





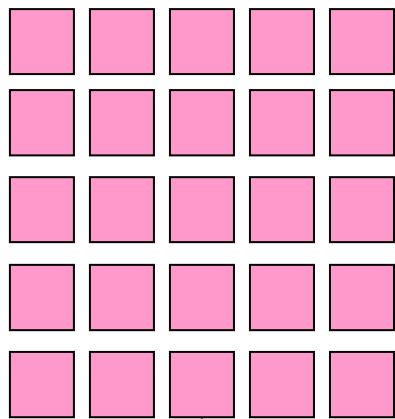
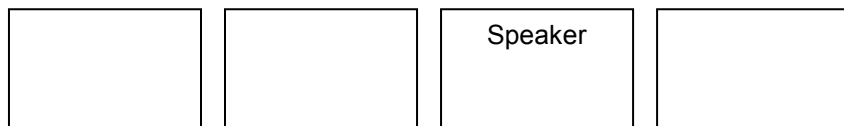
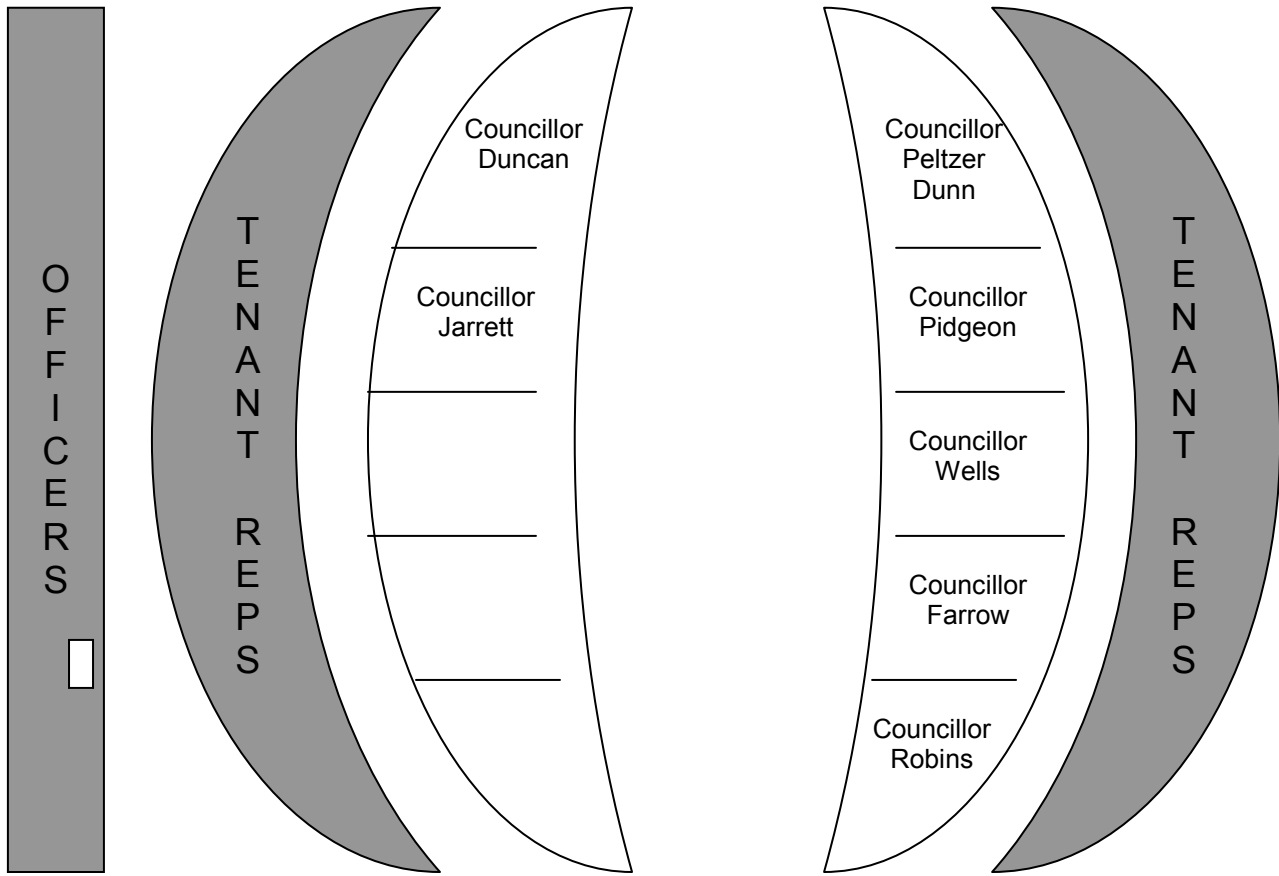
**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# Housing Management Consultative Committee

Title:	<b>Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee</b>
Date:	<b>18 December 2012</b>
Time:	<b>3.00pm</b>
Venue:	<b>Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall</b>
Members:	<b>Councillors:</b> Wakefield (Chair), Peltzer Dunn (Opposition Spokesperson), Farrow, Jarrett, Duncan, Pidgeon, Robins and Wells
Contact:	<b>Lisa Johnson</b> Senior Democratic Services Officer 01273 291228 lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk

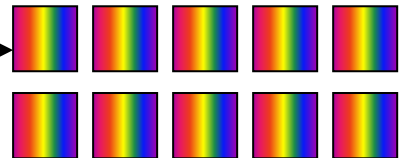
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	An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter and infra red hearing aids are available for use during the meeting. If you require any further information or assistance, please contact the receptionist on arrival.
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# Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



Public Seating

Members in Attendance



Press



**Tenant Representatives:**

Lynn Bennett, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

David Murtagh, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Trish Barnard, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Jean Davis, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Tina Urquhart, West Area Housing Management Panel

Roy Crowhurst, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

Keith Cohen, Hi Rise Action Group

Tony Worsfold, Leaseholder Action Group

Barry Kent, Tenant Disability Network

Charles Penrose, Sheltered Housing Action Group

Rita King, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Robert Spacie, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Colin Carden, Older People's Council

# AGENDA

## 28. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

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

**(b) Declarations of Interest:**

- (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests not registered on the register of interests;
- (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
- (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare

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

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

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

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

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

## 29. MINUTES OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2012 1 - 6

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2012 (copy attached).

## 30. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

### 31. CALL-OVER

- (a) Items 34-36 will be read out at the meeting and Members invited to reserve the items for consideration.
- (b) Those items not reserved will be taken as having been received

### 32. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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

- (a) **Petitions** – to receive any petitions presented to the full council or at the meeting itself;
- (b) **Written Questions** – to receive any questions submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 11 December 2012
- (d) **Deputations** – to receive any deputations submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 11 December 2012.

### 33. ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

To consider the following matters raised by councillors:

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

### 34. HOUSING & SOCIAL INCLUSION PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2012/13 7 - 28

Report of the Strategic Director, Place

Contact Officer: *Ododo Dafe* Tel: 29-3201  
Ward Affected: *All Wards*

### 35. HOUSING FINANCIAL INCLUSION COMMUNITY BANKING PROJECT - INTERIM REPORT 29 - 36

Report of the Strategic Director, Place

Contact Officer: *Tom Matthews* Tel: 01273 293234  
Ward Affected: *All Wards*

### 36. INNOVATION GROUP ON RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT 37 - 126

Report of the Strategic Director, Place

Contact Officer: *Emma Gilbert* Tel: 291704  
Ward Affected: *All Wards*

**37. HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013-16**

**127 -  
140**

Report of the Strategic Director, Place

*Contact Officer: Tom Gillham*  
*Ward Affected: All Wards*

*Tel: 01273 293857*

**38. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2013/14**

**141 -  
158**

Report of the Strategic Director, Place

*Contact Officer: Sue Chapman*  
*Ward Affected: All Wards*

*Tel: 29-3105*

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

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

Agendas and minutes are published on the council's website [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk). Agendas are available to view five working days prior to the meeting date.

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

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Lisa Johnson, (01273 291228, email [lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) or email [democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Date of Publication - Monday, 10 December 2012

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE**

**3.00pm 23 OCTOBER 2012**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor Wakefield (Chair); Councillor Peltzer Dunn (Opposition Spokesperson), Farrow, Jarrett, Pidgeon, Robins, Mears and Shanks

**Tenant Representatives** Lynn Bennett (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), David Murtagh (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Trish Barnard (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Jean Davis (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Tina Urquhart (West Area Housing Management Panel), Roy Crowhurst (West Area Housing Management Panel) Tony Worsfold (Leaseholder Action Group), Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network), Charles Penrose (Sheltered Housing Action Group) and Keith Cohen (Hi Rise Action Group).

**PART ONE**

**18. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**18A Declarations of Substitute Members**

18.1 Councillor Mears declared that she was attending as a substitute for Councillor Wells. Councillor Shanks declared that she was attending as a substitute for Councillor Duncan.

**18B Declarations of Interests**

18.2 There were none.

**18C Exclusion of the Press and Public**

18.3 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.

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

**19. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- 19.1 The Chair welcomed Keith Cohen, Roy Crowhurst and Charles Penrose to the meeting. Keith had been elected as the representative for the Hi Rise Action Group, Roy as representative for the West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel and Charles as the representative for the Sheltered Housing Action Group.
- 19.2 The Chair reminded everyone that The City Assembly was taking place on Saturday 17th November 9.30 to 4.00pm at Hove Town Hall. The key themes for the day would be:
- Changes to benefits/welfare reform - Update and meet the teams and services who can help with advice and support
  - Information Cafe - find out about training, courses and social activities; money and benefits advice; getting online; community spirit - getting people involved.
  - Elections for Assembly Chair and Community Safety Forum Rep
  - Have your say on balancing the budget.
  - Creche facilities available, lunch and refreshments provided.
  - The event could be followed on twitter or online through the live webcast.
- For more info or to book a place for the creche, attendees should contact the Resident Involvement Team on 294651

**20. MINUTES**

- 20.2 **RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee held on 4 September 2012 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

**21. CALL-OVER**

- 21.2 It was agreed that all items be reserved for debate and determination.

**22. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

- 22.1 There were no petitions, written questions or deputations.

**23. ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

- 23.1 There were no petitions, written questions, letters or notices of motion from councillors.

**24. HOUSING ADAPTATIONS**

- 24.1 The Sub Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Place which provided an update on housing adaptations. A report had been requested at the Housing Committee held on 26 September 2012. The report provided background information on the role of the Integrated Housing Adaptations Team within Housing Commissioning, and the work being undertaken to improve access to housing adaptations across all tenures in the city.



24.2 Mr Crowhurst was aware that some properties had had adaptations which were not needed by the current tenants, and asked whether officers received training on letting properties which had been adapted. Officers advised that surveyors and letting agents did receive training. Properties were advertised appropriately, adapted properties were ring fenced and those who had particular needs were taken to view flats to ensure they were appropriate.

24.3 Councillor Mears asked how much money remained in the budget for adaptations, and asked what would happen if the budget ran out as it was important that all those who had been assessed received the work needed. Officers advised that should there be any shortfall it would be topped up from the budget from the Housing Revenue Account. It was anticipated that there may need to be a top up during the current financial year of around £200,000 to £300,000. The budget was monitored and any increases within the current financial year would be reported to Policy and Resources Committee through Targeted Budget Monitoring report. In addition, officers advised that increased annual HRA funding for council housing adaptations is being identified within future HRA capital programme budgets. For the private sector housing adaptations, private sector housing renewal capital funding, supported by borrowing against New Homes Bonus following the end of Government financial support for housing renewal, has been used to 'top up' the Government Disabled Facilities Grant allocation to support a total budget of £1.1m. There is no private sector housing renewal funding currently identified for next financial year. This year the cost and commitments of adaptations to the private sector would exceed the money available and discussions were being held with the Finance Team. Councillor Jarrett was supportive of continued funding to maintain private sector housing adaptations budget. Councillors Mears asked if a report providing more details on this could be provided for a future meeting. The Chair agreed.

24.4 Mr Penrose noted that it had been four years since he last attended the meeting as a tenant representative, and was pleased to note how much the performance had improved.

24.5 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to paragraph 3.5 of the report which gave the number of new referrals received each month and the current number of cases in the assessment process, and asked why it appeared to be taking longer to deal with applications. Officers advised that the information provided was intended to give a snapshot of work being undertaken, and the cases in progress were at different levels of assessment. Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked if a report could be provided giving more detailed information. The Chair agreed.

**24.6 RESOLVED**

1. That the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee noted the background information and service improvements to better manage the demand for adaptations, the improved assessment and delivery times, and the current situation concerning capital budgets.

2. That the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee noted and approved the proposals to improve communication and client involvement through the team's on-gong work with the Brighton & Hove Federation for Independent Living and the Tenants Disability Network.

**25. HOUSING & SOCIAL INCLUSION PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2012/13**

- 25.1 The Sub Committee considered the Housing and Social Inclusion Performance report for Quarter 1 for the financial year 2012-13.
- 25.2 Councillor Shanks thanked officers for the report and was very pleased to note the impressive statistics. Councillor Shanks asked how the authority compared with other authorities. The Sub Committee was informed that officers were looking to provide benchmark information for the next year end report.
- 25.3 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.3 and noted that the target for rent collection was 98.75% and suggested that the target should be 100%. Officers agreed that the aspiration should be to collect 100% of rent, but accepted that that would never be possible. Rent collection was excellent and the target was set at 98.75% in order to give staff a manageable figure to achieve.
- 25.4 Councillor Mears referred to appendix 1 to the report, and noted that there was one property in Hangleton and Knoll which had been empty for 630 days and asked why it had not been transferred to the Local Delivery Vehicle. Officers advised that the property required substantial repairs and had not been suitable for transfer to Seaside Homes.
- 25.5 Mr Crowhurst referred to paragraph 3.5 and asked for clarification on whether the percentage of appointments kept, were those kept by Mears or by tenants. Officers confirmed it was the percentage of appointments kept by Mears.
- 25.6 Councillor Robins noted that the tables in the report had a column for 'Service Pledge', and asked what that referred to. Officers advised that following consultation with tenants a few years ago, the authority had made a pledge that certain things would be undertaken. It was agreed that a list of those pledges would be circulated to members of the Sub Committee.
- 25.7 Mr Kent referred to the level of rent collected and asked how quickly tenants are advised if they were in arrears. Officers advised that an initial letter would be sent two weeks after monies were due, and then a follow up letter would be sent after four weeks if monies were still outstanding.
- 25.8 **RESOLVED** - That the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee note the report.
- 26. ACTION PLAN FOR SUGGESTIONS FROM INNOVATION GROUP REPORT ON RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT**
- 26.1 The Sub Committee considered the report which set out the action plan for suggestions of the Innovation Group, as requested at the previous Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee (HMCSC) held on 4 September 2012. However, there was concern that the original report on the Innovation Group was not appended to the report. It was agreed by all present that it would be preferable to defer this report to the next meeting of the HMCSC, which due to be held on 18 December 2012, when the original report would be included.

**27. ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS 2012**

- 27.1 The Sub Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Place which provided a copy of the Annual Report for year ending 31 March 2012 which is sent to all council tenants and leaseholders. Members of the Sub Committee were asked to comment on both the Annual Report (appendix 1 to the report) and the summary version of the report (appendix 2 to the report).
- 27.2 Councillor Farrow thanked officers for producing the Annual Report, but felt that it could be improved. It was important that the document was read, and it was therefore important to ensure it was accessible to all. Councillor Farrow suggested that the Annual Report be passed to journalists within the council to see if it could be improved. Officers advised that the document had been produced in conjunction with the Corporate Design Team. There was a legal requirement to produce the report, and officers had liaised with tenant groups when producing it. Whilst it was very important that the document was read, it was also important that it contained the necessary information. It was essential to get the balance right and have the information available in an accessible way, but at the same time not to patronise anyone.
- 27.3 Councillor Mears appreciated the work which had gone into producing the Annual Report and agreed that it was necessary to strike the right balance, but had concerns that it was too simplistic. On page 56 there was a heading for 'What we are doing', and she suggested that information on the number of kitchens and bathrooms fitted would be useful. On page 60 there were two diagrams showing Income and Expenditure, and Councillor Mears thought the information was not detailed enough. There was a figure for 'Rents, other' which needed further explanation. Officers agreed that information could be included, and also suggested that additional information could be provided under 'Value for Money'.
- 27.4 Mr Crowhurst thanked officers for the report and felt that a good balance had been reached. He agreed that more information could be provided, but it was important that there weren't pages of facts and figures as that could put people off reading it.
- 27.5 Mr Cohen thanked officers for preparing the Annual Report and agreed that it was important to get the wording correct to ensure as many people as possible read it. Mr Cohen suggested that a short version of the Annual Report be provided for Homing In.
- 27.6 Councillor Shanks thought it was a very good report with good news contained within it. There was a section on anti-social behaviour, and Councillor Shanks asked whether there were a number of departments within the council all dealing with that issue. Officers advised that there was Corporate Safety Team which Housing worked closely with to ensure there was no duplication of work.
- 27.7 Ms Barnard asked for clarification on whether bullying, name calling etc would be classed as anti-social behaviour. It was confirmed it would.
- 27.8 Councillor Peltzer Dunn thanked officers for the report, but noted there were a few inconsistencies. Some parts of the report referred to 'working days', or 'days', and it would be useful to use one or the other. For example the report said that the average time to re-let a property was 17 days, but it wasn't clear if that was working days.

Councillor Peltzer Dunn suggested that additional information could be provided. He referred to the summary sheet which referred to the 'ASB' service, and thought it would be useful to clarify what that stood for. Page 60 of the report, which gave the Income and Expenditure could explained more clearly, and suggested that there could be a diagram showing how each pound of rent collected was spent.

27.9 Officers agreed to consider all the comments and suggestions. An updated version of the Annual Report and Summary Sheet would be circulated to all members of the Sub Committee.

27.10 **RESOLVED** - That the comments of the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee on the 2012 Annual Report to Council Tenants and Leaseholders and of the Summary version be noted.

The meeting concluded at 5.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Social Inclusion Performance Report Quarter 2 2012/13</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>18 December 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director - Place</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Ododo Dafé</b>	<b>Tel: 293201</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>ododo.dafe@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This Housing & Social Inclusion performance report covers Quarter 2 of the financial year 2012-2013. It incorporates changes suggested at previous meetings, including the rent collection rate broken down by area. Benchmarking information will be included in the Quarter 4 report along with year end figures.







#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee notes and comments on the report.

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

- 3.1 The report continues the use of the 'RAG' rating system of red, amber and green traffic light symbols to provide an indication of performance, and also trend arrows to provide an indication of movement from the previous reporting period. Where indicators are red or amber explanations have been provided.
- 3.2 The 'Service Pledge' column describes which indicators reflect performance against the Housing & Social Inclusion service pledges, which were developed through working with tenants and leaseholders. Our service pledge summary leaflet is attached as Appendix 2.

### 3.3 Key to symbols used in the report:

Status		Trend	
Performance is below target (red)		Poorer than previous reporting period	
Performance is close to achieving target, but in need of improvement (amber)		Same as previous reporting period	
Performance is on or above target (green)		Improvement on previous reporting period	

#### 4.0 Rent collection and current arrears

\*As these targets are year end (rather than for each quarter), no traffic lights or trend arrows will be applied to this table until the Quarter 4 2012/13 report.





Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status*	Trend*
Rent collected as proportion of rent due each year	Y	98.75% (£47,472,364)	98.74% (£47,449,358)	-	-
Tenants with more than seven weeks rent arrears	Y	2.85%	2.41% (286 – Cumulative Figure)	-	-
Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) served for rent arrears	Y	27.02% (706)	12.02% (338 NoSPs)	-	-
Households evicted because of rent arrears	Y	Less than 0.29% (less than 35)	0.03% (3)	-	-
Rent loss due to empty properties	N	1.6% (£718,717)	1.16% (£547,300)	-	-
Total former tenant arrears	N	£511,522	£536,336	-	-
Former tenant arrears collected	N	18% (£98,116)	8.64% (£46,186)	-	-
Rechargeable debt collected	Y	20% (£66,758)	3.98% (£9,357)	-	-

##### 4.0.1 Percentage of rent collected as proportion of rent due each year by area

Area	Target	Actual
North (includes Sheltered housing)	98.95%	98.95% (£13,123,788)
West	98.74%	98.77% (£9,626,790)
Central	98.85%	98.76% (£9,053,385)
East	98.51%	98.53% (£15,643,400)
<b>All areas</b>	<b>98.75%</b>	<b>98.74%</b> <b>(£47,449,358*)</b>

\*Includes collection from small number of Temporary Accommodation properties.

## 4.1 Empty home turnaround time

Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
Average re-let time in days (BV212)	N	21	18		
Average re-let time – all properties (including those excluded from BV212)	N	32	30		

4.1.1 A table relating to long term empty properties is attached as Appendix 1

4.1.2 The empty home turnaround time is measured according to the BV212 performance indicator set up by central government several years ago. The BV212 is the average amount of time it takes to re-let local authority housing, excluding properties where major works (defined below) have been carried out; mutual exchanges or properties that the council intends to sell or demolish. It also excludes properties that are squatted or used by the Police, for the time they are out of use.

4.1.3 Major works means:

- structural works – which include floors, walls and roofs
- Asbestos removal
- Works to amenities, where lacking (gas, electric, heating)
- Consequential works as a result of major works
- Fire and flood



## 4.2 Property & Investment

<b>Carrying out repairs to your home</b>					
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Service Pledge</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Emergency repairs completed in time	Y	99%	99.64% (1,962)		
Urgent repairs completed in time	Y	98%	99.26% (134)		
Routine repairs completed in time	Y	98%	99.71% (8,394)		
Average time to complete routine repairs	Y	15 days	8 days		
Percentage of appointments kept by contractor	N	95%	93.02% (7,291)		
Tenant satisfaction with repairs	N	95%	97.63% (1,839 survey responses)		
Percentage of responsive repairs passing post-inspection	Y	95%	93.52% (566)		
Percentage of repairs completed right first time	Y	97%	97.62% (10,814)		
Cancelled repair jobs	N	-	13.43% (1,406)	-	
<b>Home Improvements</b>					
Percentage of homes that are decent	N	89.9%	91.9%		
Energy efficiency rating of homes (SAP 2009)	N	61	61.5		
Percentage of planned works passing post-inspection	Y	97%	98.65% (804)		
Stock with up-to-date gas certificates	Y	100%	99.84% (10,453)		
<b>Empty Homes</b>					
Percentage of empty properties passing post-inspection	Y	98%	97.44% (114)		

#### 4.2.1 **Percentage of appointments kept by contractor**

Performance continued to improve towards the target in Quarter 2 compared to the previous two quarters. A total of 547 appointments were late, of which 38% were up to an hour late; 37% up to 24 hours late; and the remaining 25% over 24 hours late. Reasons for lateness up to an hour include traffic and parking, and reasons for lateness over 24 hours include appointments being rescheduled for a few days later – eg when other jobs have taken longer than expected. Mears are planning to introduce a text alert system in January 2013 to keep customers better updated about the scheduling of their appointments.

#### 4.2.2 **Percentage of responsive repairs passing post-inspection**

Although the target was missed, performance improved in Quarter 2, surpassed the 95% target in September and has remained above target for the month of October. Jobs not passing post-inspection were largely due to extra work being required or poor quality work, both of which have to be put right by the contractor.

#### 4.2.3 **Cancelled repair jobs**

A total of 1,496 orders were cancelled during Quarter 2 (down from 1,724 in the previous quarter). Of these cancelled jobs:

- 33% were due to difficulties gaining access to the property
- 29% were admin related (eg IT interface failure or 'info only' orders)
- 13% were due to incorrect or insufficient details eg wrong property address or job description
- 12% at the request of the tenant.

The remaining 13% of cancelled jobs were for a variety of miscellaneous reasons which individually make up very small proportions of overall cancellations. As cancelled jobs have been measured for under a year it is not yet possible to identify natural patterns (eg seasonal variations), and it is therefore difficult to determine whether the decline in cancellations in Quarter 2 is a natural fluctuation or a genuine reflection of improved performance. A target of 10% has been agreed by the partnership Core Group and work is currently being undertaken to reduce the admin related cancellations and to focus on those cancellations that have an impact on residents.





















#### 4.2.4 **Stock with up-to-date gas certificates**

At the end of Quarter 2 there were 17 overdue gas safety certificates, compared to 24 overdue certificates at the end of the previous quarter. It is expected that this figure will continue to fluctuate slightly at a similar level over time. All overdue cases are referred by the contractor to Housing & Social Inclusion so that action can be taken to ensure access is gained to the property for the gas safety inspection to be carried out. 185 overdue cases were referred in Quarter 2, with those serviced in the period taking an average of 23 days from the date of the referral.

#### 4.2.5 **Percentage of empty properties passing post-inspection**

The target was narrowly missed as 3 out of 117 properties failed the initial post-inspection. These properties failed either due to poor quality work or because they required additional works. Properties failing the initial post-inspection are referred back to the contractor to be put right, and are subsequently re-inspected.

### 4.3 Estates Service











Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
Percentage passing quality inspections of our cleaning service	Y	98%	98% (188)		
Percentage passing quality inspections of our minor repairs service	Y	98%	100% (149)		
Completion of cleaning tasks	N	98%	98% (13,482)		
Emergency removal of bulk waste within 24-hour target	N	100%	100% (6)		
Routine removal of bulk within 7-day target	N	97%	99% (803)		
Emergency removal of graffiti within 24-hour target	N	100%	100% (1)		
Routine removal of graffiti within 7-day target	N	100%	100% (7)		
Replacement of lights within 3-day target	N	100%	100% (330)		
Routine replacement of lights within 7-day target	N	97%	98% (224)		
Neighbourhood Response Team jobs completed within target times	N	96%	97% (1,868)		

#### 4.4 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

4.4.1 The data below is activity based, rather than performance based, hence no targets have been included. Its purpose is to present HMCSC with a picture of ASB work. The trend column has been included to compare ASB activity with the previous quarter.

<b>Activity against the ASB service pledges</b>			
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Service Pledge</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Number of new cases with the ASB team	Y	12	↑
Number of enforcement and support actions taken by Housing & Social Inclusion	Y	678	↓
Number of closed cases that were resolved by the ASB team	Y	27	↑
Customer satisfaction with cases managed by the ASB team (very or fairly satisfied)	Y	80% (5 surveys)	↓

## 4.5 Sheltered housing

Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
People with an up to date support plan	Y	100% (890)	96% (854)		
People who decline a support plan	N	0%	2% (18)		
New residents with a support plan completed within 21 days	Y	100% (21)	100% (21)		
Call each resident personally (if requested)	Y	100%	100%		
Provision of at least one social activity per week (in 21 of our 24 schemes)	Y	100%	100%		

### 4.5.1 People with an up to date support plan

Out of 890 sheltered residents, 854 have an up to date support plan, with 18 declining and 18 cases where the target for reviewing an existing plan has been missed. The latter is usually due to a resident being in hospital, respite care or in a nursing home (and in the process of giving up their tenancy) but in one case this was due to staffing reasons. Support plans take place at least annually, but are revised sooner if there is a significant event in a resident's life – eg major hospitalisation or health event, or after a bereavement.

### 4.5.2 People who decline a support plan

The 2% of sheltered residents who decline a support plan represent a small core group who choose not to receive this part of the service. Our Scheme Managers will nonetheless re-offer a plan to these residents whenever appropriate, such as if their health or wellbeing noticeably declines.

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Resident involvement is key to the successful management of council owned homes and also the setting and reviewing of our policies and procedures.

## 6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 6.1 Although there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, changes in most performance areas will have a financial impact on the Housing Revenue Account. The area with the most significant financial impact is the ability to collect rents from tenants. Given the current economic climate and the forthcoming welfare reform changes, these indicators are being very closely monitored to ensure that any changes in current trends are highlighted early. Any financial implications arising from changes to any of the performance indicators will be included in the Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring report, which is reported quarterly to Policy and Resources Committee.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks*

*Date: 27/11/12*

### Legal Implications:

- 6.2 As this is a regular report to the Sub-Committee, there are no new significant legal or Human Rights Act implications to draw to Members' attention.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley*

*Date: 30/11/12*

### Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 Where appropriate, equalities implications are included within the body of the report.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 Where appropriate, sustainability implications are included within the body of the report.

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 6.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 6.6 There are no direct risk and opportunity implications arising from this report.

### Public Health Implications:

- 6.7 There are no direct public health implications arising from this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

6.8 There are no direct corporate or city wide implications arising from this report.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Appendix 1. Long term empty properties

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. None





## Appendix 1. Long term empty properties

General needs and sheltered long term empty properties (6 weeks or more)		
Days empty as at 20/11/12	Ward	Status
45	East Brighton	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
45	East Brighton	Ready to let (studio Sheltered flat)
45	East Brighton	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
59	East Brighton	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
73	East Brighton	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
73	Goldsmid	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
87	Hangleton and Knoll	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
675	Hangleton and Knoll	BHCC - major repairs commenced Aug 2012. An extension is being built to increase the number of bedrooms. To be used to house decanted tenants.
45	Hanover and Elm Grove	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
66	Hanover and Elm Grove	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
73	Hanover and Elm Grove	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
255	Hanover and Elm Grove	Major works - currently out to tender
430	Hanover and Elm Grove	BHCC - out to tender for major works. Outer brick skin and insulation need to be removed and replaced
80	Hollingdean and Stanmer	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013

<b>General needs and sheltered long term empty properties (6 weeks or more)</b>		
<b>Days empty as at 20/11/12</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Status</b>
45	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Ready to let
45	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Ready to let
521	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	BHCC - major repairs and extension complete. To be used to house decanted tenants.
1578	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	BHCC - major repairs commenced Oct 2012. Completion expected in April 2013. Works include new roof and solar panel
52	Patcham	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
45	Queens Park	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
45	Queens Park	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
59	Queens Park	BHCC - awaiting window replacement prior to major damp works
66	Queens Park	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
87	South Portslade	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
451	St. Peter's and North Laine	Ready to let
87	Westbourne	Leasing to BHCSH in March 2013
157	Woodingdean	BHCC - major works anticipated to commence Dec 2012
4112	Woodingdean	BHCC - major repairs completion and re-let due Dec 2012.
<b>Total of 28 properties</b>		

<b>Temporary accommodation long term empty properties (6 weeks or more)</b>		
<b>Days empty as at 20/11/12</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Status</b>
1150-1403	Central Hove (1 property containing 2 flats)	With BHCC awaiting major refurbishment
468-1466	Goldsmid (1 property containing 2 flats)	Requires work before leasing to BHSCCH
1150-1487	Queens Park (block of 9 flats)	Considering redevelopment options
468	Westbourne (2 properties containing 3 flats)	Requires work before leasing to BHSCCH
469	Withdean (4 prefab bungalows within above land)	Considering redevelopment options
<b>Total of 20 dwellings</b>		





# Service Pledge

## for council tenants and leaseholders

Council tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of our services. We aim to treat you fairly and ensure that our services meet your needs and provide value for money.



Brighton & Hove  
City Council

**We will meet the national standards that all council landlords are required to meet. In addition, we've worked with residents to develop local pledges for our services that meet your priorities. This leaflet is a summary of the pledges and a detailed pledge for each service is also available.**

**We will:**

- **be easy to reach**
- **be clear and treat you with respect**
- **listen and act to get things done**

## **Getting involved**

**We will:**

- provide a wide range of opportunities for you to be involved in what we do and how we do it
- involve you in setting our standards and making sure we meet them

## **Looking after your home**

**We will:**

- complete home improvement works to the Brighton & Hove Standard
- keep you informed of when work will be carried out and deliver it to agreed timescales
- make sure that all empty homes meet the locally agreed standard before they are let to new tenants

## **Looking after your neighbourhood**

**We will:**

- make sure common areas and estates are cleaned and looked after
- carry out estate inspections with residents three times a year
- provide a budget for improvements to blocks and estates that residents can decide how to spend

## Dealing with anti-social behaviour

### We will:

- not tolerate acts of anti-social behaviour
- take all reports of anti-social behaviour seriously, take action and keep you informed
- offer support to vulnerable people and those experiencing anti-social behaviour

## Managing your tenancy

### We will:

- provide information and support to new tenants to help them settle into their home
- help tenants to understand and comply with their tenancy agreement, and enforce it when necessary
- as well as other routine visits, we will visit tenants in their homes at least once every three years to make sure that everything is okay

## Living in sheltered housing

### We will:

- provide each resident with a personalised support plan, co-ordinated with other services, to organise their appropriate care and support
- call each resident personally between 8.30am and 12 noon (Monday to Friday) and the most vulnerable also at weekends to check they are okay
- provide at least one social activity per week to residents who want them

## Paying your rent

### We will:

- offer a range of ways for you to pay rent and other charges 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- provide an advice service for people with payment difficulties from 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Thursday and from 9am to 5pm on Friday
- process Housing Benefit claims for new tenants quickly

## Council leaseholders

### We will:

- offer a range of payment options to make it easier for you to pay leaseholder charges
- ensure that service charge bills are sent in good time and clearly explain the charges
- carry out regular satisfaction surveys of all leaseholders to listen and respond to your feedback

## Garages and car parking

### We will:

- allocate car parking spaces and garages fairly and have a priority waiting list for the most vulnerable
- visit all sites to make sure they are clear of rubbish, safe and in good working order
- make sure that people who rent car parking spaces have access to them, and take enforcement action when necessary



## Making sure we keep these pledges

We will measure our performance against these pledges and report back to you so you can see that we are meeting our commitments, for example how we have dealt with anti-social behaviour and how quickly we complete different types of repairs. We will also feed back the findings from regular customer satisfaction surveys and resident 'mystery shopping' exercises.

### We promise to share this information with you by:

- reporting on performance in our annual report to tenants and leaseholders
- articles in Homing-in magazine
- regular reports to Housing Management Consultative Committee and resident groups
- including performance information in the housing pages of the council's website

## Putting things right

Letting us know what we are doing well or when something goes wrong helps us improve our services. Should we fail to meet any of these service pledges please let us know so we can apologise and do all that we can to put things right.

If you are still not happy you can make a complaint to the council by completing our online complaint form at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk), phoning Freephone 0500 291229 or writing to Standards & Complaints, Brighton & Hove City Council, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2LS.

These service pledges have been developed with residents and will be reviewed and updated regularly. Detailed pledges for each service area are available on the council's website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-service-pledges](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-service-pledges) or by contacting the service directly.

**“We aim to treat you fairly and ensure that our services meet your needs and provide value for money.”**



**Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.**

ترجمة؟ ضع علامة في المربع وخذها إلى مكتب البلدية. Arabic

অনুবাদ? বক্সে টিক চিহ্ন দিয়ে কাউন্সিল অফিসে নিয়ে যান। Bengali

需要翻譯? 請在這方格內加剔, 並送回任何市議會的辦事處。Cantonese

ترجمه؟ لطفاً این مربع را علامتگذاری نموده و آن را به هر یک از دفاتر شهرداری ارائه نمایید. Farsi

Traduction? Veuillez cocher la case et apporter au council. French

需要翻译? 请在这方格内划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Mandarin

Tłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregokolwiek biura samorządu lokalnego (council office). Polish

Tradução? Coloque um visto na quadricula e leve a uma qualquer repartição de poder local (council office). Portuguese

Tercümesi için kareyi işaretleyiniz ve bir semt belediye bürosuna veriniz Turkish

other (please state)

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



# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Financial Inclusion Community Banking Project - Interim Report</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>18 December 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director of Place</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Emma Gilbert</b>	<b>Tel: 291704</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>emma.gilbert@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report shares with Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee the progress of the Housing Financial Inclusion Community Banking Project as at end of November 2012.
- 1.2 Tackling inequality is a key priority for the city council as outlined in the Corporate Plan. One of the strategic commitments is a strong focus on tackling financial exclusion. It is also a key aspect of the city's Sustainable Community Strategy with its own chapter; 'Providing Quality Advice and Information Services' setting out a range of actions that the Advice Partnership has been tasked with delivering which contribute to promoting financial inclusion.
- 1.3 The work of this project is feeding into the Corporate Financial Inclusion Strategy and commissioning plan currently being developed, as well as the corporate and local work to mitigate the impact of Welfare reform.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee note the Interim Report

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

- 3.1 This report follows a report to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012 which outlined proposals for investment in services to promote financial inclusion amongst council housing residents. The report built upon the successful financial inclusion work undertaken by the Housing & Social Inclusion delivery unit and outlined proposals for delivering a step change in the availability of services which promote financial inclusion amongst council housing residents.

3.2 The introduction of self financing for the Housing Revenue Account from April 2012 makes it more important to ensure that income collection is maintained at the current high level. At the same time, the sharp downturn in the economy, unprecedented rises in household energy bills, rising unemployment and increasing debt levels are contributing to an increase in financial exclusion and fuel poverty, and impacting upon tenants' ability to pay rents and service charges.

3.3 This pressure upon tenants with low incomes is likely to be further exacerbated by the reforms proposed through the government's Welfare Reform Act. The Act aims to simplify and cap some welfare benefits. The following reforms will have a particular impact upon council housing tenants:

- In April 2012 reduction in benefit called non-dependant deductions for other adults (normally adult children) who live in claimants households will be increased above inflation for the second year. These deductions can be up to £73 per week.
- From April 2013, it is proposed that under-occupying social housing tenants of working age will be affected by a reduction in their housing benefit entitlement of up to 14 per cent if they have one spare room and up to 25 per cent for two spare rooms.
- From April 2014, the proposed introduction of Universal Credit will result in benefit payments for housing costs being paid directly to tenants.
- Changes to benefit eligibility and entitlement such as time limited claims for non-contributory ESA/JSA claims, benefit capping at a household level, mandatory engagement in work programmes/skills conditionality

A working group has been set up to identify and monitor the impact of the proposed welfare reforms to ensure that our financial inclusion interventions are targeted at those who are most affected by the proposed changes.

3.4 The Committee and Cabinet agreed to the commissioning of a joined-up solution for financial inclusion, involving the co-delivery of 'one-stop' services for financially excluded Council housing residents, through the creation of a Community Banking Partnership Model which integrates the 'ABCDEs' of Financial Inclusion:

- Advice specialist advice casework to assist tenants to deal with problems related to debt, money and fuel poverty
- Banking access to basic banking, bill and debt repayment services
- Credit access to affordable loans
- Deposits access to savings facilities and incentives to save
- Education - Improving financial capability and budgeting skills, increased awareness of expensive lenders such as payday loans, and the dangers of loan sharks and illegal money lending

- 3.5 A Project Board was set up in April and tasked with three key strands of work:
- I) Procurement of specialist debt and money advice for council tenants and leaseholders.
  - II) Banking: Development of the banking offer within the city.
  - III) Education: Development of training offer for staff and residents (financial literacy, financial capability, peer programmes and initiatives).

3.6 Procurement of Specialist Debt and Money Advice.

Using the new Grant Proposal model, a procurement process was carried out for the provision of specialist debt and money advice. The contract value was £80,000 plus £5,000 start up costs. The contract is for one year with the option to extend by a further 12 months and can be increased by 50% of the value without the need for further procurement.

- 3.7 Four providers submitted bids: Citizens Advice Bureau (Brighton & Hove); Brighton Housing Trust; Money Advice Community Support Service (MACSs) and A4 E (who hold the national Money Advice phone service contract). Following a robust procurement process MACSs were the preferred bidder and were awarded the contract accordingly in August 2012.

Following a period of mobilisation, the contract began from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012. Referrals are increasing rapidly and on target for the performance outcomes specified in the contract. This funds 480 in depth case work interventions over the year as well as some lower level interventions. The service is being delivered across 5 outreach locations initially: The Bridge, Whitehawk Inn, Portslade Adult Learning (Boundary Road); Oxford Street Housing Office and Hangleton & Knoll Community Centre, as well as the MACS office in Old Steine. Home visits and targeted outreach sessions are also being provided.

- 3.8 MACS are working closely in conjunction with the Housing Inclusion Team and the Housing Income Management Team's Money Advice Worker. Referrals are managed by the Inclusion Team who also take the opportunity to discuss different aspects of our money advice services with clients and provide support with financial capability, literacy, numeracy, general money advice or those affected by the Housing Benefit changes or other aspects of welfare reform.

The joined up service has been widely advertised across the city by both teams (MACS and the Housing Inclusion Team); articles in Hoving In (August and November issues); through networking with teams and agencies; stakeholder events, attendance at targeted events; mail shots to external locations eg GP surgeries and post offices; leafleting community locations eg libraries, community centres, council offices, adult learning providers, advice services etc; on the website; at the City Assembly (November). Posters are due to go up in all block and community rooms.

3.9 Education Strand

The Housing Inclusion Team are leading on the delivery of the Education strand. The budget of £10,000 has been matched with the Learning Cities Project Interreg funding to maximise the opportunities for staff and residents.

Both Financial Inclusion Co-ordinators have now undertaken the accredited “Teach Me” and “Teach Others” Financial inclusion training courses provided by Transact and are working with tenants on an individual basis and in groups in a range of ways to “make the most of their money”.

This includes

- Budgeting skills, money management
- Financial health checks
- Benefits maximisation
- Understanding the jargon – bank accounts, direct debits etc, interest rates and borrowing terms etc
- Using the Internet for online banking, shopping, finding the best deals/tariffs
- Reducing energy bills/promoting energy efficiency
- Support to those affected by the upcoming HB changes
- Targeted information sessions for tenants eg older people, young parents etc

Other team members will also be undertaking this training to support this area of work.

#### Financial Literacy

The Team will also be providing literacy and numeracy support in group work (provided by a qualified basis skills tutor), and by signposting to existing provision within the community.

#### Peer Mentor Programmes

The Inclusion Team have launched a range of mentoring programmes for residents including Money Mentors; Loan Shark Advocates; Energy Efficiency Advisors; Train the Trainer. A rolling programme of training will commence in the New Year starting with the Energy Efficiency Advisor courses in January. Staff will also be trained in these areas in order to support residents.

#### Financial Inclusion Training for Staff

The Inclusion Team and Service Improvement Team will be carrying out a mapping exercise across the division to identify the staff training requirements for financial inclusion in order to develop a training programme for staff.

Three staff within the Housing Income Management Team are undertaking Money Advice qualifications.

In-house training has been provided to frontline teams around the impact of welfare reform (particular focus on Housing Benefit) for council tenants. Home visits are being carried out with those households identified to be affected by the Housing Benefit and council tax changes

#### Advice Partnership

The Social Inclusion & Involvement Manager is working with the Advice Partnership to deliver a range of Financial Inclusion training for volunteers.

### 3.10 Banking Strand

Housing and Social Inclusion commissioned Toynbee Hall to carry out an independent review into the Banking offer and access to affordable credit within the city. The fieldwork for the review was carried out in late summer and involved a range of cross sector and internal stakeholders. The review will assist the council to develop its commissioning strategy in relation to

- Provision and promotion of basic bank accounts for tenants and leaseholders
- Provision and promotion of low cost loans
- Incentives to save

The review will

- Identify and clarify the role/potential role of current providers (including, but not exclusively the locally based [East Sussex Credit Union](#))
- Clarify the legal/FSA implications relating to the promotion of services from any specific provider
- Work with the local provider(s) of community banking services on the development of a business plan that will enable them to meet the Council's commissioning needs

The Toynbee Hall report is expected week ending 30<sup>th</sup> November. Commissioning decisions for the remaining £45,000 will consider the findings and recommendations made in the report which most benefit council tenants and leaseholders in financial exclusion, and maximise the council's capacity to continue to collect rental and service charge income at the current levels.

A report outlining the commissioning proposals will be brought to the Committee for decision early next year.

## **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The initial report was agreed at HMCC and Policy and Resources Committee, and shared with the Advice Partnership Steering Group.
- 4.2 Financial inclusion was a key theme of the council housing City Assembly in November 2011. A presentation was delivered to tenants on the services of East Sussex Credit Union and workshops were held on money matters.
- 4.3 Tenants requested a theme on Inclusion for the City Assembly in November 2012. Presentations were given on Housing Benefit Changes and Council Tax changes, and the work of the Inclusion team and delivery partners.  
An Information Hub was provided by a wide range of services and agencies with interactive sessions and information available including MACS, the Inclusion Team, Housing Income Management Team, Housing Benefits Team, the Credit Union, Welfare Rights Team and others.
- 4.4 Discussions with residents during consultation on the HRA Budget 2012/13 proposals at Area Panels and Housing Management Consultative Committee during January and February 2012 highlighted the need for targeted support for

residents who may be experiencing financial difficulty as a result welfare reform, recession, increases in energy costs and rent increases.

- 4.5 A presentation on the proposed delivery model was delivered on 9<sup>th</sup> March to residents to the Housing Income Management Monitoring Group. Residents will be involved in the design and delivery and monitoring of the service as part of an ongoing process to monitor commissioning, implementation, and review of the first year of the project.
- 4.6 The Advice Partnership facilitated a series of Financial Inclusion themed consultative working groups, workshops and events throughout 2011 involving over 30 local agencies and services and over 300 local residents. The Advice Partnership Co-ordinator has been closely involved in preliminary discussions related to the development of these proposals from the outset and has agreed to facilitate further wider consultation as appropriate
- 4.7 The Procurement process for the Money Advice Service included an open bidder's briefing session for prospective contractors.

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

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The HRA Budget 2012/13 approved at Cabinet on 9 February 2012 included the creation of an earmarked reserve of £0.400 million to fund commissioning priorities in tackling financial exclusion and inequality, promoting access to services and improving support for vulnerable families and adults on low incomes. This report provided spending plans for £0.145 million of the reserve which was included in the 2012/13 Targeted Budget Management Report to Policy & Resources Committee.
- 5.2 These projects currently require one off funding, however future ongoing funding requirements will be built into the HRA Budget Strategy for 2013/14.

*Finance Officer Consulted:* Sue Chapman

*Date:* 06/12/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 The council as local housing authority has wide powers to manage properties within the HRA, and to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its functions. The proposals in the report will assist the council to reduce rent arrears levels and improve income collection. They are therefore within the council's powers. Procurement of the advice services complied with all relevant procurement legislation, including the council's own Contract Standing Orders.

*Lawyer Consulted:* Liz Woodley

*Date:* 05/12/12



#### Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 The equalities impact assessment budget screening documents for the Housing Revenue Account identified the impact of rising fuels costs and rents upon council housing residents on low income. The development of services which promote financial inclusion amongst council housing residents aims to mitigate these impacts. A full equalities impact assessment of the new service will be developed as part of the service development process.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 Advice on fuel poverty will link to wider work taking place within housing to improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of the housing stock

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 None

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.7 A risk register in relation to this project will be maintained by the project board as part of the project management arrangements

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The Corporate Plan (2011/15) sets out 3 key priorities, one of which is to 'tackle inequality and work to create a fairer city', with a focus on tackling financial inclusion. This is also one of the priorities set out in the City's Sustainable Community Strategy through which the Advice Partnership (one of the family of partnerships of the Local Strategic Partnership) has been tasked with delivering on a range of actions to promote financial inclusion. The proposals in this report compliment the broader strategic approach to Financial Inclusion that is currently being developed by the council. This work includes building a strategic and long term cross sector partners approach to finding solutions to financial inclusion that recognises, but goes beyond 'fixing problems now' and looks towards a sustainable and coherent approach to deep and systemic issues facing the city

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices:**

1. None

#### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

#### **Background Documents**

1. Promoting Financial Inclusion amongst Council Housing residents  
HMCC Agenda Item 93 March 2012



# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Innovation Report on Resident Involvement - Final Report and Action Plan</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>18 December 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director of Place</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Emma Gilbert</b>	<b>Tel: 291704</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>emma.gilbert@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report shares with Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee the final Innovation Report into strengthening resident involvement and suggested action plan for broadening the reach and outcomes of resident involvement

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee endorse the final report of the Innovation Group and suggested action plan for broadening the reach and outcomes of resident involvement

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

- 3.1 This report follows a report to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 4 September 2012 which made that committee aware of the final draft of the report "Everyone Counts - Innovation Group report into strengthening resident involvement"; the summary of proposals, and the findings from the range of consultations that have taken place including the May City Assembly, meetings with individual residents, focus groups and through Homing In. The Innovation Group Final Report is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. The summary of suggestions is on **page 7** of that report.
- 3.2 Councillors and Tenant representatives present at that meeting considered the summary of suggestions in detail and raised a number of questions and concerns which were discussed in the meeting. Building on this discussion, it was agreed that an Action Plan would be developed and brought back to Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee alongside the final draft of the report, for endorsement.

- 3.3 **Appendix 2** to this report outlines the questions raised at the meeting on 4.9.12, the response given at the time and further clarification where appropriate, and is mapped to the corresponding Objectives within the Action Plan.
- 3.4 **Appendix 3** to this report details the proposed Action Plan to deliver the aims and objectives of the Innovation Report and new Resident Involvement Framework.
- 3.5 **Appendix 4** to this report gives the diagram of the proposed Resident Involvement Framework
- 3.6 The budget for resident involvement for 2012/13 and proposed budget for 2013/14 is summarised below:

	<b>Forecast spend 2012/13</b>	<b>Budget 2013/14</b>
<b>Resident Involvement Team</b>		
Resident Involvement staff , office, computer, lone phone, mobile, travel etc costs	£265,960	£267,250

<b>Residents' Budget</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Taxis	£10,080	£10,000
Grants to Associations	£28,250	£28,780
Grant to Resource Centre	£32,420	£33,070
Catering and City Assembly	£5,860	£6,310
Training Tenants	£3,120	£10,000
Tenant Management Organisation fees allowance (carried over to 2012/13)	£15,920	£16,240
Consultation and involvement eg STAR survey, mystery shopping etc*	£26,330	£23,500

NB: In addition to this budget, there may be some additional involvement costs attached to specific individual pieces of project work within Housing & Social Inclusion.

2013/2014 budget includes an inflationary uplift of 2% on non-salary items. The increased budget to tenant training includes the Interreg Learning Cities funded provision for residents.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

4.1 The Innovation Group presented its interim work and proposals to, and received feedback from, the following meetings:

- Area Panels - Feb 2012

- Tenant Compact Monitoring Group - March 2012
  - A meeting of Chairs and Secretaries of TRAs - March 2012
  - A meeting of managers of the housing service - April 2012
  - A meeting of councillors on HMCC - April 2012
  - City Assembly - May 2012
  - Area Panels - August 2012
- 4.2 A focus group of young tenants was undertaken as part of the Innovation Group's consultation process.
- 4.3 The findings and suggestions of this group were presented at City Assembly in May, where residents had further opportunities to feed back on this work in break out groups.
- 4.4 Wider resident consultation and awareness raising was achieved via Homing In, by contacting residents on our residents involvement database and by making information available on our website.
- 4.5 The report was discussed at Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee on 4.9.12 and the comments/questions of committee members (councillors and tenant representatives) were incorporated into the final draft and action plan.

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

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The costs of broadening involvement and achieving the suggested improvements will need to be managed from existing resources for 2012/13. The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2013/14 for resident involvement totals £395,150 as outlined in this report and the proposed action plan at Appendix 3 will need to adhere to this budget.

*Finance Officer Consulted Monica Brooks*

*Date 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012:*

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Innovation Report includes a number of suggestions which could be implemented without any formality. Others may require formal approvals. For example, changes to the Area Panels' terms of reference may need approval from the Policy and Resources Committee, as the Council's constitution provides that the terms of reference of the Panels are subject to review by that Committee. It is not considered that any individual's human rights are adversely affected by the report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley*

*Date 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012*

#### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Innovation Group has considered equalities aspects of resident involvement throughout its work, and the key objective of all the suggestions when taken together is to increase the ability for all residents to be involved in ways that are suitable to them. There are also proposals to increase training opportunities for all residents as opposed to it being limited to members of TRAs, as is the current practice. An equalities impact assessment will be carried out on the final suggestions and reported to Housing Committee.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The group's report seeks to modernise the framework and practice of resident involvement, putting it on a more sustainable footing, and the suggestions contribute to supporting and strengthening sustainable communities. The proposed improvements, for example regarding communications, use of social media, using videos to counterbalance our over-reliance on the printed word, and reduced administration of Area Panels, all contribute to more environmentally sustainable working practices too.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Successful resident involvement can help reduce perceptions of fear of crime, and reduce antisocial behaviour within neighbourhoods.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The proposal for a new resident involvement framework creates the opportunity for higher levels of resident satisfaction with their landlord. It also minimises the risk of resident involvement (while having its successes) being perceived as the being the premise of a small minority of residents and providing poor value for money.

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Any improvements to our resident involvement framework will be in line with the Council's Community Engagement Framework, and will also contribute to the development of neighbourhood councils.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices:**

1. Everyone Counts: Innovation Group Report August 2012
2. Questions/concerns raised at HMCSC in September 2012
3. Proposed Innovation Report Action Plan
4. Draft Resident Involvement Framework

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. Innovation Group Presentation to HMCC in May 2012
2. Minutes of HMCSC Meeting 4.9.12





# Everyone Counts

Innovation Group Report into  
strengthening resident involvement

August 2012

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## **Jargon buster**

BME Black and minority ethnic  
RIO Resident Involvement Officer  
EDB Estate Development Budget  
HMCC Housing Management Consultative Committee  
HRAG High Rise Action Group  
LAT Local Action Team  
SHAG Sheltered Housing Action Group  
TCMG Tenant Compact Monitoring Group  
TDN Tenant Disability Network  
TPAS Tenant Participation Advisory Service  
TSA Tenant Services Authority  
TRA Tenant and Resident Association  
VFM Value for money  
'Resident' refers to both tenants and leaseholders

## **Acknowledgements**

Gratitude is expressed to the residents on the Innovation Group for their labour intensive work and innovative suggestions for making significant improvements to resident involvement for both residents and the housing service.

They are:

Chris Kift, Linda Shaw, Dave Murtagh, Julie Nichols,  
Sam Murphy and Amal Basta.

Equal gratitude is extended to all our extremely hardworking tenant and leaseholder representatives for their longstanding, sustained and continued commitment to resident involvement.

August 2012

## 1. Summary

Resident involvement encompasses a range of activities and processes that enable residents to have influence over their housing services if they wish to, with the benefits including improving services, higher resident satisfaction, increased accountability, increased sense of community and better relationships for all. It is acknowledged that responsibility for decision making rests with the council, as part of its responsibilities to everyone in the city.

The Audit Commission advised in 2006, that housing organisations should have clear evaluated objectives for resident involvement, should offer choice of involvement mechanisms, be able to show the benefits and impacts versus true costs, and should stop activities that offer little benefit and focus more on those that offer win-win solutions both to residents and to the organisation. This advice, along with the expectations of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and the Homes and Communities Agency's standards for resident involvement have shaped the work and proposals of the Innovation Group.

The Innovation Group was set up in late 2011 to look at how we can further enhance opportunities for residents to be involved in the design, delivery and monitoring of housing services – in ways that suit them.

The highly valued work of the proportionately small numbers of residents involved in our 72 tenant and resident associations (TRAs) lies at the foundation of our successful resident involvement framework. Their commitment to involvement remains extremely high, however attendance at their TRA meetings is fairly low – even though between 9% and 14% of residents are members of a TRA. We are also aware that particular groups eg young residents, BME tenants, and those with young families are very much underrepresented in these numbers.

Key to increasing the numbers of people involved in TRAs is firstly to further promote the work of the associations, increasing information about what they do, and secondly, understanding and overcoming the barriers to involvement and providing mechanisms that chime with residents' interests. Some of the barriers include time, lack of confidence to participate, and off-putting or unwelcoming behaviours that are sometimes witnessed. The Innovation Group has considered a revised Code of Conduct to help with this last point and to encourage positive relations.

The Area Panel process was evaluated by the group and several issues of concern were noted, eg elections to groups from a small pool of dedicated and committed tenant reps, heavy administration, political charring, and possibly being able to provide better value for money. Suggestions for improvement include a re-assessment of the purpose of Area Panels, realignment of panels with ward and housing management areas, a greater focus on city-wide or area issues, and the removal or rethinking of the 'Blue Page' process with routine repairs issues reported through established mechanisms.

Also supporting resident involvement is a range of around 20 working groups, whose membership is largely restricted to elected tenant representatives, leaving little opportunity for involvement by residents who are interested in a

topic but are not members of a TRA (our survey results indicated that currently between 86% and 91% of residents are not involved in a local TRA). Consequently some individual tenant representatives sit on more than 10 groups.

The Innovation Group proposes a new resident involvement framework which aims to increase participation and representation, enable people to be involved as they prefer, modernise our approach to involving residents, and enables us to evaluate and learn from successes. Within this framework there would be three key working groups (Service Improvement Groups) that directly match the service areas against which the housing service is both regulated and performance managed. They are:

- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and community

As well as our existing citywide groups (eg Sheltered Housing Action Group and Tenants' Disability Forum), there will also be two service-wide groups directly matched to areas against which the service is regulated.

They are:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment (IEG)
- Value for money. (BVMFG)

Membership to the groups would be open to all residents to widen participation and increase the breadth of experience and ideas, with 60% for elected tenant representatives. Each group might have sub groups within them. The majority of working groups would come to an end, and those remaining will have revised terms of reference and some new membership to include residents who want to make a contribution, are interested in the topic, but cannot commit an increased amount of time.

The proposed framework also includes a wider menu of options for involvement (including training), revisions to Area Panels, additional support and training for TRAs, a tenant led scrutiny panel, and increased working within the council wide community engagement framework.

As a late request, the Innovation Group considered proposals for Housing Management Consultative Committee in the context of wider council changes to the committee system. Some initial thoughts for improvement include less formal and more collaborative meetings with greater opportunity for residents' contributions to shape policy through eg tenant only indicative vote and involvement of 'expert' residents from the proposed Service Improvement Groups. Webcast or podcast meetings and invitations extended to other housing service customers were also suggested.

The Innovation Group undertook a focus group involving young people and highlights from it are reported here, along with suggestions for increased involvement of young people. There is also information about plans for

separate work with a local BME community group to counteract the underrepresentation of BME residents.

A draft menu of involvement for formatting into accessible and engaging promotional material is appended to the report.

Communications amongst residents and between the council and residents has been looked at, as well as the opportunities for using social media to broaden communication and increase participation. This could be achieved for example, with the use of TRA Facebook accounts and web pages; officer and TRA produced Youtube videos; sharing key points from meetings on the website or through using tweets; and having posts within TRAs specifically responsible for communications and social media.

The provision of training opportunities can make a significant difference to the success of resident involvement, and a draft training offer for all residents is appended. Suggestions also include some essential training for tenant representatives; working with colleagues and local partners to provide a broader range of workshops; and staff and residents working together to facilitate workshops or deliver training sessions.

The report concludes with a section on measuring the impact and value for money of all aspects of resident involvement in order to understand effectiveness. It outlines some of the measures that can be used, and key questions that will help assist the process.

There has been wide consultation around the proposals in this report through Area Panels, Housing Management Consultative Committee, the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, City Assembly, staff meetings, Homing In and through contact with residents on our resident involvement database. The feedback from those consultations has been used to produce this final version of the report.

## Summary of main suggestions

If approved, then a detailed 'SMART' action plan will be worked up.

### Code of conduct

- 1 Adopt revised code of conduct with clear explanation of expected and unacceptable behaviours
- 2 Reassess need for TCMG in light of changed legislation, RI strategy, and a Service Improvement Group dedicated to all resident involvement matters.
- 3 Prepare descriptions of the role, time commitments and expectations of TRA positions and support available, and make them available to people in the area of benefit who could be interested in helping or joining their TRA
- 4 CRB checks to be linked to certain responsibilities in the association - eg work with money or children
- 5 Some recommended core training for TRA Chairs and other key roles in order to provide support and meet any skills gaps
- 6 Establish a separate body (eg 'Joint Adjudication Panel') to deal with some code of conduct breaches

### Tenant and resident associations (TRAs)

- 7 TRA aims clearly stated and community initiatives publicised to encourage more involvement and support achievement of objectives - eg role for social media support
- 8 Review of TRA constitutions to accord with the modernised framework, and  
clarity over which clauses can be TRA specific.
- 9 Annual impact assessments for TRAs
- 10 TRA training – some compulsory, and induction for new TRAs
- 11 List of members to be kept to help communications and activity to increase involvement, and to potentially help with equalities data
- 12 Increase local meetings without officers present by supporting and enabling  
TRAs to become more self reliant
- 13 Support increased community events and projects to bring people together,  
reduce isolation, enhance community spirit and make use of community  
assets and community space in a sustainable way

### Area Panels

- 14 Re-energise Area Panels - terms of reference, purpose of, format. Consider regrouping panel areas to match tenancy management and ward areas
- 15 Remove or improve Blue Pages and Tenant Only Meeting processes to avoid duplication and poor value for money
- 16 Share issues of citywide interest arising from Area Panels
- 17 Keep Area Panel focus on area rather than individual issues, and consultation/information on citywide issues. Also seek the involvement of other services (although paying mind to other local area meetings)

### Scrutiny

- 18 Adopt proposals as set out in Appx 4a – d

### Resident involvement framework and working groups

- 19 Adopt the three service improvement groups within which working groups will sit. Most working groups to come to an end subject to discussions within those groups. Where the group or elements of its work needs to continue, revised terms of reference to be drawn up to consider which one of the three Service Improvement Groups it best fits and to invite the participation of other residents
- 20 Establish two overarching groups for resident involvement (IEG) and Business value for Money (BVMFG) with one or two representatives from the Service Improvement Group also sitting on these two groups that cut across the whole service
- 21 Inclusion of interested residents not involved in TRAs on working groups
- 22 Fixed time on groups
- 23 Annual impact assessment of groups
- 24 Encourage residents to look at work happening in other housing organisations

### Involving young people

- 25 Obtain clarity on young people's preference for involvement eg by asking for their help, involving them in video production etc
- 26 Earmark a percentage of EDB money for ideas and suggestions from young people

### Menu of involvement

- 27 Prepare and publicise a menu of involvement to include establishing a 'Joint Adjudication Panel' – as per draft in report

### Communications and social media

- 28 Actions to improve communications eg greater publicity; training support and increase of use of new media especially videos to minimise overdependence on the written word



### Funding resident involvement

- 29 Ensure fair allocation of grants to support TRAs – eg possibly capping applications to £1,000
- 30 Encourage and support external bidding for funds for TRA initiatives
- 31 EDB – look to ensure currently under-represented tenants and those with no TRA are able to suggest proposals for EDB spend

### Resident training

- 32 Make more use of the training budget, offering a wider range of training to tenant reps and residents
- 33 Include workshops to increase confidence and life skills in training offer – eg money matters
- 34 Use a range of resources – eg local organisations, government funded offers, e-learning, staff and residents run workshops

### Annual impact assessments

- 35 Ensure all aspects of resident involvement have clear objectives against which impact can be assessed
- 36 Conduct annual assessments, document and learn from findings

## Residents' feedback on main suggestions

All 144 responses from City Assembly (40) and Homing In (104)

(Note: not all respondents answered all questions)

1. Change code of conduct to clearly explain unacceptable behaviours and Possible actions if not followed  
125 87% Agree  
10 7% Disagree  
7 5% Not sure
2. Create an independent 'Joint Adjudication Panel' of officers and residents, trained to mediate or hear appeals if Code of Conduct is not followed  
109 76% Agree  
20 14% Disagree  
14 10% Not sure
3. Support TRAs to explain their roles and what they aim to achieve, in order to encourage people's involvement  
123 85% Agree  
15 10% Disagree  
4 3% Not sure
4. Support TRAs with better training and induction – some necessary training  
121 84% Agree  
13 9% Disagree  
6 4% Not sure
5. Have a TRA membership list to help with communications  
105 73%  
21 15%  
11 8%
6. Encourage people who might not be involved in a tenants association to be involved in other ways  
103 72% Agree  
26 18% Disagree  
9 6% Not sure
7. More support for community events and projects  
116 81% Agree  
17 12% Disagree  
8 6% Not sure
8. Re-energise and re-focus Area Panels, and share citywide news better  
85 59% Agree  
40 28% Disagree  
14 10% Not sure

9. Review working groups and link them to the housing service's 5 main work areas, (ie Tenancy, Home, Neighbourhood, Involvement, Improvement)
 

91	61%	Agree
33	23%	Disagree
15	10%	Not sure
  
10. Make sure important actions and decisions made in key groups are shared with tenant reps and others
 

118	82%	Agree
18	12%	Disagree
5	4%	Not sure
  
11. Publicise more widely the ways all residents can get involved – menu of options
 

118	82%	Agree
15	10%	Disagree
9	6%	Not sure
  
12. Allocate some EDB money for suggestions from young residents
 

80	56%	Agree
29	20%	Disagree
30	21%	Not sure
  
13. Provide the opportunity for all residents to benefit from training opportunities and workshops
 

104	72%	Agree
16	12%	Disagree
7	5%	Not sure
  
14. Regularly assess the work carried out by working groups, TRAs, etc to show successes and evaluate progress
 

115	80%	Agree
14	10%	Disagree
11	8%	Not sure

## **Introduction**

Resident involvement in Brighton and Hove has a well established history amongst residents living in council owned housing. They have been involved in a wide range of issues from helping to select our long term partnering contractor, to making local decisions about how a proportion of estate development funding on items or events to benefit their local area, and to deciding what their quarterly reporting of performance information will look like.

The council has statutory and regulatory responsibilities to involve tenants in the provision of its housing service, and also has wider responsibilities to all residents of Brighton and Hove in the provision of local public services including city-wide and strategic housing issues, and to involve them in this. Some examples of local issues affecting tenants and leaseholders as well as residents in other housing sectors in the city are housing provision and supply, impacts of the welfare benefit reforms, and local access to work and learning opportunities.

In its local decision-making processes, the council will generally hear differing views and perspectives of the various resident and business communities in the city, and it has to balance these views when ultimately making decisions for which it remains responsible and accountable.

With these thoughts in mind, the then Cabinet Member for Housing (now Chair of Housing Committee) wanted to be sure we were doing our very best to work with residents to involve them in their housing services. Achieving this would necessitate keeping the best bits of, but making a shift from the traditional tenant participation models of the 1970s and 1980s which was rather characterised by paternalistic landlords doing their best for and to residents. The desired and fresher approach, which models the concepts of co-production and co-regulation, is characterised by an enabling landlord working with residents to provide efficient and effective services. As one respondent to the questionnaire put it:

“The sooner we are all dragged into the 21<sup>st</sup> century the better. We must get rid of this old fashioned ideas....and go on to a more democratic system.”

## **Background to the Innovation Group**

The Innovation Group was set up late in 2011 to look at how resident involvement could be further improved to include a wider number of people in their housing service in more ways that suit them, and to strengthen the impact that resident involvement has on decision making and monitoring processes. The idea for setting up the group was endorsed at Housing Management Consultative Committee, and elections for the tenant representative positions were initially held at Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, but were later re-held at each of the four Area Panels. The group's Terms of Reference can be seen at [Appx 1](#).

The group consists of longstanding involved residents, residents who are not currently involved, the Cabinet Member for Housing, and officers. It had met largely weekly for almost six months, reviewing one topic at a time, and looking at practice from other organisations.

### Consultation and consultation findings

The Innovation Group has regularly consulted on and taken soundings about its work. It presented its interim findings to Area Panels and took feedback in February 2012, and then returned to the Area Panels in August with the results of consultation that had taken place. It has also met with tenant and resident association committee members to feed back on its further findings and to consult with them before its draft report and recommendations were presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC) in April 2012. Further consultation on the proposals was carried out at City Assembly in May 2012, where a wider resident audience were able to contribute to the finer detail of the proposals in five break out groups, and make further suggestions. There was also a survey at the City Assembly for attendees to complete. The questionnaire used at City Assembly was also used for wider resident consultation through the summer edition of Homing In.

As the table earlier in this report shows (page ), there was overwhelming support for the main proposals that have emerged from the Innovation Group's work. The highlights from the findings are:

§ The highest area of support was for changes to the Code of Conduct – with almost 18 times as many people agreeing than disagreeing.

§ The lowest area of support was for a proportion of the Estate Development Budget to be decided upon by young people. Despite this, almost 3 times as many people agreed with it than disagreed.

§ The main area of uncertainty was about re-energising and re-focusing the Area Panels – however 6 times as many residents were in support of this than were against it.

§ The other main area of uncertainty was around the working groups, with 23% not being sure of the recommendation. Interestingly though, again, 6 times as many residents were in support of this than were against it.

There has been some concern expressed by existing tenant representatives about whether the proposals of the Innovation Group would weaken the representative role of tenant reps, and concern that involved residents should be elected in order to have a mandate to represent other residents. There has also been comment about the wisdom of trying to 'fix something that ain't broke'.

While these concerns are understood, it would be doing a disservice to all local tenants and leaseholders, and to the tenant movement itself, if we didn't acknowledge that people do want choice. It is true also that some people want the choice not to be involved and just want to be left in peace to live their lives. However for those who want to have a say, or to contribute, but

don't want or can't afford the time for the ongoing commitment that some others can afford, we need to offer alternatives. By being involved and taking an interest, it doesn't always mean that people need to represent other people - they may be interested in representing themselves and using their own democratic voice, and may well not be interested in talking on behalf of others. They may have lots of skills or ideas to contribute, or might be interested in finding out more, or learning about our processes or their local community.

There is enough work to go round, and there is room for residents who have a very important representative role to work productively alongside those who might only be interested in a specific subject or area – eg grounds maintenance or growing projects.

The Housing Quality Network is a national housing organisation that provides guidance, support and accreditation etc to the housing sector. It asserts that for organisations to obtain accreditation in the area of resident involvement, they have to demonstrate (amongst other things) that they offer tenants the opportunity to move through different levels of involvement; take a proactive approach to involving a representative cross section of people, make efforts to involve people who don't usually come forward, take their views into account, and regularly assess the impact of what they do.

The suggestions from the Innovation Group were not made for reasons of achieving any accolades or accreditations, but simply because they make sense if we are seeking to strengthen involvement in residents' housing service and want to take an inclusive approach to this.

It seems that during the consultations, and with the debates and discussions that have taken place, most concerns have been addressed, and there is acknowledgement that residents don't necessarily want one thing or another - they want a mix and want the choice. It is our expectation that with everyone's goodwill and with learning from those who adopt different approaches to us, we will achieve even better heights than we have in the past and have an even more productive, vibrant and participatory involvement structure of which we can all be proud.

## **What is resident involvement**

Resident involvement is a mix of the set up, processes, people, activities and resources that go into hearing from, involving, working with and understanding residents; and enabling them to have more influence over their housing services if they want to.

Our aim for resident involvement is to provide a wide range of opportunities for as many people as possible, which enable them to participate and influence decision making at a time and at a level that is suitable to them.

## **Benefits of resident involvement**

- Helps identify and then meet the needs of residents
- Improved services and higher satisfaction

- More accountability
- Better informed staff and residents
- Enable residents to have a voice
- Increased sense of community
- Increased individual and community confidence
- Increase ability for community to build capacity
- Creates better relationships for all

### Audit Commission advice

The Audit Commission handbook “Improving Services through Resident Involvement” offers the following advice:

1. Have a clear purpose for involvement and evaluate against the objectives - ie ask the ‘Why?’ question.
2. Provide choice, offer a menu of options.
3. Show the benefits of involvement eg through service reviews.
4. Share information about the true costs of involvement, along with the impact it has on rents or organisational efficiency, so that tenants can help make better value for money choices eg suggest better approaches - ie ask the ‘So what?’ question
5. Stop resident involvement activities with unclear benefits or impacts
6. Focus on activities that give maximum value to both the organisation and to tenants – ie aim for win-win solutions.

Although this advice is from before the TSA and the Homes and Communities standards, it still holds true today, as is reflected in the work undertaken and that follows in this report.

The suggestions from the group result from research into other organisations, discussions within the group, and importantly thoughts from other residents that have been stated at various meetings and brought together here.

### Context of resident involvement

The Tenant Services Authority’s (TSA) ‘Involvement and Empowerment Standard’ against which housing organisations can be measured, remains a strong feature of the Homes and Communities Agency’s new regulatory framework. Examples of expectations from the standard include:

- offering choice
- focus on customer service
- meeting the diverse needs of tenants
- developing resident led scrutiny as a method of co-regulation
- promoting Neighbourhood Councils and Tenant Management Organisations.

The aims of our Resident Involvement Strategy developed in 2011 are to:

1. Provide a wider range of opportunities for residents to be involved
2. Develop a framework for involve residents in service pledges (local Offers

3. Involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services.
4. Involve residents in monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services

The work of the Innovation Group attempts to take this a stage further by making suggestions for modernising our overall framework and approaches to resident involvement.

### **Resident involvement survey of all residents**

In December 2009, we carried out an involvement survey to understand why more residents were not involved in their local tenant and resident association (TRA) and to gauge people's interest in being involved in their housing service or local area. The survey was sent to every tenant and leaseholder along with their Homing In magazine, and 2,091 responses were returned.

From that survey, 9% of respondents were active members of a local TRA, 74% had never been a member of a TRA, and the remaining were either non active or were ex-members. Some of the reasons given for not being involved included not knowing what they are, not knowing about their local association or meeting times, a feeling that they were not representative of local people or not for people like them, and not feeling comfortable there. Other responses did include begin happy about what TRAs do and therefore not needing to get involved, not having the time, or simply not being interested.

A further interesting finding from this survey was that 1,800 people (or 86%) were interested in being involved in their housing service in some way, and wanted their details to be kept on our resident involvement database for being involved about other involvement opportunities.

The results of the survey were reported to the May 2010 HMCC, and the committee approved widening the ways in which interested people can become more involved in their housing service. The report stated that "...By so doing, we are better able to shape and deliver services having considered what matters most to as broad a range of residents as possible".

The survey also showed that there is an over-representation of older people in our resident involvement structure, and an under-representation of young tenants, tenants with young families, and BME tenants.

### **Tenant satisfaction survey of a sample of residents**

From this survey of a random sample of approximately 3,000 residents in November 2011 we also know that:

1. 59% of residents are aware they have a local residents association in their area
2. 14% are members of a tenants and residents association
3. 56% of tenants have access to the internet
4. 62% satisfied with how housing generally listen to their views and acts on them.

Having a good insight into our residents, who they are, their preferences etc is useful for working out how resident involvement needs to be planned and delivered.



Tenant and resident associations perform a very important role as a channel for people to express their views, opinions, or concerns and be involved in their housing service. Each association holds local meetings, at which levels of attendance remain fairly static with only small numbers of new people attending. However, not everyone wants to attend meetings, lots of residents just want information and to be kept informed of what's going on. Other residents want to be involved in some way - and part of our challenge in creating fair opportunities for people to be involved is to harness their interest through information (see [Communication section](#)) and by offering a range of opportunities to meet people's interests, time commitments and needs (see [Menu of Involvement section](#)).

All forms of our involvement have relied on small numbers of key hardworking tenant and leaseholder representatives involved in TRAs, and recognition, training and support for them is crucial for their continued involvement and success.

It is also important for us to consider the needs of new people who want to be involved and may need some encouragement (see draft [Training programme – Appx 5](#)), and those who currently are, or feel, excluded (see [Barriers to involvement section](#)). It might also be that we need to be better about sharing information about the benefits of resident involvement and what impact it can have (see [Measuring the impact of resident involvement section](#))

TRAs will continue to play an important role in bringing local people together on matters of interest, and there is more we can do to connect with groups that already exist and that council residents are already involved with eg the Crew Club to hear from younger residents.

## Barriers to resident involvement

The reasons why some people choose not to be, or are not, involved in resident involvement is varied and can be multiple. They include:

1. Aversion or reluctance to attend meetings – except where an issue is of direct relevance and importance to them
2. Lack of confidence in attending public meeting
3. Lack of clarity about the aims and what people are trying to achieve
4. Cultural factors that can mean some involvement activities are not inclusive
5. Time – work or family/caring responsibilities
6. Disability
7. Language and literacy needs – there is often an over-reliance on the written word eg paper based questionnaires and reports or minutes at meetings
8. Perception of meetings for the sake of having a meeting
9. Culture of involvement for negative reasons which is reportedly offputting to some people who would like more positive engagement
10. Perception that it won't lead to any changes, that it makes no difference
11. Perception that outcomes have already been decided
12. Poor conduct of some tenant representatives reportedly off-putting to some residents

13. Lack of a warm welcome on previous attempts to be involved
14. Timing of meetings, and the difficulties in satisfying the differing meeting time preferences for all groups eg working residents, those who are elderly or who have young families.

### Suggestions to reduce the barriers

1. Get the foundation right – ie making sure all residents have an equal opportunity to be involved in some way.
2. Make sure the menu of involvement and calendar of events are accessible to all – using different media
3. Explain better why people should join in and get involved. Publicise the goals, achievements and impacts of resident involvement to harness people's interest eg make notes from TRA minutes available on the Council's website(3 to 4 bullet points only)
4. Be clear about what decisions have already been made (if any) and where there is room for manoeuvre - or have clarity on the specific areas that are open for influence.
5. Talk to community groups of those least represented to understand barriers and possible solutions – support residents to do this too eg through training.
6. Help people develop the confidence to put themselves forward
7. Explore more fun ways to involve people, and more social events or activities, not just meetings.
8. Make more use of community rooms owned by the council
9. Introduce praise and recognition for those volunteering their time service to the community
10. Reduce the formality involved in tenant engagement activities
11. Use staff and residents to run training courses
12. Mix people up at the City Assembly
13. Use modern media, the phone or door knocking to reach people who won't respond to a leaflet or go to a meeting
14. Tap into where people go to eg contacting parents at the playground
15. Understand if people are involved for positive or negative reasons - respond to the negative factors, and use people's positive energies
16. Use different people to promote change
17. Involve all TRAs in generating ideas from everyone

## Code of conduct

With regard to resident involvement, a code of conduct is a set of guidelines that describes the way residents are expected to conduct themselves as residents participating in the involvement structure.

### Key concerns

1. There is some lack of clarity amongst some officers and tenant reps with regard to bullying, harassment and other inappropriate behaviour, and how it should be dealt with. There is also some evident reticence or limited confidence in responding to matters as they arise - particularly for behaviours outside of meetings.
2. Better use should be being made of the councils complaints procedure
3. Unprofessional and unacceptable conduct by some tenant reps - eg general insults and comments about officers by tenant reps in public gatherings are inappropriate and not acceptable. If there are specific complaints about an officer this has to be raised in the right way (eg to the line manager, or using the complaints procedure) and it will be investigated
4. Sanctions are slow to be applied to those behaving poorly (eg having to leave meeting, removal from tenant's association)
5. Model constitution needs revision to reflect the code of conduct and potential areas of conflict
6. Tenant Compact Monitoring Group's (TCMG) role in addressing code of conduct issues has not been effective or well developed

### Suggestions

1. Revise the code of conduct (see Appx 2). One respondent to the questionnaire commented that it would make more sense to talk about the behaviours that we do want rather than those that we don't want so that people are pointed 'towards the ideal solution and not the rubbish one.' These sentiments are shared, and the revised code of conduct does feature the desired behaviours, but includes the inappropriate behaviours for clarity.
2. Need for the role of TCMG to be reviewed in light of changed legislation
3. Before elections to TRA positions, a description of the job role or the expectations of the position should be made available to people in the area of benefit who could be interested
4. Clear explanation and list of unacceptable behaviour
5. Past criminal records should be part of the selection criteria for a treasurer and anyone dealing with the money of the association
6. The requirement for CRB checks should be linked to certain responsibilities in the association
7. Some training for TRA Chairs and other positions should be a requirement in order to provide support and skills needed. During the City Assembly consultation it was mentioned that some training should be essential, and would help give more confidence to tenant representatives,
8. Separate body (eg 'Joint Adjudication Panel') to deal with some code of conduct breaches.

The panel to...

- Be independent of the participation structure
- Have representation from residents and council
- Be depoliticised
- Have resident representation from outside existing groups and structures - ie not elected through the participation structure
- Have council representation not necessarily from managers but other officers not involved with community participation
- Be made up of an officer, a resident and possibly a colleague from another section drawn from a trained pool
- Reflect council's policies and procedures.

## Aspects of current resident involvement framework

The list below gives the main elements of the existing involvement framework, and this section will look at each in turn.

- Individual informal involvement
- Tenant and resident associations
- Area Panels
- Tenant Compact Monitoring Group
- Working groups and common identity groups - eg Core Group, Sheltered Housing Action Group, Tenants Disability Network, High Rise Action Group, Leaseholder Action Group
- Housing Management Consultative Committee

### 1. Individual residents in informal consultations

#### Current situation

This is a useful way residents can be involved, and can choose to participate without the need to necessarily attend formal meetings.

There have been a variety of surveys of residents that have been carried out over recent years eg postal questionnaires like the STATUS and recent STAR satisfaction surveys, or the Estate Development Budget (EDB) survey; questionnaires in Homing In or on the council's website like the Resident Involvement Survey; and surveys of specific groups eg of sheltered housing residents.

#### Key issues

Residents need more options for being involved and sharing their views and ideas. There is the risk of consultation fatigue from repeatedly asking the same people – and therefore we need to cast wider.

#### Suggestions

1. Publicity material is prepared to inform all residents of the various ways that they can be involved - the menu of involvement
2. Establish 'The 5 minute Group' - a group of residents willing to complete

short telephone, text or web based surveys to provide a 'sounding board' for testing ideas, giving service feedback, making suggestions etc that can feed into the work of other groups.

## 2. Tenant and resident associations (TRAs)

### Context

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) describes a residents association as:

"A group formed by local people who join together to work for common aims... Although all groups are different, they do have common aims and objectives which can include identifying and trying to solve problems that affect tenants and residents, campaigning on a particular issue, organising community events and creating a sense of 'community spirit'.

We have 72 TRAs. They are independent community organisations and have varying numbers of dwellings in their 'area of benefit'. Association committee members give freely of their time and have made important contributions to their local communities or to almost all areas of the housing service. Examples include running a growing project with young people; acting as an advocate for local residents; contributing to publications eg Tenancy Handbook, Resident Involvement Strategy and Repairs Handbook; selection and monitoring of our repairs partner; and service and policy suggestions through participating in working groups, Area Panels and HMCC.

The council values TRA commitment to resident involvement, and supports them by eg staff resources, our contract with the Resource Centre, the provision of some meeting rooms and the allocation of TRA grants.

Each TRA is able to apply to H&SI for funding for the running of their association for things like equipment, meeting room charges, newsletters etc. They are supported by Resident Involvement Officers (RIOs), and can access support from the Resource Centre for eg training, production of newsletters, using equipment and resources there, getting advice on applying for external funding, and confirmation of financial accounts. They can also submit bids for EDB funding, which is allocated by voting at Area Panels, for communal area or community based projects. Some TRAs also do their own fund raising for local events.

The RIO support currently includes support and advice on setting up a TRA, arranging meetings, taking minutes at meetings, giving advice and information on housing or community engagement matters.

### Key issues

1. Throughout the consultations, some TRAs talked about the low numbers attending their meetings (eg 6 people and sometimes less) and not having enough help and support from local residents. This issue really lies at the heart of the Innovation Group's work, and begs questions around people's time availability, whether they see any benefit in going to meetings, and

whether they might prefer something different.

2. Some residents have mentioned not being made to feel welcome at their local TRA, or that they feel the TRA is not representative of them, or that it is cliquey.
3. Some resident have commented about not knowing about their local TRA
4. Given the small numbers involved in some TRAs, it could be questionable how representative the TRAs are, and how able they are to canvass representative views within the locality.
5. Queries have been raised about the involvement of councillors who have active roles in some resident associations, where the associations are supposed to be politically neutral, and councillors are perceived to have a high level of power and influence.
6. Some TRAs experience difficulty in disseminating information to residents, and some residents have expressed that they are not kept informed by their TRA reps.
7. Varied access to training opportunities.
8. Ineffective use of RIO time eg in taking minutes. Residents could feasibly minute their own meetings – particularly if simply recording key decision or actions, which would give RIOs additional time to support TRAs in the various other ways suggested in this report.

### Suggestions

1. TRAs to rethink and state the reason why they have formed as a group, and what they aim to achieve (their objectives) over the coming year so that this can be locally publicised to encourage more involvement, and so that support for TRAs can be tailored to achieving these objectives.
2. Increase and encourage greater resident involvement in local TRAs by eg intergenerational topics for discussion and activities, dynamic meetings, and knowing what local people might want in a TRA, and increasing communication and publicity about what they do. Feedback from residents suggested that positive stories should be promoted as people may be turned off from what they perceive as constant moaning and winging, and may be more interested in what they can positively contribute to their local community.
3. Review TRA constitutions to ensure they tie in well with suggestions from the Innovation Group's work, that there is clarity around clauses from the 'model' constitution that need to remain within any revised constitutions, and that they adequately cover issues regarding membership.
4. Training for TRA members – some of it to be compulsory eg managing inclusive meetings, equalities and diversity, secretary duties (eg taking and writing minutes), keeping accounts, role of the Chair etc, and some of it optional – eg organising community events, meetings that matter, bidding for funds, money matters, energy efficiency, ICT skills and new media.
5. Support TRAs to increase membership and have more roles within the association - eg with responsibility for communications, social media, fundraising, activities spread out amongst a wider group. Also for TRAs (as with the wider involvement framework) to acknowledge that some people might want involvement in
6. An induction plan for new TRAs and a review of the Tenant Association Representative Handbook to bring it up to date.

7. TRAs to keep a membership list, clearly knowing which residents are and are not members of their association to assist with communications and work to increase membership, and to help give more knowledge on diversity and equalities matters.

8. The tenant's voice is extremely important, and tenants could use the resources and people at their disposal to hold more TRA and local area meetings independent of the council (resident only meetings). If any housing queries or issues arose from it, the Chairperson or Secretary could contact the relevant officer for an early response. The thought here is also about the TRAs community focus and furthering their community related objectives.

9. Encourage and promote more community projects - eg enrichment or social projects. During the consultations residents mentioned a plethora of ideas they would be interested in eg street parties, surgeries, bowls, local model railway club, walking group, breakfast clubs, homework clubs, summer fetes, table top sales, making bird boxes, and activities that younger tenants can bring their children to for intergenerational activities.

Other examples from residents groups here and elsewhere in the country include book groups, football, 'snack and chat' afternoons or evenings, estate clean up days, bartering or 'help your neighbour' website development (eg exchanging dog walking for help with preparing CVs), community gardening scheme, recipe sharing or food demonstrations, knitting clubs and netball or softball evenings.

As well as harnessing support for local TRAs, these kinds of activities will also help combat feelings of isolation on our estates, and increase community spirit.

10. Carry out annual impact assessment of TRA achievements against objectives, acknowledging successes and targeting additional officer or community support where intentions have not been realised.

### **3. Area Panels**

#### **Context**

We have four Area Panels in the city:

1. North and East Oxford Street Housing Office
2. Central Lavender Street Housing Office
3. West Victoria Road Housing Office
4. East Selsfield Drive and Manor Place Housing Office

The panels were set up to enable representatives of associations in the area to come together on matters of common interest, to consider joint solutions to issues, and to come together to participate in decisions on local or city wide housing policy and other matters.

Panels meet four times a year, with one meeting given to voting on the Estate Development Budget. Annually, at one meeting, election of tenant

representatives to particular working groups or other standing groups takes place – meaning that membership to those groups is largely taken from Area Panel reps.

Reports are taken to, or presentations are made at, Area Panels and some examples of subject matters over the past year are:

- Capital works programme
- Allocation policy
- Results of resident surveys eg resident involvement survey, EDB survey
- Draft Neighbourhood Policies

Debate is held around the subject area and resident reps help decide together, bringing in their own views or views of the residents they represent.

Area Panels have provided a good formal framework for area based involvement and local participation, and contributes to decision making. However, there are areas where improvement could be made.

### Key issues

1. Election to almost all working groups is from a small pool of residents attending Area Panels.
2. Election from the small pool has led to an over reliance on some people who sit on a large number of groups – eg up to 13, and the difficulties that entails eg time to feed back to their residents on all the groups and therefore ability to be representative, ability to attend group meetings if they clash; difficulties in trying to arrange meeting dates that don't clash.
3. Duplication - eg the number of times the same repairs issues are reported at various meetings.
4. Political chairing - is this the best method? We've not seen it replicated much in other organisations (councils).
5. Individual cases are not always effectively reported or channelled through established routes before they get to Tenant Only meetings.
6. There is sometimes some frustration that matters raised are individual issues with no direct area-wide interest, a point repeated during the consultations.
7. With housing management areas being revised to match ward boundaries,, it might be useful do the same with Area Panels.
8. There is a considerable amount of administration required for each round of Area Panel meetings, particularly the 'Blue Pages' process as follows:
  - Tenant only meetings are used to gather the 'Blue Page' questions, and are supported and administered by a paid for service through the Resource Centre
  - Blue page questions are typed up by Resource Centre staff and sent to CPOs
  - Each CPO circulates questions to the relevant person, team or council section for a response
  - Responses are checked and co-ordinated.
  - If ready, the responses then go to the Agenda planning meetings (attended by reps, CPO staff, managers and the councillor who chairs the meeting), where it is decided whether to then include it



into the Area Panel agenda papers

- Agenda papers are prepared and distributed.

9. The true total cost of administering Area Panels is not fully known. It might, or might not, provide good VFM, and will need to be considered.

Some benefits of the Blue Pages process are...

- The tenants only meeting offers residents and opportunity to meet and discuss concerns without having officers present
- Enables issues that need attention to be publicly voiced
- Some individual property concerns that are raised might reflect wider concerns – eg problems with newly fitted door handles, or delays/quality of repairs.

Some of the flaws with the Blue Page process are...

1. It is time consuming and labour intensive - and does not offer good value for money particularly if duplicating established processes for chasing a repair or making a complaint.
2. Some issues should not wait for a meeting that takes place every 3 months to be reported. Earlier reporting through established channels could lead to earlier resolution.
3. The supportive role of the TRA rep could be suitably demonstrated using the other channels.
4. Most of the issues relate to repairs
5. Some issues are repeated over time or over Area Panel areas and are not co-ordinated.
6. Several issues relate to individual properties and not the community as a whole.
7. Tenant only meetings could feasibly take place at any time with association secretaries or other members reporting any concerns to staff, or supporting tenants to use the existing channels – eg the chasing or complaints processes.

### Suggestions

1. Reconsider the terms of reference and purpose of Area Panels, reenergise them, and consider the format, while ensuring that they remain a strong voice for tenants. Some residents who were consulted were unaware of what the Area Panels were about, and some felt it had little connection with them - being unsure how their views were represented at such a forum or what was discussed.

2. Consider whether the Blue Pages and Tenant Only Meeting are needed and add value, and if so how to improve the process - eg by devising a flow chart to ensure that only relevant items make it to Area Panel. Or by having informal meetings of just residents where the Area Panel representatives then report any issues either through established channels for speedier and more effective resolution, support residents to make a complaint if they have one, and pass remaining area wide issues to the person administering Area Panels. The Area Panel process is fairly costly – at around £xxxx for each round of meetings, with the Blue Page process alone costing approximately £xxx for each panel, therefore there needs to

be some certainty of the value this is adding.

3. Communicate issues arising from one Area Panel but of citywide interest (eg a repairs performance issue or response to door handle concerns) in order to avoid duplication , through for example an information circular following each round of panels.

4. Consider any good practice lessons from the Housing Estates Forum eg multi-agency attendance.

5. Ensure Area Panels focus on area or citywide issues only rather than individual repair issues. This was also requested during the consultations.

6. People with individual issues could record them on slips of paper to be actioned by the council after the meeting. The meeting is then better able to focus on generic area or citywide issues.

#### **4. Working groups**

There are around 20 working groups that have been set up for specific areas of the service. Some are longstanding, and some could have really been 'task and finish' groups but they are still running.

#### **Key concerns**

1. Membership drawn from a small pool of people who do not well represent the profile of residents.
2. There appear to be too many groups with some duplication in terms of matters discussed - they could do with being appraised.
3. There is no route for people outside of the group to feed in views or get involved.
4. Some members of the groups sit on more than 10 groups, which can result in overload and a limited ability to pull in the views of people they represent.

#### **Suggestions**

1. All groups should be looked at to see if they have come to the end of the purpose for which they were established. Remaining ones would be reconstituted to match the proposed involvement framework suggested by the Innovation Group involving three main service improvement groups and the two other service-wide groups that match the TSA and local delivery unit governance framework, and that have sub groups sitting within each.
2. Managers responsible for the work of the relevant working group will consider its remit, and discuss its future status with residents sitting on that group at its next meeting.
3. Most groups will come to an end, and those that continue to have draft terms of reference that can be used to consider which of the three Service Improvement Groups or two others it best fits.

4. The draft terms of reference will also be used to publicise the formation of the new groups and invite other residents who might be interested to participate. This will be in acknowledgement that some people, given the choice, might prefer their involvement to be in bite-size chunks on eg 'task and finish' or 'top and tail' groups, without requiring any further obligation on their part.

5. Any future groups will be likely to form a sub group of the one of the five main groups.

## **5. Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG)**

The TCMG was established at the time when all local authority landlords were required to develop a Tenant Compact which served as an agreement or an accord on resident involvement between tenants and their landlord.

### **Key issues**

1. Tenant Compacts are no longer a statutory requirement and many landlords are now moving towards having a resident involvement strategy and action plan.

2. There is some duplication or confusion of matters discussed at TCMG and at Area Panels.

3. A large focus for TCMG of late is the planning for City Assembly, which could more effectively be managed by a smaller group of people.

### **Suggestions**

As with working groups mentioned above, the TCMG will look at its future purpose, and whether it would be reconstituted to match the proposed involvement framework involving five main service improvement groups that match the TSA and local delivery unit governance framework.

## **6. Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC)**

The Innovation Group was asked, through the recent governance report 'A new constitution for Brighton & Hove City Council' that went to Governance Committee on 20 March, to consider the future role of HMCC. (That report will go to Council on 26 April). The Innovation Group discussed this late in it's meeting schedule as it had not formed part of its terms of reference.

### **Key issues**

1. HMCC could provide an excellent platform for residents to be able to meet collectively, directly with councillors - but concern has been expressed that it is sometimes inappropriately used by some councillors and residents as a political platform - for example with emotive language used of being either for or against tenant interests as if there was nothing in between or no other perspectives to consider.

2. Its effectiveness as a mechanism for consulting with residents is questionable.

3. Its appropriateness as a mechanism for consulting with residents is questionable where the larger body of residents may not feel adequately represented by resident on the committee, or where committee members may feel they are not adequately able to reflect the views of the wider tenant body on the matter under discussion.

4. There appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the part that consultation plays, as well as the ultimate decision-making responsibilities of councillors.

### Thoughts from the Innovation Group

1. Clarify the role of HMCC (or HMCSC) with all members of the committee, and the type of subjects/reports that need to be taken to this committee.

2. Conduct more collaborative and participative meetings, with increased opportunities for everyone present to contribute, and with better meetings etiquette.

3. Possibly have a less formal committee setting by holding the meetings in community buildings or at the Housing Centre.

4. If HMCSC remains at Hove Town Hall, alter the seating arrangements so that residents are at the centre. However it is acknowledged that the seating there does not easily lend itself to all participants being able to see each other.

5. Place residents at the heart of HMCSC, giving greater acknowledgement of their contributions to shaping policy by only residents having an indicative vote that is later considered by councillors on Housing Committee, along with other views and perspectives that councillors need to balance in their decision-making role.

6. Use the voting technology system (as used at Area Panels recently) so that voting remains independent and confidential.

7. Have residents from the proposed Service Improvement Groups and service-wide groups attend HMCSC - particularly to present reports to which they have contributed and on which they have become 'experts' or 'specialists'.

8. Consider the views of a wider group of residents – eg by having recommendations on reports supported by other forms of tenant consultation already undertaken to make it more representative. This is especially important given that only between 9% and 14% of residents are involved in a TRA.

9. Have accessible reports, with eg bullet point lists, or more presentations to highlight issues, implications and nuances of the topic under discussion.

10. Webcast or podcast proceedings.

11. Consider residents sitting on HMCSC having a pre-meet to discuss recommendations - or consider doing away with the need for a pre-meet because the nature of the meetings allow for debate and discussion that can be had collaboratively.

12. Consider extending invitations to other housing service customers who are currently not residents of council owned housing – eg applicants on the housing waiting list or other interested parties.

13. Put in place code of conduct reminders that show more regard for people, whether they are present or not, and that clarify acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

14. Consider whether the chair needs to be a councillor.

### Summary of thoughts on HMCC

1 Re-state role, constitution and subject areas for HMCSC

2 Less formality, more collaboration, accessible reports, more Presentations

3 Residents at the heart – with sole indicative votes using voter technology, and possible tenant pre-meet

4 Residents on Service Improvement Groups occasionally attend HMCSC as 'experts'/'specialists'

5 Hear wider tenant body's voice – eg use results of consultation

6 Invite non-tenant/leaseholder housing customers or future customers

7 Code of conduct reminders

8 Chair - councillor, resident or officer?

## **A proposed new involvement framework**

The proposed framework largely draws on points made in the previous sections and pulls them together into a structure for resident involvement. Please see Appx 3 for a diagram that represents the framework.

### **Features of the proposed framework**

1. Retain the strong TRA foundation - with more targeted support where this is wanted, and additional training opportunities.
2. Introduction of wider options for engagement, in support of or in addition to TRAs, to be well publicised and available for all residents.
3. Introduction of a scrutiny panel
4. A different engagement model based on the five Homes and Communities Agency regulatory framework and our commissioning priority areas:
  - a. Tenant involvement and empowerment
  - b. Home
  - c. Tenancy
  - d. Neighbourhood and community
  - e. Value for money
5. Three Service Improvement Groups linked to the three service areas above (ie home, tenancy and neighbourhood), with two service-wide groups for the remaining two (ie involvement and value for money).
6. Existing working groups to come to an end, with some reforming in a different guise or merging with others, and sitting within one of the three Service Improvement Groups or the service-wide groups, with new terms of reference, clear objectives, and opportunities for other residents to be involved.
7. Residents involved in only one Service Improvement Group, although there may be a number of sub-groups within each. As well as serving to widen participation, this will also address the issues of too many meetings, too many papers to read, and too many meeting clashes.
8. Widen involvement in working groups by have reps and non reps to sit on them on a 60/40 ratio.
9. Tenure on working groups to be time limited, with a 12 month break before re-sitting on the same group, if others are interested, to maximise opportunities for all.
10. Strengthening the link to local TRAs or 'grass roots' involvement, as well as to work towards the increased merging of tenant engagement work with the engagement of neighbouring residents in the owner occupied and private rented housing sectors.
11. Reason for involvement based on where people's interests lie, the skills

they bring, or the knowledge and skills they wish to develop.

12. Yearly impact assessment of all groups and involvement activities to determine what has been gained by their work throughout the year, celebrate successes, and to evaluate value for money.

## **Tenant scrutiny**

### **Context**

Scrutiny is part of the TSA guidance - the drive for co regulation, the Duty to Involve, and a commitment of the Green Party manifesto.

The council's corporate cabinet system is returning to a committee system, and it is intended to introduce scrutiny as part of the new structure.

### **Innovation Group suggestions for establishing the Tenant Scrutiny Panel**

1. 10 - 12 people
2. Need different skills and experiences
3. Mix of one third existing reps and two thirds uninvolved residents
4. Representative – eg mix of ages, ethnicities
5. Open day for people interested to find out more
6. Informal recruitment - non intimidating selection against some criteria
7. Training and learning opportunities - eg in research, working as a group, performance issues, gathering information and evidence
8. Not consultation and engagement - real power to drill down to get the detailed picture, and make evidence-based recommendations
9. Housing Committee still the ultimate decision maker
10. Supported by the Councils Scrutiny Team (independent, experienced and not political), with the option of an independent mentor
11. Time limited positions for 2 years, but 3 years for the first group
12. Members replenished annually one third at a time following the initial tenure of approximately three years - or as required
13. Explore potential to work collaboratively with other local housing providers to share learning and skills once developed

Separate papers detailing proposals for scrutiny can be found at Appx 4a - d.

## Involving young people

### The issues

Young tenants and children of tenants form a large group of residents living in council properties, yet decisions regarding the service they receive are made largely without their involvement.

### Key findings from focus group of young tenants

1. Perceptions of landlord - kind, caring, authority, boundaries, rules, can punish, can offer help.
2. Perceptions on getting new home - happy, excited, difficult, needing lots of work to property, needing to acquire furniture etc, quick speed, pride, worry.
3. Useful information needed - how to furnish and unfurnished property on a budget, gas and electricity issues, repairs help, handyperson scheme eg for tenant with disabilities.
4. Image of TRAs - not found one, strength in numbers, working together.
5. Would want from a TRA - listen, help, advice, show you what to do, text about meeting dates, email with summary of minutes.
6. Meeting preferences - evenings, Saturday - food, transport, crèche
7. Communication preferences - internet, web, newsletters - although need more articles of interest to young people, up coming events not just past things.
8. Workshop ideas - Help with preparing a CV for help getting work, council, save money, save on energy bills, running community events, volunteering, DIY, healthy cooking on a budget.
9. Community ideas - quiz night, playgroup, coffee mornings, Christmas party.

### Suggestions

Encourage young people's involvement by for example:

1. Finding out what young people would prefer to do, what they need, what they'd like.
2. Asking for their help – eg in producing short film clips about their area or for the EDB programme, helping with TRA web pages, producing newsletters etc.
3. Using computer games designed by young people to encourage engagement.
4. Earmarking eg £50,000 or a percentage of EDB money for ideas and suggestions for spend from young people specifically.
5. Offering work experience – eg shadowing the CPOs so they can see what



is involved in the work.

6. Using skills development as an incentive for young people – eg showing before and after photos of what young people achieved through working on BHCC void properties.

7. Young people can be encouraged to make films about their space and what they want.

## **Involving BME residents**

As previously stated, it is known that BME residents are under-represented in our resident involvement structure and initiatives. The Innovation Group had hoped to involve several BME residents in its work, but this was not possible. Reasons often cited for their limited involvement are similar to those already listed in the 'Barriers to involvement' section. However anecdotal and national reasons of particular relevance worth noting here are:

- Lack of cultural awareness
- Language difficulties (in some cases)
- Lack of knowledge about resident involvement, its purpose, what it offers to residents and what residents can contribute
- Timing of meetings making it difficult to attend.

The Innovation Group has picked up on some good practice examples from other organisations eg friends going along together to focus groups, welcome approaches made to new tenants, and social events or meetings where people bring along a dish to share. However Housing is commissioning a local BME organisation to carry out some detailed work to assist us in the area. Their findings, in the autumn of 2012, will be incorporated into our resident involvement work to counterbalance under-representation of BME groups.

## **Menu of involvement options**

### **Context**

Everyone is different – and we know that one size does not fit all, so if we want a range of people involved in order to understand residents in the round, we need a range of ways of involving them.

### **Suggestions**

- Prepare publicity material for all residents, and information for the website of the many ways residents can get involved - a draft 'Menu of Involvement' can be seen at Appx 4.
- Involve residents more in social, leisure, family friendly or fun activities or consultation events as a platform for coming together and building community cohesion (as sheltered schemes do).
- Set up a young people's forum for younger tenants and children of residents. Alternatively this might be something that some TRAs would like to help establish in their local area so that there is a young persons element of their TRA.

- Consider intergenerational activities eg young people on an estate working to produce a short film with music to capture peoples memories of the estate and how they feel about it, interspersed with younger resident feelings and their aspirations for/thoughts on the future of the area, and other thoughts from much younger people about what they like about where they live. (Adapted from an example from Cannock Chase Council)
- The menu of involvement document needs to be simple, visual, open, equal, easily accessible, inclusive, participatory, catchy, a mix to suit all residents, engaging, interesting, clear, inviting, welcoming, inspirational, colourful, appealing, and not patronising.

## **Communication**

Communication sits at the foundation of good resident involvement, especially as most residents prefer to know that they are receiving the information they need that helps them feel in the picture, and then enables them to get more involved if they wish to. Good communication, information exchange, and the appropriate presentation of information runs through every level and aspect of resident involvement.

It also needs to be two-way for both housing and residents to speak and listen, using a variety of communication channels.

### **Key issues**

- Sharing information about the purpose, opportunities and successes in resident involvement.
- TRAs having capacity to feed back easily to residents.
- Needing channels other than meetings for communication.

### **Suggestions for tenant to tenant communication**

1. Continue to support the use of newsletters and encourage more groups to use them.
2. Support, training or shared tips for tenant reps to feed back to their members.
3. Use language, images and interests relevant to particular demographic groups being reached.  
Using new media to support improved communications
4. Increase the use of Facebook and Twitter.
5. Provide support to TRAs that might like to set up websites.
6. Non-live abbreviated versions of webcasts and blogs from City Assembly and other meetings made available for people to view later.

### **Suggestions for council to tenant communication and visa versa**

1. Tenant reps should be encouraged to use the established reporting routes to raise issues so that matters that can be dealt with within the system.
2. Officers and residents could work together to produce snippets of information from TRAs, meetings or groups that can be short bite-size chunks placed on the resident involvement pages of the councils website

to keep residents informed without them having to read through lengthy minutes of meetings. In addition tweets could be sent to really focus the mind on producing extremely short and easily accessible communications.

3. Videos could be made of engagement activities and put it on the website for a wider audience.

4. Residents who are skilled in developing web pages could offer their services and be involved in that way.

5. Staff and residents could jointly present information on videos - eg to new residents, or 'How to...' videos.

6. Housing might need its own website page for its videos.

7. A web page might be needed where residents can also put videos and other communication.

8. Continue to use Homing in to promote the work of TRAs and active groups.

### Suggestions for Homing In

Homing In could perhaps communicate to reach more people on eg:

1. Upcoming consultations or events
2. Upcoming policy changes
3. Feedback from consultations
4. Current work that working groups are looking at and how residents can feed into this if they want to eg by telephone, email, letter
5. Finding and/or actions from 'Rate Your Estate'
6. Always have a short survey that people can respond to in the paper, refer to website, or text in their vote
7. Diary of events happening in the city, in libraries, by local organisations
8. Information/advice – eg sustainability, water saving advice, healthy living tips/ recipes, fire safety, money related tips
9. Light content eg competitions, youth page, children's page, puzzles, gardening tips.

More aspects of communication are provided in the following section on new media and social media.

## New media and social media

### Context

While recognising that not everyone has access to the internet; increasing numbers of people do, and are also using social media. The council's use of new media is as a complement to traditional forms of communication and it not intended as a replacement. It acknowledges the numerous benefits both for residents and for the council in keeping up with technological developments and modernising our approaches.

Social Media Presentation – from CPOs, Lee Woolford and Michelle Johnson

- Brighton & Hove and Medway are leading the way
- Facebook and Twitter are a small part of social media
- Housing’s Facebook has 91 followers; people need to pass it on
- Demographic profile of users is measurable and much broader
- RIOs can support Associations to develop their own sites
- People need to get something out of it
- The City Assembly Twitter account has 150 followers- the webcast had over 400 hits
- Social media training to be rolled out
- Wordpress.org is an easy web tool to use; you just need an email account. It works on all systems. Other ones are google.com / sites or “Moodle”.

### Suggestions

1. Make an Estate Development Budget video and put it on YouTube.
2. Use social media to promote the EDB to young people and increase their involvement- own web page?
3. Have TRAs using more social media first and get them to promote it.
4. An overarching umbrella website for the Brighton & Hove TRAs.
5. Provide other information like the food festival or music gigs to make the site more attractive.
6. TRAs to make it known in their local area and at elections that they are looking for someone to stand for a Social Media post(s) as part of the constitution of associations, and not just an add on.
7. Have social media resident champions.
8. Involve new people with the relevant skills and experience, and ask them to assist TRAs or to help train others.
9. Use existing groups like the Silver Surfer sessions to promote the use of new media.
10. Publicity in Homing In on the innovations that TRAs and the council are developing.
11. An officer or project within housing dedicated to widening the use of the internet and social media.
12. A phone app promoting housing and tenant and leaseholder information that is online.
13. Look at the profiles of people using the housing Facebook and build on it – eg young women are high users so include things of interest targeted at this group.
14. Use social media to promote the scrutiny panel.
15. Involve tenants at schools and colleges, media studies students or local groups eg The Crew Club – or contact local voluntary organisations for advice eg Sussex Community Internet Project.
16. Use community rooms – using broadband access dongles to show Local residents what can be done.

Useful reference

‘Engaging Tenants Through Technology’ – The Housing E Academy  
<http://www.housingea.co.uk/files/housing/14.Tenant%20Engagement%20eBook.pdf>

## **Funding resident involvement and EDB**

Total annual cost of resident involvement is approx £46.50 per property, or around £655,000 per year (excluding Estate Development Budget).

The Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group (RMMG) has been looking at potential improvements to the EDB process following a survey on the topic, and will soon be making some recommendations. The Innovation Group has therefore not duplicated this work, but some suggestions emerged during our discussions and are included below.

### **Suggestions**

1. Better use and promotion of funding initiatives that help break down the barriers to involvement eg reimbursing care payments, provision of play or crèche facilities.
2. Reassess grant funding for tenant groups operations, limit to £1,000 for a group.
3. TRAs should be encouraged and supported more to explore and bid for external sources of funding for community projects.
4. Shared taxi journeys wherever possible.
5. TRAs could consider innovative use of the EDB to increase participation.
6. Possibly a 'Dragon's Den' style bidding process for EDB, where people have to pitch to a panel of decision makers made up of a range of residents and officers.
7. Ring fencing some EDB money to go to a public or panel vote in areas where there are no associations.

## **Resident training**

The council is keen to support residents in developing skills and knowledge, and sets aside a sum of money within the resident involvement budget to fund training for tenant representatives, however uptake of training courses has been low over the past two years.

For residents who have not previously been involved in the community participation movement, it can sometimes be daunting to think about what they need to do or know in order to get involved. In some cases a lack of confidence can prevent someone from getting involved in their local TRA.

A positive and supportive approach to training and learning can make a big difference to the contribution that residents can then make.

### **Suggestions**

To demonstrate the council's commitment to resident involvement and the benefits of increasing participation, develop a range of training opportunities and workshops available to all residents. A draft can be seen at Appendix Include workshops to increase confidence and life skills. This is likely to lead to

more people getting to meet other residents and wishing to become involved in their TRA or local community and use their skills.

Use a range of resources to increase the opportunities for residents to increase their skills and knowledge. For example through partnership working with other local organisations; through making better links with internal colleagues around training offered for eg skills development, community development and community engagement; by accessing government funded offers or e-learning opportunities; and through staff and residents potentially run workshops together.

## Measuring the impact of resident involvement

### Context

The Audit Commission says that all housing services need to demonstrate the impact and value for money of resident involvement, and that this should be reviewed annually by staff and residents.

The total annual cost of resident involvement is approx £46.50 per property, or around £655,000 per year (excluding EDB). And, as an example, the City Assembly held in May this year cost almost £3,000 excluding staff time and residents' taxi fares. This cost might be justifiable, but we need to be able to demonstrate value for money, and understand the outcomes or level of impact that our resident involvement framework, resources, activities and processes are achieving.

Even though we have many examples where resident involvement has made a difference, we are behind other organisations in taking a methodical approach to measuring impact. For example, the SOHA Resident Involvement Impact report (from South Oxfordshire Housing Association) demonstrates how the organisation uses a very wide menu of involvement, and measures service improvement and social impact against costs on an annual basis.

### What we might measure

1. The inputs - for example number of tenants and residents associations we have, or the range of ways housing involves residents to help improve services
2. The outputs - the direct impact of the activity itself - eg numbers of people at a meeting
3. The impact or outcome - that is answering the "So what...?" question. For example "So what has changed or happened as a result of an activity?"

It is sometimes hard to measure all the impacts or outcomes of resident involvement as they can sometimes be confused with outputs eg numbers of people attending City Assembly.

Some impact measures will be hard measures eg:

- Specific policies that residents have influenced
- changes in how services are provided
- performance levels
- depth of involvement, eg decision making
- People getting into volunteering, education or employment
- Levels to which residents think they can influence services

- Degree of change
- Increase in community safety, reduction in crime
- VFM – not only of the actual exercise but also whether the outcomes result in cost savings elsewhere – eg on ASB, repairs defects, more customer focussed contracts, channel shift savings etc.

And some might be soft measures eg:

- increased community spirit
- increased resident confidence
- changes to the feel of an estate
- staff learning about residents, and their needs and aspirations
- what residents have learned about themselves, their community, the work of the council

### Key questions for us

- What is the council aiming for?
- What are TRAs aiming for?
- What objectives are we measuring our impact against?
- Are we about what the baseline is, and how impact will be measured?
- How do we know that we've achieved what we set out to do if we're not clear what we're trying to achieve - eg on a journey, how do we know we've arrived if we don't know where we're going?

### Suggestions

1. Set out clearly what the council, TRAs, working groups are trying to achieve.
2. Establish a base line against which to measure progress
3. Carry out annual assessments or evaluation to see if the intended outcomes have been achieved.
4. Consider any unintended outcomes or spin offs - both positive and negative.
5. Publicise the various impact assessment results, and use them to further improve resident involvement.

## Innovation Group

### Terms of reference

#### **Purpose of the group**

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Liz Wakefield, wishes to work with a group of tenants who are currently involved in the community participation structure, tenants who are not currently involved, and officers to explore ideas and options for widening resident involvement in all aspects of our work.

#### **Group membership**

##### Residents

Five tenant representatives nominated from Area Panels for their oversight of resident involvement

Five tenants interested in contributing to this work, who are currently uninvolved, and selected from sections of the community who are underrepresented in any formal structures

##### Councillor

Councillor Liz Wakefield

##### Officers

Ododo Dafé

Rachel Chasseaud

Peter Mustow

Becky Purnell

##### Others

Invites to specific guests for particular topics

#### **Actions for the group**

To specifically look at:

1. Barriers to greater resident involvement
2. How the barriers can be removed
3. Methods of involvement - meeting the needs and preferences of all demographic groups
4. Use of information technology and new media
5. Ideas for increasing involvement
6. Ideas about working groups
7. 'Code of conduct' or 'Terms of engagement'
8. Resident training opportunities
9. Developing tenant-led scrutiny within Housing
10. Funding resident involvement
11. Evaluating the impact of resident involvement
12. Supporting resident involvement



**Scrutiny** is about having a group of residents with an enquiring and analytical approach looking at:

- How the housing service performs
- Carrying out research and requesting information
- Forming evidence based judgements
- Making recommendations
- Generally holding the service to account

#### Time commitment

It is hoped that the group will work together over a 3 month period, meeting every two or three weeks for around two hours. There might be some work that will need to be done in between meetings – eg reading reports or visiting websites of other housing organisations.

#### Meetings

Meetings will be held approximately every 2 - 3 weeks, at various locations that enable easy access for the majority of the members of the group.

#### Other involvement in the Innovation Group

The group may also want to involve others who are unable to attend meetings via eg the website, by telephone, or by arranging a one-off focus group.

#### Duration of the group and reporting mechanism

It is envisaged that the group will complete its work in March, and following consultations, will report back to Housing Management Consultative Committee on completion.

## Appendix 2

### Draft Code of Conduct

#### **What is a code of conduct?**

A code of conduct is a common sense list of guidelines that describes the way residents are expected to conduct themselves generally, but particularly when participating in the resident involvement structure.

#### **What do you mean by resident involvement?**

Resident involvement is a mix of the set up, the processes, the people, the activities and the resources that go into hearing from, involving, working with and understanding residents, and enabling them to have more influence over their housing services if they want to.

This code applies to all residents involved in these ways – eg as a tenant and residents association representative, a member of a working group or other group or committee, or as a participant on a training course, workshop or at a meeting.

#### **Why have a code of conduct?**

The aim of this overarching code of conduct is to promote positive attitudes and behaviours, and a respectful approach to resident involvement.

NB: Council officers are expected to abide by the terms and conditions of their employment contracts, and deliver services in a respectful and professional way.

A code of conduct will be displayed at meetings. New members to a group will be asked to ensure they are familiar with it and sign a copy or a register to that effect.

#### **General behaviour and courtesy**

When taking part in resident involvement activities or groups you are expected to:-

- Not bring resident involvement in Brighton & Hove City Council, their group or tenant and resident association (TRA) into disrepute.
- Comply with your tenancy agreement conditions. The council reserves the right not to work with and involve residents who are in breach of their tenancy agreement.
- Be polite, reasonable and courteous to other residents, council officers, councillors, contractors and other people you come into contact with.
- Not expect to receive preferential treatment from councillors, officers or contractors as a result of being involved.
- Always use the established and publicised procedures to report issues such as repairs, complaints, request for service, etc even if they have been reported before.
- Communicate in a respectful and helpful way, especially when offering constructive criticism or challenge

#### **Conduct in meetings and communications**

It is the responsibility of the chair or organiser of the meeting to ensure that the code of conduct is available at the meeting.

You are respectfully expected to:

- Support the meeting process by following the agenda, not talking when

someone else is speaking but waiting for the Chairperson's permission to contribute, respecting the position of chair, being courteous, and helping each other to reach effective decisions.

- Make new residents, visitors and observers feel welcome, and give new participants the opportunity to speak and become involved.
- Remember that the purpose of a meeting is to benefit residents generally and not specific individuals so please do not raise personal matters at a meeting.
- Operate within the rules laid down in the code of conduct.
- Give the opportunity to anyone affected by any remarks made, even if it is not about them, to say why they are offended without interruption so that the matter can be looked into or rectified.
- Disclose any conflict of interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group you represent, that you consider may affect or influence your approach to the matter under discussion.
- Accept that, although consensus will be sought wherever possible, not everyone will be happy with all decisions all of the time. There will need to be space for differing opinions to be evaluated, and joint approaches should be sought to arrive at win-win solutions. Once an issue has been decided, it should be respected by all present.

### **Discrimination and harassment**

Harassment means improper comment or conduct that a person knows or ought to know would be unwelcome, offensive, embarrassing or hurtful. It is important that people attending meetings, or otherwise being part of resident involvement activities or initiatives, feel comfortable, safe and free from discrimination or harassment. In order to ensure that this happens, we will challenge, and will support residents who challenge unacceptable or offensive behaviour and language.

You must not verbally, on web postings, or in writing:-

- Use discriminatory language, harass or discriminate against people on the grounds of their age, ability/disability, race/ethnicity, colour, religion or belief, gender, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation or any other matter that might cause offence.
- Behave in an abusive way towards other residents or staff. For example, initiating or spreading hurtful rumours, making a false damaging statement about a person, swearing, or using insulting or threatening behaviour.

Not only is this unacceptable, but it is also illegal, and will not be tolerated. The recognition policy for tenants' and residents' associations requires each one to have an equal opportunities statement and a means of dealing with residents who do not abide by it.

### **Confidentiality**

Residents must:

- Respect all individual tenants'/residents' confidentiality, whether present or not.
- Refrain from mentioning in public specific individual cases which may cause embarrassment or the identification of an individual.
- Not disclose any information shared with or by the officers that is of a confidential or commercially sensitive nature.

### **Financial responsibility**

Residents who are acting on behalf of other residents (eg as a committee member of a TRA) are in a position of trust. They must, where money is involved:

- Take reasonable care in management and accounting of funds.
- Ensure that accounts are accessible and available for audit.
- Consult with the residents being represented on expenditure.
- Control the use of funds for their proper use.
- Not obtain a personal gain or achieve ulterior objectives.
- Take reasonable care and precautions where property or facilities are made available for use (eg equipment should be stored properly so it is not stolen.)

If an investigation is required, the relevant residents may be required to stand down from their position temporarily while the matter is looked into. Where a committee member or an involved resident has been proven to have deliberately fraudulently obtained funds, benefits, or property, they will be excluded from any further involvement with a recognised resident group. The council may also involve the police and its legal section. Where mismanagement has resulted from a lack of information or training, the resident(s) will be expected to attend appropriate book keeping training.

### **Political affiliation**

Participating residents may be associated with, or be part of a political party; however they may not represent this party or its views within the role as a tenant representative.

### **Specific areas for tenant representatives**

You must:

- Gather views on issues and proposals put forward by housing services that affect all residents in your area and represent the views accurately and fairly to the council or other organisations.
- Remember in meetings and correspondence that you are representing the views of, and are accountable to, your community or residents' association.
- Not speak or write on behalf of a group without its prior agreement. Correspondence, sent on behalf of any group, should be known in advance and available to all members of the group to check before it is sent out in order to give members an opportunity to contribute to it.
- Send apologies if you are unable to attend meetings and consider whether your position should be replaced if attendance is difficult. Non attendance at three meetings without apologies will automatically result in a replacement as the representative on a specific group or committee being sought.

Behaviour that is unacceptable, offensive or in breach of this code could lead to an individual or association being investigated. In the case of associations it could also lead to it being derecognised.

Examples of behaviours in breach of this code of conduct include:

- Behaviour that breaches of the council's policy on equal opportunities eg making jokes about people because of their age, race, gender, disability, faith, religion or sexual orientation, or because they are 'different' to you.
- Making assumptions and generalising about people because they belong to a particular group (for example: 'all young people...', 'all Asians...', 'all single parents...', 'all travellers...', 'all white people...').
- Describing people in a way that may be seen as an insult or a threat.
- Behaving in an aggressive manner towards other people or in such a way that they feel threatened or intimidated – including threatening to get someone sacked, shouting and using offensive language.
- Verbal or physical assault upon any person or persons.
- Criminal behaviour, including fraud.
- Financial mismanagement.
- Being involved in resident involvement activities while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Conflict between committee members that means the group ceases to operate effectively and is no longer representative.
- Abuse of power - threatening to have an officer sacked or another tenant evicted instead of using appropriate channels to make a complaint.
- Abuse of power – public accusations about an individual in a meeting or by petition or by email and copying in senior managers, councillors and MPs instead of using the appropriate channels to make a complaint.

Please note that 'people' referred to above includes residents, officers, councillors, contractors and other people you come into contact with.

### **Challenging unacceptable behaviour**

Any participant can challenge unacceptable or offensive behaviour through the chair or agreed lead person at a meeting.

Outside of meetings any participant can challenge through a tenant representative or a council officer, or by completing the 'Unacceptable conduct complaints form'.

(This can be obtained through resident representatives, Community

Participation Officers, or by telephoning the Housing Customer Service Hub, or found on the council housing pages of the council's website).

## Breach of code of conduct

If a complaint is about the service, an individual member of staff or a team, it should be made to the line manager or made using the Council's formal complaints procedure.

It is difficult to be precise about how all breaches of the code of conduct will be dealt with. It can depend on the nature of the breach and the context within which the breach occurred. However, the following should act as a guide.

### Breach at a meeting

Wherever possible, complaints or allegations of a breach of the code should be dealt with amicably and resolved at the point that they occur.

The person making the remark or behaving unacceptably will be expected to apologise immediately and not to repeat it.

- a. If the person refuses to apologise and/or continues to behave unacceptably or uses offensive language, the chair, lead person or lead officer will ask the person to leave.
- b. The person behaving unacceptably or using offensive language will be written to within one week of the incident and given an opportunity to apologise in writing to the person or group concerned within two weeks.
- c. The person behaving unacceptably will be offered the opportunity to attend relevant training, where appropriate.
- d. If the person behaving unacceptably does not take up any of these opportunities the person(s) responsible for the meeting or involvement activity will be notified. It might be that the matter is referred to the tenancy team if there is a potential breach of the tenancy agreement, or to the independent Joint Adjudication Panel where appropriate for assistance in reaching a satisfactory resolution to the matter.

### Breach outside of meetings

Wherever possible, complaints should be dealt with amicably and resolved at the point that they occur.

- a. All complaints about the conduct of a participant should, in the first instance, be referred to the service manager or the Resident Involvement Manager. This should ideally be done at the time of the breach. However, if the complainant is not confident about doing this, a complaint can be made later verbally in person, by phone, or in writing. This should happen as soon as possible after the breach.
- b. The Resident Involvement Manager (or most appropriate officer) will investigate the matter and hold an informal meeting with the person breaching the code of conduct. The person concerned might not realise

their behaviour is a problem and might easily modify this once they have been told about it. They will be given the opportunity to apologise to the complainant or the meeting if this is appropriate. In most cases it will be sufficient to obtain an undertaking that the breach will not happen again.

c. In the event of a repetition of the breach, the person concerned will be required to withdraw from the involvement initiative, and they or any aggrieved person can ask to make representations or submit an appeal to the Joint Adjudication Panel which is trained to help resolve matters in a fair and just manner.

Complaints about residents' behaviour might be dealt with by the Resident Involvement Team, or by the independent Joint Adjudication Panel. If the complaint is of a serious nature, it may be referred to the Tenancy Team for investigation under the Tenancy Agreement.

Please note that serious breaches of the Code of Conduct, allegations of financial mismanagement or of criminal behaviour may result in a TRA being derecognised by the council until the matter is resolved. In practice, this means that the council will cease to fund the association, and involve it in involvement and training initiatives.

All contact during the derecognised period will be confined to the issue under investigation, and a meeting will be arranged with council staff and the association's committee to discuss the process being followed; advise of expected future conduct, of any actions required by the association (eg training), and of potential consequences of further breaches. In extreme circumstances a report might also be made to the police.

Complainants will be told promptly how their complaint is being dealt with and the reasons for this.

## Outcomes

Depending on the circumstances, potential outcomes could be:

1. An apology is accepted
2. An undertaking is agreed - eg to complete specific training or to stop a particular action
3. The person might be removed from the TRA or working group
4. Tenancy action
5. Temporary derecognition of a TRA
6. Permanent derecognition of a TRA
7. Referral for mediation
8. Referral to the Joint Adjudication Panel

## Right to appeal

In cases where an officer decision has been made that is not agreed with, the person or TRA can make an appeal to the Joint Adjudication Panel, being clear on the aspects they are in dispute over and suggesting an alternative course of action.

## Unacceptable conduct complaints form

(breach of the Code of Conduct)

Anyone who wishes to complain about unacceptable behaviour or offensive language, but may feel uncomfortable doing so at the time of an incident, can use this form.

My Name
My Contact Details
I would like to make a complaint about an incident which took place  On (date)  At (location)  Meeting Room (if applicable)
The details of my complaint are: (please continue over the page if needed)
Date:

Complaints about council officers should be made to the line manager or made using the Council's complaints procedure.

This complaint will be responded to by the manager responsible for the meeting or event within 10 working days of its receipt.

### **Draft resident involvement framework**

The proposed framework is attached as Appendix Three.



## Appendix 4a Tenant Scrutiny Panel

### **What is Tenant Scrutiny?**

Tenant scrutiny aims to place tenants at the heart of assessing how well their social landlord is delivering its services. This is known as co-regulation.

Tenant scrutiny therefore has been established to enable tenants to hold their landlords to account, using methods such as:

- Tenant led inspectors
- Tenant set/monitored performance indicators
- Tenant set service standards and local offers

The kinds of regulation that tenant scrutiny will deliver, involve:

- Consumer regulation e.g. meeting service standards, dealing with complaints
- Economic regulation e.g. ensuring value for money and financial viability
- Ensuring national standards and locally set standards are met.

The key features of tenant scrutiny are:

- Independence – separate from those making decisions about the Housing Service, so can challenge those decisions
- Formality - to give power and accountability to tenant scrutiny
- Resident power – to ensure that tenants have access to the information they need and can hold the service to account

Tenant scrutiny would represent a step change in current relationship with residents which goes beyond consultation and engagement, and helps further develop the relationships already created with residents as equal stakeholders. It would look to deliver:

- Greater accountability
- Improved tenant and resident satisfaction with the service
- Demonstrable tenant involvement in self-regulation
- A way of challenging issues at a high level
- A means of improving services and securing efficiencies
- Real power to drill down into issues and make evidence based recommendations to the council

### **How will tenant scrutiny be delivered in Brighton & Hove City Council?**

Tenant scrutiny in BHCC will build on an already well developed menu of involvement for tenants. Tenant scrutiny will form an important part of the menu by placing more power into the hands of tenants to review the issues they consider to be important.

What is the role of this panel?

- To hold the landlord (BHCC) to account
- Scrutinise service delivery and make recommendations for

improvement, aiming to complete around three in-depth reviews of priority issues per year

- Have access to timely and useful performance information
- Will link to other forms of resident involvement e.g. mystery shopping, to capture evidence and hear the views of residents

#### Membership of the panel

The Innovation Group looked at the membership of the panel and has recommended that it:

- Has 12 members who are BHCC tenants and leaseholders
- Is made up of a mixture of one third existing tenant representatives and two thirds residents who are not currently involved
- Has a representative mix of residents e.g. age, ethnicity, etc
- Ensures a good mix of skills and experience

Members of the TSP will not be able to sit on other existing tenant bodies such as HMCC to ensure that the TSP maintains independence.

#### **Recruitment to the Tenant Scrutiny Panel**

Members of the Innovation Group have recommended the following process to recruit TSP members:

1. Produce a tenant information pack that contains general information about the panel, the type of work involved, how it fits in with existing structures, skills needed, method of selection etc.
2. Prepare a presentation on scrutiny for existing meetings – e.g. Area Panel, City Assembly where ‘Expression of Interest’ forms could be given as part of the presentation notes.
3. Place a big explanatory article and recruitment advert in Homing In.
4. Prepare application pack to include application form, the draft Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, an Equal Opportunities Form, the description of the role, and statement regarding nondisclosure of information.
5. Interview panel to consist of an officer and resident mix

It is also suggested that an open day is held to allow any interested tenants or leaseholders to hear a presentation about the TSP and talk to officers and other residents. Recruitment and selection must be non-intimidating and supportive. The aim is to secure a range of skills and experiences on the TSP, and to also involve residents who have, as of yet, not been hugely involved in tenant participation. For all TSP members, a dedicated training and support programme will be necessary, and residents who do not currently have all the necessary skills but wish to develop them will be actively encouraged to express their interest.

The panel will be supported by officers from the council’s scrutiny team working closely with housing staff. This will ensure independence, but also that knowledge on housing matters is utilised.

### Future process

Further work will need to be undertaken to:

- Develop a communication strategy
- Arrange an open day for interested residents
- Hold a selection day for residents who express an interest
- Develop an induction and training plan

## **Appendix 4b**

### **Brighton & Hove Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP)**

#### **Draft Terms of Reference**

#### **Aims and Objectives**

- To operate on behalf of tenants and leaseholders, to ensure that the council provides housing services that meet residents' needs and are of the highest standard.
- To continually review and improve housing services.
- To provide an opportunity for tenants to examine housing service performance and procedures and challenge and question staff who manage & deliver the service.
- Make recommendations to senior managers and councillors on how housing services can be improved.

#### **The Role of the TSP**

- Prioritise and oversee tenant led scrutiny activities
- Collect evidence to enable housing services to be scrutinised
- Examine the evidence, make recommendations for service improvements
- Report recommendations to senior management or councillors
- Monitor and review agreed action plans
- Tell other tenants what the panel is doing and encourage them to get involved

#### **Membership**

- 12 places will be available for membership
- All Brighton & Hove Housing tenants and leaseholders will be eligible to apply
- Members will serve a terms of two years after which they can stand again but they will be considered alongside other applicants
- Successful applicants will be selected from those considered to best meet the role profile following discussions with the selection panel.
- The membership of the TSP will aim to broadly reflect the characteristics of the tenant population
- Members must sign and abide by the Code of Conduct and Breach of Code of Conduct procedures which undertake to deal firmly and promptly with any cases of discrimination or harassment

#### **Frequency of Meetings**

The Panel will normally have a minimum of 6 meetings per year. The Panel may establish Task and Finish Groups to lead on specific activities. Task and Finish Groups must report to the Scrutiny Panel at an agreed frequency. In the event of a panel member failing to attend 3 consecutive TSP meetings without good reason, they will be deemed to have resigned, unless otherwise agreed by the panel. Their place will be filled via the recruitment process.

#### **Election of Chair**

The TSP will election a chair and vice-chair on an annual basis by a straight majority vote.

### **Quorum**

A quorum will be 50% of members i.e. if membership is 12, a quorum will be 6. Inquorate meetings should be noted and decisions ratified at the next quorate meeting.

### **Officer Support**

The Scrutiny Panel will be supported by BHCC's scrutiny team to take minutes, advise tenant representatives, coordinate meetings and support the drafting of reports and recommendations to the council.

### **Area of Business**

The remit of the Scrutiny Panel will be to consider all areas of housing service performance. It will be able to request any relevant information, or attendance by council officers, needed to undertake its duties.

### **Programme of Work**

The Scrutiny Panel will develop an initial programme of scrutiny work and review this each subsequent year. The priority areas for review will be decided using feedback from all available information, including:

- Performance reports
- Reports from area panel, mystery shoppers, City Assembly, etc
- Tenant/Resident Associations
- Tenant surveys, complaints and benchmarking

### **Accountability to Tenants**

Tenants will be able to raise an issue directly with the TSP. TSP meetings will have time set aside to consider requests for scrutiny, letters and questions. The minutes and all reports of the TSP will be made available on the council's website and to any tenant on request.

### **Recommendations from the scrutiny panel**

All recommendations of the TSP will be presented to the council's Housing Committee within two months of being agreed. The Housing Committee will agree a response to the report/recommendations of the TSP. A summary of the report, recommendations and any agreed actions will be reported back to the TSP and published on the council's website.

### **Training**

All new members will undertake an induction programme and training and capacity building requirements will be assessed. A training programme will be developed, delivered and regularly reviewed.

#### **Evaluation of TSP Activities**

The work of the TSP will be subject to an annual impact assessment and its findings will be reported.

## **Appendix 4c**

### **Draft TSP Member Role Description**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the role of a Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) member is to work as a member of a team to:

- Operate on behalf of BHCC tenants and residents, ensuring that they receive services of the highest standard
- Take an independent view of BHCC housing performance
- Establish priorities for reviewing housing performance
- Oversee scrutiny activities
- Collect evidence to enable services to be scrutinised
- Assess performance against agreed standards
- Produce evidence based recommendations
- Hold councillors and officers to account for performance.

#### **Training and Support**

All members will undertake an Induction programme and further training needs will be assessed. Appropriate training and support will be provided.

#### **Key Activities**

Key activities of TSP members are to:

- Attend meetings, training and planning sessions
- Read documents in preparation for meetings
- Review performance information
- Prioritise service areas for review
- Compare performance to other comparable organisations
- Question officers and/or other relevant people (eg contractors) on areas of interest
- Participate in in-depth reviews of areas of concern
- Where standards fall below expected levels, consider how improvements might be made
- Work co-operatively with other TSP members, BHCC staff, tenants and residents
- Assist in the preparation of reports
- Produce recommendations for Housing Committee.

#### **Responsibilities**

- To familiarise yourself with BHCC policies and procedures including the Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Data Protection
- To carry out the role of TSP member in accordance with the policies and procedures
- To observe confidentiality where necessary
- To remain impartial and objective at all times
- Not to raise any personal issues or concerns via the TSP
- To act professionally and carry out your responsibilities with integrity and high standards of behaviour at all times
- To act and behave in a manner that ensures the safety of yourself and others
- To treat everyone with respect and ensure that you are responsive to the needs of all people in the community.

Appendix 4d

## Draft Tenant Scrutiny Panel Application Form

Name  
Address  
Tel  
Email

Please tick the box below to say which knowledge and experience you could bring to the Scrutiny Panel. We don't expect you to be an expert in everything  
Your knowledge and experiences  
Yes No Not sure or Some knowledge/experience

Are you a Brighton & Hove City Council tenant  
or leaseholder living in a BHCC property

Motivated to improve services  
I can commit the time needed to make the  
scrutiny panel a success (at least xx hours per  
month)

I am willing to participate in the training sessions

Want to make a difference  
I have worked on a committee  
I have worked as a volunteer  
I have worked in the community

Details of employment and voluntary work  
Please give details of your current and past employment. Please give details  
of any other public or voluntary work you do including any other board or  
committee membership.

Please explain why you want to join the scrutiny panel and why you  
would be a good scrutiniser.

Any other skills and experience you would like to tell us about, including  
any qualifications or training

Equalities Monitoring

- Age
- Health needs
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Religious/faith groups
- Sexual orientation

For help completing the form or for further information please contact xxxxxx

## Draft

# Menu of Resident Involvement

This is a very rough and basic draft of information that would be publicised and also made available on the council's website.

(NB: The clock and heart symbols have been removed for now because of the computer space they take up in a Word document)

This menu lists the opportunities for you to get involved in shaping your housing service or to participate in your local community.

### Key to symbols

**C** = The more clocks you see by each activity, the more time it will take.

**H** = The more hearts you see by each activity the greater influence your involvement will have in making a positive difference.

### Tenants and Resident Associations

**C C C**

**H H H**

These associations are the mainstay of local resident involvement.

Their meetings enable groups of residents to discuss local issues.

Speak to your Neighbourhood Officer or the Housing Customer Service Hub to see if a group exists in your area, or to the Resident Involvement Team to get support and advice on how to set one up.

### Estate walkabouts

**C C**

**H H H**

Your opportunity to join your Neighbourhood Officer to inspect your estate, report any repairs, and to check the quality of the maintenance.

### Rate Your Estate

**C C**

**H H H**

Train to use photo books to assess the quality of the estates using a red, amber green traffic light system.

### Resident assessor

**C C**

**H H H**

Train to assess specific areas of our service to make sure that standards meet residents' expectations.

### Mystery shopping

**C C**

**H H H**

Your opportunity to test and report back on the services we provide by visits to our offices or from the comfort of your own home by email, phone or letter. Full training and support is offered.



## Focus groups

C

H H H

A group of around 10 people who come together for one time to focus on discussing a single topic. Share ideas, give feedback, express your views. We want to make sure that we get ideas about how to improve our services from all groups of people. This opportunity would take 3 hours of your time.

## Communications Champs / Readers Panel / “Tell it right”

C C

H

Join staff at editorial meetings to ensure that our newsletter “Homing In” is resident focused by making suggestions and contributing articles. Tenant proof our publications like the “Annual Report” to make sure they are clear and likely to interest all groups of residents.

## Training courses

C C

H

We arrange through local organisations or provide training opportunities for all residents throughout the year on different subjects like organising a community event, taking minutes, or saving money. Have a look at our training programme on the website, or contact the Housing Customer Service Hub to see what’s on offer.

## Fun days

C C

H

Work with our Resident Involvement Team and your neighbours to organise a fun event for everyone in your area, this could be coming together to share food, a Jubilee street party, or ideas that you suggest – feel free to use your imagination.

## Joint Adjudication Panel

C C

H H

Interested in helping to resolve differences, and looking into possible breaches of our Code of Conduct? This small group of officers and residents will be trained to help come to fair resolutions when conflict occurs.

## City Assembly **we might need to think of a much more engaging and less formal name for this**

C

H

Come along to our twice yearly conference for residents and catch up with the latest developments, meet other residents and senior managers and join in the debate.

## Surveys and questionnaires - join the 5-minute Club

C

## HHH

Completing a survey is a quick way for residents to communicate satisfaction with our services, help us measure our performance or feed in ideas and suggestions. We get feedback that can help us improve. Surveys can take only a few minutes - by post, telephone, email or text messaging!

## E-bate

C

H

Have your say without leaving your home by joining e-bate our online consultation group. All sorts of housing and community related topics are up for discussion.

## Facebook

C

H

Join our Facebook group to keep up to date with what's going on. The Resident Involvement Team can help your group set up its own social networking site or web based forum.

## Service Improvement Groups

CCCCC

HHHHH

There are five Service Improvement Groups open to all residents with half the members being elected tenant representatives, and half from residents who have expressed an interest in being involved in these areas. The groups will work on a number of areas that come under their remit, and might co-opt new members for 'task and finish' or short life sub groups to look at specific new topics.

The five main groups are:

- Tenancy
- Home
- Neighbourhood and community
- Involvement and empowerment
- Value for money and business improvement

Each group will have sub groups within them that will enable people to be involved in specific areas of interest to them for fixed periods of time. Contact your Resident Involvement Officer or the Housing Customer Service Hub to find out more.

## Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee

CC

HHH

Elected residents attend this committee where councillors make decisions about council housing, and contribute to the debate and have an indicative vote on recommendations.

## Residents Scrutiny Panel

CCCCC

## HHHHH

The Residents Scrutiny Panel independently scrutinise Brighton & Hove City Council's housing performance and make recommendations for improvements, ensuring that residents' views and priorities are at the heart of everything we do.

All residents can apply dependent on the vacancies available. The aim is to complete around four scrutiny reviews a year, and meeting frequency and times, and other aspects of work are agreed by members.

### Other options for getting involved

- Comment, complements and complaints
- Social media
- On line forums
- Local street or block groups
- Drop-ins
- Community clean-up days
- Activities in residents' rooms – eg board game championships, workshops, homework club etc

Is there something you'd be keen to get involved in that's not listed here?

Can you and your friends and neighbours organise local activities eg 'tea and teach' sessions to learn card games, dancing, knitting, netball, football etc? If so, your local tenant and resident association would love to hear from you so please let us know.

## Draft

### Residents training programme 2012 - 2013

(This is a very rough and basic draft of information that would be publicised and also made available on the council's website.)

The council, the Resource Centre and local organisations provide a wide range of training courses to help you improve your skills and increase knowledge. The aim is to help residents learn new skills and gain the confidence to use these skills to make a positive difference in your community, personal life or workplace.

The following internal courses are now available:

1. Mystery shopping
2. Estate Inspections and Rate Your Estate
3. Improving housing services (includes scrutiny and monitoring)
4. Tackling neighbour disputes
5. Finding your way around the council
6. Managing your finances
7. Home energy efficiency
8. Filling in housing benefit forms
9. Recycling (visit)
10. E-learning
11. How to run your own training session
12. Social media skills (includes setting up a website and using Facebook)

Core Training that is recommended for TRA committees are:

1. Running an efficient tenants and residents group (includes committee skills and effective minute taking)
2. Communication skills (includes marketing and the media, successful newsletters and communication skills)
3. Organising successful events (includes risk assessments)
4. Taking care of the money (includes book keeping and fundraising)
5. How to write a questionnaire
6. Confidence and public speaking
7. Recognising differences in people

We can also help with external courses:

1. Trafford Hall tenants training residential courses (organised by the Government)
2. Tenant Scrutiny
3. Community engagement
4. Risk assessments
5. Fire safety
6. Food hygiene
7. Child protection
8. Basic first aid
9. Healthy eating on a budget
10. Introduction to the construction industry

11. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
12. Adult Literacy and Numeracy
13. Introduction to computers

## E – Learning

Brighton & Hove City Council has joined forces with the Housing e-Academy to provide you with the opportunity to improve your skills and knowledge. You can attend a session in the training programme for E-Learning to help you feel comfortable completing the below modules in your own time at home.

The courses are:

### 1. Around the Home

Basic Home Maintenance

Saving Energy to Reduce Bills

Pest Awareness

Feeding a Family on a Budget

What is Telehealth?

### 2. Social Issues

Hate Crime

Anti-social behaviour

Issues Surrounding Drug

Issues Surrounding Alcohol

Preparing for Interviews

### 3. Using the Internet

Starting out on the Internet

Internet Safety

Power of the Internet

Getting Started with Social Media.

### 4. Community

Gypsy and Traveller Culture

Respect

Building a Community

Cultural Awareness.

<http://www.housingea.co.uk/files/housing/Access%20Tenant%20Plus.pdf>

If you are interested in any of the courses in our training offer please complete the application from below.

You can also do this by completing the form on the Resident Involvement pages of the council's website.

If you would like to suggest a workshop that is not listed here please let us know.

Also, if you are interested in running a workshop for residents (perhaps with officers) please do get in touch with the Resident Involvement Team.

## Application for resident involvement training

Name .....

Address .....

Post Code .....

Phone ..... Email .....

<b>INTERNAL COURSES FOR ALL RESIDENTS</b>		
<b>WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>MYSTERY SHOPPING</b>		
<b>ESTATE INSPECTIONS &amp; RATE YOUR ESTATE</b>		
<b>IMPROVING HOUSING SERVICES (INCLUDES SCRUTINY &amp; MONITORING)</b>		
<b>TACKLING NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES</b>		
<b>FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND THE COUNCIL</b>		
<b>MANAGING YOUR FINANCES</b>		
<b>ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVISORS</b>		
<b>FILLING IN HOUSING BENEFIT FORMS</b>		
<b>RECYCLING (VISIT)</b>		
<b>E-LEARNING</b>		
<b>TRAIN THE TRAINER – HOW TO RUN YOUR OWN TRAINING SESSION</b>		
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS (INCLUDES SETTING UP A WEBSITE &amp; USING FACEBOOK)</b>		
<b>MENTOR PROGRAMMES eg reading, money mentors, learning champions, ICT champions</b>		

<b>TRAINING THAT IS RECOMMENDED FOR TRA COMMITTEES</b>		
<b>WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>RUNNING AN EFFICIENT TENANTS AND RESIDENTS GROUP INCLUDING INC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTEE SKILLS</li> <li>• EFFECTIVE MINUTE TAKING</li> </ul>		
<b>COMMUNICATION SKILLS INC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MARKETING &amp; THE MEDIA</li> <li>• SUCCESSFUL NEWSLETTERS</li> </ul>		
<b>ORGANISING SUCCESSFUL EVENTS INC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RISK ASSESSMENTS</li> </ul>		
<b>TAKING CARE OF THE MONEY INC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOOK KEEPING</li> <li>• FUND RAISING</li> </ul>		
<b>HOW TO WRITE A QUESTIONNAIRE</b>		
<b>CONFIDENCE &amp; PUBLIC SPEAKING</b>		
<b>RECOGNISING DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE</b>		

Which time would you prefer: Morning/Afternoon/ Evening (delete as applicable)

Courses will be run when there are 8-12 people interested in attending. Courses will be run in community venues where possible. Travel costs and refreshments will be provided (with lunch provided if the course is all day). Places will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

Please return the completed form to: The Resident Involvement Team  
The Housing Centre, Unit 1, Fairway Trading Estate, Eastergate Road  
Brighton, BN2 4QL or email [housingtraining@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:housingtraining@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

## Appendix 7

### Sources of information

Some of the documents looked at, organisations contacted, or organisations whose reports or websites were looked at during the work of the Innovation Group are listed below.

“Improving Services through Resident Involvement” Audit Commission 2004  
Report of Resident Involvement Survey, BHCC 2010  
Report of resident satisfaction survey (STAR survey), BHCC 2012  
“Engaging Tenants Through Technology” – The Housing E Academy  
<http://www.housingea.co.uk/files/housing/14.Tenant%20Engagement%20eBook.pdf>  
Birmingham City Council  
Bristol  
CV CHA  
Helena Homes  
The Hyde Group  
Mercian  
Norwich City Council  
Peterborough  
Portsmouth City Council  
Salford ALMO  
Salix Homes  
Sheffield Council  
SOHA - South Oxfordshire Housing Association  
Stoneham  
Winchester City Council  
Worthing Homes



## Appendix 8

### Evaluation of how the Innovation Group has worked

#### Positive aspects

1. Fantastic gelling of the group, with everyone feeling connected and able to make valid contributions in a 'safe space'.
2. Hard work! - mostly weekly meetings
3. Supportive group - all contributions listened to and carefully considered
4. At the end of each meeting, getting papers for the topic of discussion for the following meeting
5. Relaxed, informal approach to the meetings - a breath of fresh air from some of the overly formal meetings that seem to be our mainstay
6. Learning from other organisations
7. Ability to consider any suggestions

#### Learning

1. Massive under-estimation of the time commitment needed by all group members to study papers and prepare for meetings
2. Huge under-estimation of the time needed to complete the work (hence weekly meetings to fit it into an already extended timescale)
3. How to harness and include views from a range of council officers
4. How to harness and include views from a range of ward councillors
5. The level of hostility to this work was hard for all members of the group, and presented learning opportunities around information dissemination, and communicating more widely about the work of the group. It also further crystallised the need for modernisation and improvement of our resident involvement framework.



## Innovation Report Suggestions – Issues raised at HMCSC 4.9.12

Minutes of Meeting on 4.9.2012	Information/Clarification	Link to Action Plan Objective
<p>(15.4) Suggestion 1 (adopting a revised code of conduct). Mr Melson questioned the need for a revised code of conduct as there was already one in place. Mr Kent said that different groups had different codes of conduct and it was important that everyone used the same one. The Chair referred to page 10 of appendix one (page 23 in the agenda), and noted that 87% of the residents who commented on that issue were in favour of a change.</p>	<p>There has always been a code of conduct but tenant feedback was that it was out of date and needed to be implemented consistently throughout the resident involvement framework.</p> <p>The existing code of conduct and examples of good practise in other Local authorities/ housing providers have fed into the draft Code of Conduct</p>	<p>Objective 14</p>
<p>(15.5) Suggestion 2 (reassessing the need for a Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG)). Councillor Mears asked why it was necessary to reassess the need for the TCMG, and asked for clarification of what would be different with Service Improvement Group. She also commented that many of the working groups she had set up should have been closed down by now but they were still running. The Committee were advised that there had been recognition that the TCMG were not doing what was in their terms of reference and that the TCMG had acknowledged that they had found certain issues hard to deal with. Mr Kent stated that he had not attended the last few meetings of the TCMG because there were so many arguments within the group and there was concern that if they couldn't agree amongst themselves they wouldn't be able to help others. Mr Murtagh agreed and said that the TCMG had behaved appalling over the last two years.</p>	<p>The request to review the Tenant Compact Monitoring Compact Group has come from tenant representatives and members of TCMG.</p> <p>The new Resident Involvement Framework establishes groups based on the TSA regulatory themes: Service Area Specific groups Service Improvement Groups for Home, Tenancy, Neighbourhood &amp; Community;</p> <p>2 service wide groups for Involvement and Empowerment Business and Value for money</p> <p>Objective 3 focuses on reviewing TCMG and establishing the new IEG. Part of this will be to look at the roles and remits of both groups to see if they should amalgamate or not</p> <p>All working groups will be reviewed under objective 2. It is anticipated that some groups will end whilst others will continue. Aiming to standardize the framework for groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of reference</li> <li>• Membership (60/40)</li> <li>• Key aims and Objectives</li> <li>• Identify key priorities for a set period</li> <li>• Simple Action Plan – live document that is reviewed regularly to identify progress/lack of movement; identify gaps or upcoming events</li> </ul>	<p>Objective 3</p> <p>Objective 3</p> <p>Objective 2</p>

## Innovation Report Suggestions – Issues raised at HMCSC 4.9.12

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing Agenda</li> <li>• Review of achievements/celebration of success</li> </ul> <p>This information will feed into the annual Impact and VFM Assessment process.</p> <p>The review process will be supported by the Resident Involvement Team.</p>	
<p>(15.6) The Committee considered Suggestion 3 (Tenant and Resident Associations). Councillor Farrow noted that all communities and estates were different and would need individual help. The Committee were advised that appropriate help and support would be offered to all Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA). Mr Cohen was concerned that some areas had no representatives and wondered who would be involved in the TRA. The Chair reassured the Committee that the intention was to have representatives on all TRA. Councillor Mears noted that the report stated that 62% of residents were satisfied with housing generally and that their views were listened to and acted on, and was concerned that they may therefore feel that was no need to be involved.</p>	<p>Individualised support offer to all TRA's.</p> <p>Encourage new TRA's in areas where there aren't current associations or look at amalgamation with others</p> <p>Support all TRA's to have representation</p>	<p>Objective 5</p>
<p>(15.7) The Committee considered Suggestion 4 (CRB checks). Councillor Farrow asked for clarification on when a CRB check would be needed and how it would be operated. Councillor Mears also asked in what circumstances it would be needed and was concerned over funding as she did not think a HRA should pay for it. The Committee were advised that the suggestion had come from residents. Some of the groups had discussed the possibility of holding homework or sports clubs etc. The council would offer support where necessary. Mr Murtagh suggested that there would a number of ways to generate additional funding such as coffee mornings, and the council would not be expected to fund it all. Mr Melson asked what would happen if someone failed a CRB check and did not think it should be the responsibility of residents.</p>	<p>CRB Checks.....Guidance can be sought on an individual basis about the requirements for CRB checks. TRA's would need to fund the application from their grants.</p>	

## Innovation Report Suggestions – Issues raised at HMCSC 4.9.12

<p>(15.8) The Committee considered Suggestion 5 (training for TRA Chairs). Mr Crowhurst asked who would provide the training and who would monitor it. The Committee were advised that the training would be monitored as it was now, with feedback from those who undertook it. The training would be provided at the Resource Centre as it was now, but it was also hoped to use other venues such as City College or other Community Centres. Councillor Farrow suggested it would be useful to provide training in the evenings or weekends as well as during the day, and also that training for Secretary's and Treasurer's be provided. Mr Kent said that some residents may have difficulty with literacy and support for them would be useful. The Committee were advised that there was a range of training which it was hoped to provide, and that the council was already working with trade unions to provide to provide literacy training at the learning centre in Moulsecoomb.</p>	<p>Resident Training Offer</p> <p>Inclusion and Involvement Team will set up a database of tenant training. Evaluation and impact of training will be captured through follow up and feedback etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident training offer available to all tenants</li> <li>• New initiatives funded through the Interreg Learning Cities Project</li> <li>• Resource Centre funded to provide their core training offer</li> <li>• Recommended training for key TRA roles (not compulsory)</li> <li>• "Buddying" for new TRA members/ reps</li> <li>• Learning &amp; Participation Service to support individual training needs</li> <li>• Inclusion team to include basic skills support</li> <li>• Developing the Learning offer at the Housing Centre (including Learning Champions model)</li> </ul> <p>Flexible approach to meet the needs of tenants ie. Evenings and weekends</p>	<p>Objective 10</p>
<p>(15.9) The Committee considered Suggestion 6 (establishment of a separate body to deal with code of conduct breaches). Mr Melson said it would be important to have a balance, and not to return to the old system.</p>	<p>Joint Adjudication Panel</p>	<p>Objective 14</p>
<p>(15.10) The Committee considered Suggestions 7-13 (Tenant and Resident Associations). Councillor Mears noted there was reference to 'compulsory' training and asked who would police the training and whether anyone had spoken to the Resource Centre. The Committee were advised that the wording could be changed to 'highly recommended' or 'core training'. It was not the case that people would be forced to undertake training, but the council wanted to encourage as many people as possible to do it. The Resource Centre had been contacted. Mr Kent felt training would be very useful but it should not be compulsory. Cllr Farrow referred to suggestion 11</p>	<p>Wording amended to highly recommended</p>	<p>Objective 10</p>

## Innovation Report Suggestions – Issues raised at HMCSC 4.9.12

<p>(keeping a list of TRA members) and said that all tenants should already be part of associations. All residents should be given equal information and not just those who were active in the association. Councillor Farrow referred to suggestion 12 and said that new associations would need assistance if officers would not be present. Mr Melson said that officers should be present unless requested not to. Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to suggestion 9, and the further information provided on page 54, and was concerned that it was far too detailed. Councillor Peltzer Dunn suggested that there be a two year rather than an annual impact assessment for the TRAs. Councillor Robins referred to suggestion 12 and thought that it could be advantageous for the TRAs not to always have an officer present. The Committee were advised that suggestion 11 had come from residents, but could be removed. With regard to suggestion 12, if an officer were requested they could attend. Resident Associations could meet whenever they wanted and the feedback was that it would sometimes be useful not to have an officer present. As much support as possible would be provided, but it would not always be possible to have an officer available to attend all meetings. It was agreed that the Annual Impact Assessments were detailed, but it was necessary to look at the cost effectiveness and impact of resident involvement</p>	<p>Suggestion 11 - Tenant request</p> <p>All TRA's have contact lists; Information will be shared with all residents not just TRAs</p> <p>Tenant Only Meetings. This is not about withdrawing support but about enabling tenant groups. Recognition that tenants did not always want council officers present.</p> <p>There will be a tailored support offer for each TRA. Officers will attend meetings if requested but TRAs need to consider:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what do you want from that officer</li> <li>• who is the most appropriate officer to attend</li> <li>• Agenda planning before meeting - highlight issues you want to discuss so officer has time to investigate/get responses from the appropriate services/teams beforehand and bring them to the meeting</li> <li>• Don't wait for a meeting to raise an issue – use the reporting protocols in place</li> <li>• Recognition that it is not always possible for an officer to attend every meeting given the number of TRAs in the city/meeting clashes. It is possible for an officer to provide the chair with a written update if requested beforehand.</li> </ul> <p>Annual Impact Assessments These would be light touch - KISS Keep it simple and short</p>	<p>Objective 7</p>
<p>(15.11) The Committee considered Suggestions 14-17 (Area Panels). Councillor Mears said that it appeared that Area Panels were no longer important, and asked whether the cost of running them was an issue. The Committee were reassured that Area Panels were important and their views had been taken into account. The cost of holding each Area Panel was around £1800, with each round of blue pages costing around an additional £2,000. It was important to look at the best use of money. Councillor Mears stated that Area Panels were for tenants and were paid for out of tenant rents. Housing Management was about performance and the suggestions in this report seemed to be silencing tenants. The Chair confirmed that that was not the case. The Head of</p>	<p>Revisions to Area Panels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-energise Area Panels ToR; purpose and format</li> <li>• Review the Blue Pages Process to make it more efficient in terms of time and cost (including looking at other reporting protocols/processes)</li> <li>• Ensuring residents have a strong robust method to raise issues</li> </ul>	<p>Objective 8</p>

## Innovation Report Suggestions – Issues raised at HMCSC 4.9.12

<p>Housing and Social Inclusion reminded the Committee that this report had come from tenant's suggestions. The whole motivation for the report was to give tenants a voice and support their involvement. Mr Melson stated that the only voice tenants had was when they had Blue Pages and that Area Panels were useful. Mr Melson asked for a breakdown of the cost of preparing this report. In response to this, additional information was circulated comparing the costs of the Innovation Group with those for running the TCMG. The committee was informed that costs considered were room hire, refreshments and travel; and totalled £339 for the IG and £1534 for TCMG. Also that when the costs were averaged out per meeting the former was £24 and the latter was £220. Mr Melson commented that he did not mean the cost of holding the meetings but the cost of preparing the actual report. It was confirmed that there would be no budget pressure from preparing this report as it was the core work of the department to bring reports to meetings</p>		
<p>(15.12) Suggestion 18 related to Tenant Scrutiny Panel and would be covered in more detail in Item 16 on the agenda.</p>	<p>TSP agreed at HMCSC</p>	<p>Objective 13</p>
<p>(15.13) The Committee considered Suggestions 19-26 (Resident involvement framework and working groups and the involvement of young people).</p> <p>Cllr Peltzer Dunn noted the reference to 'young people' and asked if that meant those under 18. It was confirmed that it referred to young tenants aged 18-30. Councillors Farrow and Peltzer Dunn both referred to suggestion 26 and suggested that the percentage earmarked should be confirmed. Mr Crowhurst said that the Estate Development Budget (EDB) was a finite budget for the whole city and there could be other ways to raise money. The Committee were advised that this suggestion had come from residents who wanted to include everyone. It was important to hear from younger people and what they wanted on their estate. Councillor Duncan said that this report had been looked at a number of times and it wasn't for</p>	<p>Sum would need to be agreed by tenants. Suggestion of bidding process/Dragons Den style presentations from young people etc</p>	<p>Objective 11</p>

## Innovation Report Suggestions – Issues raised at HMCSC 4.9.12

<p>councillors to pick apart what tenants had asked for. Residents had been asked what they wanted the money spent on and they had said that they wanted to help the whole community to be engaged. Councillor Mears replied that a lot of these issues had not been looked at before. This was Housing Management and it was important to ensure that funds were not used by other council departments.</p>	<p>HRA is ring fenced and cannot be used for general fund activities. HSI see this as an opportunity to bring in match funding/added value from other budget areas in meeting shared community aims and objectives</p>	
<p>15.14 The Committee considered Suggestions 27-31 (The menu of involvement, communications and social media and the funding of resident involvement). Councillor Farrow referred to suggestion 29 and said that there were different size associations and it might be better to allocate money to an area. The Committee were advised that it was a suggestion that each application be capped at £1,000. All associations could complete an application. There would be a cut off date for submission of applications, and it would not be on a first come first served basis. Resident Involvement officers would support associations. Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked what the budget would be, and was advised it £26,250. Councillor Peltzer Dunn thought the wording suggested that there would be a limit to one application per TRA. Councillor Robins thought it was clear that there would be no limit to the number of applications any association could submit, but that any application would be limited to £1,000. Councillor Mears referred to Appendix 3 (page 67 on agenda), and said that a restructure would be costly and would be a misuse of tenants rent. If the Strategic Director was looking at a restructure, why was tenant's rents being used. The Committee were advised that Appendix 3 was not a restructure of staff, but a new way of resident involvement and there would no additional cost involved. Councillor Mears said she would like to see a breakdown of the current budget and the costings alongside the new structure in appendix 3. The Chair confirmed that it was important to know how effective and useful the TRAs were and to ensure value for money was being achieved</p>	<p>Wording changed to clarify capping limit of individual grants</p> <p>Clarified in meeting that restructure related to the proposed Resident Involvement Framework not staffing structure.</p> <p>Resident Involvement Budget included in report to December HMCSC</p> <p>Annual assessment of EDB spend</p>	<p>Objective 6</p> <p>Objective 12</p>



## Innovation Report Suggestions – Issues raised at HMCSC 4.9.12

<p>(15.15) The Committee considered Suggestions 32-36 (Resident training and annual impact assessments). Councillor Farrow referred to suggestion 33 and said that it would be good to hold workshops and particularly useful if all the TRAs attended together. Mr Crowhurst referred to suggestion 36 and asked how the assessments would be done and what the cost implications would be. Councillor Jarrett said that financial issues should be for the Housing Committee and not for this meeting.</p>	<p>Annual Impact Assessments – will be light touch as previously explained.</p> <p>Costs will be met in through existing resources</p> <p>Training and support offer to all residents</p>	<p>Objective 7</p>
<p>(15.16) Councillor Peltzer Dunn noted an inconsistency with information relating to a meeting of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel on pages 72 and 105 of the report. On page 72 it says a meeting will be quorate with 6 people and on page 105 it would be 7 people. Councillor Peltzer Dunn also noted that page 72 stated that 'inquorate meetings should be noted and decisions ratified at the next quorate meeting. It was agreed that it should read that any discussion would be discussed at the next quorate meeting.</p>		
<p>(15.17)The Committee had been asked to endorse this report, and it would then be considered by the Housing Committee. However, following the comments made at this meeting it was agreed that an action plan be produced covering the issues raised. and that the report together with the aforementioned action plan come to the next meeting of the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee.</p>		
<p><b>RESOLVED</b> – That the report of the Innovation Group on Resident Involvement, together with an action plan following comments made at this meeting, be considered at the meeting of the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee on 23 October 2012.</p>		



**Appendix 3 Housing & Social Inclusion – Proposed Innovation Report Action Plan**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions to achieve this</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Lead Team</b>	<b>Working with..</b>
1	<b>Continue to support and develop the citywide interest groups</b>	<p>Support the following groups to achieve their aims, and support members to revise the terms of reference if they want to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ High Rise Action Group</li> <li>§ Leaseholder Action Group</li> <li>§ Sheltered Housing Action Group</li> <li>§ Tenant Disability Network</li> </ul>	Jan – May then ongoing	Resident Involvement	HRAG LAG SHAG TDN
2	<b>Establish the three new Service Improvement Groups Home, Tenancy, and Neighbourhood and Community</b>	Review the TOR of existing working groups; discuss achievements, successes and learning.	Jan - Mar	Relevant managers	Group members
		Work with tenant representatives to end working groups that have completed their tasks	Jan - Mar	Relevant managers	Group members
		Agree aims and areas of work for the Home Service Improvement Group	Jan - Feb	Property and Investment Resident Involvement	RMMG, Partnership Group, Core Group, Asset Management Panel, Energy Efficiency Working Group
		Agree aims and areas of work for the Tenancy Service Improvement Group	Jan - Feb	Tenancy Team Resident Involvement	ASB Focus Group, Tenancy Management Focus Group

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions to achieve this</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Lead Team</b>	<b>Working with..</b>
		Agree aims and areas of work for the Neighbourhood and Community Service Improvement Group	Jan - Feb	Neighbourhoods Team	Estates Services Monitoring Group, Car Parks and Garages Monitoring Group, Laundry Facilities Working Group
		Promote setting up the Service Improvement Groups - eg in Homing In, newsletters, website, at meetings, text messages, Facebook etc	Feb - March	Resident Involvement	Communication
		Transfer, elect and recruit membership as necessary	April	Resident Involvement	Performance & Improvement
		Agree terms of reference for each Service Improvement Group	April	Relevant teams	Service Improvement Groups
<b>3</b>	<b>Establish the new Involvement and Empowerment Group (IEG) and reassess the need for the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG)</b>	Hold a workshop with TCMG to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review the role of TCMG in light of the IEG</li> <li>• consider whether members of TCMG should transfer into the IEG</li> </ul>	Jan	Resident Involvement	TCMG
		Agree a draft terms of reference for the service wide Involvement and Empowerment Group (IEG)	Jan - Feb	Resident Involvement	TCMG
		Promote the service wide Involvement and Empowerment Group (IEG) eg in Homing In, newsletters, website, at meetings, text messages, Facebook etc	Feb - March	Communication	Resident Involvement

	Objective	Actions to achieve this	Timescales	Lead Team	Working with..
		Transfer, elect and recruit membership as necessary	April	Resident Involvement	Performance & Improvement
		<p>Establish the IEG to enable residents to monitor and develop Housing &amp; Social Inclusion's work within the regulatory theme of Tenant Involvement and Empowerment. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Monitoring customer service, choice and complaints</li> <li>§ Monitoring what has changed due to resident involvement and empowerment</li> <li>§ Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants</li> </ul>	April	Resident Involvement	Housing Customer Services IEG
		Develop the Homing In Tenants Editorial Group into a readers panel who can advise on communication	May	Communication	IEG
4	<b>Establish the service wide Business and Value for Money Group (BVFMG)</b>	Agree aims and areas of work for the BVFMG	Jan - Feb	Senior Managers	Performance & Improvement, Income Management Group
		Promote the setting up of the BVFMG eg in Homing In, newsletters, website, at meetings, text messages, Facebook etc	Jan - Feb	Communication	Resident Involvement
		Transfer, elect and recruit membership as necessary	April	Resident Involvement	Performance & Improvement

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions to achieve this</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Lead Team</b>	<b>Working with..</b>
		Agree terms of reference for the BVFMG	March	Resident Involvement	BVFMG
		Carry out an annual impact assessment of resident involvement work as recommended by regulator	June - June13	Performance & Improvement	BVFMG Resident Involvement
<b>5</b>	<b>Plan and provide additional support for Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs)</b>	Prepare role descriptions, time commitments and expectations of TRA positions and support available and promote in eg Homing In	February-May	Resident Involvement	TRAs
		Continue to support the use of newsletters, Facebook and websites and encourage more groups to use them	Ongoing	Resident Involvement Social Media Officer	TRAs Resource Centre
		Support TRAs to find members who would like to get involved by developing websites and social media and signpost to training and support available	Ongoing	Resident Involvement Social Media Officer IT Training Officer	Sussex Community Internet Project
		Support TRAs to promote aims, community initiatives and encourage more involvement and support eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRA information on council website</li> <li>• Support projects to bring people together and reduce isolation</li> <li>• Increase shared use of community rooms</li> <li>• Support residents' groups to hold family friendly events</li> </ul>	Jan - Jun	Resident Involvement	TRAs

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions to achieve this</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Lead Team</b>	<b>Working with..</b>
		Work with IEG to consider a praise and recognition system for valuing residents' contribution	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	IEG
		Produce a fresh, user friendly Tenant Representative Handbook	May- July	Resident Involvement	IEG
		Review of TRA constitutions to fit with the new framework and good practice	May- July	Resident Involvement	IEG TRAs
		Encourage and support external fundraising for TRA initiatives	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	Resource Centre TRAs
		Resident involvement officers will encourage new committee members to attend training at the Resource Centre, and can take them to visit the Centre to find out about its services	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	Resource Centre TRAs
		Work with the Involvement & Empowerment Group to develop guidance for residents associations re: child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults, including guidance on when CRB checks are advisable	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	IEG
<b>6</b>	<b>Review the policy for allocating grant support to TRA's</b>	Consider whether grant allocations should be calculated in proportion to the size of the TRA or if an upper limit should be set	May	Resident Involvement	IEG
		Advise TRAs about the running costs funding process	June	Resident Involvement	IEG

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions to achieve this</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Lead Team</b>	<b>Working with..</b>
7	<b>Introduce simple impact assessments for TRAs</b>	Resident Involvement Officers will support TRAs to identify the key thing(s) they want to achieve, and to work with IEG / TRAs to establish a user friendly way to assess success and share learning	June	Resident Involvement	IEG TRAs
8	<b>Revisions to Area Panels</b>	Re-energise Area Panels eg terms of reference, purpose and format	January	Senior Managers	Area Panels
		Review the Blue Page process in terms of its high time and cost while ensuring that residents have a strong method of raising issues	January	Senior Managers	Area Panels
		Share issues of citywide interest arising from Area Panels eg via the website or a regular feature in Homing In and keep the focus of meetings on area and city-wide issues	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	Democratic Services Area Panels
9	<b>A wider menu of options for involvement</b>	Develop a calendar of involvement events and publish on the website and in Homing In	January / ongoing	Resident Involvement	Communication Social Media Officer TRAs
		Promote involvement using social media	January / ongoing	Resident Involvement	TRAs
		Write to TRAs with publicity for their newsletters	January / ongoing	Resident Involvement	TRAs Resource Centre
		Establish 'The 5 minute Group'	March / ongoing	Performance and Improvement	Resident Involvement Neighbourhoods

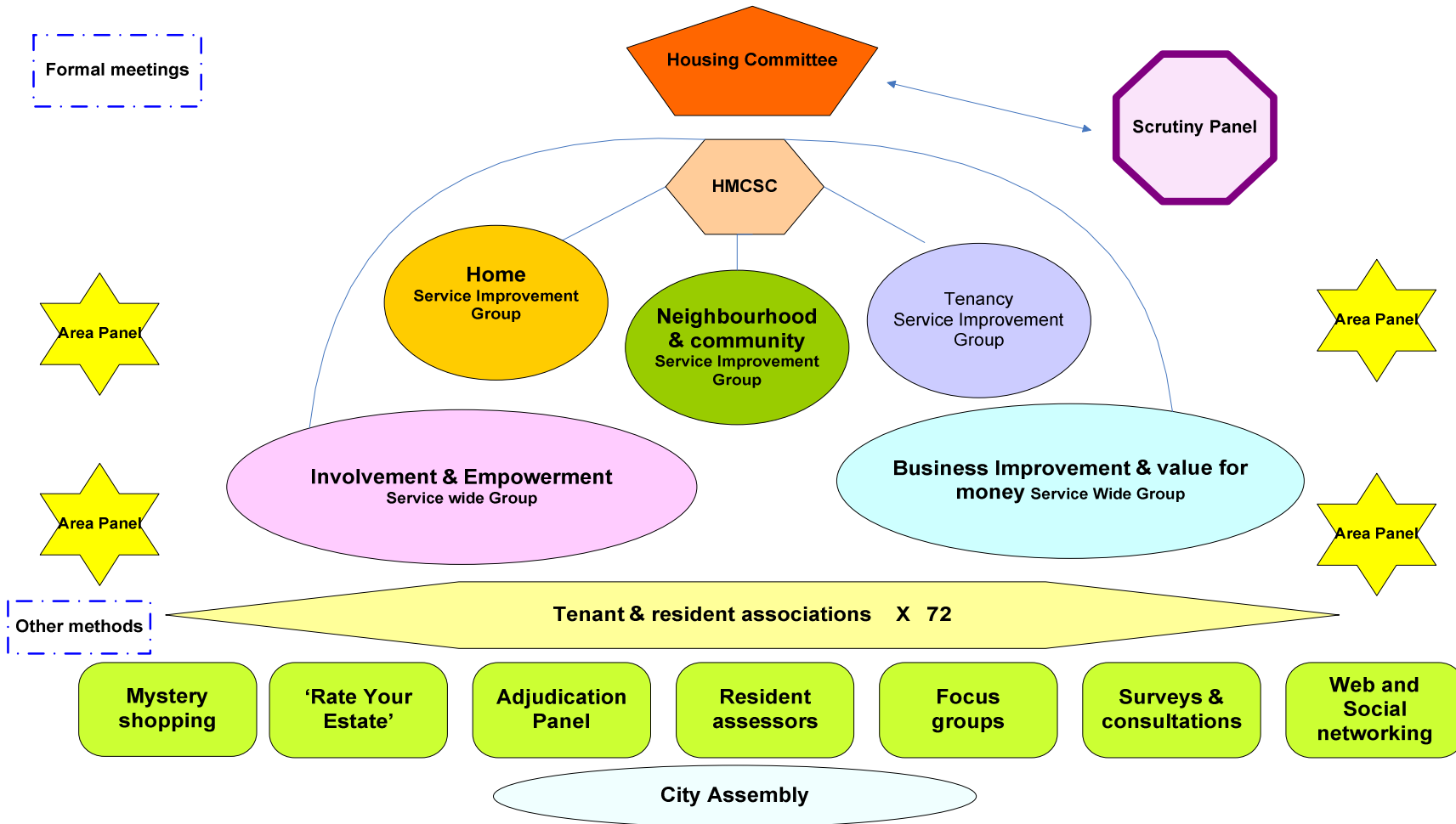


	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions to achieve this</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Lead Team</b>	<b>Working with..</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>A training offer for all residents</b>	Provide workshops to increase confidence and life skills – eg money matters	Ongoing	Inclusion Team	Residents
		Promote adult learning activities at eg community centres, Friends Centre and City College	Ongoing	Inclusion Team	Residents
		Set up a broad range of workshops that staff and/or residents working together can facilitate	Ongoing	Resident Involvement Inclusion Team	Residents
		Provide one to one support, training and peer group sessions to increase meetings, community rooms and community development skills	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	Residents
		Promote the benefits of the highly recommended training to all existing and new TRAs or for particular roles eg around equalities, safeguarding children, role of the treasurer	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	Residents Inclusion Team Resource Centre
		Support, training or shared tips for tenant reps to feed back to their members including a section in the handbook	Ongoing	Resident Involvement	Residents
<b>11</b>	<b>Undertake targeted work to understand why it is difficult for some people to get involved and find ways to involve them</b>	Use the results from the work with Mosaic to develop a BME involvement action plan	June	Resident Involvement	Mosaic IEG Inclusion Team
		Identify residents aged 18-30, survey about how would like to be involved and develop an action plan	June	Resident Involvement	Performance & Improvement Inclusion Team
		Explore more ways to involve young tenants aged 18-30 in the EDB process	July	Resident Involvement	Home SIG Inclusion Team

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions to achieve this</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Lead Team</b>	<b>Working with..</b>
		Using skills development as an incentive for young people- this could be working for a TRA or work shadowing with the resident involvement team	From June	Resident Involvement	Inclusion Team TRAs
<b>12</b>	<b>Estates Development Budget</b>	Undertake an annual assessment of EDB spend	June	Resident Involvement	Home SIG
		Identify any under-represented tenants eg people aged 18-30, or families and those with no TRA and work with the Home SIG to identify ways they are able to suggest proposals for EDB spend	July	Resident Involvement Performance & Improvement	Home SIG
		Use social media to show the benefits of estates development work and encourage involvement	July	Resident Involvement Social Media Officer	Home SIG Residents
<b>13</b>	<b>Establish a tenant led scrutiny panel</b>	Write role profiles, recruit, train, induct and support the Tenant Scrutiny Panel	October 2012 - March 2013	Scrutiny Team	Residents
<b>14</b>	<b>Adopt revised Code of Conduct</b>	Recruit and train a Joint Adjudication Panel	February-April	Resident Involvement	Residents Housing managers Complaints?
		Establish terms of reference for the group	March	Resident Involvement	Residents
		Promote the Code of Conduct to residents and staff	May	Resident Involvement	Residents

**Draft resident involvement framework**

**Appendix 4**





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2013-2016</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>18 December 2012 – Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee 16 January 2013 – Housing Committee 14 February 2013 – Policy &amp; Resources Committee 28 March 2013 – Council</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director of Place Director of Finance</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tom Gillham - Head of Property Investment</b>	<b>Tel: 29-3857</b>
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:tom.gillham@brighton-hove.gov.uk">tom.gillham@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

*The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that this report was being brought forward at the Chair's request, to maximise opportunities for additional consultation and to enable observations from HMSCS to be included in final version presented to Housing Committee. Some information contained within this report had only very recently become available.*

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

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

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the 2013/14 capital programme and provides a provisional capital programme for the following two years, 2014/15 & 2015/16, for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The report takes into consideration the latest resources available and commissioning investment priorities.
- 1.2 The council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) relates to the council's landlord duties in respect of approximately 11,935 properties and 2,555 leasehold properties.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee note that Housing Committee recommend that Policy & Resources approves the HRA capital

programme budget of £26.957 million and financing for 2013/14 as set out in paragraph 4.1 and comments upon the proposals.

- 2.2 That Policy & Resources recommends approval to Council of the HRA capital programme budget of £26.957 million and financing for 2013/14, as set out in paragraph 4.1, as part of the Council's Capital Programme.

### **3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The 2013 - 2016 provisional HRA Capital Programme aims to balance the priorities of both the City Council and our residents to achieve a good quality, sustainable, and fit for purpose housing stock which delivers against emerging housing commissioning investment priorities as identified in the housing commissioning framework. The Capital Programme is developed within the context of the Corporate Plan 2011-2015, which sets out the council's strategic direction and priorities for the next four years, based around the five council priorities:

- Tackling inequality
- Creating a more sustainable city
- Engaging people who live and work in the city
- A responsible and empowering employer
- A council the city deserves

- 3.2 The capital strategy will focus on meeting the overarching housing strategy and corporate plan priorities through investment in building new homes, and improving the quality and sustainability of the existing housing stock. The HRA capital strategy aims to ensure that every pound invested reaches beyond the housing service and contributes to regeneration, tackling inequality, creating training and employment opportunities and improving sustainability. In supporting these priorities the capital programme will focus on:

#### **1) Tackling Inequality**

The Capital budget strategy focuses upon:

- § Investment in building new affordable homes in HRA land and specific garage sites. The development of new housing also has a strong economic multiplier impact on the local economy (estimated at £3.51 of economic output for every £1 of public investment) creating jobs and supply chain business opportunities
- § Continuing the improvement in the quality of existing council homes by achieving the Brighton & Hove Standard (Decent Homes Standard) across the housing stock by the end of 2013. Research by Nottingham Trent University has estimated that every pound spent on Decent Homes improvements creates £1.46 in local spend through orders to tradesmen and suppliers in the area
- § Increased investment in adaptations to enable council tenants to live independently in their homes. Adaptations to housing are aligned with adult social care's focus on prevention and reablement, which minimises delayed discharges and avoidable admissions to hospital and reduces the pressure on health and social care budgets.

- § Action to increase asset value, tackle over-crowding, and improve health and well-being through the continuation of the loft conversion and home extension programme.
- § Tackling health inequalities through an ongoing strategic programme to prevent damp and reduce condensation in homes.

## **2) Creating a more sustainable city**

The capital programme will focus on improving the sustainability and energy efficiency of the housing stock by reducing waste and delivering more affordable warmth:

- Tackling fuel poverty through continued investment in providing modern, energy efficient heating for council housing residents.
- Improving the sustainability and energy efficiency of the housing stock in line with the emerging One Planet Living Sustainable Action Plan for council housing. This would include insulation improvements, cladding projects, solar thermal and photo-voltaic (PV) also improvements to communal lighting.
- Investing in estate regeneration to make best use of our existing assets and building new council homes to high sustainability standards.

## **3) Engaging people who live and work in the city**

- The budget strategy continues to provide £0.540m for the tenant-led estate development budget. This budget is now operated using a not-for-profit model to maximise social value. The lift replacement programme was accelerated and investment increased as a direct response to the 2012/13 budget consultation. Budget consultation this year has also informed our discretionary capital spend.

- 3.3 This report outlines the strategic commissioning approach to the 3-year HRA capital programme giving details of proposed funding for:
- Improving housing quality
  - Brighton & Hove standard works
  - Sustainability and carbon reduction
  - Tackling inequality
  - Building new council homes

It should be noted that Decent Homes work is included within Improving housing quality, Brighton & Hove standard works and sustainability and carbon reduction programmes.

## **4. FUNDING 2013/14 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 4.1 The 3 year programme is funded from a variety of sources including revenue surpluses, general reserves, borrowing, capital receipts from leasing properties to Seaside Community Homes and Right to Buy sales and grants. The proposed programme for 2013/14 and the funding arrangements are outlined below. This programme does not include any reprofiling identified from the 2012/13 targeted budget monitoring.

	<b>2013/14 Budget £'000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Improving housing quality	8,963
Brighton & Hove standard works	6,270
Sustainability & carbon reduction	8,499
Tackling inequality	2,575
Building new council homes	650
<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>26,957</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>	
Revenue Contribution to Capital	20,779
Borrowing	2,948
Decent homes indicative funding	1,000
Other Grants - CESP	80
Reserves	2,150
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>26,957</b>
<b>Projected Capital Reserves at 31 March 2014</b>	<b>250</b>

- 4.2 The majority of the capital programme is funded from the 2013/14 revenue budget surpluses (from rental income) of £20.779 million, supported by borrowing of £2.948 million for which the capital financing costs are included in the revenue budget.
- 4.3 The Homes and Communities Agency confirmed that provisional grant funding of £1 million for 2013/14 and a further £1.2 million for 2014/15 available to support the Decent Homes programme has been allocated. In addition, the funding includes £0.080 million from the national sustainability scheme, run by utility companies, called Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP). The funding is generated from work that bring about carbon use reductions in the housing stock.
- 4.4 The programme assumes that there will be no capital receipts available during 2013/14 from the leasing of properties to Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes due to the phased transfer of these properties however receipts will become available again during 2014/15. Investment will be used to maintain our homes to the Brighton & Hove Standard and potentially



fund                      other                      strategic                      housing                      priorities.

- 4.5 The 2013/14 budget assumes that retained capital receipts from 'right to buy' (RTB) sales will be held in reserves until 2014/15 and then used to offset against the costs of the building new council homes programme. Capital reserves at 31 March 2014 are projected at £0.250 million which reflects the estimated retained RTB receipts.

## **5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013-2016**

- 5.1 The investment programme for 2013/14 is £26.977 million and is detailed in Appendix 1, along with the provisional programme for the following two years.
- 5.2 The 3 year Capital Investment Plans provide the council with medium and long-term works information which will enable the council to build, achieve and sustain consistently high levels of customer service, to both general housing and sheltered homes across the city. This plan will help to build on the progress already made ensuring proactive, efficient and effective pre-planning, as well as continuously improving resident liaison and overall engagement. The plan effectively supports the council's commitment to communicate plans and intentions, and further develops one of the key objectives of transparency.
- 5.3 This 3 year plan takes its lead largely from that consulted on and agreed last year, giving a consistent strategic approach, and assisting with achieving programme delivery. Outline plans are currently being developed into meaningful geographical areas of work programmes with indicative timelines to foster improved resident communication, and understanding, of our major works plans across the city. Once these plans are finalised, with our partners, over the coming weeks, further details will be reported as appropriate, to allow further discussion of the capital investment programme. The programme will also be published on the council's website, as usual and as soon as possible, to ensure full access to information. A high level of resident liaison and involvement in the earliest phases, and throughout refurbishment programmes is supported through the agreed processes now in place with Mears.

### **1) Improving Housing Quality**

- 5.4 Health & safety works remain the key basic requirement for ensuring the wellbeing of all residents, visitors and those working on housing assets. This area of works includes door entry systems, close circuit television (CCTV), water tanks, lifts, ventilation shafts, dry risers, fire alarms, asbestos

management, roofing, lighting, structural building work, preventative damp work, cyclical maintenance and decorations programme.

- 5.5 The 3 year programme includes substantial investment in lift replacements and modernisation. This budget was increased to reflect tenants support for completing the lift replacement programme as soon as is practical. The increased funding reflected in this programme will enable the new lifts to be installed across the city within 7 years, rather than the original plan to complete programme within 10 years. Over the next year, replacement and upgrading will focus on installing new lifts at Hereford Court, Theobald House, Thornsedale, Philip Court, Sanders House, Nettleton Court and beginning the 2-year programme at Leach Court, subject to any leasehold requirements, where they apply.
- 5.6 Fire Safety and Asbestos management budgets throughout the period reflect the need to retain good levels of risk management in these key areas. In many cases, such as the door replacement programme, highly secure and fire compliant doors are being fitted, which also reduce drafts and improve energy efficiency for residents.
- 5.7 The Minor Capital works budget includes a provision for programmed works identified by residents where their homes and buildings require large or complex repairs, also a sum for surveys and preparatory works.
- 5.8 The budget now includes a specific programme for tackling condensation and mould growth. This essential work deals with a potential health hazard, and work to prevent effects of condensation and damp have been integrated into the cyclical area-based investment programmes. Fire Safety and Asbestos management budgets throughout the 3-year period reflect the need to support our good track record of risk reduction in these key areas. Other budgets for ensuring water safety and the security of residents, for example through modern, well maintained door entry systems, make up our ongoing planned investment in safety and security in this area.

## **2) Brighton & Hove Standard Works**

- 5.9 The capital programme reflects the need to meet the Decent Homes target by December 2013. Works to improve homes include ensuring that internal elements such as kitchens, bathrooms, central heating systems and rewiring homes, as well as external elements such as doors and windows, all meet the benchmark standards. Additionally, basic health and wellbeing requirements are assessed, and the required safety levels met. By 2013/14, with decency achieved, the capital budgets reduce to a level that provides funding for those properties falling out of decency and for further investment in areas that provide comfort and security and improve energy efficiency. For example upgrading and improving main entrance door sets in blocks of flats and installing high efficiency boilers.
- 5.10 A large scale electrical wiring programme to upgrade and improve communal lighting and controls, is now well underway, with provisional programmes published on the website.

### **3) Sustainability & Carbon Reduction**

- 5.11 This programme supports our targets set out in the One Planet Living plan to reduce annual Carbon Emissions associated with energy use in council owned properties. Proposals for the next 3 years will allow the installation of PV solar panels to be integrated into appropriate projects to take advantage of economies of scale and other opportunities.
- 5.12 Against the background of rising fuel costs, it is imperative that we reduce energy wastage by ensuring homes have modern heating systems and are well insulated to minimise the number of households suffering from fuel poverty. £10.4 million is included over the next three years to replace and upgrade a number of the communally heated systems alongside individual domestic replacements and improvements. Where practicable, renewable energy is being incorporated within these projects, for example, in 2012/13 Walter May House received a communal solar hot water system along with new high efficiency boilers. It is intended to undertake more of these types of project, subject to feasibility surveys that are now being undertaken.
- 5.13 Insulated over cladding provides an additional protective layer to our buildings this has a number of benefits including energy efficiency. The programme also includes survey and installation of cavity wall insulation and loft insulation top ups to 270mm, where construction types and location allow it. In addition it is proposed to fund the completion of ongoing major projects at Essex Place and Hereford Court, as well as starting Phase 2 improvements at the Bristol Estate (subject to further studies).

### **4) Tackling Inequality**

- 5.14 The capital programme has been proposed with the inclusion of the following discretionary items of spend:

#### Estate Development Budget (EDB)

- 5.15 The Estate Development Budget is included at £0.540 million per annum. Working collectively with our residents and Mears, officers wish to explore ways of returning even greater value for money and levels of customer satisfaction. EDB bids will be integrated into larger planned programmes of works, where it makes sense to do so, in order to achieve greater economies of scale and therefore get more for EDB money.

#### Improving adaptability and accessibility

- 5.16 The aids and adaptations budget has been increased by a further £0.300 million per annum to £1.150 million to reflect the growing need for a variety of personalised adaptations to help residents continue to access and live comfortably in their home as their circumstances change. These projects are delivered by working together with Occupational Therapy professionals. A review will be undertaken during 2013-14, to ensure that the funding is delivering value for money.

#### Conversion and Extension of Existing Dwellings

- 5.17 The 3 year capital programme includes a programme of loft conversion and extensions to help alleviate overcrowding and to facilitate any required adaptation works, in some of our family homes. These projects have already helped to reduce the number of overcrowded families, and provide good quality family homes that meet the specific needs of vulnerable residents. We have identified many overcrowded families whose homes would benefit from adaptations, special needs or lifetime homes requirements that are integrated with the investment works where possible. These projects help local families to be in a position to plan for the future by being based in a suitable location for the long-term. This budget will provide up to 12 extensions per annum, depending on the size and complexity of each project.

#### Fencing

- 5.18 This budget provides for a strategic approach to improving boundary fencing across the city. Fencing has been identified by residents as an area where greater resources should be allocated based on safety and security needs and a policy is being developed with partners and residents to reflect this.

#### Cycling Facilities

- 5.19 This proposed budget supports sustainable lifestyles by allowing communities to identify and install improved cycling infrastructure, such as secure, dry storage facilities and lighting.

#### **5) Information Computing Technology**

- 5.20 Investment in ICT continues to be key to improving the council's online offer to residents by expanding the range of fully web-enabled transactions and support residents to self-serve and access services more locally, particularly with Universal Credit and the impact of Welfare Reform starting to be felt. The budget has been reduced compared to previous years but provides for upgrade and improvements to the current Housing Management and Customer Online system and out the IDOX electronic document management system across all housing services.

#### **6) Building new council housing**

- 5.21 The Housing Investment 2012-2020: Strategy & Implementation Plan report approved by Housing Committee on 26 September 2012 outlined proposals for future redevelopment and new build opportunities on HRA land. This included developing the final feasibility, design and build of 29 new housing units on demolished vacant garage sites. The current capital programme includes funding for initial feasibility, design, planning to develop these schemes, with an additional £1.000 million for building costs (during 2012/13) and a further £4.315 million in the provisional 2014/15 programme.

Once full schemes are developed, a report will be presented to Committee for scheme approval.

- 5.22 The Housing Investment 2012-2020 report also included approval for funding (of £0.350 m for 2012/13 and £0.650 m for 2013/14) for the procurement of initial feasibility and design, on identified case studies for housing opportunities on HRA land where appropriate, including stakeholder engagement and consultation. Any proposed deliverable schemes from these case studies identified within 2013/14 will be reported to Policy & Resources for project, budget and funding approval.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Both the asset management panel (AMP) and Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group (RMMG) have successfully and effectively worked with BHCC staff and Mears to ensure that there is a thorough and transparent management of the programmes, and improvements to them. Both RMMG and AMP are represented on the Core Group, and are also to have representatives on the Partnership (operational) group and technical forum groups. All these groups will continue to work closely with BHCC and Mears as a partnership to ensure that contract expectations and requirements are met, and exceeded where possible.
- 6.2 The service has undertaken consultation with residents as part of the budget setting process, based around their priorities for the service. The consultation took place at Area Housing Panels in October with a follow up session at the City Assembly meeting in November. Each session used electronic voting technology to enable residents to register their views confidentially and see real time results. Each session was introduced with a quiz to provide background and context to the Housing Revenue Account budget.
- 6.3 The Area Panel sessions involved council offers presenting the case for two different budget areas with questions and discussion. This was followed by voting on which area is the most important budget priority or if they should be treated in balance. The results were as follows:

Option 1	Option 2	Resident priority
Spending money on making your homes safer and more accessible	Spending money on making your homes warmer and more energy efficient	Both in balance
Investment in prevention (e.g. tackle problems early and services such as money advice)	React as problems arise (e.g. reactive repairs, tackle ASB as it arises)	Both in balance
Make efficiencies to reinvest in homes (e.g. reduce office costs to support new house building and investment to improve housing and estates)	Maintain services as they are with no growth	Option 1

6.4 At the Citywide Assembly, in November 2012, residents looked at each of the priorities identified at Area Panels and discussed in groups their views about each area. They then identified specific areas of work that they as a group would like to see prioritised. The wider Assembly then voted on each of these areas. Priorities which received the most support included:

- Solar panels for revenue generation and reducing bills
- Review assets to see if any can be sold e.g. offices, garages or land
- Reacting and feeding back on anti social behaviour
- Increase rents for new homes and those who can afford it
- Lifts to be repaired quicker
- Draft proofing checks for homes
- Faster response when repairs are reported
- Reacting quickly when a vulnerable tenant has not been seen

6.5 The information on the strategy and commitments of the 3-year capital programme for the period 2012-2015 was presented to residents in early 2012, and details circulated widely, including being available on our website. The 2013-2016 3-year plan seeks to build on these solid foundations and deliver the long-term commitments that were made in these programmes, in a transparent manner, whilst reflecting any new priorities that have emerged in consultation with residents, such as speeding up the lift replacement programme. As more details emerge, further details will be reported as appropriate, to allow further discussion of the investment strategy and programme.

6.6 All leaseholders have been, or will be, consulted about individual contracts carried out as part of the programme in full compliance with the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

6.7 It is important to note that every project cannot be foreseen within our planning strategy and where ad-hoc projects are needed to be carried out this will be done through existing and new processes and procedures that incorporate effective communication and engagement with all residents in

the properties concerned, regardless of their individual tenure. All appropriate resident groups are to be fully included in this consultation.

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

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Financial Implications are included in the main body of the report

*Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman* *Date: 27/11/12*

### Legal Implications

- 7.2 In its role as landlord, the Council has statutory and contractual obligations to maintain the structure of and installations in its housing stock. The maintenance and works proposals contained within this report will assist the Council in fulfilling those obligations. The Council must take the Human Rights Act into account when making decisions but it is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights would be adversely affected by the recommendations in the report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley* *Date: 05/12/12*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 All projects carried out include full consideration of various equality issues and specifically the implications of the Equality Act.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 This programme supports the One Planet Council targets and Sustainable Action Plan. Housing is a key contributor to the Carbon Emissions reductions commitments and will help to reduce the number of residents affected by fuel poverty and rising energy costs.

Project briefs are issued on all projects and require due consideration of sustainability issues, including energy conservation and procurement of materials from managed and sustainable sources.

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 All contracts are entered into with a requirement for site security. Specific projects, directly address security and prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 The prime risks associated with this report are those associated with major construction projects. Full account of risk is taken through compliance, in all works, with the Construction Design & Management Regulations, which amongst other measures, require preparation of project specific Health & Safety Plans.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.7 The Housing Capital Programme reaches to all parts of the city. It seeks to provide substantial improvement to the Council's housing stock and improve quality of residents' lives in their homes. The implementation of the proposed programme will take account of all relevant best practice guidelines and be developed to provide ever improving performance targets.

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

- 8.1 No alternative options were considered.

**9. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires each Local Authority to formulate proposals relating to capital expenditure in respect of the HRA. The council's constitution and financial regulations require that capital budgets are approved through the Committee system.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. HRA Capital Programme for 2013-16

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

**Background Documents**

None



## HRA Capital Programme 2013 – 16

EXPENDITURE	Budget 2013/14	Provisional Budget 2014/15	Provisional Budget 2015/16
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Improving Housing Quality</b>			
Door Entry Systems & CCTV	247	249	252
Water Tanks, Ventilation, Fire Alarms Lighting	288	290	294
Lifts	2,457	1,517	1,939
Fire Safety & Asbestos Management	507	467	428
Minor Capital Works	467	457	454
Roofing	1,095	933	951
Condensation & Damp Works	461	467	357
Structural works	1,827	1,400	350
Cyclical Decorations	1,614	1,458	1,545
<b>Brighton &amp; Hove Standard Works</b>			
Dwelling Doors	426	408	392
Kitchens & bathrooms	2,202	1,983	2,020
Rewiring - Domestic/ Communal	1,291	933	986
Windows	2,351	1,341	1,307
<b>Sustainability &amp; Carbon Reduction</b>			
Solar PV Citywide project	206	207	210
Domestic/Communal Heating Improvements	3,625	3,559	3,250
Insulation improvements (incl overcladding)	4,668	4,900	4,195
<b>Tackling Inequality</b>			
Estate Development Budget	540	540	540
Disabled Aids & Adaptations	1,150	1,150	1,150
Conversions & Extensions Project	684	758	772
Fencing	69	70	71
Cycling Facilities	52	52	52
<b>Housing ICT Budget</b>	80	80	100
<b>Building New Council Homes</b>	650	4,315	

<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>26,957</b>	<b>27,534</b>	<b>21,615</b>
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**Subject:** Housing Revenue Account Budget 2013/14

**Date of Meeting:** 18 December 2012

**Report of:** Strategic Director Place  
Director of Finance

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

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Wards Affected:** All

*The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that this report was being brought forward from the 12 February 2013 meeting at the Chair's request, to maximise opportunities for additional consultation and to enable observations from HMSCS to be included in final version presented to Housing Committee.*

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

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

- 1.1 This report presents the proposed Budget for 2013/14 as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Members are required to consider the budget proposals including changes to rents, fees and charges as well as savings and service pressures.
- 1.2 The council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) contains the income and expenditure relating to the council's landlord duties, of approximately 11,935 properties and 2,555 leasehold properties. These properties are accounted for separately from the council's other services/activities which form part of the council's General Fund.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee note the proposed draft 2013/14 revenue budget to be reported to Housing Committee, (subject to confirmation from the Government of the 2013/14 rent restructuring indices and target rent convergence date) for recommendation that Policy & Resources Committee:
- (a) Approves and recommends to Council the budget for 2013/14 as shown in Appendix 1.
- (b) Approves individual rent increases and decreases in line with rent restructuring principles as determined by the Government and detailed in paragraphs 3.13 to 3.15.

- (c) Approves the changes to fees and charges as detailed in Table 2, paragraphs 3.16 to 3.18 and delegate authority to the Strategic Director Place to increase communal heating electricity charges following the corporate procurement of new contract prices.

### **3. HRA BUDGET PROPOSALS 2013/14**

#### **Summary**

- 3.1 The HRA Budget 2013/14 aims to balance the priorities of both the City Council and housing residents within the context of the Corporate Plan 2011-2015, which sets out the council's strategic direction and priorities for the next three years, based around the five council priorities:
- Tackling inequality
  - Creating a more sustainable city
  - Engaging people who live and work in the city
  - A responsible and empowering employer
  - A council the city deserves
- 3.2 The HRA revenue strategy focuses upon investment to deliver corporate priorities:

#### **1. Investment to tackling Inequality and sustain rental income**

- § Investment in providing specialist support services for vulnerable council housing residents on low incomes including the development services which promote financial inclusion. The current economic climate and social welfare reforms present challenges for the HRA in relation to maintaining income collection performance. Through the development of the Community Banking Partnership model, specialist money advice and financial literacy and community banking interventions will help to sustain current income collection whilst also having an impact on the local economy which goes beyond client households. Recent research published by Citizens Advice shows that tenants could be £10 per week better off as a result of financial skills training from their landlords;
- § Investment through EU 'Interreg' grant funding in the 'Learning Cities' project will deliver interventions to council tenants that enhance the employability of individuals, and so improve their and their families' life chances;
- § Continued investment in specialist tenancy management and support services to support vulnerable council housing residents, and services which tackles anti-social behaviour;
- § No increases in the service charges for communal cleaning, supporting people, TV digital aerials or garages and car parks. Heating charges will increase by inflation but consumption will be reviewed to ensure residents are charged based on latest estimates of usage.

#### **2. Creating a more sustainable city**

The Housing & Social Inclusion service is developing a Sustainability Action Plan according to One Planet Living principles. Actions to be delivered in 2013/14 will include working with the Sustainability working group on:

- § Pilot smart meter loan scheme and behavioural change campaign leading to lower energy usage, reduced carbon emissions and lower fuel bills from council managed housing;

- § Providing energy advice to council tenants from operatives as part of the annual gas check.

### **3. Engaging people who live and work in the city**

- § Establishing the new tenant scrutiny panel to ensure that tenants and leaseholders have a stronger voice in the management of council housing
- § Continuing to maximise the social value arising from investment in the Repairs and Improvement Partnership with Mears, through provision of local jobs, raising the aspirations of young people through apprenticeships, and creating local supply chain opportunities. As well as the successful scheme delivering 20 apprentices per year this includes:
  - 95% local employment
  - 28 local businesses employed as subcontractors
  - Partnership with City College to enable 35 construction students to gain experience refurbishing empty homes
  - Estate Development Budget run as a not-for-profit business model

3.3 A local authority's HRA must be in balance, meaning that the authority must show in its financial planning that HRA income meets expenditure and that the HRA is consequently viable. The introduction of self financing of the HRA from 1st April 2012 means that the authority needs to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet the future management, repairs and investment needs of the stock. Self financing has given authorities the freedom to plan for the longer term and has given greater emphasis to the 30 year business plan.

3.4 The Commissioning framework for the HRA aims to reduce management unit costs to enable re-investment in services, to reduce inequality (support), and improve homes and neighbourhoods (investment) As the HRA is a ring-fenced account, any savings achieved are reinvested into council housing services. However, the significance of the HRA budget reaches beyond housing service provision, and provides the opportunity to tackle inequality, create jobs and training opportunities, and improve the lives and well-being of residents.

3.5 Benchmarking of both service quality and cost is used extensively throughout the service to identify opportunities for reducing unit costs. Benchmarking against comparator organisations and an analysis of the outcome of the Housing Quality Network value for money review has identified a savings target of £1.028m over 2 years to ensure that the service provides value for money. The savings target is split over the two years as:

Target 2013/14	£0.590m
Indicative Target 2014/15	£0.438m

### **Budget Variations**

3.6 The HRA budget for 2013/14 is shown in Appendix 1 with the main budget variations detailed in Table 1. Employees' costs include a 1% pay increase along with any known increments. In preparing this year's base budget, individual National Insurance contributions have been calculated, rather than the previous practice of using an average rate, which has resulted in a budget reduction of £0.142 million.

- 3.7 An inflation rate of 2% has been applied to non employee costs with the exception of some contracts where inflationary increases are agreed within the terms of the contract. All income budgets are zero based and therefore charges are estimated based on known increases in costs or inflation. The major works leasehold income budget has increased by £0.520 million to reflect a significant increase in planned major works during 2012/13 to blocks containing leaseholders. The transfer of an estimated 201 homes to Brighton & Hove Community Seaside Homes during 2012/13, increasing the number of leaseholders, has resulted in an increase in service charges income and this impact is included in the net increase in service charges of £0.260 million below.
- 3.8 A review of the Mears Partnership overheads has identified that a greater proportion of these should be treated as revenue expenditure supporting the responsive repairs and empty homes programme rather than capital expenditure supporting the investment programme. Therefore, there is a reduction in resources of £0.449 million shown below, which is simply an accounting adjustment, switching the current costs from capital to revenue.
- 3.9 The budget for capital financing costs has increased by £0.929 million reflecting an increase in repayment of capital and set aside, which represents £2.336 million of the total cost of £8.148 million.
- 3.10 The budget variances result in an increase in the overall surplus of £2.137 million which will be used to support the capital programme and is shown as 'revenue contributions to capital' within the Revenue Budget. Savings proposals, service pressures and changes to rent and fees and charges are detailed in paragraphs 3.11 to 3.18.

**Table 1: Main Budget Variations**

	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Adjusted Budget 2012/13</b>	<b>(400)</b>
<b><i>Increases in Resources:</i></b>	
Savings Proposals as detailed in paragraph 3.11	(671)
Increase in rent for dwellings (net of empty properties)	(2,532)
Net Increase in service charges	(260)
Increase in major works income from leaseholders	(520)
Budgeting at actual National Insurance contributions	(142)
Other minor variances	(63)
<b><i>Reductions in Resources:</i></b>	
Employees pay award and other inflation	473
Service Pressures as detailed in paragraph 3.12	600
Accounting adjustment – repairs overheads costs	449
Increase in capital financing costs	929
Revenue contribution to capital schemes	2,137
<b>Original Budget 2013/14</b>	<b>0</b>

**Savings & Service Pressures**

3.11 Housing Management has identified savings of £0.671 million in the following areas:

- The full year effect of the introduction of Customer Access Review phase 3 in July 2012 achieved savings of £0.130 million resulting in a reduction in Housing Management unit costs.
- A review of all HRA budgets through zero based budgeting and the centralisation of office management purchasing has achieved savings of £0.141 million.
- Reduction in the management costs of £0.030 million associated with managing temporary accommodation properties following the leasing of these properties to Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes.
- A saving of £0.300 million for the Mears responsive repairs and empty property works through service efficiencies and a reduction in unit costs.
- The gas servicing and maintenance contract with Mears and PH Jones has achieved efficiencies of £0.070 million.

3.12 Service pressures and improvements of £0.600 million are:

- Investment of £0.094m in staff to support the management of capital and service contracts and reduce the need for expenditure on specialist consultant support.
- Additional staff and associated supplies and services to support future HRA housing development and regeneration projects, including the redevelopment of the garage sites at an investment of £0.286 million.
- The introduction of benefit reductions for those tenants that are classified as under occupying and changes to disability allowance from April 2013 may have a significant impact on collection rates, so £0.070m will be included in the budget to increase the contribution to the bad debt provision.
- To implement a range of measures to tackle financial exclusion through the development of a range of specialist money and debt advice services at an estimated cost of £0.150 m to support households in financial difficulty. This investment will also help to sustain rental and service charge income collection to the HRA.

### **Rents 2013/14**

- 3.13 Rents will continue to be calculated in accordance with the government's rent restructuring guidelines. Target rents for each property are calculated based on the relative property values, bedroom size and local earnings. The act of moving tenants' current rents to the target rent is called rent convergence. In order to limit increases in current rents to reach target rents, the guidance specifies a maximum rent increase equivalent to inflation + ½% + £2 per week.
- 3.14 The draft budget assumes that Local Authorities must continue to use the September 2012 Retail Price Index of 2.6% plus 0.5% for setting rent inflationary increases and that the rent convergence date remains at 2015/16. The Government has yet to confirm these factors for 2013/14. As the majority of the rents are increasing towards target rents, this results in an **average rent increase of 4.26% for Brighton & Hove**. This is the equivalent to an increase of £3.24 per week, increasing the average rent to £79.29. However, in line with rent restructuring, all rents are moving towards their individual targets and some rents will be increasing by more or less than the average rent. The maximum increase will be approximately £6.11, with the lowest increase being £0.22 per week. Approximately 78% of tenants are in receipt of housing benefit.
- 3.15 Approximately 13% of HRA properties will not reach their target rents by the convergence date of 2015/16. This is because the increases required to reach the target rent are greater than the maximum rent increase allowed by the rent restructuring guidance (which is an increase of RPI + ½ % + £2 per week). It is therefore proposed to adopt target rents for all future empty property lettings to support bringing as many properties as possible to target rents. This will not affect current tenancies.



## Fees and Service Charges 2013/14

- 3.16 The proposed changes to fees and charges for 2013/14 are set out in Table 2. All service charges are reviewed annually to ensure full cost recovery and also to identify any service efficiencies which can be offset against inflationary increases in order to keep increases to the minimum.

**Table 2 : Proposed Increases to Fees and Service Charges**

	Number of tenants affected	Eligiblef or HB	2012/13 Average Weekly Charge	2013/14 proposed increase/ (decrease) %	2013/14 Proposed average increase/ (decrease) per week £	Comments
Grounds Maintenance	5,800	yes	£0.63	2%	£0.01	Contractual increase
Communal cleaning	5,535	yes	£2.77	0%	Nil	
Communal heating - gas	1,115	no	£9.28	(4%)	(£0.36)	See paragraph 3.17
Communal heating - electric	79	no	£7.13	tba	tba	See paragraph 3.18
TV Aerials	5052	yes	£0.56	0%	Nil	
Sheltered Services – common ways	853	yes	£8.23	2.5%	£0.21	Contractual increase and full cost recovery
Sheltered Services- laundry	827	yes	£1.26	5.7%	£0.07	Contractual increase
Water	147	no	£3.21	7%	£0.22	Estimated Contractual increase
Guest rooms	n/a	no	£8.80 per night	9.3%	£0.79	Increase for cost recovery
Supporting People	783	SP grant	£12.85	0%	Nil	Grant to remain at 2012/13 level
Garages & Car Parking	2,365	no	£8.04	0%	Nil	

### **Heating**

- 3.17 The heating and hot water service charges for residents with communal gas fired boilers are proposed to **reduce** by an overall average of 4% (£0.36 per week) from 1 April 2013, with a maximum reduction of 12.5%, £1.12 per week and a maximum increase of 5.6%, £0.41 per week. Under the current corporate gas supply contract, the unit price for gas is revised annually in October each year. From October 2013, the unit price for gas has increased by an average of 2%, for blocks with communal boilers. However, the latest review of gas consumption shows a reduction in estimated energy consumption in a number of blocks resulting from a mixture of improvements including boiler upgrades and replacements, and the installation of solar panels for hot water. This has therefore resulted in an overall average reduction in service charges by 4%.
- 3.18 Two council blocks (Elwyn Jones Court and Broadfields) are heated by electric heating systems. Service charges for these blocks will be amended from 1<sup>st</sup> April to reflect the new contract price and the latest estimates of consumption. The new contract is currently being procured and prices will not be known until March 2013, at the earliest. Indications are that the unit price may increase by as much as 27%. If this were to be the case, tenants in these blocks would receive increases of, on average, £1.93 per week. However, these tenants have benefited from fixed heating costs over the last three years and, in fact, received a 16.51% reduction in their heating charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 with no increases since.

### **Medium Term Financial Forecast**

- 3.19 The introduction of self financing has provided additional resources from the retention of all rental income and, through greater control locally, will enable longer term planning to improve the management and maintenance of council homes. Although there are additional resources available in the long term, self financing includes a cap (or limit) on the amount of HRA borrowing for capital investment by each local authority. This limit is set at £158.2 million for Brighton and Hove and the estimated total borrowing up to 31 March 2014 is £127m providing additional borrowing capacity of £31m.
- 3.20 The HRA 30 year Business Plan will be updated to reflect the proposed 2013/14 budget and reviewed to assess the opportunities for additional investment (as outlined in the Housing Investment 2012-2020: Strategy & Implementation Plan report to Housing Committee on 26 September 2012 ) and how the housing debt could be structured to accommodate these plans or possibilities. In the meantime, until a debt strategy is developed, the Budget Strategy assumes that all revenue surpluses that are not required for capital investment are set aside for the repayment of debt. This will reduce the interest payments on existing debt and provide greater headroom in the borrowing limit for future development opportunities. The current Medium Term Financial Forecasts are detailed in Appendix 2.

### **Projected HRA Revenue Reserves**

- 3.21 Table 3 details the projected revenue reserves for 2013/14 which are estimated at £3.394 million as at 31 March 2014. Movements in reserves include a contribution of £3.270 million to fund the 2012/13 capital programme, £1.500 million to fund the 2013/14 capital programme and an estimated contribution of £1.045 million from the 2012/13 revenue forecast outturn. The main variances from the 2012/13 forecast outturn as at month 7 are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.22 The 2012/13 revenue budget was set with a surplus of £0.400 million to establish an earmarked reserve to fund commissioning priorities plans when developed to tackle financial exclusion and inequality, promoting access to services and improving support for vulnerable families and adults on low incomes. These plans have now been funded within the 2013/14 budget (at an annual cost of £0.150m as detailed in paragraph 3.12) and absorbed within the underspending in 2012/13 so there is no longer a need to maintain an earmarked reserve for this purpose. Therefore the projected reserves include the release of this earmarked reserve.
- 3.23 The recommended working balance (minimum level of reserves) is £2.800 million. Therefore usable revenue reserves are projected at £0.594 million at 31 March 2014, which can be used to support one off items of expenditure.

**Table 3: Projected Unearmarked Revenue Reserves at 31 March 2014**

	<b>£'000</b>
Reserves at 1 April 2012	6,719
Less: Contribution to fund the capital programme 2012/13	(3,270)
Plus: Forecast contribution from 2012/13 Revenue Outturn	1,045
Release of earmarked reserve for commissioning priorities	400
<b>Projected reserves at 31 March 2013</b>	<b>4,894</b>
Less: Use of revenue reserves to fund the capital programme 2013/14	(1,500)
<b>Total Projected Balance at 31 March 2014:</b>	<b>3,394</b>
<b>Applied to:</b>	
Working Balance	<b>2,800</b>
Usable revenue reserves	<b>594</b>

- 3.24 Estate Development Budget reserves, which are held separately from the HRA general reserves, are £0.146 million as at 1 April 2012. These reserves relate to committed revenue and capital expenditure for schemes agreed in previous financial years that are not yet completed.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The service has undertaken consultation with residents as part of the budget setting process, based around their priorities for the service. The consultation took place at Area Housing Panels in October with a follow up session at the City Assembly meeting in November. Each session used electronic voting technology to enable residents to register

their views confidentially and see real time results. Each session was introduced with a quiz to provide background and context to the Housing Revenue Account budget.

4.2 The Area Panel sessions involved council offers presenting the case for two different budget areas with questions and discussion. This was followed by voting on which area is the most important budget priority or if they should be treated in balance. The results were as follows:

Option 1	Option 2	Resident priority
Spending money on making your homes Safe and more accessible	Spending money on making your homes warmer and more energy efficient	Both in balance
Investment in prevention (e.g. tackle problems early and services such as money advice)	React as problems arise (e.g. reactive repairs, tackle ASB as it arises)	Both in balance
Make efficiencies to reinvest in properties (e.g. close offices to support house building and investment in homes)	Maintain services as they are with no growth	Option 1

4.3 At the Citywide Assembly, in November 2012, residents looked at each of the priorities identified at Area Panels and discussed in groups their views about each area. They then identified specific areas of work that they as a group would like to see prioritised. The wider Assembly then voted on each of these areas. Priorities which received the most support included:

- Solar panels for revenue generation and reducing bills
- Review assets to see if any can be sold e.g. offices, garages or land
- Reacting and feeding back on anti social behaviour
- Increase rents for new homes and those who can afford it
- Lifts to be repaired quicker
- Draft proofing checks for homes
- Faster response when repairs are reported
- Reacting quickly when a vulnerable tenant has not been seen

4.4 The review and challenge of the options as they were developed for this paper included members from all political parties. A Scrutiny Panel considered the HRA budget strategy proposals in December 2012.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

5.1 Financial Implications are included in the main body of the report

*Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman*

*Date: 22/11/12*

Legal Implications

- 5.2 The Council is required to keep a separate Housing Revenue Account (HRA) by virtue of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Preceding any financial year, the council must formulate for that year proposals relating to i) the income from rent and charges of all property within the HRA, ii) the expenditure on repair, maintenance, supervision and management of that property and iii) any other prescribed matters. In formulating the proposals, the council must use its best assumptions and estimates to secure that on their implementation the account will not show a debit balance. Within one month of formulating the proposals it must prepare and place on deposit a statement setting out the proposals and estimates. The report is compatible with the council's statutory obligations.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Liz Woodley*

*Date: 5/12/12*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The HRA budget will fund services to people with special needs due to age, vulnerability or health needs. In order to ensure that the equality impact of the budget proposals is fully considered as part of the decision making process, an Equality Impact Assessment screening document for the HRA budget proposals has been prepared and is included elsewhere on the agenda. Full equality impact assessments have been developed on specific areas where required. As part of the Council's engagement process, a series of meetings are being held with specific communities of interest in January to explore the issues for these groups arising from the Council's budget changes

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The HRA budget will fund a range of measures that will benefit and sustain the local environment. 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 The Budget includes financial provision for Crime and disorder implications.

### Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Financial risks have been assessed throughout the development of the council's budget. The introduction of Self Financing means that all the risks inherent in running a housing business will now transfer from the government to the local authority. 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
- 5.7 A full risk register will therefore be developed in preparing the HRA Business Plan.

### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The Budget seeks to improve the quality of housing and services provided to tenants across the City.

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

- 6.1 There are no alternative options proposed.
- 6.2 Rents have been set in accordance with the Government's rent restructuring guidance. In previous years, the Housing Subsidy Determination controlled rent setting increases by removing resources from local authorities through non compliance. Although the subsidy system is now abolished increases in rents above rent convergence will be subject the rent rebate limitation which sets a limit on how much rents can be increased. Any increases above this limit result in a loss of Housing Benefit Subsidy which is payable by the HRA.
- 6.3 The government's policy for rent restructuring is to ensure rents are fair and equitable nationally so, although the authority can set rents at a lower level than rent restructuring, this will bring the rents out of line nationally and provide a lower level of resources to fund repairs, maintenance and improvements works both in this years and future financial years. For example a 1% reduction in the rental increase (saving each tenant an average of £0.76 per week in rent increase) will result in a loss of rental income of approximately £0.870 million over the next three years.

## **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires each Local Authority to formulate proposals relating to income from rent and charges, expenditure on repairs, maintenance, supervision and management and any other prescribed matters in respect of the HRA. In formulating these proposals using best estimates and assumptions the Authority must set a balanced account. This budget report provides a breakeven budget and recommends rent increases in line with current government guidance.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. HRA Forecast Outturn 2012/13 and Budget 2013/14
2. Medium Term Financial Forecasts

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

1. 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account Working Papers

## HRA Forecast Outturn 2012/13 and Budget 2013/14

	2012/13 Adjusted Budget £'000	2012/13 Forecast Outturn £'000	2013/14 Original Budget £'000
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Employees	8,518	8,121	8,543
Premises - Repairs	10,645	10,280	11,139
Premises - Other	3,442	3,296	3,443
Transport	167	154	143
Contribution to Bad Debt Provision	214	214	288
Supplies & Services	1,692	1,539	1,660
Third Party Payments	55	66	147
Support Services - From Other Departments	1,981	1,927	1,999
Revenue Contributions to Capital Schemes	18,642	19,042	20,779
Capital Financing Costs	7,219	7,219	8,148
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>52,575</b>	<b>51,858</b>	<b>56,289</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Rents Dwellings	(46,702)	(46,860)	(49,234)
Rents Car Parking / Garages	(800)	(810)	(824)
Commercial Rents	(446)	(446)	(446)
Service Charges	(4,152)	(4,342)	(4,932)
Supporting People	(465)	(484)	(465)
Other Recharges and Interest	(410)	(361)	(388)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(52,975)</b>	<b>(53,303)</b>	<b>(56,289)</b>
<b>TOTAL DEFICIT / (SURPLUS)</b>	<b>(400)</b>	<b>(1,445)</b>	<b>0</b>



## Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 2012/13 as at Month 7

The forecast outturn for month 7 is an underspend of £1.045 million, which will provide a contribution to revenue reserves to be reinvested in the Housing Revenue Account Capital Investment Programme for 2013/14.

The Employees budget is forecast to underspend by £0.397 million due to vacancies throughout the service while recruitment to the new Housing and Social Inclusion structure was being finalised. The underspend also includes underspends on pension costs as fewer staff than budgeted are members of the pension scheme.

The Premises repairs budget is forecast to underspend by £0.365 million from the following major variances:

- Responsive repairs are forecast to underspend by £0.200 million due to the continuation of the policy implemented last year to review responsive repairs within the context of the replacement programme, resulting in lower than expected values and numbers of responsive repairs.
- Further underspends on the costs of gas servicing of £0.104 million as a result of re-basing of the open book contract after the budget was set.
- Works to empty properties is also underspent by £0.138 million as a result of fewer properties than budgeted becoming empty.
- These underspends are partly off-set by an overspend on asbestos works of £0.080 million.

Premises Other is forecast to underspend by £0.146 million from the following significant variances:

- £0.054 million underspend on premises costs relating to the housing centre due to uncertainties of the operating costs at budget setting time;
- £0.050 million on electricity costs and £0.020 million on council tax payments due to fewer empty properties than expected.
- an anticipated £0.027 million underspend for decorating vouchers.

The Supplies & Services underspend of £0.153 million is also made up of a number of major variances, namely: £0.050 million for professional fees no longer required in this financial year due to the changing or delay of projects and more utilisation of in-house staff. There are also forecast underspends on computer hardware; legal fees for leaseholder tribunals and many other small underspends on supplies throughout the service. These underspends are off-set by £0.078 million additional expenditure on the financial inclusion project which aims to procure a money advice service for residents. This expenditure was approved as part of the 2012/13 budget process to be funded out of earmarked reserves but has now been funded by these underspends.

The disabled adaptations programme for Council tenants had identified an increased investment requirement of £0.400 million, which can be funded from an increase in revenue contributions to the capital programme, due to the overall underspend on the revenue budget.

Rental income is forecast to over recover by £0.158 million due to a reduction in the number of long term empty properties now that many have been transferred to Seaside Community Homes.

Service charge income from leaseholders is forecast to over-recover by £0.280 million due in the main to an unexpected increase in the 2011/12 repairs service charge for leaseholders (billed in 2012/13) due to more repairs works being carried out to leaseholders' properties during the last financial year. This is off-set by small amounts of under-recovery from various service charges totalling £0.097 million caused in part by the transfer of properties to Seaside Homes which was difficult to predict at budget setting time.

## Medium Term Financial Forecasts

<b>Revenue Budget</b>	<b>2013/14 £'000</b>	<b>2014/15 £'000</b>	<b>2015/16 £'000</b>
Expenditure			
Employees	8,543	8,426	8,444
Premises -Repairs	11,139	11,317	11,500
Other expenditure	8,680	8,067	8,128
Capital Financing	8,148	9,451	9,877
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>35,510</b>	<b>37,261</b>	<b>37,949</b>
Income			
Rental Income	(49,234)	(50,237)	(52,247)
Other Income	(7,055)	(6,355)	(6,123)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(56,289)</b>	<b>(56,592)</b>	<b>(58,370)</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS</b>	<b>20,779</b>	<b>19,331</b>	<b>20,421</b>
Allocated to :			
Revenue Contribution to Capital schemes	20,779	19,331	20,421

**Assumptions**

1. Inflation is included at 2% per annum with pay increases at 1% for 2013/14 and 2% per annum thereafter to cover pay award and pay related matters.
2. Efficiency savings are assumed at £0.738 million over 2014/15 and 2015/16.
3. Capital financing costs are projected to increase reflecting the capital repayment/set aside of £3.946m and £4.358m for 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively. The total estimated borrowing as at 31 March 2016 is £119m, against the debt cap of £158m, providing the opportunity for additional borrowing of £39m subject to affordability.
4. Rents are assumed to increase by 4% for 2014/15 and 4% for 2015/16, which includes provision for increases to meet rent convergence at target rents.
5. Other income is projected to increase by 1%. However, income from major works to leasehold properties is projected to reduce by £0.800 million from 2014/15 and reduce by a further £0.300 million in 2014/15.

The net revenue surpluses over the three year period will be used to fund the HRA Capital Programme 2013 – 2016

