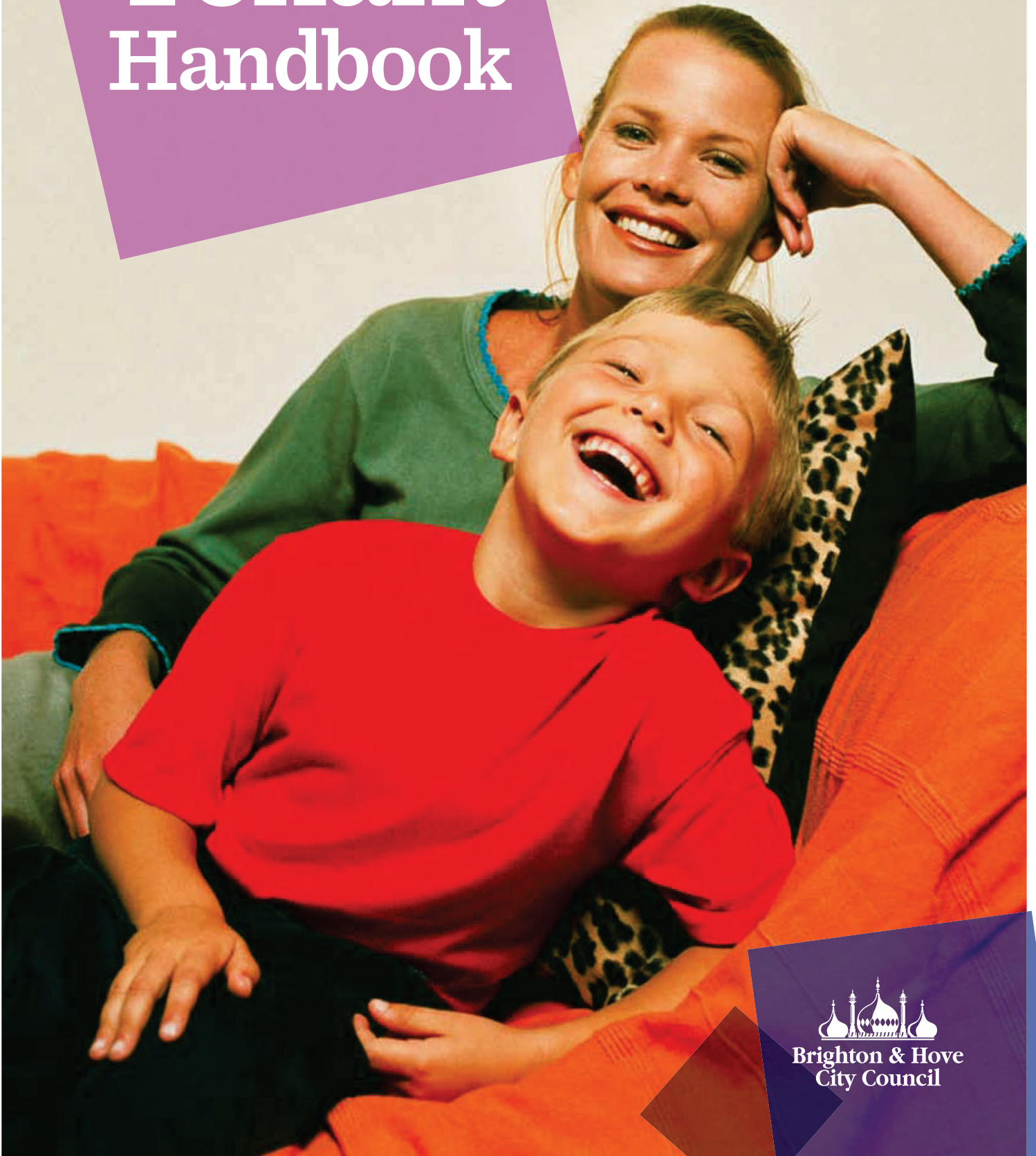
**Background Documents**

None



# Tenant Handbook

Your guide to being a tenant  
of Brighton & Hove City Council



Brighton & Hove  
City Council



# Welcome

This is your tenant handbook. It has been put together by elected tenant representatives and officers to give you information and guidance on your tenancy with Brighton & Hove City Council.

The handbook explains your rights and your responsibilities, as well as the council's responsibilities as your landlord. It also gives details of the housing services the council provides for you.

This handbook is only a guide to our services and aims to answer the general queries you may have about your home and tenancy.

Over time, our services and policies may change and not be reflected here, but we will keep you up to date through our website ([www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing)) and the Homing In newsletter.

Please let us know if you or a member of your household would like any part of the book explained, or put on CD or tape, or produced in large print. If you need to have any of our documents translated please contact your housing office.

We would like to express our thanks to the tenant representatives involved for all the hard work they put into compiling this handbook. They spent many hours making sure it was easy to read and understand and as useful as possible to you.

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# 1

# Customer care





## Contacting us

You can contact us in a number of ways including through our offices, by telephone, by letter, email or through the council's website.

Details of our housing offices, Repairs Helpdesk and other useful telephone numbers are in the useful contacts section at the back of this handbook. Useful email and website addresses have also been included throughout the handbook.

Our housing offices have a number of facilities, including a free telephone to put you in touch with other council departments and internet access to browse the council's website. All housing offices have private interview rooms, are wheelchair accessible and have hearing loops available.

Brighton & Hove City Council's website address is [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk). You will find basic information and contact details for all the council services on there, including a section on housing. If you are a regular internet user you will find the website contains a lot of the information you need and provides a way of contacting services, councillors and officers about issues that affect you and your neighbourhood. Free internet access is also available in the city's libraries.

## Our priorities

We are committed to improving our service. Our plan for managing and maintaining council housing has been developed with residents, and has the overall objective of achieving excellent housing management services for council tenants and leaseholders in Brighton & Hove. Our priorities are to:

- improve services to an excellent standard, with residents at the heart of everything we do
- improve the quality and sustainability of our homes and neighbourhoods
- deliver value for money services and maintain a sustainable 30 year business plan
- make best use of our housing stock to address housing need

- ensure that social housing provides a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity

## Customer Service Standards

We aim to deliver excellent customer service by putting our customers at the centre of everything we do and having regard to the diverse needs of the communities they belong to.

We have developed a customer charter which explains what you can expect from Brighton & Hove City Council.

For a copy of our standards, please contact your housing office.

## Service Standards

Our service standards ensure that everyone receives the same standard of service and allow us to measure our performance, so that we can keep improving the services we deliver to you. Each team has worked with residents to develop service standards for their area of work to ensure that you receive a consistently high quality service from us. Our performance against these standards can be seen in the performance reports available on our website.

For copies of our service charters, please contact your housing office or go to [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing)

## Complaints

### Who do I contact if I wish to raise an issue?

We always try to get things right first time but appreciate that this doesn't always happen. As a first step, it is often best to contact the person who dealt with your enquiry. They will know most about the matter and it may be possible to sort out the problem straight away. If you are not satisfied with our first response, we have a complaints procedure you can follow.

### Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure helps us make sure your complaint is handled efficiently and in a fair way. Our 'Complaints, Comments & Compliments' booklet explains the procedure and includes a complaints form you can complete. You can hand it in or post it free of charge, or you can complete an on-line form at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/complaints).

You can also make your complaint by telephone or authorise someone to act on your behalf.

Copies of the Complaints, Comments & Compliments' booklet are available from your housing office, the council's Complaints Team, or from the council website.

### What action can I expect?

If, following an investigation, we find that we are in the wrong, we will apologise in writing and will do everything we can to put things right. We will also take action to make sure the same problem does not happen again to you or any other tenant. If your complaint was about one of our policies, we may decide to review the policy to see whether changes are needed.

### Who else can I approach?

You can contact your local councillor or Member of Parliament who can ask about an issue which is causing you concern on your behalf.

If you have a complaint against Brighton & Hove City Council and have been through our formal complaints process but are not satisfied, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman. The ombudsman is an independent organisation which may investigate the matter further. See the useful contacts section for details.

We also like to know if you are pleased with us. Our staff take pride in their work, so it means a lot to us when someone tells us that we got it right. This helps us to find out which parts of our service work well.

## Equalities

We aim to make sure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs

of our existing and future customers, and that all sections of the community have equal access to those services. We test our services and policies to make sure we are providing a service that meets residents' needs.

Brighton & Hove City Council has an equalities and inclusion policy to ensure all tenants are treated fairly and have access to our housing services regardless of race, colour, gender, nationality, religion, age, mental illness, disability, sexuality or for any other reason. Go to [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/equalities) for further information.

We can provide information in a range of formats including audio tape, CD, large print and Braille. We can also translate into different languages or arrange interpreters. Please contact your housing office to discuss your individual needs.

## Data Protection

The information we hold about you will be used for housing management purposes. We may use it for other council purposes where the law permits us. We may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds to prevent or detect crime and to protect public funds in other ways as permitted by law. The council is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 for these purposes. We will not disclose information about you to anyone, unless the law permits us to.

We adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998 to ensure that the information we hold about you is secure. The information you provide will be treated confidentially at all times. Security safeguards apply to both manual and computerised held data and only relevant staff can access your information.

For further information please contact the Data Protection Officer, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 4AH or on 01273 291207.

## Freedom of information

The law gives you a right to know or have access to certain information held by public authorities such as councils. This right is set out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You can ask for information by emailing [freedomofinformation@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or write to: Freedom of Information Team, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 4AH

For further information on the act, please call the team on 01273 291207.

# Draft



# 2

Your  
rights

## Your rights



This section gives a brief description of your main rights as set out in housing laws. For more detailed information please speak to a member of staff at your housing office.

## Types of tenancies

### Introductory tenancies

The introductory tenancy is for a trial period of one year. During that time, tenants must show that they are responsible enough to keep their home and can keep to the conditions set out in the tenancy agreement. If you break any of the conditions of your tenancy, your tenancy could be extended or we can take steps to end it. Introductory tenancies can be ended more easily than secure tenancies. We will write to you to confirm the situation.

As an introductory tenant you have fewer legal rights than a secure tenant. The differences are:

- you cannot assign your tenancy by mutual exchange
- you do not have the right to buy your home
- you cannot take in lodgers or sublet any part of your home
- you cannot use your home for business purposes
- you cannot make any alterations to your property (other than decorating, laying carpet and minor improvements such as putting up shelves)

### Secure tenancies

If you become a secure tenant, you get the full legal rights of a council tenant. This means you keep your home as long as you choose - as long as you keep to the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement. We can only take your home away from you if you give us good reason to do so, for example if you do not pay your rent, harass other people or, if there is a legal ground for possession under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 or any other law.

### Demoted tenancies

If you do not keep to the conditions of your secure tenancy or you or your visitors behave anti-socially, we may apply to the court to remove some of your rights as a secure tenant. You will then have a demoted tenancy. If you continue to

break the conditions of your demoted tenancy, we can apply to the courts to evict you.

A demoted tenant loses a number of tenancy rights, including the right to buy, the right to exchange your home, the right to take in lodgers and the right to sublet part of your home. A demoted tenancy lasts for one year. If we are satisfied with your behaviour during that time, you will go back to a secure tenancy.

### Joint tenancies

As long as there are no previous rent arrears or breaches of the tenancy, we will normally grant joint tenancies to:

- married couples and civil partners
- partners who have lived together for 12 months or more and where both partners are over 18 years of age
- partners with a child or children

If you have a joint tenancy, you are both responsible for the whole tenancy. If there are rent arrears on a joint tenancy, either of the tenants can be held responsible for the full amount. A joint tenancy can be ended if either person serves a valid termination notice on the council.

### Overcrowding

Every home has a maximum number of occupants according to the floor area of the living space (bedrooms and living rooms). The permitted numbers are shown on your tenancy agreement or you can ask at your housing office. If the number of people living in your home is more than the permitted number, the home is legally overcrowded. Young children are calculated differently from adults and older children for overcrowding purposes.

The rules are as follows:

- people aged 10 years or over count as one
- children aged between one and 10 count as half
- babies under one are not counted

It is the tenant's responsibility to make sure the home is not overcrowded. You should contact your housing office if your home is likely to become overcrowded.

## Rights

### The right to live in your home

You have the right, as a tenant, to live in the property unless there is a legal reason for us to take action against you to recover possession of the property. For example, this might happen if:

- you break any conditions of the tenancy agreement. We will always try to sort out matters before taking legal action but, if you continue to break your tenancy agreement, we may have no option but to take possession of your home
- you abandon your home or live permanently at another address
- you have given false or fraudulent information to get the tenancy
- we need to carry out redevelopment or major repairs to the property, which we can not do unless you move out
- there is a legal ground for possession under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 or any other law

### The right of succession

Tenants may have the right for their spouse, partner or family member to take over their tenancy when they die - this is called succession. Please see 'ending your tenancy' section for further information. A succession can only take place once.

### The right of assignment

In certain circumstances you can transfer your tenancy to another family member, but this can only be to someone qualified to succeed to your tenancy under the right of succession. If you want to pass your tenancy on, please contact your housing office for further advice.

### The right to exchange (secure tenants only)

You have the right to mutually exchange your property with another council or housing association tenant (subject to certain conditions). See the 'ending your tenancy' section for further details.

### The right to sublet part of your home (secure tenants only)

You have the right to take in a sub tenant, but there are rules you must follow. You must not:

- sublet without our written permission
- sublet the whole of your property and move elsewhere, or
- create a situation of overcrowding

You need to note that:

- it may affect any benefit entitlement
- you are responsible for the behaviour of people living with you
- if you decide you want them to leave, you will need to arrange it yourself

If you sublet the whole of the property, you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement and we will take action to end your tenancy by serving you with a 'Notice to Quit'. If you suspect a property has been sublet, please report it to your housing office so we can investigate further. You can also call 01273 291700 or e-mail [anti-fraud@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:anti-fraud@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

### The right to take in lodgers (secure tenants only)

You have the right to take in a lodger but you must not create a situation of overcrowding.

You need to note that:

- it may affect any benefit entitlement
- you are responsible for the behaviour of people living with you
- if you decide you want them to leave, you will need to arrange it yourself

### The right to buy (secure tenants only)

If you have been a secure tenant with us, or another public sector landlord for at least five years (or two years if your tenancy started before 18 January 2005), you can apply to buy your home unless it's in a sheltered scheme suitable for older people or has been specifically adapted for someone with a disability. If you are interested in buying your home, please contact the Right to Buy & Leasehold Team for further information on qualifying criteria on 01273 293074 or [rtbleasehold@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:rtbleasehold@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

### The right to be consulted and changes to your tenancy agreement

We believe that it is important that you are involved in housing management decisions that affect you. We will consult with you about any changes to our policy or practice that may substantially change the housing service we provide to you, your home and your neighbourhood.

Except for changes to rent and any other charges, the terms of your tenancy agreement can only be changed if we give you written notice that we intend to alter it. We will write to tell you about any changes we are proposing and give you the opportunity to comment. We will take your views into consideration before agreeing any changes and give you at least four weeks notice before the change takes place. The tenancy may also be changed where you and we agree.

### The right to manage

You have the right to take over the management of your own home. This right can be taken by a group of tenants forming a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) in a particular block or estate. The TMO would take on the responsibility for providing the housing services the council normally supplies, such as collecting the rents and organising repairs and maintenance.

All tenants in the block or estate must be consulted and those proposing to take over the management must go through competency tests. Support from outside agencies is available to help with this process.

### The right to repair

The right to repair is a scheme to ensure that small, urgent repairs (up to a value of £250) that might affect your health, safety or security, are done quickly and easily. For example:

- loss of electric power
- a tap which cannot be turned
- a blocked sink, bath or basin

The types of repair we need to complete under the right to repair, and the response times you

can expect from us are set by law. See the 'Guide to Repairs' for more information.

### The right to improve your home (secure tenants only)

You must get permission in writing from us before you start any work. Please note that you will be recharged for any damage caused to the property or if we have to put right any sub-standard work.

### The right to compensation for improvements

This scheme gives tenants the right to claim compensation for some authorised improvements you have made to your home when you move out. For further details on qualifying improvements, please contact your housing office.

### The right to information

We keep details about you and your family that are relevant for the management of your tenancy. You have the right to see the information we hold about you and your family. If you wish to see this information please contact the council's Data Protection Officer on 01273 291207.

We can arrange an appointment for you to come to our offices to view the information. You cannot take the information away with you but we can arrange to take copies of the information we hold and we can do this for you at a reasonable charge.

We cannot show you information that includes details of other people.

If you think the information we have is not correct, you can ask us to change or remove it. If we do not accept that the information is wrong, we will attach a note to your file recording your view and our decision not to alter it.



# 3

## Resident involvement

Resident  
Involvement



The council has a long standing commitment to working closely with tenants. This commitment has been formalised in the Tenant Participation Compact - a written agreement developed by tenants and the council that sets out how residents will be involved in strategic and local housing decisions.

## How can I get involved?

Your opinions about your home and neighbourhood are very important to us, and we want to know your views about the service you receive. Without your involvement our service would not be as good as it could be.

There are many different ways you can have your say. You can get involved by giving as much or as little time as you are able to. We have developed a variety of options to ensure there's something to suit everyone. By working together we can improve the service for everyone.

## What can I get involved with?

### Individual residents

#### Telling us what you think

You can raise issues, problems and ideas directly with our services. Contact details for our services are in our useful contacts section at the back of this handbook.

#### Estate inspections

We inspect all our estates quarterly to make sure they are clean and tidy, and identify work or improvements that need to be done. We encourage residents to take part in these inspections alongside housing staff and local councillors so you can tell us about the issues affecting your neighbourhood.

#### Taking part in surveys and consultations

These surveys may be done face-to-face, over the phone or by post or e-mail. We will promote these consultations and surveys in Homing In, on our website and at our housing offices.

### Mystery shopping

Resident mystery shoppers make unannounced visits or telephone calls and report back on the service they receive. Training is provided to help you carry out this role. You will be helping us to check how well we deal with our customers so we can improve our services to all residents.

### Neighbourhood agreements

Neighbourhood agreements are voluntary schemes where landlords, residents and other partners aim to agree standards and plans for delivering services in a particular area. If we are setting up a neighbourhood agreement in your area, we will let you know and give you the opportunity to get involved. If you think your area needs a neighbourhood agreement, let us know so we can start talking to residents about local issues.

### Local offers

You can help us to develop and monitor local standards for our services to ensure we are delivering quality, relevant services that reflect the priorities of local communities.

### At a local level

#### Tenant and resident associations

You can join your local association or set one up if there is not one in your area. Each association aims to represent the views of the residents within a defined area, or block of flats, and is open to everyone living there. Your association can also raise issues affecting you and your neighbourhood on your behalf. If there isn't a tenant or resident association in your area, we can help you start one by providing financial and officer support.

#### Joining a Local Action Team

Local Action Teams are formed of people who come together alongside the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and other public agencies to tackle crime and disorder in their area. These groups have a strong commitment to resolving problems at a local level.

## At area level

### Area Panels

These are panels of tenant and resident association representatives in each of the council's four housing management areas who meet regularly to discuss service, performance and neighbourhood issues.

## At a citywide level

### Citywide interest and monitoring groups

We have groups that meet several times a year to discuss particular subjects or services. Our current groups are:

- Tenant Compact Monitoring Group
- Repairs & Maintenance Monitoring Group
- Car Parks & Garages Monitoring Group
- Housing Income Management Monitoring Group
- Estates Service Monitoring Group
- Sheltered Housing Action Group
- High Rise Action Group
- Leaseholder Action Group
- Tenant Disability Network
- Asset Management Panel
- Homing In Editorial Board

### Working groups and focus groups

These are special working groups set up to deal with a particular aspect of the housing service, such as reviewing our Estates Service. They are task based groups set up for a short time until the aims have been achieved. The working groups can make recommendations for changes to the service or policies through our committees and are set up as and when required.

### The City Assembly

Representatives from all associations across the city come together to debate matters concerning tenants and leaseholders citywide. These meetings are held twice a year and all tenants and leaseholders are welcome to take part in the debates. Dates of the meetings are promoted in Homing In and on our website.

### Housing Management Consultative Committee

This is the main consultative body for housing management prior to the council's Cabinet and decision making process. Area Panels send elected resident representatives but there is a public gallery if you wish to observe. Meetings are held several times a year. Details are on the council's website or you can contact your housing office.

A chart showing our resident involvement structure is shown on the following page.

## Breaking down barriers

We don't want any barriers to stop you being involved. That's why we offer to cover travel costs and can reimburse you for childcare or care for any other dependants. For further details, contact your Community Participation Officers at your housing office.

We aim to ensure that all venues we use have disabled access and facilities. We can provide British Sign Language signers as well as foreign language interpreters on request.

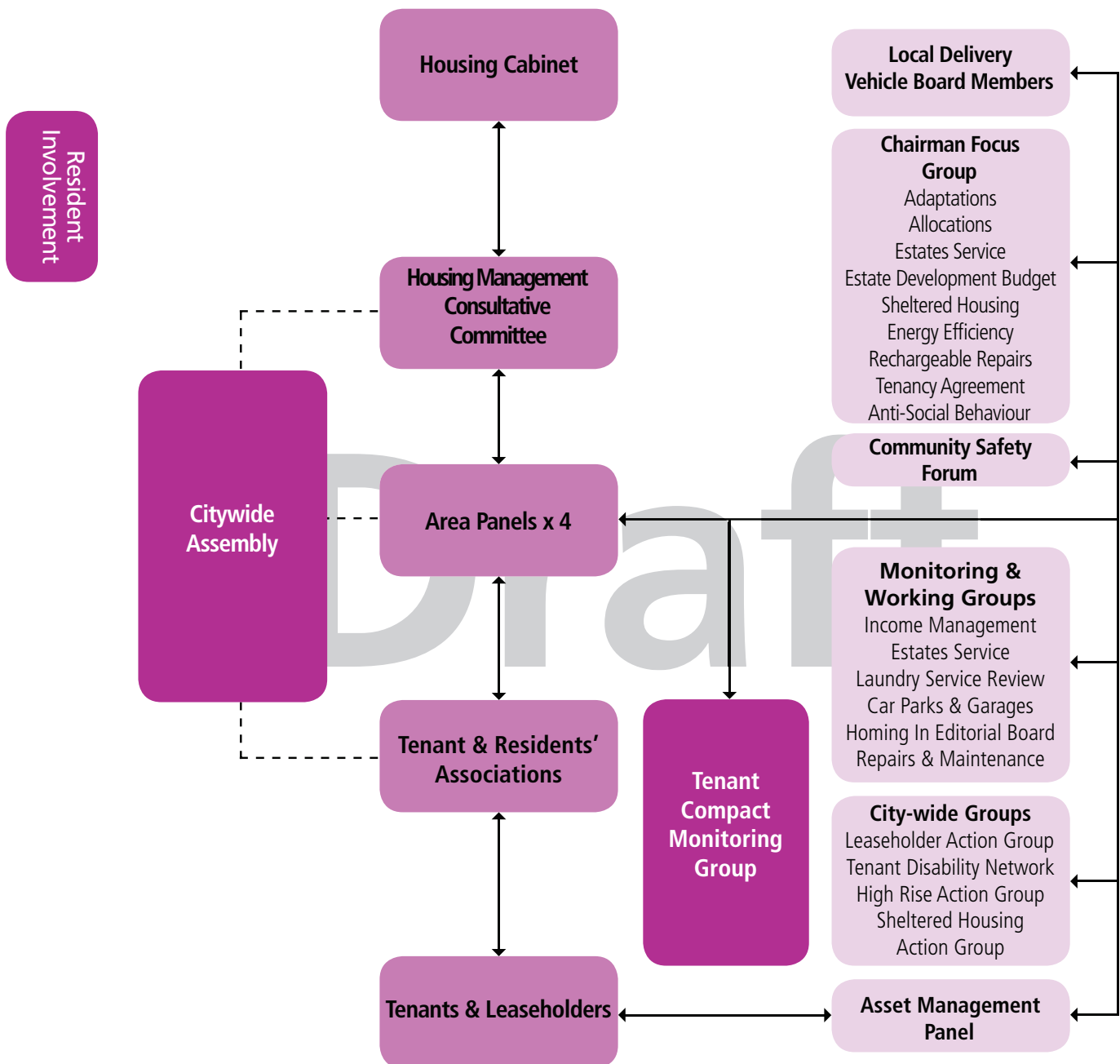
## Who should I contact?

Contact your housing office to discuss how you would like to get involved. Each neighbourhood also has its own Community Participation Officer who can provide support and advice to resident groups. They can tell you about activities and the dates of any meetings.

## Estate Development Budget

The Estate Development Budget is set up to allow tenant and resident associations to put forward bids for improvements on their estate and in their neighbourhood - this can range from installing a bench to putting in extra lighting. Bids are reviewed and voted on annually at area panel meetings. If you would like to know about any work due in your area, please contact the Repairs Helpdesk.

Brighton & Hove's formal resident involvement structure





# 4

## Your rent & other charges

Your rent & other charges



## What is included in my rent?

Your rent is a weekly charge for the property you live in. This reflects the size and type of property you live in. You may also pay additional charges for any extra services you receive. These might include:

- communal heating
- cleaning communal areas, such as in blocks of flats
- grounds maintenance, such as grass cutting areas surrounding blocks of flats
- laundry charge for sheltered housing

If you live in a block with charges such as communal heating, cleaning or grounds maintenance, charges are divided proportionately among all residents and the proportion is added to your rent account.

Tenants in sheltered housing also pay a support charge. The scheme manager support charge pays for the housing-related support provided by the sheltered service. This includes providing the scheme manager and community alarm service.

Garages and parking spaces are managed by our Car Parks & Garages Team. Please contact the team on 01273 296646 for further information.

## When is my rent due?

Your rent is due on a Monday every week and must be paid on or before the date it is due. Most tenants pay their rent weekly, but it may be more convenient for you to pay fortnightly or monthly. If you do wish to pay at longer intervals, rent must be paid in advance. Please contact the Housing Income Management Team on 01273 293224 if you want to discuss this.

We will send you a statement of your rent account every three months. When you receive your statement, please contact us if you are not clear about any of the items or charges shown.

It is vital for us to collect the rent due every week in order to maintain and improve services to tenants. You are in breach of your tenancy agreement and could lose your home if your rent account falls into arrears.

## Can my rent change?

The amount of rent you pay is reviewed at the beginning of each year. Your rent is based on a formula that takes into account the value of your home and other factors set out by the government. Any change in your rent will normally start in April and we will advise you at least four weeks before your rent changes.

## How do I pay my rent?

### At any post office or PayPoint outlet

You can pay at any post office or PayPoint outlet free of charge using your payment card. Please contact the Rent Accounting Section to order a payment card on 01273 293065. For a list of all of the payment outlets in Brighton & Hove, please contact your housing office. If you use a payment card to pay your rent, please make sure that you always get a payment receipt for your records.

### Pay on-line

You can pay your rent online through our secure server if you have a debit card. Go to [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk) and follow the 'pay on-line' link. Select 'housing rents' from the drop down menu and follow the instructions to make your payment. If you do not have internet access at home we have computers available for you at the housing offices. All libraries in Brighton & Hove also provide free internet access.

### Direct Debit

This is the easiest way to pay. Once a direct debit is set up you don't have to think about paying your rent again, as we notify you of any changes and arrange to change the payment with your bank. It costs the council less to collect and any money we save means there is more available to help improve the services you receive. It costs nothing to set up and can be cancelled at any time by contacting your bank or building society. When you make regular payments by direct debit you will be entered into our £100 monthly tenant reward scheme.

For further information, pick up a leaflet from your housing office or contact the Rent Accounting Section on 01273 293065.

**Standing Order**

Paying by standing order is another simple way to pay your rent if you have a bank or building society account. Once you have filled in a standing order form and sent it to your bank or building society, they will make your payments automatically. With a standing order you have to tell your bank or building society to change the amount that is paid if your rent changes.

For further information contact the Rent Accounting Section on 01273 293065.

**By telephone**

You can use a debit card to pay your rent by telephone 24 hours a day via our automated service on 01273 291908. You will need a debit card and your rent account reference number. Alternatively the Housing Income Management Team take telephone payments from 8.30am – 6.30pm Monday to Thursday and from 9am – 5pm on Friday.

**By post**

Cheques or postal orders can be sent to your housing office, but please make sure you write your rent reference number on the back of the cheque. Please allow time for your cheques to clear. Never send cash through the post.

**At a housing office**

You can pay your rent in person at any housing office, by cash, cheque or debit card. Our cashiers can also take telephone payments during normal working hours.

**Council employees**

If you work for Brighton & Hove City Council, you can also pay directly from your wages. Please contact the Rent Accounting Section on 01273 293065 for further information.

**What if I am finding it difficult to pay my rent?**

Your tenancy agreement states that 'you must pay your rent and other charges on or before the date it is due'. The rent and other charges

are due on Monday every week.

If you have difficulty paying your rent, contact the Housing Income Management Team as soon as possible on 01273 293224. We are here to help and the earlier you contact us the easier it will be to help you.

If you do get into arrears, the Housing Income Management Team will carry out a financial assessment and agree an affordable repayment plan with you. They can also refer you to specialist advice to make sure you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to, or if you need help to cope with high levels of debt.

**What should I do if I have rent arrears?**

If you have arrears on your rent account you can take the following steps:

- where possible make a one-off payment to clear your arrears in full
- agree a repayment plan to clear your arrears within a reasonable time. If you have agreed a repayment plan and have difficulty making a payment, contact the Housing Income Management Team immediately
- seek independent advice about your debts – the Citizens Advice Bureau on 0845 120 3710 can help
- contact the Housing Income Management Team or your housing office if you think you may be entitled to help with paying your rent - they can advise you and help you to make a housing benefit claim

Remember the Housing Income Management Team is there to help you so please get in contact if you are experiencing difficulties.

**What will happen if I do not clear my rent arrears?**

If you don't pay your rent and fail to get in touch with us, we will make every attempt to contact you and help with any difficulties that might be stopping you making a payment. However, if you do not work with us and reduce

your arrears we will serve you with a 'Notice of Seeking Possession'. This is the first stage of legal proceedings, which may result in you losing your home.

We will continue to try to help, but if you do not pay your rent, or if you continually fail to keep to a repayment plan to clear any arrears, you may end up being evicted from your home. If it does become necessary to refer your case to court, you will be responsible for paying all the court costs. These are currently several hundred pounds.

You will not normally be allowed to carry out a transfer if you have rent arrears. You may also be excluded from our discretionary decoration and gardening schemes and will not be able to rent a parking space or garage.

Garages and parking spaces are on seven day licence agreements. If you are in arrears we will inform you. If the arrears are not cleared we will end your licence.

## What happens about the rent if I am a joint tenant and one of us leaves?

If you have a joint tenancy, you are both responsible for the tenancy and for the paying the rent. If one of you leaves, the rent must still be paid. If one tenant is planning to leave the property, please contact your housing office to discuss the options available to you.

## Am I eligible for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit?

If you receive other welfare benefits or are on a low income and have savings below the amount advised by the benefit service, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit (Rent Rebate). If you are entitled, the amount you receive will depend on your income and household and may cover all or part of your weekly rent. Housing Benefit does not cover water rates, heating charges or garage and car parking charges.

You can claim Housing Benefit if you are responsible for paying the rent. It is important to claim Housing Benefit as soon as you think you may be entitled, as it is only payable from the date you make your claim. When you claim Housing Benefit you must respond to any requests for documents within the time stated.

If you do get Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit and your circumstances change - eg someone moves in with you or your income changes - you must tell the Benefits Service about this straightaway. Please refer to the useful contacts section.

## Am I eligible for any help with my support charge?

If you receive any amount of Housing Benefit, you will be entitled to maximum help with your support charge (payable by sheltered housing tenants). You may also get help with this charge if you do not receive Housing Benefit, but you must complete a Fairer Charge Assessment form to find out if you qualify. Contact the Sheltered Housing Service on 01273 293255 for an application form and further advice.

## What other financial help can you provide?

We are committed to ensuring that you have access to appropriate financial products and services so that you can make informed decisions about your circumstances. This ranges from where you can go to get the best money advice to information about maximising your income and minimising your financial outgoings.

The Housing Income Management Team can give you information about:

- setting up a bank account and to pay rent by direct debit
- making claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit
- other welfare benefits and how to claim
- independent financial and legal advice
- low cost home contents insurance
- low cost energy companies and energy efficiency
- joining the credit union



# 5

## Repairs & improvements

Repairs & improvements



We have included some key information on the repairs service - for full information, including a list of council and tenant responsibilities, please see the Guide to Repairs.

## What repairs are the council responsible for?

By law, the council has an obligation to look after the structure of your home. Repairs must be carried out to make sure that fixtures and fittings for water, sanitation, gas and electricity are safe and in working order. The council must also maintain any equipment it has installed to provide hot water and heating and maintain communal facilities such as lifts and door entry phones.

## Servicing of gas appliances

**By law, it is essential that we service all gas appliances installed by us once a year** - this could save your life. If they are in a poor condition, they can produce carbon monoxide gas which doesn't smell and can't be seen, but can kill.

The contractor will contact you directly to make an appointment to service your gas appliances and if they cannot contact you by telephone, they will send a letter.

You must allow our contractors access to your home to carry out this work. It is a condition of your tenancy agreement and, if you refuse, we will take legal action against you to gain access. If we do this, we will seek to recover any legal costs from you.

### Gas Leaks

If you think there is a gas leak in your home, the suggested steps to follow are:

- ring the National Grid on 0800 111 999
- open the windows to get rid of the gas
- turn off the gas mains
- do not turn electric switches on or off
- do not smoke
- do not use matches or other naked flames
- report the problem to the Repairs Helpdesk

## What repairs am I responsible for?

As a tenant you are responsible for all fixtures and fittings (apart from those mentioned above or provided by the council), such as curtain rails, light bulbs and sink plugs. You are also responsible for internal decoration and for any improvements, alterations or work you do yourself. You will have to pay for repairing anything damaged by you, your family or your visitors.

You are expected to make sure that your home, garden and balcony (if you have one) are not neglected and kept clean, tidy and free from rubbish.

Examples of the repairs tenants are responsible for include:

- internal doors, locks and handles, cupboard doors and catches
- wall, floor and fireplace tiles
- fences, gates, washing lines, posts and rotary driers
- toilet seats and tap washers

Exceptions are made in some cases for people over 70, people who have a disability, and sheltered housing tenants.

## How do I report a repair?

Tenants can report repairs in a number of ways:

- by phoning the Repairs Helpdesk on freephone 0800 052 6140 or local number 01273 294409 24 hours a day (you may wish to use the local number if you have a mobile phone or free local calls)
- via the freephone at your housing office
- by emailing BHCC.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk
- by completing our online repairs reporting form
- by text message (for non-urgent repairs) to 07786 204352 – make sure each message begins 'Repairs' and we will text you back to confirm we've received your request
- by completing a form at our housing offices
- by letter

To report all urgent or emergency repairs, please phone the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 or 01273 294409.

**What do I do if I have an emergency repair?**

An emergency repair would be one which needed to be carried out to avoid danger to you and/or your neighbours or serious damage to the building, **such as burst pipes, water leaks, gas leaks or complete power failure.**

Emergency repairs will be dealt with immediately and should be reported to the Repairs Helpdesk at any time. Please note that only emergencies will be dealt with outside of normal working hours.

**Who is responsible for reporting repairs to communal areas?**

Our Community Wardens will check for any repairs needed in the communal areas. However, they are not there all of the time so if you see anything that needs repairing please call the Repairs Helpdesk as you usually would for home repairs. In sheltered housing schemes, the Scheme Manager will report these repairs.

Appointments are not needed for repairs to common areas in blocks of flats as we can get to these areas without you being at home.

**When will the repair be done?**

This will depend on the work needed but should be within 28 days, unless the work is being done under a planned maintenance programme. When you report the repair, we will give you the target date for completion and this will be confirmed on your 'Repair Notification Card'.

**How will the work be arranged?**

When you report a general repair, in most cases we will offer you the choice of a morning or afternoon appointment. Some evening and Saturday morning appointments are also available.

We will try to arrange to do the work at a time to suit you, but it is important that you are at home at the agreed time.

Please note that you will not be given an appointment for emergency repairs. Our contractors will get to these repairs as quickly as possible and you need to wait at home to let them in. Before you let anyone into your home

to carry out repairs or gas servicing, check their identity card to make sure they are genuine. If you are in any doubt, ring the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 or 01273 294409.

**What if I am not happy with the repair or the contractors?**

All work carried out by contractors should be done to the highest possible standard and finished properly. If a job cannot be completed due to lack of materials or parts, the contractor must tell you and make arrangements to return to finish the work. However, we aim to complete most repairs in a single visit.

Once your repair has been reported you will receive a customer satisfaction questionnaire. If you complete and return this form after the work has been done, it gives us a clear idea of the quality of work being done.

All contractors who work for the council have to abide by a Code of Conduct, covering how they should behave in your home, treat you and your property, and clean up. Our contractors will also carry identification badges which they will show to you. If you are unhappy with the way you were treated or the way work was carried out, please let us know by calling the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 or 01273 294409.

## Tenant alterations and improvements

**Can I carry out my own improvements?**

The council allows you to carry out improvements to your home, but you must get written permission from your housing office before starting. Only secure tenants can carry out improvements. If you are an introductory tenant you will need to wait until your tenancy is secure.

We will not normally refuse permission for work unless it is likely to affect the safety of the building, cause a future maintenance problem, or cause a nuisance to your neighbours. We may attach conditions to the permission, such as insisting that the work is carried out by a competent contractor and to a satisfactory standard.

You will need our permission to put down any hard floor finish such as laminate flooring, hardwood overlay and ceramic tiles, or want to have bare floorboards in any room. This is because these types of flooring can cause a noise nuisance to neighbours. We will not refuse permission unreasonably but are only likely to agree if you live in a house or a ground floor flat where there is less risk of neighbours being disturbed. It is important that you make sure any floor covering is installed correctly with appropriate underlay to keep noise to a minimum. Any flooring of this type will be the tenant's responsibility to maintain and lift if we need to inspect anything below the floor.

You do not need permission to decorate the inside of your home, lay carpet or carry out minor improvements such as putting up shelves. However, you must not fit polystyrene (or similar) ceiling tiles or coving as they are a fire risk. If you do, you will need to pay for the cost of their removal.

If you move, you will be expected to return your home to its original condition or leave any alterations that we have given permission for in place. If we have to do any work to correct it, you may be charged – see 'Rechargeable Repairs' for more information. Check with your housing office before you move out.

You may be able to claim compensation for certain types of improvements that we have given permission for - see the 'Right to compensation for improvements' information in the 'Ending your tenancy' section.

**Do I need permission to put up an aerial, shed or other structure?**

You must get our written permission before erecting sheds, garages, greenhouses or extra fencing. We do not allow very large structures or sheds which cut out the light or views of your neighbours, and you should not put sheds or garages against boundary fences.

You must also get our written permission before putting up external aerials and you may also need planning permission. The aerial needs to be properly fixed and should not interfere with

anyone else's TV and radio reception. There are also restrictions on where you can put aerials and satellite dishes.

**How do I get permission to carry out an alteration or improvement?**

To get permission to do alterations to your home, write to your housing office giving details of the work and, if appropriate, a detailed sketch plan of what you intend to do.

A member of staff may visit you and we will write to tell you whether you have permission and if there are any conditions attached. Please note that some alterations and improvements may require planning permission or building regulations permission as well - this must be obtained in advance as it could cost you a lot to put things right afterwards.

Usually, a surveyor will inspect the work you do to check that it has been done to a satisfactory standard.

If permission is refused and you feel the decision is unreasonable, you can contact the Housing Manager at your housing office or your local councillor. You can also appeal in the County Court.

**Rechargeable Repairs – what we recharge for**

A recharge is for a repair or clearance done by the council to your property for which you are responsible. If we need to do this, you will be charged for the cost of the work.

We are committed to being clear about what work we are responsible for and what residents are responsible for. Being consistent about the way decisions are made about recharging helps us manage the repairs and maintenance budget. This money can then be spent on looking after and improving all residents' homes.





Recharges include:

- Unauthorised alterations or DIY. You must have written permission from your housing office before starting any alterations or improvements to your home (apart from decorating, laying carpet and minor improvements such as putting up shelves). It is important to check with the housing office before you move out to find out if you are expected to leave any alterations or improvements in place, or return the property to its original condition. If the council has to do any work as a result of alterations you have done, the cost will be recharged to you.
- Moving out. When you end your tenancy, we will explain your responsibilities and what you must do to avoid being recharged. This includes handing back all keys to the property on the agreed date and time, leaving the property clear of all goods, belongings and rubbish (including carpets and laminate flooring unless we have given you permission to leave them in the property). You should ensure that the property is in a good state of repair.
- Emergency repairs. If emergency repairs are needed due to deliberate damage, vandalism, neglect or botched DIY, by any members of your household (including pets) or visitors to your home, the council will carry out the repair and recharge you.
- Damage caused by condensation.

We will tell you if we need to recharge you and how much you need to pay. If you fail to repay any sums due, legal action may be taken to recover the recharge debts.

Tips on how you can avoid being recharged:

- report repairs and keep the property in a good state of repair
- know your responsibilities as explained in the guide to repairs
- seek written permission before you make any alterations or improvements and keep a copy of any letters giving you permission
- clean and clear your property before leaving

## Looking after your home

### Condensation

Condensation is dampness caused by water vapour and it can cause a lot of damage to your home. Condensation occurs when there is too much water vapour in the air or when warm moist air meets cold surfaces.

Condensation is worse in cold damp weather and when heating is poor, but it can be controlled by proper heating and ventilation.

### How can I minimise condensation?

You can minimise condensation by:

- closing kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking and bathing to stop water vapour spreading through the home - it also helps to have a window open
- avoiding drying clothes indoors - if you have to, always dry clothes near an open window with the door to the room closed
- avoiding using paraffin and bottled gas heaters as these give out a lot of water vapour
- keeping a constant level of heat throughout your home
- using air vents and opening windows slightly - never block air vents
- wiping your windows and sills regularly to prevent mould growth and other damage from standing water, which is quite common in winter
- washing off black mould growth with a weak solution of bleach - this is a common symptom of condensation but it will not usually become a serious problem if you remove it
- leave a gap between your furniture and the wall to let air circulate

If you do this and still have problems, report it to the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 or 01273 294409. If condensation causes damage to the property this will be a rechargeable repair.

### How can I prevent frost and flood damage?

A lot of damage is done by burst pipes in cold weather. To reduce the risk of damage, make sure you know where the stop taps are and check they work. If you cannot find them or they don't work, contact your housing office. It is a good idea to check and oil the taps regularly.

You should also make sure all pipes and tanks are properly insulated and keep your home heated during cold weather, even if at a low heat. If you go away during the winter, drain down the water system by turning off the main stop tap and running all the taps.

If one of your pipes does burst, turn off the stop taps, central heating and immersion heater, and run the taps to empty the system to minimise damage. Report the problem immediately to the Repairs Helpdesk, and mop up any water.

**How can I make my home more secure?**

If you have concerns about the security of your block of flats or local estate, speak to staff at your housing office - they will be able to tell you whether there are any plans to improve security, such as installing door entry systems or additional lighting.

You can do a number of things to improve the security of your home:

- never leave doors and windows unlocked when you go out
- don't leave keys under doormats, or flowerpots - burglars know all the hiding places
- don't make it obvious if you go away - get a friend to come in to open and close curtains and switch lights on and off or buy a time switch so that your home looks occupied
- never let people into your home unless you know who they are - if in doubt don't let them in and always ask workers to show their identity cards

**How can I keep safe in my home?**

We want to help you make your home a safer place. Taking simple precautions can help you avoid potentially dangerous situations.

**Safety in the home – gas heaters and flammable substances**

You will need written permission to store potentially flammable or explosive substances in your home, such as gas canisters including oxygen cylinders.

Although accidents involving oxygen cylinders are very rare, when they happen, they can cause serious injury or death through fire and explosion. When you seek permission, we will write to you with some guidance as to how to prevent accidents and keep safe. Always follow instructions given to you about your oxygen equipment carefully.

Due to the risk to other residents from explosion in flats of a particular construction, tenants must not use bottled gas in the flats listed below. If you live in these properties and require further advice, please contact your housing office.

• Dudeney Lodge	• Heron Court
• Falcon Court	• Kingfisher Court
• Kestrel Court	• Nettleton Court
• Swallow Court	• St James' House

**Asbestos**

Although asbestos is a hazardous material, it only poses a risk to health if the fibres get released into the air. Material containing asbestos poses little risk unless it is disturbed (for example broken, drilled, cut or sanded) and no precautions are taken.

Before 1985, asbestos was often used in the construction of houses. Most council properties were built before this date, and therefore may contain materials that have some asbestos in them.

Items that may contain asbestos include:

- corrugated or flat cement sheets used for roofing and panels
- roof and ceiling tiles
- bath panels
- textured coating such as Artex
- boilers
- kitchen floor tiles

If your home has any of these items, it doesn't mean they will contain asbestos. However, if you suspect that there is asbestos in your property, please report it to the Repairs Helpdesk. A surveyor will visit to investigate and organise whatever action is needed, if any. Asbestos

is not always dangerous and may not need removing, but it does need to be managed and the property address does need to be added to our asbestos register.

If you are thinking of carrying out any work that may involve asbestos:

- do not remove the material or do any work which may disturb it without getting advice from the Repairs Helpdesk
- do not break, cut or drill the material
- do not put asbestos waste in your dustbin

### Legionella

Legionella bacteria are common in natural sources of water but certain circumstances need to be in place for infection to occur, and this doesn't happen very often. You can take the following precautions to reduce the risk in your home:

- if you have a shower, regularly descale and clean the shower head to protect against the risk of legionella
- if you are going on holiday or away for longer than a week, take the shower head off and place it in a bowl of diluted disinfectant or a shower head cleaning agent. When you return, run the shower without the shower head for a few minutes and then refit it

## Fire safety

### What you should do in the event of a fire

Preparing and practising a plan of action will help you act quickly if there's a fire in your home, and could even save your life. When discussing fire safety, involve everyone who lives in your home, including children, older or disabled people and any lodgers or regular visitors. Please note that the following safety advice is offered as guidance only. If in doubt, get out, stay out and call 999.

### Fires in your home

If there is a fire in your home you should:

- alert everyone
- get everyone out of your home and close the door after you
- call the fire service on 999
- close windows if it's safe to do so
- not delay for valuables
- not investigate the fire
- check doors with the back of your hand before you open them - if they're warm don't open them as the fire is on the other side
- always use the stairs - don't use the lift

### Fires in communal/shared areas

If you discover a fire in any communal or shared area, such as stairwells or resident lounges in sheltered housing, please leave the building by the nearest fire exit and call the fire service on 999.

### If a fire breaks out elsewhere in your building

If there is a fire elsewhere in the building, you are usually safest in your own flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you. The council and the fire service support a 'stay put' policy unless you are told otherwise, meaning the majority of fires elsewhere in a building can be extinguished with residents staying in their homes.

### Keep safe

To help reduce the risk of fire you can:

- ensure all shared areas are kept free of rubbish and belongings
- fit smoke alarms and make sure to test them weekly and change the battery once a year. The East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service will supply smoke alarms free of charge. In sheltered housing fire alarms are fitted in all individual properties and in the common ways
- have an evacuation plan – know your exit route, where your keys are, etc
- keep passage ways clear to help you get out quickly
- don't smoke in bed
- beware chip pans – don't leave them frying on their own
- ensure cooking appliances are turned off when you have finished cooking

- unplug appliances at night or when your home is empty
- be careful with candles
- use fire guards on open fires
- don't put clothing close to open fires, storage heaters or electric fires to dry off
- don't overload power points and avoid using multi adaptors
- never leave children alone in a room with cookers and heaters on and always keep matches out of their reach
- tell anyone living with you or your visitors what to do in the event of a fire

If you have a mobility problem, you should discuss a personal emergency evacuation plan with your Housing Officer.

If you would like your Housing Officer to visit to discuss what to do in a fire, please contact your housing office.

For further information on fire safety please contact the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service at [www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org) or 0845 130 8855.

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# 6

## Living in your home



Living in  
your home

## Moving in – checklist for new tenants

If you are just moving in, there are a number of things you need to do or know about.

### Getting connected

Contact the electricity, gas and water companies to make sure supplies are connected. Make a note of all meter readings as soon as you move in. A council officer will tell you where the meters, fuse boxes and stop taps are. Make a note of where they are in case of an emergency.

### Letting people know

Below are some examples of who you might need to tell your new address:

• your doctor, dentist or healthcare visitors	• your home help and support workers
• your bank	• the benefits agency
• TV licence	• council tax
• your employer	• children’s school
• library service	• household insurance company

For council services we have the ‘tell us once’ scheme in place so we notify other council departments.

### What can I expect?

Once you have moved into your property, you will be contacted by your Housing Officer to arrange a visit within the first two weeks of your tenancy. This is to check that you are settling into your new home and give you an opportunity to ask any questions.

If you are an introductory tenant, you will receive three visits during the first year of your tenancy to see that your tenancy is running smoothly. At the end of the year, your tenancy will automatically become secure unless we have taken action to end or extend your tenancy.

Our staff also visit all households every so often. These are to find out how we can help you, ensure the property is being looked after and

check the property is occupied by the tenant. You don’t need to wait for our visit - if you think we can help in any way, please contact your housing office.

If you live in sheltered housing, your Scheme Manager will also give you information about our sheltered housing service.

## Insuring your home’s contents

We strongly advise all tenants to take out household contents insurance, as we do not insure your belongings or decorations. This is important in case your belongings are damaged by fire, water leak or flooding, theft or burglaries for example.

You can insure your contents through your own private arrangements or through the council scheme. We have negotiated competitive rates with an insurance company and premiums can be paid weekly with your rent. For a little extra money, your insurance cover can also include accidental damage.

For further information and an application form on our insurance scheme please contact the Rent Accounting Section on 01273 293303.

## What happens if I move out of the property?

Your tenancy agreement states that your property must be your main home. You must tell us if you are going to be away from your home for 28 days or more. This is so that we can contact you or a nominated representative if there are any issues while you are away.

If you don’t tell us that you are temporarily away, we may decide that you are no longer living at the property as your main home and treat it as abandoned. We will then serve a notice to quit on the property to end your tenancy and take legal action to take it back.

If you decide to move out, you need to tell us and provide four weeks written notice to end your tenancy. Information on how to do this is included in the ‘Ending your tenancy’ section.

## Can I run a business from my home?

You need to apply to your housing office for permission to use your home for business purposes. Permission will depend on the nature of the business and the likely impact on your neighbours - for example, we might not give permission for businesses involving car repairs or using controlled substances. If we do grant permission but receive complaints at a later date, we will investigate and may withdraw the permission. Obviously you cannot use your home for any illegal purposes.

## How is my estate kept clean and tidy?

We aim to make all estates safer, greener and cleaner places to live to improve the quality of life for all residents. We work closely with our colleagues in the council's refuse, recycling and park services to help us do this.

### Estates Service

The duties you can expect the Estates Service Team to do are:

- sweep and wash the entrance halls, banisters, railings and skirting boards
- clear litter in and around blocks of flats
- keep bin areas clean
- check for safety hazards
- report repairs to shared areas
- arrange the removal of dumped rubbish (we will take action against those responsible where possible)
- remove graffiti
- check and change lights as necessary
- adjust timers for the automated lights in shared areas

You can help by letting us know if anything in particular needs to be done. To do this or give feedback on the service, please call the Estates Service Team on 01273 294769 or e-mail [EstatesServiceManagers@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:EstatesServiceManagers@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Residents can help to keep their estates and buildings clean by:

- taking litter home or putting it in bins
- wrapping and bagging rubbish and putting it in the bins provided
- keeping entrances and common ways clear – do not fly tip or leave bulky items or bags of rubbish in corridors, landings or beside bins and chutes
- clearing up any spills or leaks when taking rubbish to the bin rooms
- removing any marks on the floor or walls made by bikes, prams, or by dragging items in or out of the building

### Ground maintenance

Some of our estates and sheltered schemes have shared grassed areas, which we are responsible for. We maintain landscaped areas and cut the grass regularly but do not collect the cuttings.

We encourage residents to take an active interest in their local areas and will not normally refuse permission to anyone wishing to cultivate or maintain shared areas and gardens. However, you must get written permission from your housing office first.

### Refuse and recycling

You are expected to dispose of your rubbish responsibly by bagging it up properly and putting it out for collection on the day it is due. If you live in a flat please place your rubbish in the provided bin areas.

If you have large or bulky items that you need to dispose of, the council's refuse and recycling service can collect it for a charge – call them on 01273 292929 for further details. Discounts are available for older residents and people in receipt of benefits.

The council encourages tenants to recycle and reduce waste as much as possible. If you want to find out more about recycling facilities in your area, go to the council website or call the refuse and recycling service on 01273 292929.

### Estate inspections

We inspect all our estates quarterly to make sure they are clean and tidy, and identify work or improvements that need to be done. We encourage residents to take part in these

inspections so you can tell us about the issues affecting your neighbourhood. If you are interested, please contact your housing office. If you would like to see feedback on recent inspections, results are displayed on community notice boards or at your housing office.

### Community Wardens

Our team of Community Wardens provide a presence on our estates and act as the 'eyes and ears of the council'. The wardens are there to deal with any environmental issues in the neighbourhood and can answer questions and provide advice. They provide support to local groups including resident associations, lunch clubs and youth activities. They also carry out welcome visits to new tenants and home visits to vulnerable tenants.

The Community Wardens spend much of their time out on our estates and can be easily identified by their distinctive uniform displaying the Brighton & Hove City Council logo so, if you see them, please approach them with any queries. Alternatively, you can contact them at your housing office.

## Sustainability & energy efficiency

The council is committed to taking action for a more sustainable future. Housing Management aims to improve the sustainability of our service to ensure we have a minimal impact on the environment and improve the energy efficiency of our properties. We hope to achieve this by:

- setting challenging targets to improve the energy efficiency of your home
- using contractors with a commitment to recycling and reducing their carbon footprint
- installing energy efficient lighting in communal areas
- working towards tackling fuel poverty for all our residents by being at the forefront of technology and innovation
- providing energy efficiency advice in Homing In and through home visits

There are also a number of things you can do:

- if you are worried about paying your fuel bills, SMART displays can help you make savings by showing exactly how much energy you are using in your home - some energy companies supply these so get in touch with your provider to see if you can benefit
- if you are having difficulties paying your fuel bills, contact the Homeheat helpline on 0800 336699 for further advice
- get involved in community based gardening and food schemes
- recycle as much as possible
- take steps in your home to reduce the amount of energy you use - eg by turning lights off when not in use and switching off appliances rather than leaving them in 'stand by' mode

For more information on energy saving, visit the Energy Saving Trust website at [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

### Energy saving lightbulbs

Energy saving lightbulbs contain a tiny trace of mercury and should not be put in the normal household waste. Unbroken bulbs can be recycled at the city's two household waste recycling centres. Please ask a member of staff to point out the correct container.

If you break one, make sure the room is well ventilated for 15 minutes as a precaution. Sweep up up the remains with a damp cloth, place them in a sealed bag and dispose of them at one of the household waste recycling centres.

## Pest control

As a general rule, it is your responsibility to deal with pests in your home, and some you can deal with yourself. However, some pests need specialised treatment and it is essential to get professional advice on how to deal with them safely without damaging the environment.

The council's Pest Control Team offers advice on all types of pests. They treat rats, mice, cockroaches, wasps and fleas. They do not treat bedbugs but can give advice on how to deal with them. Contact them on 01273 292170.



# 7

## Being a good neighbour



Being a good neighbour

## Being a good neighbour

### How can I be a good neighbour?

- welcoming new neighbours and saying hello to them
- make sure your house/flat contributes positively to the appearance of an area
- alert someone if you notice a change in your neighbour, eg if you haven't seen them for a while
- help neighbours who are unable to use communal bins by taking their rubbish out for them
- getting involved in local groups
- don't carry out noisy DIY work at night or early in the morning
- be co-operative if asked by a neighbour to reduce noise
- be quiet when you return home late at night – don't slam doors or shout to your friends
- respect the fact that different people have different lifestyles, but do not impose your lifestyle on your neighbours
- if you have permission to keep a pet, look after it properly and don't let it foul public areas or cause a nuisance in any other way
- dispose of rubbish properly

## Abuse against staff

The council will not tolerate violence, threats of violence or abusive language towards our staff and contractors. We will support the prosecution of tenants or members of the public if any council employees are assaulted. Tenants who threaten staff could be taken to court and face eviction proceedings.

## Neighbourhood Agreements

These are voluntary agreements between landlords, residents and other partners setting standards and agreeing plans for delivering services.

They give residents the opportunity to get involved and shape the services they want to receive. They can cover a range of issues and services at a local level, such as anti-social behaviour, street cleaning and dog control.

They are tailored to meet your needs and take account of local priorities in your area. They can cover any area from a block to a few streets or a whole estate. To find out more about setting up a neighbourhood agreement, contact your housing office.

## Anti-social behaviour

### What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is any behaviour that unreasonably disrupts the peace and comfort of other residents or adversely affects their health and safety. ASB can be anything that prevents another person from enjoying their home, garden, estate or neighbourhood.

Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to ensuring that all residents can enjoy their home peacefully. We expect you to behave in a way that does not disturb your neighbours and respects differences in lifestyles.

You are responsible for the behaviour of anyone living with or visiting you. Your tenancy agreement makes it clear that we will not accept nuisance or harassment. It states that: 'you, anyone living with you and your visitors must not do or threaten to do anything which causes, or is likely to cause, a nuisance or annoy someone else'.

Examples of ASB include:

- loud music or car stereos
- graffiti
- vandalism (ie causing damage to property)
- dumping rubbish
- aggressive and threatening language and behaviour
- problems caused by pets such as noise and fouling

### What should I do if I experience anti-social behaviour?

If you are having problems with a neighbour, talk to them about it if you can. It's possible that they do not realise that their behaviour is disturbing you.

If the problem continues, or you do not feel able to contact the person causing the problem,

please contact your housing office. If you live in sheltered housing, please speak to your Scheme Manager.

If you are experiencing noise nuisance, you should contact the council's Environmental Health & Licensing Team on 01273 292929.

### **If I need to complain how will you deal with my complaint?**

We take all reports of nuisance and harassment very seriously, and will act quickly and decisively. We will:

- contact you to discuss your complaint
- agree an action plan with you
- investigate the complaint, including talking to other residents as necessary
- contact the perpetrator if you give us permission
- work with other agencies such as the police and environmental health to resolve the problem
- ask you to keep diary sheets as they are useful in allowing us to build a picture of what is happening
- keep you informed
- contact you once your case is closed and find out how you felt it was handled

### **What will you do to tackle anti-social behaviour?**

Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to effectively tackling and resolving nuisance and anti-social behaviour throughout the city. We aim to do this using a balance of support, diversionary activities and enforcement.

There are lots of things that we can do to help stop anti-social behaviour. We recognise that there are no easy answers and no single solution that will work for everyone.

The information below gives you an idea of the range of action that can be taken. Your Housing Officer will explain more about which is most suited in your situation.

**Acceptable Behaviour Contracts** – these are written agreements between a person who has been involved in anti-social behaviour and their landlord, the police or another agency. They engage an individual in acknowledging their behaviour and its effect on others with the aim of stopping that behaviour.

**Mediation** – we recommend mediation in cases of neighbour disputes which could be resolved through discussion and shared understanding. We use an independent external mediation agency and this has proved a very effective way of helping parties understand each other's views, particularly as they will usually remain living as neighbours. Mediation does not look to blame, but tries to find a middle ground that the parties can agree on and work from there. You can also refer yourself to the service by calling them on 01273 700812.

If these measures break down, we may consider enforcement action, which may include:

**Injunctions** – these are court orders which tell a person to stop behaving in an anti-social way. Injunctions can also be used against anyone living with our tenants, visitors, or even people with no connection to a council tenancy. If you disobey the order, you may go to prison.

**Noise Abatement Notices** – these can be used to stop noise that is causing a statutory nuisance. If the noise continues, the council may put a stop to the nuisance, and recover the costs. This includes the power to seize and remove equipment.

**Demoted Tenancies** – these allow landlords to apply to the court to reduce the security of tenure. A demoted tenancy gives the tenant fewer rights and the tenancy can be ended quicker if nuisance continues.

**Possession action** – we may look to take possession action when a tenant has seriously or persistently broken the tenancy agreement.

Enforcement action is normally only considered when all other options have been exhausted. We will always consider issues of vulnerability such as mental health, drug or alcohol dependence. Where such issues exist, we will seek the intervention and support of our partner agencies to help to address problem behaviour.

Your Housing Officer will manage the majority of cases through to their conclusion. However, in cases of serious nuisance and harassment, your case may be referred to one of our Anti-Social Behaviour Housing Officers. Your Housing Officer will tell you if this is the case.

**Why is it taking a long time to get the problem resolved?**

Tenants are protected by the terms of their tenancy agreement and this means that we may need to go through many steps if we want to take legal action. We always act as quickly as we can to resolve problems but need to ensure we have sufficient evidence. We will keep you informed of the progress of investigations but please let us know if you have any concerns.

**What can I do to help?**

Witnesses are crucial to tackling anti-social behaviour. We recognise that being a witness in an anti-social behaviour case can be a daunting experience, but it is often essential to the success of a case, particularly if the case goes to court. Being a witness could involve providing us with a diary of events through to attending court to give evidence.

We make a commitment to support and protect witnesses throughout the process, including after a court case if necessary. We will also look at practical measures including additional security and referrals to partner agencies that can provide appropriate support.

**How can I get involved?**

If you are interested in getting involved to improve community safety and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in your local area, you can:

- join or start a neighbourhood watch scheme
- become involved in your neighbourhood's Local Action Team (LAT)

Contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team for further information.

**Harassment**

**What is harassment?**

We expect you to treat all your neighbours with respect and any form of harassment, abuse or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated. Harassment differs from nuisance in that it is deliberate action to cause annoyance or distress to a particular individual, family or group.

Your tenancy agreement states:

'You or they must not harass or threaten any other person because of race, colour, gender, nationality, religion, age, mental illness, disability, sexuality or for any other reason.'

Harassment can consist of one incident or many. It may include attacks on property as well as the person, and can be:

- verbal abuse - eg racist or homophobic name calling
- physical abuse - eg spitting, punching, kicking, slapping
- threats
- attacks on property - eg throwing eggs or stones at properties, slashing tyres, breaking windows, racist graffiti, etc

**What is racial harassment?**

Racial harassment is abuse suffered by individuals, families or groups of people because of their colour, race, nationality, or ethnic origin.

**What is a hate crime?**

A hate crime is a criminal offence motivated by hostility or prejudice based upon the victim's disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or because they are transgender.

We support people who experience harassment, victimisation or abuse because of their race, faith, religion, disability or because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

If you know someone is being harassed, please encourage them to contact us.

**What should I do?**

If you are being harassed, you should:

- report any violence, threats, damage to your property or any other criminal acts to the police immediately
- tell us as soon as possible
- keep a record of all incidents
- keep a note of the name and address of the person harassing you, if you know it
- let us know the names and addresses of anyone who saw any of the harassment

**What will we do?**

We will not accept any harassment. Once reported, we will:

- meet you as soon as possible (within one working day)
- arrange for an interpreter if you need one
- remove any offensive graffiti and complete emergency repairs within one working day
- agree with you what action we will take, and confirm this in writing
- keep you informed about what is happening
- work with the police and other agencies including the Partnership Community Safety Team
- put you in contact with any support agencies, such as victim support

**We may be able to:**

- help the police to take action
- improve your home's security, such as providing stronger locks and better lighting
- take out an injunction to stop the person from committing further acts of harassment
- start proceeding to demote or end their tenancy.

We will support you to stay in your home, which may include increasing your security. However, if you no longer feel safe, we will discuss the different housing options available to you. You may need to live in temporary accommodation before finding a new permanent home.

**What other support can I get?**

The Partnership Community Safety Team work with a range of organisations and groups to improve community safety, reduce crime and disorder and make people feel safer across the city. The Hate Crime & Community Engagement Team has specialist officers who can support victims of hate crimes.

The Racial Harassment Team work to reduce racist and religiously motivated crimes and incidents. They aim to increase reporting of incidents, ensure that victims and witnesses are fully supported, and build their confidence in the criminal justice system. The team can be contacted on 01273 292735 or by e-mailing [racial.harassment@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:racial.harassment@brighton-hove.gov.uk). We can also contact them on your behalf.

Victims of racist, faith and disability hate crime can call 01273 294367, and victims of homophobic or transgender hate crime can call 01273 294636 for additional support.

**Violence****Domestic violence**

Your tenancy agreement states that 'You must not use or threaten to use violence by using physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse against any other person living with you, anyone you have invited into your home, or anyone living in, or in the locality of our properties. If you do and that person or their children have to leave the property because of violence, or threats of violence or abuse against them, we may take steps to evict you from your home'

Anyone who is experiencing domestic violence can also expect help and support from the council. If you are experiencing domestic violence, please contact your housing office for further advice.

We will do everything we can to help you stay in your home - offering advice, security, support and a sensitive, confidential service. We can also put you in touch with other people who can help and support you such as RISE and the police. Should you decide to take legal action against a violent partner, we can help you to access legal help. We will also take action where possible to evict any tenant who is violent.

If you are experiencing domestic violence you can get help and support from:

- the police on 0845 60 70 999 or call 999 in an emergency
- RISE (formerly the Women's Refuge Project) on 01273 622822 [www.riseuk.org.uk](http://www.riseuk.org.uk)
- the 24 hour National Domestic Violence helpline on a freephone number – 0808 2000 247
- the men's advice line on 0808 010 327
- Broken Rainbow for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who are experiencing violence or abuse in their relationships on 0300 999 5428



If you need to leave your home, we can help you access emergency housing through a refuge, or where this is not appropriate, through temporary accommodation. We will discuss your longer term housing options with you.

**Safeguarding vulnerable adults**

Older people, people with a physical disability, mental illness or learning disability can be vulnerable to abuse. The abuser is usually well known to the person being abused. They may be:

- a partner, child or relative
- a friend or neighbour
- a paid or volunteer care worker
- a professional

Abuse can occur anywhere and people can be abused in different ways, including:

- physical abuse
- neglect
- financial exploitation
- psychological abuse
- sexual abuse

The housing management service follows the Sussex multi-agency policy and procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults. If you experience, witness, or suspect abuse is happening to a vulnerable adult, it is important to tell someone about your concerns. For help and advice please call the council's Access Point on 01273 295555 or Sussex Police 0845 60 70 999. In an emergency call 999.

**Pets and animals**

**How many pets can I have?**

If you want to keep pets you must get our written permission through your housing office. The number of pets we will allow will depend upon the type of pet, and the size and type of home you live in. If you live in sheltered housing, please check with your Scheme Manager as to whether your scheme allows pets. We will not unreasonably withhold permission but will not give permission for residents to keep the following animals:

- any dangerous wild animal as detailed in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

- the specific breed of dog restricted by law and detailed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, such as pit bull terriers and Japanese tosas
- a species prohibited by trade, import or export as detailed in the Endangered Species (Import & Export) Act 1976
- all venomous (poisonous) insects and spiders
- all large, poisonous or constrictor snakes or lizards

The Animal Welfare Team gives advice and practical help for keeping pets and animals in the city. They investigate complaints about stray animals, dangerous dogs, dog fouling and cases of animal cruelty. You can get further information and advice on 01273 292929 or 292446.

**Is there anything I need to know about keeping pets?**

If you have a pet or would like to get one, we expect you to look after your pets in a responsible way.

You must ensure that:

- they do not cause a nuisance to your neighbours by creating lots of noise or excessive smells
- you clean up after your pets
- you look after your pet responsibly

If you keep an animal that we believe is being maltreated, we will report it to the council's Animal Welfare Team.

If your pets are causing a nuisance or disturbance to your neighbours, we may ask you to re-home them.

If these conditions are not kept, permission can be withdrawn and action may be taken against your tenancy.

**Can I feed wild birds and animals?**

You must not encourage pests, vermin or animals that may cause a nuisance or damage at your home or in the neighbourhood. Examples of this include feeding wild pigeons and seagulls and not disposing of rubbish properly.

This is because they can pass on diseases to people or, in numbers, can be a nuisance to or

pollute the areas you live in. You must not feed them from your home or in your neighbourhood. If you do, action may be taken against your tenancy and you will have to pay the costs if we have to clean mess from the building.

## Communal areas

### What are communal areas?

Communal areas are shared areas of a block of flats, or an estate, which tenants, residents and visitors can use. This includes stairs and lifts, landings, bin stores, shared gardens and car parks.

### Are there any special considerations if I live in a flat?

Living in flats and maisonettes brings extra responsibilities. Everyone living in a block is responsible for keeping the communal areas clean and tidy, and must:

- not leave rubbish or property on the stairs or in the hallways - rubbish should be disposed of carefully
- not smoke in enclosed shared areas
- not interfere with fire safety equipment
- keep emergency exits clear
- not interfere with security equipment such as door entry systems and CCTV
- never throw rubbish or other items from balconies - if you, your family or visitors do this, you will be considered to have broken your tenancy agreement and legal action may be taken

The fire service and the council have agreed that personal goods should not be stored in communal areas as they could be a hazard if people need to leave the building in an emergency. If we need to clear any items belonging to you from shared areas, you will need to pay our costs.

You must not store mobility scooters in shared areas without our permission. You need to speak to your Housing Officer before buying a mobility scooter so we can make sure you have somewhere to store it safely.

### Door entry systems

To improve the security of people living in flats and maisonettes, we provide door entry systems so that only residents and genuine visitors can get in. Please help to keep the flats safe and do not:

- let someone you do not know into the building
- wedge the door open or leave it open for any reason

When you leave the building, please close the door securely to protect you and your neighbour's homes against theft, vandalism and unwanted visitors. If you notice that your door is being left open or is faulty, please let your housing office or the Repairs Helpdesk know.

## Parking

### Where can I park my car?

We, and your neighbours, expect you to park in a reasonable way and not block other residents or obstruct emergency access routes.

You must only park in marked areas or on the side of the road. Where there are parking control schemes, you and your visitors must follow the rules.

You can only park on your property or your front garden if you have a driveway with a lowered kerb and a hard standing for your vehicle. If you wish to apply for this, you will need permission from us and the council's Highways Team. You may also need planning permission.

### How can I rent a garage or parking space?

We have a number of garages to rent and parking areas with marked bays. If you would like to rent a garage or parking space, please contact the Car Parks & Garages Team on 01273 296646.

If you rent a garage or car parking space you will have a separate account for it, but can pay in the same ways you pay your rent. If you are in arrears with your rent, you cannot rent a garage or parking space.

**Can I store anything in my garage or parking space?**

A garage is only for storing a car, van or motorbike. You must not use it to store any dangerous items, such as petrol, bottled gas or any other flammable materials. Your garage must not be used for general storage and it must not be used in connection with a business.

**What do I do if my car is clamped or taken away?**

Your vehicle will only be clamped or removed if you have not followed the rules of the local parking control scheme or have left it untaxed or abandoned. If your car is clamped, you can get it released quite quickly by making the payment - details are given on a ticket that is left on your car. If your car is taken away, there will be a notice nearby telling you what to do to get it back.

**Can I repair my car outside my home?**

You are allowed to carry out minor routine maintenance to your own vehicle in your garage, parking space or outside your home, provided that you do not cause a hazard or nuisance to your neighbours and do not make a mess. If the council has to clear up after you, you will be charged.

You are not allowed to do welding, spraying or major car maintenance on housing land. If you do, we may take legal action which could result in you losing your home.

**Caravans, boats, trailers and other vehicles**

You must get permission from your housing office before parking a caravan, boat, trailer or other such vehicle in your garden, in a parking space or on other housing land.

**Abandoned and unroadworthy cars and motorbikes**

You are not allowed to leave unroadworthy vehicles in your front garden or in parking areas. If you do, we may arrange for the vehicle to be towed away and you will be recharged the costs and may face action against your tenancy.

**Gardens and balconies**

Tenants are required to maintain their own gardens and balconies to ensure they look acceptable and do not cause a nuisance to their neighbours. If you are having difficulty maintaining your garden, please contact your housing office as further help may be available through our discretionary gardening scheme.

You are responsible for:

- keeping the garden tidy and free of rubbish, household items and vehicle parts
- trimming shrubs, hedges or trees to make sure they do not become a nuisance to neighbours
- maintaining any fencing that is your responsibility - please check with your housing office if you are unsure which fences are your responsibility

You will need our written permission to:

- put up a garage, shed or greenhouse
- put up or change a wall or fence
- cut down, remove or destroy any bushes, hedges or trees unless you planted them

Harvest Brighton & Hove operate a 'Grow your neighbours own' which links people who would like their gardens to be used for growing fruit and vegetables but don't have the time or physical capability with those who don't have the space. If you'd like further information, contact Harvest on 01273 431700.

Being a good neighbour



# 8

## Ending your tenancy



Ending your tenancy

## Ending your tenancy

### What if I want to end my tenancy?

If you want to end your tenancy, you need to give us a minimum of four weeks notice in writing, with your tenancy ending on a Monday. If you are transferring to another Brighton & Hove City Council tenancy, you can give two weeks notice. This is a requirement of your tenancy agreement.

If you do not give us the required notice before you leave, you will still be responsible for the rent until the end of the notice period.

You need to complete a 'Termination of tenancy' form, available from your housing office or our website. Once you have returned this to us, we will arrange for a council officer to visit you at home before you move out.

At this visit we will tell you about any work you need to do before you leave. This could include repairs which are your responsibility or returning any work done without our permission to its original state. However, we may only identify this after you move out, in which case you will be recharged for the work.

Your home must be left in a clean and tidy condition. All fixtures and fittings supplied by the council should be left in the property. All your items and possessions must be removed, including anything kept in lofts, sheds and gardens. In some cases, fittings such as carpets and curtain rails can be left for the incoming tenant but please discuss this during our visit.

If we need to remove anything after you leave or if you do not complete any work identified, you will be recharged.

### Moving checklist

- it is your responsibility to tell all parties that you are moving, including your gas, electricity, water and telephone suppliers
- you must return all keys and/or pendant alarms to us on or before the termination date
- you will need to pay any outstanding rent and any other charges owed to us
- if you receive housing or council tax benefit, you must tell them when you intend to leave

If you want your mail to be redirected to your new address, please contact the Post Office.

If you have any questions or need help or advice about ending your tenancy, please contact your housing office.

### Compensation for improvements

If you move, you can apply for compensation for certain improvements you have made with our permission. Please contact your housing office for a list of qualifying improvements.

Please tell us if you would like to claim when you give notice to end your tenancy. We will need to see bills for the work – if you do not have these, tell us the cost and when the work was done. The maximum payment for each improvement is £3,000, but this depends on when you made the improvement, how much you have benefited from it, the cost, and its quality and condition.

## Ending a tenancy – following the death of a tenant

We understand that this is a difficult time for families and friends and want to make the process of returning the property as simple as possible. We give a broad outline of what to do here, but for more advice or to arrange an appointment to speak to an officer, please contact the housing office where staff will be happy to help.

If there is no one to succeed to the tenancy, the tenancy will need to be legally ended. This can happen in a couple of ways:

1. If there is an executor, they will need to provide four weeks notice. Rent will be charged for the four week period but we appreciate this places a burden on the deceased tenant's estate. If the executor is able to clear the property within the first two weeks of the notice period and return the keys to us we will not charge rent for the final two weeks of the notice period.
2. If there is no executor, we will serve a notice to end the tenancy and register it with the

Public Trustee. If there is a next of kin, we will provide them with a copy of this notice.

### Who can take on my tenancy if I die?

If a tenant dies, their tenancy can be passed on to a joint tenant, spouse, civil partner or another family member (including partners) - this is called succession. Under the Housing Act 1985, only one succession is allowed for each tenancy. The successor will have the same tenancy conditions as the previous tenant.

There are some rules we have to follow when someone wants to succeed to the tenancy:

- if you are a joint tenant, your surviving joint tenant will succeed to the tenancy and can stay in the same property
- if you are a sole tenant, your married partner or civil partner can succeed to the tenancy and can stay in the same property
- a family member (including partners) can succeed to the tenancy if they can prove they have resided with you for 12 months before your death and used it as their only or main home – however, they may have to move if the home is larger than they reasonably need
- if there are two or more family members who can succeed, they must decide who will take over the tenancy – if they cannot agree, we will decide
- if a family member is required to move to smaller accommodation and refuses to, we can take legal action to take back the property and enforce the move to suitable alternative accommodation

### What will happen if a succession has already taken place?

There can only be one succession in law but we will work with the family member to find a solution. In certain circumstances, our allocations policy allows us to make further offers but each case needs to be looked at on an individual basis.

We appreciate this is a difficult time and our staff will work closely with the family member. If we cannot offer a further tenancy, we will provide advice and help on other housing options, and allow a reasonable time for the family member to find another home.

## Moving options

### What happens if I want to move home?

We have several schemes that may help you if you wish to move to a different property.

#### Transfer Scheme - Homemove

If your current home no longer suits your needs, you can apply to transfer to alternative accommodation using the housing application form, available from our website or your housing office. Once we have assessed your application, you will receive a banding depending on your level of housing need - for example, whether your home is overcrowded or if you need to move for medical reasons.

Properties that become available to let are advertised and you 'bid' for the properties you wish to be considered for.

We will not normally agree transfers for tenants in rent arrears.

We try to help as many people as possible, but there are more people wanting to move than homes available. For this reason, we actively promote the alternative housing options below.

#### Transfer Incentive Scheme

The Transfer Incentive Scheme offers a financial reward of up to £3500 to tenants who want to downsize from a family home or wheelchair adapted property that they no longer need. Incentives are also available for tenants moving into the private sector. Please contact your housing office for further information and an application form.

#### Moving to sheltered housing

We have sheltered housing schemes for older people with identified support needs. All schemes have scheme managers and a 24 hour call system in case of emergencies. This allows older people to continue to live independently while having the reassurance of having support close by when needed. The schemes also provide opportunities for social activities.

If you would like more information, contact the Sheltered Housing Team on 01273 293255.

### Apply directly to another council

You can apply directly to a council in another area. However, you may be given less priority than someone with a connection to that area

### Mutual Exchanges

Mutual Exchanges are where council or housing association tenants apply to swap homes with each other. Each tenant signs over (assigns) their tenancy to the other. **Please note that introductory tenants can not exchange their property.**

If you are interested in a mutual exchange and would like to find someone to swap with, you can:

- Enter your details on our Sussex Homemove Mutual Exchange Register, a web-based service on [www.homemove.org.uk](http://www.homemove.org.uk). You can use computers in housing offices and in the city's libraries to check potential swaps. Once your details appear on the mutual exchange register, other tenants may contact you.
- Contact another tenant who already has their details listed on our mutual exchange register.
- Advertise your home in a local newspaper or place an advert in a local shop. Please note that you must pay for any advertising costs yourself.
- Check the Homeswapper website, a national database with information on people wanting to move locally and nationally. Find out more by logging on to [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk). Please note that there is a fee for joining this service.

Once you have found a potential swap, please contact your housing office for an application form. Before a mutual exchange can take place each tenant will need the written permission of their landlord – you must not move home unless you have this. We will usually give permission unless there is a ground set out in Schedule 3 of the 85 Act, such as the property being substantially larger than the proposed tenant needs or the swap causing overcrowding.

### Buying your home

There are a range of opportunities for tenants to become home owners:

- Right to Buy – if you have been a secure tenant for at least five years (two years if your tenancy began before 18 January 2005), you

may have the right to buy your home (this doesn't apply to sheltered housing or homes adapted for someone with a disability). You get a discount on the price depending on how long you have been a tenant and your family members may be able to share in the purchase. For further information, please contact our Right to Buy & Leasehold Team on 01273 293074. **Introductory tenants can not exercise the right to buy.**

- Low Cost Home Ownership - there are various low cost home ownership options available to Brighton & Hove residents but all are subject to eligibility and funding. Moat is the appointed homebuy agent in Sussex and they co-ordinate the affordable home ownership in the south east. Details of all the schemes currently available can be found on [www.homebuy.co.uk](http://www.homebuy.co.uk) or you can call the Moat home ownership enquiry line on 0845 359 6161 (8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday).

### Private sector

We strongly recommend that you consider renting in the private sector where properties are in far greater supply. This gives you choice over where you live and the type of property you want to live in. If you are on a low income or benefits, you may be entitled to help with the rent through the local housing allowance. Please contact your housing office for further advice.

### What if you ask me to move?

There are some circumstances when we might ask you to move. These include if:

- we need to carry out major works to repair or modernise your home – if this happens, we will provide financial and practical help
- you succeeded to your tenancy, but the property is too big for you, or designed for someone in a wheelchair or who has mobility problems and you do not need this type of property

If we ask you to move, we will explain why and give you as much notice as we can. We will discuss your rehousing options with you and make sure we keep you informed. Please contact your housing office for further advice



# 9

## Supporting independence



Supported  
independence

We can provide a number of services to help you live independently.

## Sheltered housing service

The council manages a number of sheltered schemes across the city, providing over 800 homes. The service aims to provide older people with a high quality of accommodation and support services to meet a wide range of needs, enabling older people to live independently and in comfort.

Our sheltered schemes can offer the following benefits:

- a wide variety of locations and properties, including flats and bungalows
- a secure tenancy with the privacy of your own front door and living space
- an on-site Scheme Manager
- a 24-hour alarm that allows residents to summon help in an emergency
- a friendly, welcoming community of vibrant and diverse people
- communal lounges with a selection of social activities
- guest rooms where family and friends may stay
- private gardens or patios where residents may sit and relax
- laundry facilities
- existing sheltered tenants who need to move to a more suitable property have priority to move within their scheme

Our Sheltered Housing Service can offer:

- a personalised support plan
- regular call service
- emergency support service
- a range of social, learning and healthy living activities
- an on site scheme manager

For more information and an application form, please contact the Sheltered Housing Team on 01273 293255.

If you currently live in sheltered housing and have any queries, please speak to your Scheme Manager.

## Can I still get emergency alarm support if I don't live in sheltered housing?

The 24-hour community alarm is provided by the council's CareLink Plus service and is available to anyone living in Brighton & Hove, in any type of housing. The service provides a communication link for people who may need to summon help quickly in an emergency, due to age, illness or disability.

The system can be installed in your home and linked through your telephone to the CareLink Control Centre. In an emergency, you use the alarm button, pendant or pull-cord to alert the CareLink staff to get help to you as soon as possible. For more information call the Carelink Control Centre on 01273 673105.

## Tenancy support

### What if I need extra support managing my tenancy?

If you are having problems managing your tenancy, your housing office can advise you and may be able to offer you support. Depending on your needs, this may involve referring you to another service.

The support we offer may include:

- regular visits by your Community Warden
- advice in running your home well
- making the most of your neighbourhood
- putting you in touch with extra help

If you are having difficulties, please get in touch with your housing office for advice.

### What if my tenancy is at risk?

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team offers flexible support to vulnerable tenants experiencing difficulties in maintaining their tenancy who may be at risk of homelessness without appropriate advice and intervention.

The aim of the service is to prevent residents losing their homes, and to ensure that identified needs are supported and additional services brought in where required.

The support the Tenancy Sustainment Team can provide includes:

- help and support to access other services to meet health, financial or social needs - this may include employment, education, training, statutory health and social care services, local community and voluntary sector organisations
- help to access services that will help you budget and manage debt
- advice and assistance to maximise your income and claim benefits
- advice and assistance on housing options
- help to manage neighbour problems
- accessing services in the local community

You must be willing to work with us to agree and work through a support plan to address tenancy problems so that you do not lose your home.

If you would like to find out more about the Tenancy Sustainment Team or if you think you could benefit from the support they offer, please contact them on 01273 293171 for information and advice.

## Adaptations

### What if I, or a member of my family, need adaptations because of a disability?

If you or someone living with you has a disability that restricts your quality of life or ability to live independently, there are a number of ways we can help you to remain in your home.

This includes advising you about equipment you can buy, providing equipment to make daily tasks easier, or adapting your home to improve access or help you use bathing facilities, etc. Alternatively, if your current home is unsuitable, we can help you move to a property that will better suit your needs.

If you are living in a property that is too big for your needs, we can also support you to move to a smaller, more suitable property. You may also be entitled to transfer incentive scheme money if you agree to move to a smaller home. See our 'Moving options' section in 'Ending your tenancy' for more information.

If you think you would benefit from an assessment, please contact the council's Access Point on 01273 295555. They will take your details and your needs will be assessed by a disability professional, who will discuss their recommendations with you. If these include an adaptation, the Adaptation Team will contact you to organise a visit.

If you are eligible to have your home adapted, the Adaptations Team will tell you when this work will be done. Priority is given to those in greatest need and there is likely to be some delay as the demand for the work exceeds the budget we have available each year.

## Help with gardening and decorating

### What if I can no longer maintain my home?

Help with gardening may be available if you are over 65 or have a disability, and do not have a relative, friend or anyone else to do the gardening for you. The gardening scheme covers grass cutting and other essential work such as hedge trimming and pruning.

You may also be able to get help with the decoration of your home for a maximum of one room per year. You can either apply for vouchers to buy decorating materials in certain DIY stores if you have someone to do the work for you, or apply for us to do the work.

The yearly budgets for these schemes is limited but if you are having difficulties, contact your housing office for more details and an application form. The application form can also be downloaded from our website.

Alternatively, if your current home is unsuitable, we can help you to move to a property that will better suit your needs. Please contact your housing office for further advice.

# Draft

Supported  
independence



# 10

## Useful contacts & index



## Useful contacts

### Housing Management

#### Lavender Street Housing Office

01273 293260

email:LavenderStreetOffice@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Manor Place Housing Office

01273 293200

email:ManorPlaceOffice@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Oxford Street Housing Office

01273 293230

email:OxfordStreetOffice@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Selsfield Drive Housing Office

01273 293171

email:SelsfieldDriveOffice@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Victoria Road Housing Office

01273 293377

email:VictoriaRoadOffice@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Repairs Helpdesk - 24 hour reporting

0800 052 6140 Or 01273 294409

#### Text: For non urgent repairs;

Begin your text with 'Repairs'

07786 204352

email: BHCC.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk

#### Housing Income Management Team

01273 293224

email: Housing.IncomeManagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Rent Accounting Section

01273 293065 - for direct debit and payment method enquiries

01273 293303 - for home contents insurance

email: rentaccounting@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Car Parks & Garages

01273 296646

email: Parking.Domestic@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Right to Buy

01273 293074

email:rtbleasehold@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Sheltered Housing

01273 293255

email:sheltered@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Estates Service

01273 294769

email:EstatesServiceManagers@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Lettings

01273 293205

email:LettingsTeam@brighton-hove.gov.uk

### Other useful council numbers

#### Abandoned Vehicles

01273 292929

email: abandoned.vehicles@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Access Point (Adult Social Care)

01273 295555

email: accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Allotments

01273 292929

email: allotments@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Animal Welfare Team

01273 292929/292446

email: ehl.community@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Building Control

01273 292030

email: building.control@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Carelink

01273 673105

email: CareLinkPlus@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Council switchboard

01273 290000

#### Council Tax

01273 291291

email: council.tax@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Woodvale Crematorium

01273 604020

email: woodvale@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Disabled Access Toilets (Radar keys)

01273 292929

email: cityclean@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Disabled Parking (blue badges)

01273 296270

email: parking@brighton-hove.gov.uk

#### Gritting (roads)

01273 292929

**Highways - dropped kerbs and crossovers**

01273 292929

**Homemove Team**

01273 294400

email: [homemove@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:homemove@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Housing Advice**

01273 294400

email: [housing.advice@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:housing.advice@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Housing Benefit**

01273 292000

email: [housing.benefits@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:housing.benefits@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Noise Nuisance**

01273 292929

The Noise patrol can be contacted for noise complaints over the weekend from Friday 10pm – 3am Saturday morning and from 10pm Saturday night – 3am Sunday morning

01273 293541

**Parking**

01273 296622

email: [parking@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:parking@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Pest Control**

01273 292170

email: [pest.control@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:pest.control@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Planning applications & permissions**

01273 292222

email: [planning.applications@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:planning.applications@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Public Toilets**

01273 292929

**Refuse, recycling, and street cleansing**

01273 292929

email: [cityclean@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:cityclean@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Roads and Pavements**

01273 292929

email: [HighwayBasicMaintenance@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:HighwayBasicMaintenance@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Stray dogs**

01273 292929

**Street Lighting**

01273 292929

**Trees**

01273 292929

email: [arboriculture@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:arboriculture@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Other useful contacts**

**Action on Elder Abuse**

0808 808 8141

**ageuk**

0800 16965 65

website: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

**Brighton & Hove Independent Mediation Service**

01273 700812

email: [mediationservice@onetel.com](mailto:mediationservice@onetel.com)

**Brighton & Hove Resource Centre**

01273 606160

**Brighton Housing Trust**

(legal and housing advice services)

01273 234737

email: [advice@bht.org.uk](mailto:advice@bht.org.uk)

**Citizens Advice Bureau**

0845 120 3710

**Energy Saving Trust**

0800 512 012

website: [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

**Harvest (Brighton & Hove)**

01273 431700

email: [info@bhfood.org.uk](mailto:info@bhfood.org.uk)

**Job Centre Plus:**

Brighton - 01273 647400

Hove - 01273 368100

**Local Government Ombudsman**

0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983

email: [advice@lgo.org.uk](mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk)

website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

**Probate & Inheritance Tax helpline**

0845 302900

**RISE (formerly women's refuge project)**

01273 622822

website: [www.riseuk.org.uk](http://www.riseuk.org.uk)

**Sussex Police**

0845 607 0999

**Treasury Solicitor**

020 7210 3116 or 020 7210 3117

website: [www.tsol.gov.uk](http://www.tsol.gov.uk)



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## Notes



**This is your tenant handbook. If you need a translation, tick the box and take to any housing office.**

هذا هو كتيب المستأجر الخاص بك. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى نسخة مترجمة، ضع علامة في الخانة و من ثم أخذ هذا إلى أي مكتب من مكاتب الإسكان.

Arabic

এটা হচ্ছে আপনার 'টেন্যান্ট হ্যান্ডবুক'। আপনি যদি এর বাংলায় অনুবাদের কপি পেতে চান, তাহলে বক্সটিতে টিক্ চিহ্ন দিন এবং যেকোন হাউজিং অফিসে নিয়ে যান।

Bengali

這是你的租戶手冊。如果你需要一份翻譯本，請在方格內加劃，並交往任何房屋辦事處。

Cantonese

Ceci est votre manuel du locataire. Si vous avez besoin d'une traduction, cochez cette case et présentez-vous à n'importe quel bureau des affaires de logement.

French

این کتابچه مستأجر شما است. اگر احتیاج به ترجمه آن دارید، در مربع این علامت (✓) را بگذارید و به يك اداره مسکن ببرید.

Farsi

这是您的承租人手册。如果您需要一份翻译件，请勾此方框并拿到任何一个住房办公室。

Mandarin

Jest to Informator dla Najemcy (Tenant Handbook). Jeżeli chcesz otrzymać jego tłumaczenie, proszę o zaznaczenie okienka i dostarczenie tego do któregośkolwiek biur ds. mieszkaniowych (housing office).

Polish

Este documento é o seu "Manual de Inquilinos" (Tenant Handbook). Se precisa de uma tradução, por favor assinala a caixinha e entregue em qualquer Gabinete de Habitação (Housing Office).

Portuguese

Bu sizin kiracı el kitabınız. Çevirisine ihtiyacınız varsa, kutuyu işaretleyiniz ve herhangi bir konut bürosuna götürünüz.

Turkish

This handbook can also be made available in large print, Braille or on CD or audio tape.



# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 13

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Consultation Draft of Resident Involvement Strategy  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 June 2010  
**Report of:** Director of Housing, Culture and Enterprise  
**Contact Officer:** Name: John Austin Locke Tel: 29-1008  
E-mail: john.austin-locke@brighton-hove.gov.uk  
**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report provides a copy of the consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy for council housing residents, as agreed with the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG). Following member approval, a wider process of consultation will begin, throughout the City. Suggested changes and amendments will be considered before a final, proposed, document, will be presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the process of consultation on the draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy, to commence, as outlined in the timetable in appendix 1.
- 2.2 Committee requests that, following the period of consultation; a revised document is presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Service has developed a wide range of informal and form mechanisms to promote tenant and resident involvement, through a network of 69 active resident associations, representing their communities across the city. There has been considerable success in promoting different levels and styles of involvement, with recent initiatives including the development of the City Assembly, Chairman's focus groups, the Asset Management Panel, and resident Mystery Shoppers. The Housing Service now aims to focus upon the effectiveness and outcomes of involvement.

- 3.2 Through the development of an overarching Resident Involvement Strategy, the council now aims to build upon this success and focus upon the effectiveness and outcomes of involvement. .
- 3.3 In March, 2009, the Audit Commission's carried out an assessment of tenant and resident participation activities and made recommendation for improvement based upon good practice. The assessment 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.
  - 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.
- 3.4 The feedback from the audit commission was very encouraging and included the follow strengths relating to our resident involvement activity:
- Resident involvement is well resourced and supported with residents consulted on a wide range of issues
  - Our three year Service Improvement Plan is built upon strong links to residents priorities
  - Relationships with tenants and councilors are mature and productive
  - We have committed staff who demonstrate a professional and caring approach towards customers consulted on a wide range of issues.

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

- developing an overarching resident involvement 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 community.

The development of the Resident Involvement Strategy aims to meet these recommendations.

- 3.5 The relationship between Members, tenants, leaseholders and officers has previously been set out in the document "*Tenant Participation Compact for Brighton & Hove, Partnership for Success*". This is a published document, available on the council web site. *Partnership for Success*, itself followed on from the first published compact in 2000. Although Brighton & Hove tenants and leaseholders were among the first in the country to engage in close, partnership, working in a participation relationship going back to the early 1980's

3.6 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group have highlighted the need to reach out to those residents who are not actively involved in their local tenant and resident association. To support this, a Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey was issued to all council housing residents. The survey was carried out in order to achieve the following:

- To gain an understanding of why some residents are not more actively involved in their local tenant and resident association
- To establish how those residents who do not want to be involved in their local association, for whatever reason, would still like to play a role in influencing the services they receive
- To establish the key issues or service areas that tenant and leaseholders would like to be involved in
- To develop a database of those residents and leaseholders who are interested in becoming involved, and the way in which they would like that you happen.

The results of the survey were presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee in May 2010.

3.7 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group considered the results of this survey and held two workshops, for the TCMG members and deputies, on 24 February and 27 April this year. The result of their work is the attached draft of the new Resident Involvement Strategy (Appendix 2).

3.8 The advent of the Tenant Services Authority, as the national regulator for the sector, has given an added imperative to the review of the Compact and the writing of the new Strategy. The consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy is designed to deliver a resident involvement framework that will meet the requirement of the 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment' standard of the TSA's new regulatory framework for social housing.

### 3.9 Consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy

3.9.1 The consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy is attached as Appendix 2. The strategy sets out to build upon the existing resident participation system and seeks to present new opportunities for increasing the number of residents who get involved, whilst also encouraging those that don't normally engage with the council's housing service to do so

3.9.2 During the development of the consultation draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy we agreed with the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, the following guiding principles that underpin everything we do when involving residents in the management of their housing:

- Every tenant and leaseholder matters and should be able to have a say in how their housing is managed
- We will offer residents support to be effectively engaged, involved and empowered
- We are committed to equal opportunities and social inclusion in how we deliver services, provide information and involve residents
- We will treat all residents with fairness and respect and encourage residents to do the same
- We are committed to openness and transparency with our residents in reaching decisions about our housing stock and providing information about our performance
- We will ensure we meet regulatory requirements on tenant involvement and empowerment and fully involve our tenants in co-regulating our housing management services

3.9.3 The draft strategy proposes the following objectives for delivering the Resident Involvement Strategy 2010 – 2015

Objective 1	Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing
Objective 2	Develop, a framework for agreeing local offers and priorities with our residents
Objective 3	Involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services
Objective 4	Involve residents in monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services

Residents will be asked through the consultation process whether they agree with the guiding principles and core objective of the strategy and will be encouraged to suggest activity that will enable use to meet the core objectives.

#### 4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group have now approved this document for broad and open consultation with all council housing residents. Subject to HMCC approval, those to be included, in this process, will be Members, all tenant and resident associations and other interested local groups through the Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership and the Community Engagement Framework.
- 4.2 The document will be published on the council's website and press releases will accompany the consultation process.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that the results of the consultation will be available in a revised document to be brought back to the September 2010 Committee cycle, in accordance with the timetable attached as Appendix 1.

## **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 Any costs arising from the consultation process will be met from existing resources within the 2010/11 Housing Revenue Account budget and reported as part of the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) process if necessary. Any financial implications arising from the revised Resident Involvement Strategy will be included as part of a separate report in September

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks: Principal Accountant  
Date: 19 May 2010*

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 imposes a duty on the Council to maintain appropriate arrangements for informing and involving residents in housing policy. A new Resident Involvement Strategy devised as a result of the consultation process outlined in the report will assist the Council in meeting that duty. It will also help in meeting the TSA's new "Tenant Involvement and Empowerment" standard. Failure to meet a standard is a ground for the TSA to exercise its extensive range of regulatory powers. It is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights will be adversely affected by the report's recommendations.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley*

*Date: 1 June 2010*

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey has provided an up to date and focussed basis on which to conduct consultation in a way that engages customers in an appropriate way to suit their individual needs. The survey will be a valuable resource in ensuring appropriate consideration is given where, previously, groups might have been under represented. An equalities impact assessment of the final strategy will be produced.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 To assist with the Council's sustainability objectives resource neutral or reduced carbon methods of consultation will be used wherever possible. These will include web-based, internet and Email surveys as well as social media and networking sites

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 It is recognised that anti-social behaviour remains a level of concern for residents and their representatives. It is anticipated that the final Resident Insolvent Strategy will confirm and develop the role of the recently established Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 In any arrangement of engagement it is acknowledged that there will, at times, be conflicting views and the potential for individual rivalries, within or between groups of residents. Within the new strategy it will be important to maintain, as far as possible, that it is for residents themselves to resolve difficulties through their own, local, democratic arrangements. Where difficulties become particularly destructive that they risk the good working of the strategy, individuals will be encouraged to use the facilities of independent mediation services to resolve matters. The final Resident Involvement Strategy will take account of such issues.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The final Resident Involvement Strategy will be in line with the principles of the Corporate Engagement Framework and those preparing the final draft will consider the emerging views.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2010 - 2015

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. None

### Timetable for Resident Involvement Strategy Consultation

<b>Consultation taking place</b>	<b>Date commenced</b>	<b>Date completed</b>
Draft Strategy to HMCC	<b>14 June</b>	
Draft strategy sent to the chairs of all Residents' Associations	W/C 14 June	Request for comments deadline 19 July
Consultation through the Corporate Centre and the Stronger Communities Partnership	W/C 14 June	Request for comments Deadline 26 July
Consultation using the "ways I would like to be involved in decisions that affect me" section of the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey	W/C 14 June	Completion 26 July
Information placed on council web-site with feedback form	W/C 14 June	Request for comments Deadline 26 July
Collated comments to Tenant Compact Monitoring Group Working Group	W/C 9 August	13 August
Area Panel meetings		24 August 2 September 9 September 13 September
Final sign off by Tenant Compact Monitoring Group working Group	W/C 13 September	
Arrangements for presentation of report by TCMG working group members.	W/C 20 September	
Final Resident Involvement Strategy to HMCC		27 September





**CONSULTATION DRAFT. V.1.0**

**Brighton & Hove City Council**

# **Resident Involvement Strategy**

**2010 - 2015**

**CONSULTATION DRAFT**

## FOREWORD

[insert foreword from Cllr Maria Caulfield]

## INTRODUCTION

This Resident involvement Strategy sets out to build on the existing resident participation system, amongst the council's tenants and leaseholders, seeking to present new opportunities for increasing the number of residents who get involved, whilst also encouraging those that don't normally engage with us to do so. The strategy works within the council's existing Community Engagement Framework that itself is part of the city-wide 2020 Community Partnership.

### Our vision for achieving excellence in Housing Management

The Housing Management Service Improvement Plan 2009-2012 aims to '***achieve excellence in housing management with residents at the heart of everything we do***'. The priorities of the plan are to

- Improve services to an excellent standard, with residents at the heart of everything we do
- Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes and neighbourhoods
- Deliver Value for Money services and maintain a sustainable 30 year business plan
- Make best use of our housing stock to address housing need
- Ensure that social housing provides a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity

### Our guiding principles for involving residents

During the development of the Resident Involvement Strategy we agreed with residents the following guiding principles that underpin everything we do when involving residents in the management of their housing:

## CONSULTATION DRAFT. V.1.0

- Every tenant and leaseholder matters and should be able to have a say in how their housing is managed
- We will offer residents support to be effectively engaged, involved and empowered
- We are committed to equal opportunities and social inclusion in how we deliver services, provide information and involve residents
- We will treat all residents with fairness and respect and encourage residents to do the same
- We are committed to openness and transparency with our residents in reaching decisions about our housing stock and providing information about our performance
- We will ensure we meet regulatory requirements on tenant involvement and empowerment and fully involve our tenants in co-regulating our housing management services

### **How tenants and leaseholders have been involved in developing this resident involvement strategy**

The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG) is carrying out a review of the Tenant Compact and has a key role in developing this strategy. A resident involvement workshop was held by the group, who identified issues that would lead to better resident involvement. This group identified the key themes they would want to see reflected in the Resident Involvement Strategy. These themes form the key objectives of the strategy document, and include an agreement that the development of the strategy is tenant led which will result in a proactive resident involvement network. The outcome from implementing the strategy should deliver more residents getting involved, and clear evidence of how residents contribute to policy development, service delivery and performance improvement

The TCMG have identified that residents need to be empowered through training and education. Building resident's capacity to be fully engaged was a central theme. This is to include training of all residents that want to get involved, making sure that special provision is made for encouraging

## **CONSULTATION DRAFT. V.1.0**

younger residents gain the skills and enthusiasm to become fully engaged. Group members seek to change perceptions around resident involvement, and want to raise the expectations of those that do volunteer. They want to have more influence on decision making, and also be in a position to demonstrate this. Good communication is seen as central to the success of the Strategy. The TCMG want the council to become excellent at this, whilst accepting that resident representatives will need to develop their communication skills as well. The members of the group want the strategy to focus on ways of providing more information, both to residents from the council and from resident representatives to their resident members. They also want to see more front line staff being trained on resident involvement. Caring for other residents was a central theme identified and one that the group members felt would lead to the encouragement of more respect within the involvement system

As well as developments from the TCMG workshop, resident representatives' were invited and responded to a communications and profile survey in April 2009. Their priorities are reflected in this document. From a questionnaire sent to every tenant and leaseholder, residents responded to an involvement survey conducted in December 2009. The results were encouraging as over 15% responded. 95% of those that responded want their names retained in a database of those that would want to become further involved in a number of ways

A series of workshops were held with residents to further develop their views

## **PART 1 Our Resident Involvement Strategy objectives**

Through our consultation with residents we have agreed the following objectives for delivering the Resident Involvement Strategy 2010 – 2015

- Objective 1**      **Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing**
  
- Objective 2**      **Develop, a framework for agreeing local offers and priorities with our residents**
  
- Objective 3**      **Involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services**
  
- Objective 4**      **Involve residents in monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services**

## OBJECTIVE 1

### Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing

#### You have told us that you would like:

- To be more involved in the decisions that affect you or your local area, depending on the issues discussed
- An extended menu of ways to get involved, from serving on formal groups and answering questionnaires, to other less formal ways like personal visits by officers and joining in to social networks to make your views known, helping to bring about improvements in your neighbourhood
- To be supported to develop the confidence, skills and capacity to engage with housing services in a way that is right for you
- To broaden involvement to encourage participation from sections of the resident population not currently as involved. A broader range of residents in terms of age, ethnicity, sexuality, and religious persuasion have expressed a wish to be more involved
- Regular city-wide gatherings and for as many residents as possible to be invited to the City Assembly; the twice yearly forum where all residents' associations meet and debate issues of interest to residents across the city
- To see a high level of flexibility in the timing of meetings and methods of contact
- Local resident associations to be notified of new tenants in your area so you can make contact with them
- Opportunities to be involved in the management of your homes

## **Our strategic actions to deliver this objective to you are:**

- Continue to encourage residents to participate in the formal resident involvement structure and to support these associations and groups across the city
- Expand the menu of options for residents to get involved in the management of their home and their local neighbourhood, including informal ways of engagement. This will include the ability to influence strategic priorities, the formulation of housing related policies and the delivery of housing related services
- Continue to ask all tenants and leaseholders how they would like to be involved in the management of their housing and record their preferences in our new database.
- Use tenant preference information to invite interested residents to participate in their preferred ways of getting involved
- Monitor the profile of residents who are involved in the management of their housing against the profile of all our residents and develop methods of participation that encourage residents from under represented groups to get involved
- Improve the training and development programme for residents who wish to become involved by continuing to utilise the Resource Centre, and providing coaching and support by the Housing Management Community Participation Officers
- Build on the support for the Citywide Assembly and agree a process by which residents can follow up on agreed strategic city wide priorities
- Publicise opportunities and arrangements for resident involvement and empowerment and continue to provide details of tenant and resident associations to new tenants
- Work with partners to engage a broader range of residents e.g. Children and Young Peoples Trust to develop links with groups representing young people
- Provide tenants with a range of opportunities to influence how we meet all the regulatory standards we need to comply with, and to scrutinise our performance against these standards



## OBJECTIVE 2

### Develop a framework for agreeing local offers and priorities with our residents

#### You have told us you would like:

- Area Housing Management Panel meetings to be focused on issues that affect the local area, and City Assembly meetings to be concerned with city-wide issues
- Patch based issues identified by residents to be resolved locally (either through the local group working with Housing Officers or by individuals not working in a group)
- Housing Officers to spend less time on administration and more time engaging with the residents who live in their neighbourhood
- More information on what maintenance and improvement works are planned to help you decide what additional improvements to use your Estate Development Budget (which you control and very much value) to bid for each year

#### Also you would like to be involved in:

- Agreeing priorities and standards of service delivery that reflect what is important to you at a local, neighbourhood and city-wide level
- Prioritising local improvements to your estates and neighbourhoods (through regular estate inspections that detail work needing to be done, utilising the estate development budget and capital investment programme)

#### Our strategic actions to deliver this objective to you are:

- Provide a quarterly timetable of local estate inspections by Residents, Housing Officers, and Councillors to:

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- Identify what is important to residents in that estate or neighbourhood and agree local priorities
  - Identify specific items of work needing to be completed. You have indicated that repairs and maintenance, issues affecting your tenancy or property, together with issues surrounding anti social behaviour are high in your consideration of work to be done
  - Resolve issues locally as far as possible
  - Report back on local performance and objectives set
  - Evaluate the quality of the local service
- 
- Encourage all residents to take part in their local estates inspections
  - Housing officers and community wardens will increase their engagement with relevant resident associations and individual residents
  - Increase the local focus of Area Panels by presenting outcome focused reports that summarise the work done at patch level over the last quarter, leading to agreement on neighbourhood priorities and the setting of local offers
  - Build local priorities and offers into service plans and involve residents in the development of the capital investment programme
  - Involve residents in the follow up and management of city wide strategic issues agreed at the City Assembly
  - Work with residents to develop a policy for maintaining and improving neighbourhoods
  - Meet our regulator's requirements to agree and implement local offers with tenants where they want them, as a minimum in relation to standards on:
    - Tenant involvement and empowerment
    - Quality of accommodation and repairs and maintenance
    - Neighbourhood and community
  - Through our local offers we will offer commitments to tenants on
    - Local standards of performance
    - How performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants

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- Outline what will happen if we do not meet our local offers
- Have in place arrangements for reviewing local offers on a periodic basis

**[Diagram]**

## OBJECTIVE 3

### Involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services

#### You have told us you value:

- Your involvement in developing housing policy and influencing our strategic priorities at Housing Management Consultative Committee. You also value the role and influence of Area Panels and other resident groups such as the Sheltered Housing Action Group and the Estates Service Review Group in reviewing and shaping housing services
- Your full involvement at every stage of the procurement of the new repairs, maintenance and improvement partnership; the laundry equipment contract; and choice of contractors
- Your involvement in developing a Brighton & Hove standard for improvements to tenants' homes

#### You also want to be more involved in:

- Developing and delivering change and improvement
- Developing housing services they can access easily
- Establishing the strategic priorities of the service
- The direct testing of the services you receive (for example, increasing your involvement in mystery shopping) and feedback on your experiences
- In developing a clear and accessible policy for responding to complaints and using the policy to improve services and receive regular reports on how improvements have been made
- In the management of the new repairs and improvement partnership

## **You would like:**

- To have more choice over the services you receive
- Tenants and leaseholders with additional support needs, to be involved in the design of housing services and to be provided with facilities to help them do that
- To be part of an involvement system that considers equality issues and the diversity of residents

## **Our strategic actions to deliver this objective to you are:**

- Work with you to strengthen what is already in place for consultation on policy and plans. This will be done through a tenant compact review
- Continue to involve you in service reviews and the strategic commissioning and procurement of new or redesigned services
- Continue the work of the Asset Management Panel (AMP) and the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group (RMMG) in the strategic planning and operational delivery of the 10 year repairs, maintenance and improvement partnering contract
- Manage and operate resident involvement by mutual respect and trust through reviewing and utilising available tools like the code of conduct agreement governing resident involvement and the powers of the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG)
- Supplement input from existing residents' groups (such as the Estates Service Monitoring Group) with your views obtained through focus groups, panels, mystery shopping questionnaires, telephone surveys, on-line forums and other ways as appropriate, to review and improve performance in areas such as:
  - Cleaning of common areas and grounds maintenance
  - Health and safety
  - Security in the neighbourhoods, including dealing effectively with anti social behaviour
- Continue to consult you where we intend to make a significant change in the arrangements for the management of our housing stock

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- After we have consulted you we will feed back to you how we have taken your views into account through our resident magazine *Homing In* and/or other ways as appropriate
- Have regular 'You said, we did' feedback in our resident magazine *Homing in* detailing how we take account of your views and highlighting examples where this has positively influenced the service
- Develop and add to the range of ways that make it easier for you to express a complaint, and give details about what to do if you are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint
- Develop, agree and monitor service pledges for complaints with you and make sure that complaints and other feedback are managed and resolved promptly, politely and fairly
- Develop the mechanisms for reporting performance to focus on developments, improvements, outcomes and resulting changes from service enhancements
- Continue to involve you in the design, delivery and management of the new repairs and improvement partnership

## OBJECTIVE 4

### Involve residents in the monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services

#### You have told us that you would like:

- To be involved in developing how performance is monitored, is communicated, and how you will be able to scrutinise it
- Performance reports that are presented to you to include comparisons with performances of other social housing landlords, particularly top performers
- Performance measurements to be outcome focused and based on what is of value to you, in addition to the performance measures set by government
- Independent access to facilities that will allow you to compare performance with other landlords
- To be involved in determining the periodic review of local offers
- To be involved in the monitoring of the quality and performance of the new repairs and improvement partnership

#### Our strategic actions to deliver this objective are:

- Increase the range of opportunities for you to scrutinise our performance
- Adopt a co-regulation approach with tenant scrutiny at the heart of the approach. We will support you to build your capacity to make co-regulation effective
- Develop a performance monitoring plan which will include information to residents on
  - Definition of each performance indicator
  - The source, method, frequency and schedule of performance reports
  - The office, team, or individual responsible for ensuring performance reports are

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available on schedule

- Involve you to plan for how the performance data will be analysed, how reports will be presented, reviewed, and used to inform decisions
- Provide you with links to the regulator's web portal and benchmarking organisations, so you can independently compare our performance with other landlords
- Produce an annual report with you and for tenants setting out
  - Our performance against our regulator's standards in the previous year
  - Our performance against local offers in the previous year
  - How you have been involved in scrutinising our performance
  - How we have used external validation, peer review and benchmarking, where appropriate to gauge the impact of our actions
- Develop training in performance monitoring and scrutiny as an opportunity for you to be effectively engaged
- Enable you to be in the Core Group monitoring the quality and performance of the new repairs and improvement partnership
- Ensure you have the opportunity to measure and scrutinise how effective this Resident Involvement Strategy is
- Involve you in any review of democratic arrangements to ensure we are involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the housing management service in the best way



## PART 2 Delivering the strategy

### Our resident involvement structure

#### Developing policy

#### [Diagram]

The diagram above represents the formal ways in which you can get involved. Our present resident involvement structure offers a range of ways that residents can participate and express their views or help develop policy. These include:

- Local Residents Associations and neighbourhood groups
- City-wide special interest groups
- Monitoring and working groups
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Direct consultation with customers – e.g. focus groups
- Asset Management Panel and Repairs and maintenance monitoring group
- Email, online discussion forums and social networking sites
- Raising issues, problems or ideas directly with services
- Presenting the case for any other resident if authorised by them to do so.

**A menu of involvement options and time commitments is presented in appendix 1**

### The Tenant Compact

This is a written agreement developed by tenants and the council that sets out how residents will be involved in strategic and local housing decisions. The compact sets out the standards that have been agreed for involvement of tenant and leaseholders, meetings, information and resident groups. We aim to increase the number of residents who know about the compact to 60% by 2011 and increase satisfaction with it to 85%.

## **Review of the Tenant Compact**

The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG) of elected tenants and leaseholders representatives and council officers are reviewing the tenant compact. They have indicated the areas they wish to review. These are listed in appendix 3. The purpose of the review is to make involvement easier, accessible, and more transparent, whilst gauging the impact on value for money.

## **Delivering value for money**

Delivering value for money involves providing residents with cost-effective, efficient, quality services and homes to meet their needs. Involving residents in shaping and monitoring those services through this strategy helps us achieve this. You have told us that value for money for your rent was one of the three most important issues for you.

Focusing our resources on the most effective methods of resident involvement we will involve residents in understanding not only the costs involved, but also the benefits that come from using different methods of participation.

In 2010/11 we have allocated £281,240 of our Housing Management budget to resident involvement including:

- £24,310 for grants to each resident association to enable them to run their association
- £9,690 in transport, by way of taxis, to ensure that problems with mobility or personal safety did not exclude residents from meetings.
- A grant of £31,160 to the Resource Centre for training to provide residents with the necessary skills to run their associations, such as setting up accounts, running a group, working in a committee, producing a newsletter, etc.
- Specialist community participation staff to support local associations and the resident participation structure.

**Our strategic actions to deliver value for money in resident involvement are:**

- We will report to you, information on the costs of our services as well as our performance:
  - So you can challenge how our costs compare to those of other social landlords and help us achieve better value for money
  - To demonstrate how we are spending money on your priorities and how we have prioritised expenditure
  - So you can be involved in decisions about the services delivered and the costs of services that result in a service charge
  - So we can demonstrate to you that we have ensured value for money
- We will develop tools to understand which resident involvement mechanisms are the most effective and provide best value for money, so that we can direct our resources to those activities with the greatest impact
- We will improve monitoring of resident associations and forums to ensure effectiveness and value for money through completing Resident Involvement Impact Assessments
- We will improve what we are already doing, for example become better at implementing tried and tested practices such as strengthening residents and officers scrutiny of expenditure. Expenditure by resident associations is monitored by the TCMG
- In partnership with you we will be innovative when building in measurement and monitoring arrangements for getting more value for money from existing budgets that support resident involvement
- Enhanced efficiency will be essential to maintain and enhance service quality in the five years of this strategy, so we will encourage the take-up of shared activities and shared costs, more electronic and phone contact, and more collaboration around development projects
- To be effective in making efficiency savings residents will be backed up with a strong skills development programme
- We will tap into the expertise of the other registered providers, and compare our efficiency gains with theirs

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- We will investigate how we might benefit from the beacon programme and access mentoring services to facilitate improvements
- We will support behaviour change by individuals and groups which are promoting energy efficiency aims and objectives

### **PART 3 Strategy action plan**

The Action plan to deliver this strategy is presented together with this document. It details the plan of works that will be undertaken to meet the objectives we set out here, and will be updated throughout the five year period of this strategy.

## Appendix 1 Menu of involvement options

### Present options

#### Involvement at local level

##### Tenants and Residents Associations

Local associations are the independent democratic organisations for tenants and leaseholders in Brighton and Hove. The groups are open to any council tenant or leaseholder who lives in an area or block. Residents with particular common interests or issues are encouraged to exchange ideas and information and make collective representations to the council

#### Involvement at housing area level

##### Area Housing Management Panels

An Area Panel for each of the four neighbourhoods; Brighton East, Central, North & East, West Hove & Portslade meets at least three times a year, and

- Is used as a consultation forum for new housing management policies and initiatives
- Has an annual budget (the Estate Development Budget) to spend on local environmental improvements
- Monitors performance of area and council housing management
- Elects representatives to citywide bodies
- Can require reports from officers to an appropriate future meeting

##### 'Tenant-only' meetings

Prior to Housing Management Area Panels all the local tenants and residents associations in a housing management area send representatives to a meeting to discuss issues to be raised at the Area Panel. These meetings are open to all tenants and leaseholders in the area

## **Involvement in groups at city-wide level**

### **Citywide special interest groups**

#### **High Rise Action Group (HRAG)**

All residents of blocks with six or more stories are encouraged to attend general meetings of the HRAG and to speak and vote at them. This group discusses and campaigns on issues and services that are relevant to residents of high rise blocks. Recent examples have been around lifts, door entry systems, security, CCTV, caretaking and cleaning, noise and nuisance problems, and water metering and bills

#### **Sheltered Housing Action Group**

Each sheltered housing tenants' association or scheme meeting elect one voting representative for this group. Used as a consultation forum for issues and services for sheltered housing e.g. Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing and Scheme Manager recruitment

#### **Tenant Disability Network (TDN)**

This is an information gathering and sharing group concerned with issues for tenants and leaseholders with a disability. Members are elected by Area Panels. The main aim of the TDN is to identify and remove barriers that prevent disabled tenants and leaseholders from getting involved

#### **Leaseholder Action Group**

This group brings together people who own council leasehold properties. These are mainly flats in blocks where the freehold owner is the council. It is open to all leaseholders and is consulted by the council on issues that affect this special interest group

### **City-wide representative and participation bodies**

#### **Tenants' Conference**

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The conference brings together representatives of all tenants associations, city-wide special interest groups and tenants from areas without an association together with Members and officers of the council. It is chaired by a tenant. The purpose is to discuss major issues about housing and resident involvement

### **The City Assembly**

The City Assembly is for resident representatives, from all associations across the City, to come together in open debate on matters of city wide strategic interest concerning residents. The result of the debates may be the basis of policy development with the council

### **Joint Council and residents group**

#### **Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC)**

The HMCC is the main consultative body for housing management prior to decision making by the Cabinet Member for Housing and, where appropriate, the Cabinet and Full Council. HMCC is made up of councillors and elected representatives from each of the Area Panels and the city wide resident groups. Representatives take part in discussions relating to formal papers or committee reports. An 'indicative vote' of the tenants present is taken where 'recommendations' are made in the report.

This committee recommends policy and service delivery changes to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Cabinet, budget and capital programme reports and performance monitoring reports

### **City wide level - monitoring groups**

#### **Tenants' Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG)**

The group monitors the implementation of the Tenant Compact between residents, councilors and officers of the council. It acts as the agenda planning group and arrangements committee for the City Assembly meetings. The TCMG also discusses action and policy relevant to the Codes of Practice and procedures contained in the Compact. It can sit as a disciplinary committee when there has been an alleged breach of

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the standards in the Compact and can de-recognise associations that remain in breach of standards of conduct or democratic control

### **Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group**

The Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group consists of councillors, resident representatives and officers. It discusses the priorities for capital works and monitors the performance and standards of day to day repairs, voids repairs and services contracts

### **Estate Services Monitoring Group**

The Estates Service undertakes a caretaking role across the city. This monitoring group is the body that collects feedback and reports on the service. It deals with estate cleaning and makes recommendations on how the service is developed and managed

### **Car Parks and Garages Monitoring Group**

Housing own and manage a range of car parks and garages across the city. Some are rented by tenants, leaseholders or others. The group oversees the management, collection of charges, and their enforcement of rules by a small specialist team.

### **Housing income monitoring group**

The group works to support the work of the Housing Income Management Team to maximise income for the benefit of all tenants and leaseholders. They review performance outputs of the team in terms of both debt collection and meeting published customer service standards. At meetings members of the group discuss policies and procedures and how these might impact on performance and individuals with rent arrears. They will also highlight service delivery issues and work through how these might be improved

## **City wide level - working groups and panels**

### **‘Homing In’ Residents Editorial Advisory Board.**

‘Homing In’ is the Housing Management periodical produced by Brighton & Hove City Council for its tenants and leaseholders. The members of the Advisory Board influence



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the content of the publication and do not have to be able write copy or edit articles. They need to have a feel for what will interest fellow residents and a strong commitment to a diverse community. The group will encourage associations and individuals to write and submit material for publication.

### **Asset Management Panel**

This panel is a city wide strategic group that sets, reviews investment priorities, agrees standards, policies, procedures, timescales, etc. The Asset Management Panel was set up following a city wide request for volunteers. Those volunteering were then selected based on equalities considerations to ensure a representative sample. They are representative of as wide a range of tenants as possible and make collective recommendations.

### **Community Safety Forum**

The Forum is concerned with the Policing and Community Safety in Brighton & Hove. The group meets quarterly and consists of Councilors, the Police, the Fire Brigade, the Youth Offending Team, Victim Support, Brighton & Hove Mediation Service and Community Safety Officers. One Representative from the entire resident involvement structure attends these meetings and reports back to the City Assembly at each meeting.

### **Other working groups and focus groups**

There are, short term or task based groups set up to discuss and make recommendation on a particular issues or situations. These groups dissolve when the task is completed. They include focus groups and panels of residents called as individuals to discuss their own opinions about a particular issue or service

Currently there are Groups on

- Adaptations
- Allocations
- New Tenancy Agreement

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- Sheltered Housing
- Rechargeable Repairs
- Sustainability/ energy efficiency
- Local Lettings Plans
- Laundry Facilities

### **Non formal means of getting involved**

- Internet streaming radio stations. Working in partnership with privately run radio stations.
- Mobile phone contact (texting), and mobile website
- Telephone surveys
- Social networking sites including: Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, You Tube, Twitter, Mobikade, Muxlim, and My Church
- Building on the existing tenant discussion forum
- Community engagement fun days as part of an annual community road show made up of residents and housing staff
- Postal survey panel, Reading Panel, Email Panel / Online forum

## Involvement commitment

Activity	Frequency of involvement Estimated preparation time	Time at activity	
<b>Strategic and higher level involvement</b>			
Housing Management Consultative Committee		Every 3 Months	
	4hrs	2hrs	
City Assembly	Every 6 months	3hrs	1hr
Auditing – self assessment	Every 6 months	2hrs	2hrs
Residents Conference	Every 3 years	All day	
<b>Area and Neighbourhood level involvement</b>			
Area Panels	Every 4 months	2hrs	1hr
Neighbourhood groups	Every 3 months	1 ½ hrs	½ hr
<b>City wide involvement</b>			
Service review groups or panels – including resident complaints panel		Every 2 months	1
½ hrs	1hr		
Part of Citizens panel	Every 6 months	1hr	
Tenant Compact Monitoring Group	Every 2 months	2hrs	1hr
City Wide special interest groups	Every 2 months	1 ½ hrs	1hr
Focus groups on specific subjects	Small discussion groups set up for one off meetings 2hrs		
Mystery Shopper training	Every 3 months	1hr	½ day
Resident inspectors training	Every 3 months	1hr	½ day
Surveys – Telephone, online, mobile phone,		Annually	30mins

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Online forums	Individual choice		
Questionnaires – direct to home / with ‘Homing in’ magazine		Twice a year	30mins
Questionnaires – Electronic (via email)	Twice a year		30mins
Internet discussion forums and social networking websites – Twitter, Facebook or other online media	Individual choice		
Marketing and Communication group	Every 3 months	1 ½ hrs	1hr
Resident involvement strategy monitoring evaluation and review group	Every 3 months		
	2hrs	1hr	
<b>Local patch level involvement</b>			
Local residents association	Monthly – every 6 weeks	1 ½ hrs	1hr
Estate Inspections training	Every 3 months	2hrs	½ day
Community fun days	Annually	½ day	
Members of frontline teams	Weekly	8hrs	
Home visit by Housing Officers	As appropriate	1hr	
Informal Residents group	Group choice	1 ½ hrs	

## Appendix 2 Equalities Impact Assessment

## Appendix 3 Areas for review in the Tenant Compact

- The resources available to support the various options for consultation and engagement.
- The service standards the council is committed to
- The role of the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, and the arrangements in place for monitoring the delivery of the compact
- Considering where the City Assembly sits in relation to Area Panels. Area Panel meetings will be reduced from four to three per year taking place either side of the City Assembly (holding twice per year)
- There will be a review of the city wide groups considering their role and the support they will need
- The establishment of working groups will be based on an assessment of their expected contribution towards policy development
- The neighbourhood meetings, for example the Lewes Road Consortium, will be officially included as part of the resident participation structure with clear identified support
- A review of the Tenant Only meetings and their contribution towards policy development and adoption
- A review of the resident representative role. Skills capacity will be built into the role to enable effective representation, advocacy, monitoring, mediation and governance
- A review of the recognition policy making it fit for purpose. It will include agreeing procedures and processes for recognition and de recognition. The policy will seek to allow recognition for individuals who wish to participate but do not want to join group meetings and those who wish to set up small block or street meetings (without being part of a larger group)
- A review of the standard constitution considering issues like 'votes of no confidence', representation, operations of bank accounts and audits
- The setting of key tasks for the structure, including the responsibilities of resident reps, and what is expected from the council (the service standards that residents have agreed)
- Adopt a commitment to provide, where possible, meeting rooms for tenants to meet

## Appendix 4 Future development options

- Maintain and build on the 'community focus' of the participation system, emphasising stronger communities as well as resident involvement, working with groups and companies that are already working in a particular community or subject area we are interested in
- Forge closer links between resident groups and existing community ethnic organisations that residents belong to. This would help with initial contacts and consultation opportunities of BME residents, as residents are drawn by the cultural and faith based activities of these groups
- Some residents from BME backgrounds would prefer the use of less written communication whilst using the phone more to contact and involve residents. There are some issues to do with language and others to do with literacy that are barriers to effective involvement. So continuing to develop accessibility for all is a main priority
- The TCMG would like a residents forum for BME residents to be set up
- Involve vulnerable residents that are being supported to maintain their tenancies by developing a peer led project to encourage other residents in this group to join in
- Target the involvement of younger residents by developing the 'sign post of ideas' presented in 'Successfully engaging young people in participation'. This considers the present barriers to participation, communicating with young people and encouraging combined staff and residents associations
- Encourage residents to become members of frontline teams within the participation system to build team work towards service delivery goals. This is an opportunity to get involved and will lead to opportunities for personal development
- Organise a recognition day for achievements in participation during the year. This will be celebrated at a yearly 'golden lunch' where awards will be given out in recognition of volunteering
- Set up a marketing and communication central resident and staff group to develop and promote strategic activities for the year. The group will devise marketing plans in relation to

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the resources available



# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 14

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Resident involvement in the 2010 annual report to council tenants and leaseholders and development of local service offers</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14 June 2010</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Housing, Culture &amp; Enterprise</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Carol Jenkins</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>29-3832</b>
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>Carol.jenkins@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE/NOT FOR PUBLICATION

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The council is to produce an annual report to all tenants and leaseholders on our performance as their landlord and setting out our plans and service offer to tenants for 2010/11. This report to Housing Management Consultative Committee sets out our plan and timetable for involving residents in producing and scrutinising this annual report for the year ending 31 March 2010. It also outlines the proposed approach and timetable for involving tenants and leaseholders in developing local service offers.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the plan and timetable set out in Appendix 1 to this report for involving residents in producing and scrutinising the annual report to tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2010.

(2) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the outline plan and timetable set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6 to this report for involving residents in developing and agreeing local offers for service delivery.

### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 A report to the Housing Management Consultative Committee meeting in March outlined the new arrangements for regulating the council's landlord services. It explained landlords are now required by 1 October each year to publish for their tenants, and share with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), a report on how they are meeting the TSA standards, including their local offers. The tenant involvement and empowerment standard requires landlords to support co-regulation with their tenants by providing tenants with a range of opportunities to influence how providers meet all the TSA's standards and to scrutinise performance against all standards and in the development of the annual report.
- 3.2 The 2010 annual performance report to tenants and leaseholders will:
- assess how we currently meet regulatory standards and how we have measured that;
  - note any gaps and our improvement plans to fill those gaps;
  - include our offer to tenants against the standards for the next year;
  - set out our plans for developing locally tailored service offers to be implemented by 1 April 2011; and
  - detail how tenants have been involved in producing and scrutinising the report.
- 3.3 The plan and timetable for producing the annual report to be published by 1 October 2010 are set out in Appendix 1. They aim to involve as wide a range of residents as possible in the production and scrutiny of the report within the time available, including:
- tenants and leaseholders in all tenant and resident associations and other existing resident groups;
  - tenants and leaseholders not currently involved in the formal resident participation structure who have, through the resident involvement survey reported to the Committee's last meeting, indicated their willingness to become involved in having a say in how their homes and neighbourhoods are managed in other ways;
  - tenants and leaseholders from all sections of the community and in all equality and diversity strands;
  - all tenants and leaseholders, through the Homing In newsletter and our website.
- The Chairman will be requested to call a special meeting of the Committee in the first week of September to scrutinise the final draft of the report and recommend it (subject to any comments by the Committee) for approval by the Cabinet Member for Housing at her meeting on 8 September 2010.
- 3.4 Our plans for developing locally tailored service offers to be implemented by 1 April 2011 also involve engaging as many residents as possible, using the resident involvement database and other means as well as working closely with our resident working groups and tenant and resident associations. We

plan to contact tenants and leaseholders during the summer and autumn to find out what their priorities are for the range of services that we deliver, to help us to develop service pledges. We will use the resident involvement survey database to contact residents on the services and areas that they have expressed an interest in. A range of methods will be employed to engage with residents, including questionnaires, community events and through daily contact.

- 3.5 Once we have established what residents' priorities are, we will work with existing resident groups to work up the detail of the service pledges and what the remedies would be if we fail to meet our pledges. We then intend to consult with residents on the pledges and put them to the Housing Management Consultative Committee for scrutiny and discussion and to recommend approval. The service pledges will be implemented by 1 April 2011.
- 3.6 Initially we will be looking at local offers on a citywide basis. However, there will be opportunities for us to vary and agree standards to meet the priorities and needs of particular groups, such as sheltered tenants, or local priorities in particular neighbourhoods. The draft Resident Involvement Strategy, elsewhere on the agenda, also sets out ways we intend to strengthen our partnership with residents at a local or neighbourhood level, to give residents opportunities to agree local priorities and to report back on local performance.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Housing Management officers discussed and agreed the outline proposed arrangements for resident involvement in the annual report and development of local service offers with residents from the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG) at a resident involvement workshop on 27 April 2010. TCMG supported the use of the resident involvement database resulting from the resident involvement survey in December 2009 and of the draft resident involvement strategy, elsewhere on the agenda, to provide a range of ways to involve residents in producing and scrutinising the annual report and developing local service offers.
- 4.2 The proposals were also presented to and acknowledged by the City Assembly of tenants and leaseholders on 15 May 2010 and to Area Housing Management Panel meetings in May and June.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The costs of producing the annual report and involving residents will be met from within the existing 2010/11 Housing Revenue Account Budget.

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By section 204 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 the regulator, the Tenant Standards Authority (TSA), may require a provider to prepare annual reports assessing the registered provider's performance by reference to standards set by the regulator. Failure to comply with the regulator's request without reasonable excuse is an offence punishable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £5000. The TSA has required that an annual report for the year ending 31 March 2010 should be made available to tenants by no later than 1 October 2010. The plan and timetable set out in the report will assist the Council in complying with its legal obligations. No adverse Human Rights Act implications are considered to arise from the report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley*

*Date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The annual report and development of local service offers will be undertaken in line with the TSA's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard, which requires registered providers to understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants in meeting all of the standards, including in relation to the seven equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed on work to meet the TSA's requirements.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The TSA standards promote the use of engagement and partnership with tenants to support sustainable communities. The Neighbourhood and Community standard includes a requirement for registered providers to co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic well being in the areas where they own properties. The annual report will include the council's performance in this area and improvement plans and local service offers will be developed in relation to this standard.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The annual report and local service offers will include the council's performance on dealing with anti-social behaviour and a local service offer will be developed in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 It is currently a regulatory requirement of the TSA as set out in its regulatory framework that the council should:

- involve tenants in producing and scrutinising the annual report for the year ending 31 March 2010 and make it available to tenants by no later than 1 October 2010;
- offer tenants opportunities to agree how some services can be tailored to meet local priorities. Where tenants want local tailoring and choices to reflect their priorities, the council should consult meaningfully with tenants and act reasonably to develop a local offer in response. Local offers for service delivery should be in place by 1 April 2011.

Where agreement cannot be reached on local offers, the TSA states it would encourage the landlord and tenants to seek independent mediation. The TSA states it wants co-regulation between landlords and tenants to work to resolve any issues; 'Only in exceptional circumstances (such as when the provider is not delivering services in line with the outcomes set out in the TSA standards and has failed to address this) and where it is reasonable and proportionate will the TSA consider more formal intervention'.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 In regulating councils' landlord function the TSA has committed to work closely with the Audit Commission.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Timetable for 2010 annual performance report to tenants and leaseholders

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

*None*

**Background Documents**

1. *The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2010*  
Tenant Services Authority, March 2010

**Plan and timetable for 2010 annual performance report to tenants and leaseholders**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
early May	Copy of new regulatory framework and standards sent to all tenant and resident associations
15 May	Consult City Assembly on plan and timetable and seek views on whether the council currently meets standards on tenant involvement and empowerment, customer service, choice and complaints, understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants and value for money
w/c 24 May	Advise all tenants and leaseholders through Homing In of standards and how to get a copy and invite comments on how the council is meeting them
24 May - 2 June	Consult Area Panels on plan and timetable and seek views on whether the council currently meets standards on neighbourhood management, local area co-operation and anti social behaviour
May/June	Ensure all resident groups are aware of relevant standards and annual report plan
14 June	Housing Management Consultative Committee to discuss and sign off plan and timetable
June	Produce draft report and check accuracy with staff
June/July	Hold one-off focus group meetings with respondents to the resident involvement survey who indicated interest in focus groups and reflect a cross section of our resident profile, to discuss in detail how the council meets a standard and how it could improve
w/c 28 June	Circulate draft report to all tenant and resident associations and other resident groups for scrutiny and comments
w/c 28 June	Put draft report on council website and email resident involvement survey respondents who gave an email address with link and request feedback
w/c 28 June	Make copies of draft report available at housing offices and send to residents on request
June/July	Seek to engage residents who are under-represented in existing resident groups e.g. younger residents, BME residents through Facebook and other means
July	Officers attending resident meetings to discuss draft report
26 July	Deadline for comments on draft report and focus group feedback
early Aug	Produce final draft report
5 Aug	Homing In Tenant Editorial Board to help with design of final draft
early Sept	Housing Management Consultative Committee to scrutinise and sign off final draft
8 Sept	Cabinet Member for Housing to approve final report
Sept	Printing and distribution of report to all tenants and leaseholders
1 Oct	Deadline for publication of report

**Subject:** Grounds Maintenance Review. Progress Update  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 June 2010  
**Report of:** Director of Housing, Culture and Enterprise  
**Contact Officer:** Name: Graham Page Tel: 29-3354  
E-mail: Graham.Page@brighton-hove.gov.uk  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE/ EXEMPTIONS

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Provide a progress report on the review of grounds maintenance service on housing management owned land.
- 1.2 The scope of the review is large and complex so the aim is to have the revised service in place by April 2011
- 1.3 A revised service specification for the grounds maintenance service will be developed with City parks using pilot locations to test and cost out the service improvements.
- 1.4 The revised service will be benchmarked with other local authorities in order to demonstrate the new service delivers value for money.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) That members of HMCC note the contents of the report.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The project officer has been working alongside the Estates Service Monitoring Group which consists of two representatives from each of the four area panels, a leaseholder, sheltered housing action group and high rise action group member.
- 3.2 The group also includes the Operational Managers for City parks and Estate Services. Collectively we have explored with residents their concerns and identified what are the core issues with the current service.
- 3.3 We aim to become a 3 star service and to achieve this we need to meet the National Standards set by the Tenant Service Authority. The project officer

has adopted those guidelines as a framework for the review. These guidelines are comprehensive and focus on;

- Emphasis on outcomes-what are residents priorities for the service
- Initial assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the service
- Develop resident involvement impact assessments to demonstrate the outcome and influence of residents in shaping and changing the service.
- Involve residents in making assessments through visits , mystery shopping, learning from complaints
- Focus on access and customer care ,diversity and value for money
- Assess prospects for improvement- track record performance management and capacity
- Score the service and identify parts of the service and geographical areas that should be prioritised for improvement. Identify what difference the service makes to residents
- Devise communication plan – regular briefings to staff and councillors, key residents/contractors on service performance and improvement planning
- Devise programme of testing

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Estates Service Monitoring Group has met monthly since November 2009.
- 4.2 In January 2010 the group engaged in a 'pin point board' activity and residents wrote down what they thought of the current service listing, good and bad practice and scoring them 1-10, 10 being excellent , 1 very poor. There were 38 individual 'Post it's' with comments on the board which were grouped into themes, namely; trees, grass, shrubs, litter, weeds, wildlife and communication. The scores for each theme ranged from 1-8, with most scores being in the lower to middle range.
- 4.3 The group have produced a Grounds Maintenance Action Plan which set out what residents would like to be achieved under each of the headings.
- 4.4 On 10 May 2010 representatives from the group were taken on an estate tour of housing sites. The purpose of this tour was to show residents how varied our estates are and familiarise themselves with the range of grounds maintenance standards across parts of the city.
- 4.5 The group are keen to explore and demonstrate what can be achieved by operating local standards agreed with residents in particular pilot areas. The



estate tour visited diverse locations so that the full range of services could be explored, including some natural sites where wildlife occurs naturally – rare butterflies in chalky banks and conservation areas.

- 4.6 The project is entering an exciting phase with pilot locations to be decided at the next Estates Service Monitoring Group meeting in June. This will afford the project the opportunity to explore with residents the local service standards they would like to see, cost out any changes to service charges and monitor resident satisfaction with the service
- 4.7 Once the group has decided on the locations to be piloted the project will engage the services of Brighton University Volunteering group of students. They will survey residents in the pilot areas to seek their views on what level of grounds maintenance service they would like to see where they live. The volunteers will also survey resident satisfaction before/after the pilot.
- 4.8 Members of the Estates Service Monitoring Group attend the Housing and Estate Forum in Moulsecoomb and are working with the forum to develop the 'rate your estate' initiative. Some Estates Service Monitoring Group resident members have undertaken training to become 'resident assessors' who will monitor the standards of cleaning and grounds maintenance by scoring the service.
- 4.9 On 14 May 2010 a group of residents from Crawley visited Brighton to see the scheme in operation and this visit will be reciprocated later in the year. This will prove useful when we benchmarking and compare our services with other social landlords
- 4.10 The Project Officer has had met with Highways to explore the use of a mechanical ride on vehicle with telescopic arms which sprays weeds on the highway which could easily divert into housing owned parking spaces and garage areas. We are waiting on costs, but this could provide significant savings as we currently use City parks who use an operative on foot to spray these areas.

## **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. As the review of grounds maintenance on housing land progresses, the financial implications for the HRA Budget and tenants will be assessed and reported back to this committee.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen      Date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010*

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As the report is for noting only, there are no direct legal or Human Rights Act implications

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley*

*Date: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Research suggests that there is a strong correlation between economic and environmental deprivation and poorer communities tend to live in more polluted and less green locations. Residents of social housing are therefore more likely to live in areas of poor environmental quality (Neighbourhoods Green (2004) Decent Homes Decent spaces). In order to minimise any negative impacts throughout the city an impact assessment will be undertaken during this review.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 This project supports the council's sustainability strategy and clear environmental benefits could be gained from the development of a new specification including reducing the cities carbon footprint and protecting and enhancing nature conservation interest within the city.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Through the development of a new specification there is an opportunity to ensure that issues of community safety are considered in the design and maintenance of green spaces and communal areas

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The development of a new specification for the delivery of our grounds maintenance service will have citywide implications for council tenants and leaseholders

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

None

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

**Background Documents**

None

# **HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

## **Agenda Item 16**

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Management Performance Report End of Year (and quarter 4)</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14 June 2010</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Housing Culture and Enterprise</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>John Austin-Locke</b>	<b>Tel: 291008</b>
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>John.austin-locke@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

#### **1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This is the fourth and final quarter for Housing Management performance for the financial year 2009/10. End of year figures are presented either as a collective figure for the year or as final end of year figure against a previously set target. The distinctions, and the reasons for it, are made clear in the body of the report.
- 1.2 As reported previously, and at City Assembly, the requirements of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) will entail a change in the presentation of this report in the coming year. Therefore we will be reviewing our performance reports during 2010 to ensure that it provides tenants and leaseholders a full picture of our performance.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

#### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

### 3.1.0 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

Indicator	End of year performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Top 25% of performing authorities figures 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	Targets	
				09/10	10/11
BV66a Rent Collection	98.16%	98.29%	Definition under review with HouseMark	98.50%	98.68%
BV66a Rent Collection (Central housing area)	98.35%	98.32%	n.a.	98.79%	99.03%
BV66a Rent Collection (East housing area)	97.73%	98.00%	n.a.	97.99%	98.13%
BV66a Rent Collection (North housing area)	98.35%	98.47%	n.a.	98.66%	98.82%
BV66a Rent Collection (West housing area)	98.43%	98.47%	n.a.	98.88%	99.12%
BV66a Rent Collection (Temporary Accommodation)	97.07%	98.65%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
BV66b Those with arrears of more than 7 weeks	6.40%	4.91%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 3.79%	4.96%	4.13%
BV66c The NOSP figure	30.35%	26.97%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 22.94%	26.46%	23.80%
BV66d The Eviction Figure (% tenants evicted for	0.16%	0.12%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 0.13%	< than 35 evictions per annum: 0.29%	

Indicator	End of year performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Top 25% of performing authorities figures 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	Targets	
				09/10	10/11
rent arrears)					
BV69 % rent lost due to vacant dwellings	1.33%	2.05%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 1.65%	n.a.	To be set
Total former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temporary Accommodation)	£784,753	£780,279	n.a.	n.a.	To be set
% Collection rate for former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temporary Accommodation)	28.70%	22.88%	RIEN	n.a.	To be set
% of Write Offs for former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temporary Accommodation)	18.66%	9.30%	n.a.	n.a.	To be set
Total recharge debt	£95,884	£190,138	n.a.	£125,484	£272,110
% collection rate for recharges	31.26%	19.63%	n.a.	35%	20%
% Leaseholder recovery rate	80%	84%	n.a.	82%	To be set
% Leaseholder Recovery Rate on Recoverable arrears	90%	92%	n.a.	90%	To be set

- The above figures are cumulative and therefore 4<sup>th</sup> quarter figures are the same as the end of year.

Indicator	End of year performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Top 25% of performing authorities figures 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	Targets	
				09/10	10/11

- RIEN: Rental Income Excellence Network

### 3.1.1 BVPI66a

3.1.2 The end of year figures show a 2009/10 collection rate of 98.29% against last year's performance of 98.16% and the 2007/08 result of 97.75%.

3.1.3 Continuous improvement has been a challenge in the current economic climate, but a clear and steady focus on rent collection and arrears management has delivered positive results.

### 3.1.4 BVPI66b

3.1.5 The percentage of debtors with more than seven weeks rent arrears at the end of March 2010 was 4.98%. This compares favourably with the 2008/09 result of 6.40% and represents a reduction of 212 in the number of debtors with more than seven weeks rent arrears.

### 3.1.6 BVPI66c

3.1.7 Between April 2009 and March 2010 the number of tenants served with a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) was 753 compared to 917 during the same period in 2008/09.

### 3.1.8 BVPI66d

3.1.9 The number of households evicted for rent arrears in 2009/10 was 14. Increasing the collection rate while sustaining tenancies and minimising evictions is aligned with the corporate housing strategy in preventing an increase in homelessness. Thus, in order to achieve this, the Income Management Team will continue to use the Rent Arrears Pre-Action Protocol and work with customers to address issues prior to taking legal action.

### 3.2.0 Former tenant arrears

3.2.1 In 2008/09 the national average collection rate for former tenant arrears was 9.12% (Rent Income Excellence Network national figures). The 2009/10 collection rate for BHCC Income Management Team of 22.88% reflects the commitment of the Former Arrears Team and the work being

done by the Current Arrears Team to ensure that all legal obligations are met on the ending of a tenancy.

### 3.2.2 Recharges

3.2.3 Due to the increased emphasis on recharges the number of tenants who were recharged for the cost of repairs due to deliberate damage or neglect between April 2009 and March 2010 was 249. As a result the total recharge debt has increased by £94,254. This however, reflects the Housing Management policy, which places emphasis on the responsibility remaining with the tenant in order to ensure that properties are left in a reasonable condition, and no longer tolerates damage to our properties. Whilst the collection rate for 2009/10 was 19.63% the income management team will continue to implement the recharge policy with vigour.

### 3.3 Leaseholders' service charges - % collection rate on gross arrears

3.3.1 Throughout 2009/2010 there has been an increased emphasis in supporting leaseholders so that they can meet their service charge obligations. As a consequence of this focused work, the average gross arrears were £156 per leaseholder in 2009/10. This is the lowest amount recorded for this indicator against previous yearly totals.

3.3.2 There will be a need for an increased focus in the management of service charges in the forthcoming year to maintain the high level of success. There is a high level of works anticipated throughout the service in order to meet the decent homes standard. In order to achieve this we will be working with our partners Mears to anticipate the potential impact of charges on leaseholders to ensure that accurate information is available at the earliest opportunity.

### 3.3.3 Leaseholders' service charges - % collection rate on recoverable arrears

3.3.4 The 'recoverable' arrears figure excludes the costs that have been passed to legal services for recovery. The legal recovery is subject to charging orders and formal payment arrangements that have been arranged, or those that are being disputed.

### 3.4.0 Empty home turnaround time

Indicator	End of year performance 08/09	Fourth quarter 09/10	End of year performance 09/10	Top 25% of performing authorities figures 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Targets	
					09/10	10/11
BV212 average re-let times in days (all properties)	28	24	25.5	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 25 Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 23.38	26	24
General needs	25	24	23	n.a.	26	24
Sheltered	38	29	38	n.a.	26	24

\*Empty property turnaround figures are quarterly whilst the end of year is cumulative.

3.4.1 The Lettings Team has continued meet the challenge of reducing the overall empty home turnaround time from 28 days to 25.5 days during the past year. And whilst it is acknowledged that this falls just outside the upper quartile figures for both the major cities and stock retained benchmarking clubs, it exceeds our target for the year.

3.4.2 In order to address the challenges faced in letting sheltered properties a number of flats within some of the schemes, such as Hazel Holt, have been made into self contained homes providing residents with their own shower facilities. This is an ongoing project, and all schemes, with shared facilities will be reviewed during the next year.

3.4.3 Looking to the year ahead, the team has set a challenging turnaround target of 24 days on average turnaround time.

3.4.4 The Lettings Team is looking forward to achieving the objectives on its service plan for the coming year, this includes:

- making improvements to our customers' experience of the letting's service by working with newly moved in tenants to discuss, for example, their expectations, satisfaction levels, and suggestions for improvement.
- involving customers more in the work of the team, and in developing our local service pledges and remedies.
- improving communications in order to improve the service delivered



- taking extra steps to ensure tenancies get off on the right footing and are sustainable.
- meeting the target of 24 days.

### 3.5.0 Stock investment and asset management – Performance Quarter Three

Indicator	End of year performance 08/09	Fourth quarter 09/10	End of year performance 09/10	Top 25% of performing authorities figures 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	Targets	
					09/10	10/11
Emergency Repairs Completed in time	96.8 % 98.48 % (Mears) 94.49 % (Kier)	98.12% 99.53 (Mears) 96.2% (Kier)	98%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile	99 %	97%
No of Emergency Repairs completed	7,755 4,414 (Mears) 3,341 (Kier)	1,865 1,075 (Mears) 790 (Kier)	7,080 4,135 (Mears) 2,945 (Kier)	n.a	n.a.	
Urgent Repairs Completed in time	92.53 % 95.35 % (Mears) 89.18 % (Kier)	97.69% 98.94% (Mears) 97.03% (Kier)	97.6%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile	98 %	97%
No of Urgent Repairs completed	4,391 2,388 (Mears) 2,005 (Kier)	1,429 852 (Mears) 577 (Kier)	4,246 2,474 (Mears) 1,772 (Kier)	n.a.	n.a.	**
Routine Repairs Completed within target time	96.01 % 97.86 % (Mears) 93.53 % (Kier)	98.94% 99.87% (Mears) 97.03% (Kier)	98.9%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile	98 %	97%
No of Routine Repairs completed	19,697 11,305 (Mears) 8,419 (Kier)	4,448 2,999 (Mears) 1,449 (Kier)	18380 11,474 (Mears) 6,906 (Kier)	n.a.	n.a.	**
BV72 Right to Repair orders completed within target time	96.87 %	98.06%	98.3%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile	97 %	97%
BV73 Ave time to	15 days	12 days	12 days	HouseMark Major Cities	14 days	**

Indicator	End of year performance 08/09	Fourth quarter 09/10	End of year performance 09/10	Top 25% of performing authorities figures 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	Targets	
					09/10	10/11
complete routine repairs				Benchmarking: Upper Quartile Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile		
NI158 % of council homes that are non-decent	48.89%	39.48%	39.48%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile	36%	**
BV63 - Energy Efficiency (SAP Rating 2001)	75.9	76.5	76.5	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 72.9 (target)	76.5	**
LPI G3 Citywide % of stock with up to date gas safety certificates	99.61%	99.68%	99.68%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile target	100 %	**
Mears Area	99.49 %	99.74%	99.74%	n.a.	100 %	**
PH Jones Area	99.78 %	99.91%	99.61%	n.a.	100 %	**

### 3.5.1 Responsive repairs

3.5.2 Improvements in the completion of emergency, urgent and routine repairs continued over the last quarter of 2009/2010. These existing repairs contracts ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and despite the challenges of the closedown of the contracts performance for 2009/2010 has improved on the previous year across all of the above indicators.

3.5.3 Targets have been achieved for indicators BV72 (right to repairs completed within target), BV73 (number of days to complete routine repairs), and for

the completion of routine repairs. The targets for emergency and urgent repairs for the year however, were not met as a consequence of the performance in the first quarter of 2009/2010. Despite this, it is worth noting that our new partners Mears, performance in all areas exceeded the targets set for them.

3.5.4 Further, although the targets for 2010/11 were set ahead of the new repairs and improvement partnership with Mears and reflect the minimum position expected for the first year, Mears have asserted their confidence in exceeding the said targets.

### 3.6.0 **Decent homes and SAP**

3.6.1 Further improvements in residents homes have been delivered over the last quarter of the year with kitchens, bathrooms, doors and heating installations all contributing to improved performance in decent homes. At the end of the year 39.48% of homes were non-decent meaning that approximately 10% of the housing stock was made decent in 2009/2010.

3.6.2 Following the successful mobilisation of the repairs and improvement partnership with Mears there is a target of achieving decency in 75% of the stock by the end of 2010/11.

### 3.6.3 **Gas**

3.6.4 The percentage of homes with a current gas safety certificate remains high with excellent performance being delivered in partnership by Brighton & Hove City Council, Mears Group and PH Jones. Performance at the end of 2009/2010 was 99.68%; this is an improvement on last year's performance of 99.61%. At the time of writing this report a total of 34 properties have an overdue service however, the status of each of the properties is individually known.

### 3.7.0 Estates Services

Satisfaction	Total inspections /reports	Good	Moderate	Poor	Very poor/fail
Estate Inspections	54	26	13	13	2
Estate Cleaning Service	50	23	18	8	1
Grounds Maintenance	18	2	9	6	1

#### 3.7.1 Cleaning

3.7.2 The last performance report advised members of this committee that changes were being considered as to the way the Estates Service cleaning performance is recorded. The proposal was to include residents' assessments of the quality of the work carried out.

3.7.3 The Turning the Tide project are pioneering this approach through the 'Rate Your Estate' initiative, where resident assessors will score the environmental quality of their estate, or part of it, and the services that contribute to its overall appearance.

3.7.4 The table above shows feedback on the housing related elements from the recent 'Rate Your Estate' Resident Assessor training day that was organised by the Turning the Tide project. This data was gathered from a test inspection of 3 small areas in Moulsecomb and are an example of the type of report that will be available when 'Rate Your Estate' is finalised and rolled out across the city. Residents were given guidance on how to carry out this type of estate inspection using a photo book to score quality, and then asked to test the procedures and forms that support the inspection process. Residents who attended this event were very positive about this style of estate inspection, and have made suggestions on how the forms and procedure can be improved. Work is ongoing to make these changes and test them out before the procedure is introduced on a city wide basis.

3.7.5 The figures for estate inspections provide a summary of the overall categorisation of each of the 54 reports that were carried out on the training day. This ranges from Good to Very poor/fail. From the results of the inspections the overall feedback, reflected up to 72% either good or moderate.

3.7.6 The Estate Cleaning service results reflect up to 82% of areas either good or moderate, with 16% reported as poor and a further 2% fail.

3.7.7 The Grounds maintenance service results reflected 61% of areas either good or moderate, with 33% reported as poor and a further 5.5% fail.

3.7.8 This type of reporting also provides the facility to identify areas that need a higher concentration of input in order to bring them up to an acceptable standard.

3.7.9 When the 'Rate your Estate' procedure is finalised the assessments will be reported back to the Housing & Estates Forum where resident representatives in the Turning the Tide area will meet with service providers, to agree the actions that need to be taken to improve the lower scoring areas.

### 3.7.10 Bulk Refuse & Graffiti removal

Indicator	End of year performance 08/09	Fourth quarter 09/10	End of year performance 09/10	Future targets	
				09/10	10/11
Bulk refuse removal	Emergency 77%	Emergency 100%	Emergency 98.6%	E 100%	E 100%
Targets met within timescales	Routine 84%	Routine 99.1%	Routine 97.3%	R 95%	R 96%
Graffiti removal	Emergency 100%	Emergency 77.8%	Emergency 84.3%	E 100%	E 100%
Targets met within timescales	Routine 88%	R Routine 93.8%	Routine 75.6%	R 95%	R 96%

3.7.11 Performance by the bulk refuse removal team has been particularly strong this year. This team has played an important role in improving fire safety in blocks of flats by working with the local housing offices to remove abandoned goods from the common parts of buildings to keep common ways clear and free from obstructions.

3.7.12 The graffiti team has not reached the targets that were set this year. This is mainly due to the vehicle being off the road for repairs during the

summer of 2009. Further delays in the removal of graffiti may be upon further inspection, a result of the need for specialist contractors to carry out the work. The trend, however, for routine removal is one of improved performance and should it continue, would indicate that the target of 96% for 2010/11 is achievable.

### 3.8.0 Anti-social behaviour

Current high profile ASB cases	Number of new cases	Number of Notices of Seeking Possession served	Number of evictions	Number of closed cases
48	9	6	2	5

3.8.1 The main focus of the “Turning the Tide” pilot is to operate within the area serviced by the Selsfield Drive Housing Office. Both the city wide ASB and Tenancy Support teams have been brought together as part of the systemic change in the delivery of housing management services that forms a key aspect of the pilot.

3.8.2 The intention of the pilot is to ensure that all of the city’s tenants can benefit from the refocused approach to ASB and tenancy sustainment. This includes robust and assertive actions to actively challenge ASB and to ensure that there is consistency city wide.

3.8.3 During the last quarter the pilot can report that it has successfully closed 5 cases, with 2 cases resulting in eviction. A clear priority of the pilot is to ensure that anti-social behaviour ceases as quickly as possible. Eviction is not an ideal outcome and the pilot aims to use targeted and firm interventions in order to change behaviour and, if possible, to maintain tenancy. The pilot seeks to ensure sufficient support is provided to victims and witnesses and is currently in the process of assigning additional staff resources in order to provide an improved support service to residents.

3.8.4 The success of the pilot has very much been a result of adopting a multi agency approach and utilizing the various enforcement powers available whilst ensuring that the necessary support is provided for victims, witnesses and perpetrators, who may be presenting with complex needs. The enforcement measures that have been adopted have included Brighton and Hove’s first premises Closure Order made under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (as amended by Section 118 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008). This ensured an immediate end to a situation of serious anti-social behaviour prior to obtaining outright possession of the property through the court.

3.8.5 Other examples of utilising the enforcement options through this approach have included working with the Environmental Health team to obtain an ASBO on conviction following seizure of noise making equipment under the Noise Act 1996. The Order was breached, the council returned to court and the perpetrator was remanded in custody in January pending trial. This provided an immediate end to continuing noise and anti-social behaviour. Another case incorporated obtaining an injunction with powers of arrest under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. In order to protect vulnerable and elderly residents this, upon breach of the order, resulted in a 2 month custodial sentence and court costs of £862.50,.

3.8.6 Turning the tide will continue to develop performance indicators in-line with our benchmarking colleagues at HouseMark whilst placing emphasis on outcomes.

Satisfaction	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
How satisfied are you with the way your complaint / case was dealt with	4	2	2	2	2
How satisfied are you with the outcome of your work with the service	6	3	1	1	1
How satisfied are you that your case officer was always helpful	7	1	2		2
How satisfied are you that you were kept informed about what was happening throughout your work with the service	5	3	1	1	2
How satisfied were you with the support given to you by your case officer	5	3	2		2

3.8.7 Thus, emphasis is placed on effective outcomes and in order to ensure that the pilot is a success all victims and witnesses will be contacted when a case is closed to determine whether they have been satisfied with the way in which the case has been managed.

3.8.8 Following the closure of the cases from the last quarter of all satisfaction questions asked, the percentage of victims of anti-social behaviour either very satisfied or dissatisfied ranged between 60% and 75%, with one response rate of 50%.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 Service specific groups will continue to monitor performance on a regular basis.

4.2 The consultation on the new resident involvement strategy will also emphasise continued customer involvement in analysing and scrutinising performance.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications which have been included in the monthly financial monitoring reports. An example is the improvement in the rent collection and arrears management over the past two years, which has contributed to a saving in the HRA Budget for the bad debt provision requirement. Another example is any improvement in turnaround times or a reduction in empty property numbers increases the amount of rent collected. Improvements in performance will, in general, lead to more resources being available for tenants services in the future

5.2 *Finance Officer Consulted:* Sue Chapman *Date:* 1/06/2010

##### Legal Implications:

5.3 There are no significant legal implications arising from this standard performance report.

5.4 *Lawyer Consulted:* Liz Woodley *Date:* 1/06/2010

##### Equalities Implications:

5.5 These are contained within the body of the report. For example ensuring that due note is taken of equalities considerations in sustaining tenancies



and minimising evictions. In each area of the service, where performance information is provided, an Equalities Impact Assessment has either been carried out or is currently being planned and is timetabled within the corporate framework.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report or its publication. Relevant comments are made within the body of the report, where appropriate.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.7 There are no direct crime & disorder implications arising directly from this report. Relevant comments are made within the body of the report, where appropriate.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.8 There are no direct Risk and Opportunity Management Implications arising directly from this report. Relevant comments are made within the body of the report, where appropriate.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.9 The performance report takes account of corporate priorities, in particular, making better use of public money, reducing inequality by increasing opportunity and fair enforcement of the law.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. None

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. None

