



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Panel

Title:	Housing Management Panel: North Area
Date:	28 July 2016
Time:	7.00pm
Venue	Laburnum Grove, Ground Floor Lounge, Burstead Close, Brighton, BN17HX
Members:	Councillors: Hill (Chair), ; Ward Councillors for the Area, Delegates of Tenants Association in the area.
Contact:	Gregory Weaver Democratic Services Assistant 01273 29-1214 greg.weaver@brighton-hove.gov.uk

AGENDA

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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

7.00pm 4 FEBRUARY 2016

ST GEORGES HALL, NEWICK ROAD, MOULSECOOMB, BRIGHTON, BN1 9JJ

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Hill (Chair)

Representatives: Heather Hayes (Coldean), John Marchant (East Central Moulsecoomb), Bob Spacie (Laburnum Grove), Barbara Castleton (North Moulsecoomb), Tracey Cox (North Moulsecoomb), John Dean (East Central Moulsecoomb)

Non-Voting Delegates: Ray Metcalf (East Central Moulsecoomb), Jeanne Thomas (Coldean), Walter Sargison (Broadfields), Terrence Hill (Bates Estate), Jane Hunter (East Moulsecoomb), Andrew Hunter (East Moulsecoomb), Carol Hayes (East Central Moulsecoomb), Peter O'Connor (Bates Estate), John McCabe (Laburnum Grove), Glynis Shipley (Nettleton and Dudeney), Paulin Pike (Nettleton and Dudeney)

Officers: John Currell (Asset Manager), Delia Hills (Mears), Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Martin Reid (Head of Housing Strategy) Gregory Weaver (Democratic Services Assistant)

Guests:

27 APOLOGIES

27.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Mo Marsh, Tracy Johns, Kath Davis, Jenny Simmons, Paul Wright, Ray Grovel and Peter Hartley.

28 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

28.1 Amendment on page 1 from 'North Castleton' to 'North Moulsecoomb.'

28.2 Page 3 item 6, point 19.40 Barkam Road should be changed to Barcoomb Road.

29 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

29.1 Councillor Tracy Hill, Chair, announced that letter and emails regarding the report discussed at the recent consultation meeting on the 26th January have been sent out. The chair also announced that letters have been sent notifying the panel that K and T Heating Services have been awarded the gas contract.

30 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

30.1 (Item 1 - Setting start and end dates for repairs and improvements)

- 30.2 John Marchant stated that he was contact by 2 residents requesting a proper survey be taken.
- 30.3 Councillor Tracey Hill suggested Delia Hills meet John Marchant individually after the meeting concluded.
- 30.4 Heather Hayes commented on the length of time it took to get work done on properties. Some scaffolding was up for 5 months before being removed before Christmas. She noted a tenant requested a letter of complaint be written.
- 30.5 Councillor Hill stated that Ms Hayes should talk to officers outside once meeting has concluded.
- 30.6 Delia Hills apologised for timelines missing from the document.
- 30.7 (Item 2 – Scaffolding)
- 30.8 Councillor Daniel Yates, in regards to question 2, expressed surprise that there is an absence of details about time frames relating to scaffolding as the text in the contract is specific to safety issues.
- 30.9 Martin Reed stated the cost of major and planned works is monitored from the beginning and not a running total.
- 30.10 John Marchant stated if the scaffolding firm has nowhere to leave scaffolding, they will opt to leave it at the property.
- 30.11 Rachel Chasseud, Head of Tenancy Services, quoted Mears as having said; until recently they did not have a problem with scaffolding left up due to higher demand. She noted Mears have introduced new systems such as introducing penalties on contractors.
- 30.12 **AGREED**– that the report is satisfactory
- 30.13 (Item 4 – Review of RIOs)
- 30.14 Terry Hill stated that he raised this question at a resident meeting; he noted that he was not specifically worried about the resident involvement service rather specifically the officers.
- 30.15 John McCabe enquired if there will be cuts to officers or not.
- 30.16 Rachel Chasseud stated she didn't know yet, she noted the enquiry and offered to respond in due course pending the findings of the report.
- 30.17 **AGREED**-that the report is satisfactory
- 30.18 (Item 5 – State Development Budget)
- 30.19 Bob Spacie stated he attended a meeting with Health and Safety to remove a stud wall and input a shower. He noted a complete misinterpretation of the bad was what was concluded as RIO's do not understand buildings in which residents live. He

stated that he would like to see a resident attend meetings where bids that go out for consultation are discussed so as to clarify the proposal.

- 30.20 Rachel Chasseaud agreed that this sounds sensible and enquired if residents write the bids.
- 30.21 Bob Spacie stated that they do; however the misinterpretation that occurs changes the cost as officers end up deciding what residents are bidding for. He confirmed that officers are there to perform a feasibility assessment.
- 30.22 Rachel Chasseaud agreed with the suggestion for the presence of residents.
- 30.23 Dave Eve stated, in regards to point B, that the EDB form was for 1 dorm in one block, he also stated that as the doors used are made of aluminium and glass they do not provide much in the way of security, he enquired of the possibility of being provided sliding doors akin to those provided at St John's House.
- 30.24 Becky Purnell stated the one sliding door she was aware of at Essex Place however it is due to be placed with a normal doors due to fire regulations. She noted that after all the checks had been done in March 2015, a recommendation was made to Housing Committee that both front and rear entrance doors need to be made of steel which would also need a new door entry system the costs of which escalated to circa £50000 putting it beyond the reach of the real estate budget. She stated that there is a door replacement and door replacement programme that is being invested in and she will have more information in April.
- 30.25 Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy, stated more consultation was needed with leaseholders regarding new steel doors.
- 30.26 Rachel Chasseaud asked Becky Purnell about how the process is managed and reviewed.
- 30.27 Becky Purnell stated that it was the group's remit to look at the process, she noted that Central area reps felt strongly that a review of EDB was required. She also stated that there will be a task and finish group to also look at the process.
- 30.28 **AGREED**-that the report is satisfactory
- 30.29 (Item 6 – Charges to Tenants)
- 30.30 Bob Spacie attributed issues to bad communication between residents and officers as quotes given by officers to fix a fish pond diminished from £3400 to £2000 over the course of a year, residents were able to fix the pond themselves at a reduced cost of £400. He stated that the given example was a case where BHCC were not assuring value for money.
- 30.31 Martin Reid stated that risk assessment for legionella is important. He noted that there is a city wide issue surrounding legionella and that it wasn't just Laburnum Grove that was looked at.
- 30.32 John Marchant enquired when the last case of Legionella was reported.

- 30.33 Martin Reid stated he had no information at hand.
- 30.34 Bob Spacie stated that he scoured the internet and found no report of legionella outside of ponds.
- 30.35 Councillor Daniel Yates stated that Brighton and Sussex hospital was charged a million pounds due to a death attributed to Legionella to highlight the seriousness of legionella.
- 30.36 **AGREED**-that the report is satisfactory
- 30.37 (Item 7 – Competitive tendering for EDB Work)
- 30.38 John Marchant enquired if only Mears tendered for the work and further enquired why BHCC had not tendered out to the cheapest company.
- 30.39 Rachel Chasseaud stated that Mears have the contract however they may want to sub contract some work out to other companies.
- 30.40 Bob Spacie stated in defence of Mears that they do it at cost. He noted that their costing for EDB jobs is quite good.
- 30.41 **AGREED**-that the report is satisfactory
- 30.42 (Item 8 – Washing Machines)
- 30.43 Heather Hayes stated there was an issue that there was a lack of services as the machines are used by many flats. She noted that often they will be without use for weeks and enquired if there was going to be an improvement in the servicing of washing machines.
- 30.44 Rachel Chasseaud stated that she would expect that, as part of the contract, they would be regularly serviced.
- 30.45 John McCabe stated he had put forward a business plan for the CIC to run this. He explained that he hadn't seen a copy of the tender document and noted that CIC could deliver this for a lot less.
- 30.46 Rachel Chasseaud stated she was unaware of this and would look in to it.
- 30.47 John McCabe requested suggestions of new processes to save money as things such as the Housing Management Consultative Committee.
- 30.48 Bob Spacie noted stated that he wanted a decision on the consultation.
- 30.49 Martin Reid stated that the survey is meant to take in everyone's views; he noted that it would be best practice to wait for the consultation to finish.
- 30.50 Bob Spacie enquired if every resident will receive a copy of the survey or if it would only be provided to people who turn up to meetings.

- 30.51 Councillor Daniel Yates stated that there was no point having a tenant's participation structure if the Council did not use it. He noted that he has attended face to face meetings, he furthered that it was possible BHCC may not agree with tenant's, if this were the case then consideration would be needed on choosing a different course.
- 30.52 Rachel Chasseaud stated that it was not the case that there was an extended consultation in order to get a different answer. She emphasised the importance of a tenant participation structure and highlighted that the tenant representative's voice was not diminished by those who choose to not attend meetings but wanted to simultaneously be involved in decision making; a position declared by the regulator.
- 30.53 Dave Eve enquired if it would be better to start with the survey.
- 30.54 Rachel Chasseaud agreed and apologised for the mishandling of the situation at the beginning. She stated that officers had nothing to gain from a specific outcome.
- 30.55 John McCabe criticised the process.
- 30.56 **AGREED**-that the report is satisfactory
- 30.57 (Item 1 on 3 star – Homing in)
- 30.58 Becky Purnell explained the newly introduced 3 star system.
- 30.59 **AGREED**-that the report be noted.
- 30.60 (Item 2 on 3 star – Timing of meetings)
- 30.61 Becky Purnell stated she would welcome the views of the panel regarding proposals to spread the date of panels over the year more fairly. She proposed to replace Area Panel meetings in January with March.
- 30.62 John McCabe has stated that area panels were convened to consider this, he noted that 1 month to consider the budget would not be long enough.
- 30.63 Becky Purnell stated that area panels would get further information in December.
- 30.64 **AGREED**- To put on the online diary.

31 DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 31.1 John Currell presented the Draft Asset Management Strategy report
- 31.2 Terry Hill enquired if this linked in with the discussion held at the Planning HRA.
- 31.3 John Currell stated that it was a long term income and expenditure program not a capital program, he noted that it will go to Housing Committee in March.
- 31.4 Terry Hill enquired what was rejected.
- 31.5 John Currell stated that the HRA capital program was rejected.

- 31.6 Martin Reed stated that the program looks at how we are going to spend on investment in new homes, he noted that this was subject to the financial management plan. He also stated that people can still have input in the strategy.
- 31.7 John McCabe enquired if there was a possibility of having solar panels.
- 31.8 John Currell stated that there are commitments in this program to help residents reduce bills, there are already 300 houses with solar panels. He noted that where it didn't provide value for money, it was not decided upon.
- 31.9 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

32 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 32.1 Rachel Chasseaud presented the Quarter 3 Performance Report highlighting that rent collection is generally good, ASBO performance is good, there is a mistake at the bottom of the which should read, "quarter 3", finally in response to tenancy fraud 19 properties have so far been taken back. She stated that by the time of print, the full details hadn't been finalised, there will be a more substantial report going to housing and new homes committee and it will be circulated once it has been uploaded to the website. She furthered that residents will receive the full report in April.
- 32.2 Dave Eve stated his surprise about the number of tenancy fraud cases.
- 32.3 Rachel Chasseaud stated that there were some cases where they fraud was suspected but often no actual case was found. She noted the positive fact that more people are reporting cases of suspected fraud and as a result more investment cases are being chased.
- 32.4 **RESOLVED**-That the report be noted.

33 REVIEW REPORT

- 33.1 Becky Purnell presented the Review Report explaining that the resident involvement review in 2012 has to be reviewed and assessed every 3 years. She further explained that some work has started such as residents reviewing the code of conduct, that residents are experiencing difficulty recruiting new panel members; out of 1450 tenants and 200 leaseholders most affirm that they would be happy to provide a view via a comprehensive survey but not to attend a meeting. She noted there will be an update at the next July Area Panel.
- 33.2 Jane McCloughlan enquired by what medium will the survey become available.
- 33.3 Becky Purnell stated surveys will become available by phone interview or online.
- 33.4 Jane Hunter stated that area panel meetings often get bogged down in irrelevant chat as a result there is a short amount of time to discuss any other business at the end of the agenda.
- 33.5 Becky Purnell suggested that residents and officers arrive half an hour before in advance in order to take on concerns of residents 1-2-1.

33.6 Rachel Chasseaud agreed that an early start for officers could be achieved.

33.7 **AGREED** – that the report be noted.

34 CITY WIDE REPORTS

34.1 **AGREED** – that the reports be noted.

35 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

35.1 John Marchant stated that the attendance figure at the recent City Wide Conference was roughly 49-50.

The meeting concluded at 21:10.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

Items from the North Tenant Only meeting held on 03/05/16

1. Setting start and end dates for repairs and improvements

The meeting felt that residents still don't receive clear and up-to-date information about when repair and improvement work will commence and when it will be completed. It is understood that sometimes these dates have to be moved. However, it is reasonable for residents to be advised of planned start and finish dates, and for them to be updated when these dates have to be changed.

This was previously raised in the Blue Pages for the Area Panels on 10th December 2015 and 4th February 2016, but the meeting felt that this matter is still not fully resolved.

Action 1: III (3 stars) *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and request what procedures are in place to inform residents of changes to start and end dates for planned work.*

Action 2: I (1 star) *When local Associations know of work that has been delayed, they can follow this up on behalf of residents to request up-to-date information. If this is not provided, a formal complaint can be made.*

Response from Scott Lunn, General Building Manager, Tel: 01273 290282

As previously stated, timescales for individual projects are subject to change depending on need and overall assessment. There can be various reasons for this which can be explained as and when this happens such as any urgent work identified or budget restraints. The majority of city wide projects are also subject to statutory leaseholder consultation and we are required by law to ensure we have taken full regard to any leaseholder observations before we can issue any task order or instruction to the contractors. Therefore, no confirmation of start dates can be issued until the leaseholder consultation is completed.

Where a project or repairs are not subject to leaseholder consultation, there can also be instances where priorities can change. Where this happens we will endeavour to inform tenant representatives and explain the reasons for the changes.

We are committed to improve our communications with tenants and where any specific update for repairs, or an individual project, or stream of work is required, you can also request information using the agreed tenant representative process.

Please note that for all Area Panel meetings a member of the Property & Investment Team will be in attendance along with Mears where questions can also be raised regarding possible delays to works.

2. Scaffolding

The meeting discussed the responses that had been given to their previous queries, but felt that there are still instances when scaffolding is left up for longer than it needs to be, and that there were two outstanding questions relating to payments to scaffolding contractors and fines imposed.

Action: III

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and request the following information:

- a. Is Mears charged for scaffolding by the job (irrespective of how long the scaffolding is left up) or is there a charge per day, week or month?*
- b. Has Mears fined any of the scaffolding contractors for leaving scaffolding up after Mears have requested that it be taken down? What is the procedure for imposing such fines?*

Response from Delia Hills, Mears Resident Liaison Manager, Tel: 01273 574354

2a – Mears are charged in accordance with contract rates and set framework agreements with contractors for the supply and erection of scaffold. This is a one off charge regardless of length of time that the scaffold is erected.

2b – Scaffold contractors are instructed to strike a scaffold on completion of works Post Inspection. Contractors have two weeks in which to strike, if they fail to meet the set deadline date they are charged by Mears for any compliance checks that Mears scaffold inspectors carry out. To date the duration from instructed to strike has been achieved by all contractors and there has not been a requirement to charge for any compliance checks.

3. Estate Development Budget - fencing

The meeting discussed the response from Mears, which stated EDB work sometimes has to be deprioritised so that 'boundary' fencing work (with health & safety or vulnerability issues) can be done.

Barbara reported on a discussion she had had, where she was told that there is a separate budget and a separate team responsible for 'boundary work'.

Action: III

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel, and clarification be requested on whether 'Boundary' fencing work is done by the same team as EDB fencing work, or by a different team.

Response from Delia Hills, Mears Resident Liaison Manager, Tel: 01273 574354

To clarify, there is a separate health and safety fencing budget, however the same Mears operatives that undertake EDB fencing carry out the boundary health and safety work.

4. Review of Resident Involvement Officers

Residents stated that they had previously been told there would be a review of Resident Involvement Officers. The response in the Blue pages states that this will be a review of the whole Resident Involvement structure and that it will be carried out by the Resident Involvement Team.

It was felt that the review cannot be independent if it is carried out by the officers themselves.

Action: II (2 stars) *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel, and to ask for an update on the proposed review.*

Response from Hilary Edgar, Housing Services Operations Manager, Tel: 01273 293250

All aspects of Resident Involvement in Housing are being reviewed. This includes council led groups (Area Panels, Service Improvement Groups), resident led groups (Tenant and Resident Associations), communications, the Resource Centre, Estates Development Budget and community rooms. The specific objectives within this review are to:

- Assess how effective the current Resident Involvement framework is.
- Find out what the impact of this work is, what the benefits are and how it links to service improvements.
- Whether resident involvement work is cost effective.
- Make recommendations, based on the above, that support positive outcomes for residents, service improvements and are good value for money.

To ensure there is consistency across the review each part is following a similar approach – assessing what the current process is, finding out what residents think about it, analysing its cost and effectiveness and whether improvements can be made. In all of this, the Resident Involvement Team's role will also be reviewed.

Tracy John, Head of Housing, is leading a series of themed meetings with the Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group throughout the length of this project. This group will have sight of, and comment upon, the different strands of work and be involved in making recommendations to the Area Panels and the Housing & New Homes Committee based on the outcome of the review.

Other resident groups will be involved in those parts of the review that fall within their area of expertise e.g. the Estates Development Budget (EDB) Panel will be involved in a review of EDB, the Business & Value for Money Service Improvement Group will be involved in reviewing issues within that theme. Officers will also be encouraged to get the views of 'noninvolved' residents when carrying out this work.

An early piece of work in this project was a survey about resident involvement. This was included in the Spring edition of Homing In and was sent to all residents for whom we have an email address. We received 618 responses to the email surveys and one from the Homing In route.

It is hoped that the wide scope of this project, the range of opportunities for residents to get involved will lead to a thorough and fair review of Resident Involvement.

5. Pricing policy

The meeting felt that there is still a general problem with Mears' charges being very high. Three examples were given: replacement of a greenhouse in East Central Moulsecoomb area; removal of a silver birch tree in Broadfields; the water feature filter at Laburnum Grove.

The meeting felt that this could be resolved through resident involvement in the preparation of the specification for work and the pricing for each job. It was also felt that this would ensure that the specifications for EDB work fully match the proposals originally put together by Associations.

It was also suggested that the EDB bidding process would be more effective if the specifications and quotes were put together before the meeting

Associations receive details of all the bids in advance so they can discuss them. This would need to be at least one week before the EDB meeting, but 2 weeks would be ideal.

Action: III

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel with a view to discussing the following proposal for all EDB bids.

That representatives of Residents Associations should:

- a. be involved in the preparation of specifications for EDB work to ensure that officers fully understand the nature of the work requested;*
- b. be invited to view the quotes for work, so they can query and/or clarify any instances where they feel the quote is too high or too low;*
- c. receive a full list of EDB bids for their area at least one week (but ideally 2 weeks) before the EDB meeting.*

Response from Keith Dadswell, Responsive & EDB Project Manager, Tel: 01273 574382

Upon submitting a main bid a series of checks are undertaken prior to Mears involvement these include Property & Investment's programmed and capital works checks. Mears receive the approved bids and using the information provided, site visits and meetings with tenants associations (TAs) compile a costing to undertake proposed works. The level of information provided by the TAs to support main bids is improving year on year and Mears encourages TAs to be involved in the specifications, designs of any potential main bids.

The majority of EDB work carried out is in accordance with contract schedule of rates, any specialist works will be specified and sent to Mears' subcontractors for quotation as per contract requirements. The costs are then presented at the EDB Area Panels. It would be possible for the TAs to be aware of the applied costs prior to Area Panel however Mears would require the bids to be received sooner to allow for any changes or to obtain alternative costs if the TA is in disagreement.

In response to item c) Resident Associations should receive a full list of EDB bids for their area at least one week (but ideally 2 weeks) before the EDB meeting.

6. Washing machines

The previous contract for provision of laundries expired 6 months ago, and there is still no clear information about what the council plans to do next.

Residents previously raised concerns about the proposed switch from a standard charge included with the rent to a card payment system. However, there doesn't seem to be any clear resolution to this.

Residents are also not clear about what the process is for starting a new contract, although it is understood that a final decision has been made by officers.

Action: III

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and to ask the following questions:

- a) How much has the consultation on this matter cost?*
- b) Has a final decision been made about the future of the laundry service, or are there still ongoing discussions?*
- c) If a decision has been made, what is it?*
- d) If a decision hasn't yet been made, what options are being considered?*

Response from Robert Nayan, Project Manager, Tel: 01273 293021

a) There has been no direct financial cost incurred during this consultation besides officer time and administration.

b) The future of this service is that the council will continue to provide laundry facilities in blocks which have such facilities. This was communicated to residents and at the Senior Housing Action Group (SHAG) during the recent consultation.

The procurement for the new contract is underway and we anticipate an appointment of a new service provider by the end of December 2016 and to start the new contract on 1 April 2017.

c) The decision has been made by the council that the amount for the laundry service for senior housing residents is to remain within the tenant's service charge. General needs laundries have different systems in place.

We are returning to the SHAG meeting on the 13th July 2016 to present the decision reached by the Housing Leadership Team. We remain committed to this agreement.

7. Future of Homing In

There was concern that the paper version of Homing In might be withdrawn in favour of an online publication, and that this would exclude residents who do not have computers.

Action: III

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and to ask if any guarantee can be given that this is not being actively considered.

Response from Diane Hughes, Performance & Improvement Manager, Tel: 01273 293841

The Central Area Panel representatives have previously raised concerns about Homing In and a three star response was included in the report packs for Area Panels held in November and December 2015.

Further to this response the Homing In Editorial Board are now carrying out the review alongside council officers. Without prejudging the outcome of such a review we know that some residents may not have access to the internet or computers and we are not currently considering withdrawing a paper copy for all residents. However in order to achieve value for money it is important that we look for opportunities to increase our online readership and we will be investigating ways to achieve this.

8. Sub-contractor overcharging

The meeting discussed the money that Mears had been overcharged by a sub-contractor. The figures of £500,000 and £300,000 were given.

It is Mears' responsibility to ensure this money is repaid to the council and recent reports state that only £140,000 has been repaid to date.

It was also reported that the council auditors are now going to scrutinise other aspects of the Mears contract.

Action: III

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and details be requested on how much of the overcharged money has been paid back, and what action is being taken to recover the full amount.

Response from Glyn Huelin, Business & Performance Manager, Tel: 01273 293306

In May 2015 the council's in-house contract compliance team discovered overpayments were being made to one sub-contractor working on responsive repairs. Since then housing staff have been working proactively with Mears and the council's internal auditors to put the service back on track.

The council has taken steps to recover the overpayments owed to the council and improve the controls and inspection regime with our contractor and their sub-contractors. The council has received a total repayment of £513,113 related to the overcharge. This is made up of a sum of £274,866 for repairs post April 2014 and a sum £238,247 relating to the repairs undertaken by this subcontractor before April 2014.

Mears provide a comprehensive responsive repairs, planned maintenance and major works service for council homes across the city under a 10-year contract. Around 20% of the annual contract is responsive repairs and approximately 4% of the annual cost relates to sub-contracted responsive repairs. The overcharging was isolated to a single sub-contractor working on a small proportion of responsive repairs.

The sub-contractor involved with the overpayments no longer works with Mears and the council is now working with Mears to strengthen processes and procedures to prevent any reoccurrence.

This includes reducing the amount of sub-contracted work (currently around 30% of responsive repairs contracted work) and having a new quality assurance manager within the Mears Team.

The Housing & New Homes Committee reviewed this in January 2016 and has requested a bi-annual report to members of the committee to make sure that the contract is operating effectively.

An update report will also be shared with Area Panels.

A follow-up audit will also be carried out in this financial year.

9. Wheelie bins and rubbish

Residents in East Central and North Moulsecoomb areas are leaving their wheelie bins out from week to week, which leads to lots of unhygienic waste being scattered over the street.

This is despite guidelines stating that bins should only be put out on the street when they are due to be collected and should be put back on the resident's property when they have been emptied.

Carol, from East Central Moulsecoomb, has contacted CityClean and the Neighbourhood Officer about this problem, but no action is being taken.

Peter said he has also contacted the Traffic Management Team as wheelie bins are also obstructing other people's use of the pavement.

Action: II (*It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and details be requested about what action is being taken when residents leave their wheelie bins on the street.*

This request and question is in regards to your City Clean service and not for Housing Services. Your enquiry should be directed to:

Cityclean, Brighton & Hove City Council
Hollingdean Depot, Upper Hollingdean Road, Brighton, BN1 7GA
After receiving your letter they aim to respond within 5 working days

The contact centre: (01273) 292929
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: 9am - 5pm
Wednesdays: 10am - 5pm
Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays: closed

cityclean@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

You will receive an automatic response to confirm we they receive your email.
They then aim to respond to you within ten working days

In December 2015 Area Panel pages, it was requested that in the future, associations who have queries about litter bins should get in touch with City Clean directly using the contact details at the end of those Blue Pages or the online reporting form.

10. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

There seems to be an increase in the number of HMOs in the Moulsecoomb area but official data provided to resident's states that only 10% of properties are HMOs.

It was thought that this might be because the data only includes HMOs listed under the new licensing scheme, and not those that have existed for longer.

Action: II *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and request full details of the HMOs in the area, including those that existed before the new licensing scheme came into effect.*

This request is in regards to Private Sector Housing Service and not for Council Housing Services. Your enquiry should be directed to:

Private Sector Housing
Room 217, Ground Floor, Hove Town Hall, Hove, BN3 4AH

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

Phone: (01273) 293156

11. Fumes from boiler outlets

The resident of 125 Staplefield Drive is being affected by the fumes from her neighbour's boiler outlet pipe. She has reported this to Mears, but they just say the neighbour has to report it. She has spoken to several other officers, but no action has been taken.

Action: II *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel.*

Response from Kevin Wilson, Gas Contracts & Compliance Manager, Tel: 01273 294649

Our gas contractor K&T heating have attended and assessed the boiler flues at both properties. Both flue positions conform to current gas safety regulations however due to possible nuisance of water vapour from the boiler flue at 125 Staplefield Drive Brighton & Hove City Council have approved works to have the flue extended to a satisfactory termination point.

12. Boiler service contract

The Resident of 71b Newick Road recently had their boiler serviced. They had problems with the pressure dropping and asked the operative to check the radiators, but they were told this wasn't part of the service.

They then noticed that there was a small leak on one of their radiators that may be causing the problem. Another plumber came out to fix it, who said that the radiators should have been checked as part of the service and that the pressure on the boiler had not been reset.

Action: II *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel with a request for a list of tasks that should be included in a boiler service.*

Response from Kevin Wilson, Gas Contracts & Compliance Manager, Tel: 01273 294649

Items that should be checked as part of an annual gas safety check would be:

- 1) Performance/ safety of landlord's appliances including flue analysis of combustion products
- 2) Pressure of system
- 3) Condition/ operation of radiators and other system components
- 4) Checking settings of controls suit the needs of the customer
- 5) Verbal communication with customers to identify difficulties experienced with the gas installation
- 6) Initial/ final soundness test to confirm integrity of pipework
- 7) Inspection of any flue with void/ roof spaces
- 8) Testing of 'hardwired' smoke/ CO alarms
- 9) Visual inspection /safety check of tenants own appliances (cookers, gas fires)

13. Window replacements on Bates Estate

Window replacements are scheduled for Bates Estate for 2017. However, work on the old Selsfield Drive Housing Office site is due to start in October 2016, and residents will be adversely affected by the noise and dust.

The Residents Association made a request on 31st March for the properties that will be most affected (1 24 and 25–36 Selsfield Drive) to have their window replacements brought forward.

No response has been received so far.

Action: II *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel to ask if this proposal is being considered.*

Response from Scott Lunn, General Building Manager, Property & Investment 01273 290282

Bates estate windows phase 1 is in the provisional planned window replacement programme for 2019-20 at present, but may be moved if budget /circumstances change. The estate would probably take at least 3 - 4 years funding to complete all blocks. Therefore it would be difficult to justify undertaking window replacement to one individual block at this time although we are committed to ongoing repairs where necessary.

The contractors working on the site at Selsfield Drive will be part of the 'considerate contractor scheme and under CDM2015 regulations will be required to consider any potential risks to local residents. The Regeneration Team will also conduct community engagement to allow local residents to voice any concerns.

14. Front Door at Dudeney Lodge

The entrance door at Dudeney Lodge is not a security door and does not shut properly, particularly when it is windy. This makes residents feel very insecure.

The Residents Association has asked for a new door and has been told that they will have to wait 14 years.

Action: II *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel to ask if the matter can be reconsidered.*

Response from Jamie Smith, Electrical Engineer, Tel: 01273 293350

The door that is currently installed is 'Multisteel' which is already a security door. Multisteel are an accredited Secured by Design member. Secured by Design works with the industry and test homes to create high level security standards, responding to trends in crime, and has given input on a number of key standards. The principles of the scheme have been proven to reduce the risk of crime and the fear of crime. Multisteel doors also comply with the current Building Regulation Approved Document Q security element.

In addition to the Secured by Design New Homes standard, the following points are considered necessary and must be included within the Senior Housing and blocks with vulnerable and elderly tenants.

Main Communal Entrance Door

- Door sets should comply with section 7 in the new homes document. Section 7 states "front & rear doors with a robust locking system that should always be engaged when you leave the house".
- Access control with visual or audio verification ideally linked to each individual unit.
- Electronic door locking release by withdrawal or magnetic release Secured by Design
- Automatic door closer
- The internal lobby access door locking release to be part of the master suited system with a door closer

Both Nettleton and Dudeney Court comply with these guidelines.

We have also looked at the repairs history and it appears that the existing doors were installed under an EDB Bid December 2010 to January 2011. Multisteel doors have a twenty year warranty and as these have only been installed for 6 years, there is still 14 years remaining on the warranty.

Current policy when replacing main entrance doors to high rise (or sometimes medium rise) blocks are to install secure by design Multisteel units. This was passed through Housing Committees on the 4 March 2015 which discussed increasing security at

blocks of flats. So if the Multisteel door was to be replaced it would be replaced with another Multisteel door.

As the door still has 14 years left on the warranty and BHCC would only be replace the existing Multisteel door for a Multisteel door, the position to not replace remains the same.

The closing of the door is not an issue with the door directly. It is attributed to the location of the door, the automatic door opener operation which catches the door in adverse weather (wind) which is affecting it.

I visited the site on 23 February 2016 when there were high winds. On Inspection, the doors at Dudeney closed every time, and the doors at Nettleton closed 6 times out of 7. The door was approximately an inch from securing on the maglocks, which I was able to manually pull closed to secure. In order ensure the door at Nettleton is closing every time a job was raised for the closer strength to be adjusted to help reduce the risk of it not closing fully, mechanically.

The automatic door openers can be adjusted on close and open rate, however, can be difficult to set for every type of wind/ weather condition. If it is adjusted to close on a windy day it could result in the door closing too aggressively on a calm day, which could create further complaints of a noisy slamming door which closes too quickly.

15. Health and Safety regulations in Seniors Housing

Residents in Seniors Housing have been asked to remove pots, paths and tools on the grounds of Health and Safety. The meeting felt that this was making it very hard for people trying to run gardening projects that involve the residents.

Action: II *It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel to ask what is being done to ensure there is a fair balance between making sure garden spaces are safe, and giving residents the opportunity to be involved and creative in their gardens.*

Response from Peter Huntbach, Older Persons Housing Manager TI: 01273 293248

We recently discussed gardening with our tenant representatives at the last Seniors Housing Action Group (SHAG). We share the same aim of having safely managed communal gardens where residents can enjoy gardening. We really value our tenant gardeners. Seniors housing have helped with purchasing garden tools across the city to support their good work.

This said, we are aware of tensions that can arise over health and safety management. We agreed with SHAG representatives to hold an awareness session on health and safety as a way of fostering better ways of working between officers and representatives. Our corporate Health and Safety Team are working with our Seniors Housing Team and are planning to hold this awareness session in July. We hope that this will help us get the fair balance that is requested.

1. Roof repair at Highden, Westmount and Crownhill

A repair to roof doors at HWC took 2 years to complete, and there were a number of problems about the way these repairs were handled.

Action: *III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

Response from Delia Hills, Mears Ltd Complaints & Resident Liaison Team, Tel: 01273 574354

Please accept our apologies for our failure to stop water ingress through the roof doors in 2014. Our records show in April 2014 our sub-contractor attended to fit a new door and frame leading to the roof from the tank room. However, two years later in January 2016 our operative attended to a report of a fault and he reported that rain was again coming through the double door on the roof and repairs were completed on the 17th February 2016. Please be advised that the sub-contractor who attended in 2014 is no longer employed by Mears.

Mears have recently mobilised a direct roofing labour force and a roofing supervisor, this has resulted in greater control over available resources and a quicker turnaround on roofing repairs. In addition Mears have invested in alternative working at height access equipment enabling early diagnosis and an increase in first time fixes on roofing works whilst eliminating the need for many scaffolds.

An increase in direct trade operatives has enabled Mears to reduce their reliance on sub-contractors. Remaining subcontractors work streams are closely monitored and all contractors partake in a monthly review meeting where all operational key elements are discussed (performance, Health and Safety, quality etc).

2. Communication with leaseholders

Communication between the Council and leaseholders about major work, which will incur expense for leaseholders, is poor and needs improving.

Action: *III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

**Response from Perrin Horne, Customer Services Manager Property & Investment
Tel: 01273 294641**

For residents who have bought leases on our council homes there is a responsibility to contribute to any improvements and repairs, carried out by the council, subject to the terms of their lease. The council believes the works carried out to council homes are necessary to maintain and improve the stock. We are acting on our professional structural, surveying and legal advice in complying with our obligations as a landlord to provide accommodation that meets specific decency standards and the terms of our leases in keeping the buildings in repair.

Consultation with leaseholders is a statutory requirement and we are obliged to adhere to the tight deadlines and requirements made in law in consultation with leaseholders. The Property & Investment Team can confirm that we have always maintained a high standard of consultation with leaseholders and continue to make improvements to how we communicate.

During the consultation we now offer one to one appointments with individual leaseholders to discuss the works, the costs associated and where requested, to discuss payment options. We also hold and arrange regular meetings while works are progressing to discuss any issues arising from the work. Alongside this, leaseholders and tenants receive monthly updates via newsletters.

Finally, we have put in place a range of flexible payment options for resident leaseholders who have difficulty in paying for high cost works.

3. Resident Inspectors

The Resident Inspectors have asked for permission to inspect major repair work on all properties. At the moment they are only allowed to inspect empty properties.

Action: *III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

Response from Glyn Huelin, Partnering Business Manager Property & Investment, Tel: 01273 293306

The council has been working with the Home Service Improvement Group who led the resident inspectors' project over recent years to develop their role and opportunities for residents to provide feedback on the work of Mears and the Property & Investment Team.

The resident inspectors have recently been visiting tenants and resident associations across the city to discuss their role, get feedback on the Mears service and ask for further ideas for the Resident Inspectors to look into. The group are also working on looking at major work to senior housing conversions (studio to one bed flats) and will be carrying out a site visit in the coming weeks.

In past years the Resident Inspectors (previously called Resident Assessors) had focussed on empty property inspections. Since the revitalisation of the project, new terms of reference and name change, it has been open for discussion what areas of the Partnership could be inspected. There are suggestions being made as to what else the group might do and this is being prioritised by the Resident Inspectors to make the best use of the resident's and officer's time.

If residents are interested in getting involved in the resident inspectors programme they are welcome to attend the meetings and can contact Hannah Barker, Resident Involvement Officer 01273 296639. The dates of the Resident Inspector meetings are also online in the Resident Involvement calendar, <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/council-housing/resident-involvement-meeting-diary>

Three star items from the West Tenant Only meeting held on 12/05/16

2. Scaffolding

There was concern that scaffolding is still being left up for long periods of time. This issue has been raised before, and assurances given that scaffolding would be taken down immediately work is finished, but this is not happening (there have been recent cases in both Downland Court and Knoll).

Some specific issues were raised:

- a) Who is paying? Are contractors charging the Council for the unnecessary time that scaffolding is up after a job is completed?*
- b) When scaffolding is up the house contents insurance of affected properties is often invalid. You are only informed that you need to check this if you are in the flat where work is taking place. This means flats affected by scaffolding (e.g. a ground floor flat when work is happening on the flat above) may not realise they have no insurance.*
- c) If work undertaken by the Council invalidates an individual's insurance, who is responsible for any losses they might incur as a result?*
- d) If you have house contents insurance with the Council, is your insurance still invalid while scaffolding is up?*

Action: *III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

Response from Keith Dadswell, Mears Responsive & EDB Project Manager, Tel: 01273 574382

Mears have been working very hard in Partnership with the council to tackle issues with scaffolding raised by residents.

I have attended the Home Group and discussed the new process which monitors and tracks all scaffold and the length of time it is in place.

- a) The council are charged in accordance with contract rates and set framework agreements with contractors for the supply and erection of scaffold. This is a one off charge to the council and does not change or alter due to the length of time it is in place.
- b) Mears are committed to inform all residents before scaffold is erected. The only exception is in an emergency situation. Included in the notices is the following advice on contents insurance..... "Please inform your contents insurance provider that scaffolding is now being erected around the block. Claims may prove invalid if this declaration is not made".

With Major Works and Planned Works all affected residents receive this communication, however, with responsive repair works as you correctly state some residents that need to inform their contents insurers do not currently receive this information. Therefore, the

Responsive Repairs Manager Keith Dadswell will change the current communications process so that all relevant parties are informed.

c) Under the terms of the tenancy agreement, a tenant is responsible for their household insurance. It is therefore the tenants responsibility to contact (whoever their insurers are) to let them know that scaffold is in place. It may not be valid whilst scaffold is in place if you do not inform them.

d) Contents insurance will not be invalidated unless you do not let the insurers know there is scaffold in place.

3. Scaffolding and disabled access

A lack of consultation when scaffolding was erected in Clarendon & Ellen has caused problems with access for people with disabilities. This is not acceptable, and in future there must be proper consultation before any major works are done to ensure that the requirements of people with disabilities are covered.

Action: *III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

Response from Allen Shaw, Mears Project Manager, Tel: 01273 321376

We apologise if residents feel they have not been properly consulted on the erection of scaffolding. We do endeavour to consult with residents on all aspects of the project through our pre-commencement meeting. Beyond that, we communicate through regular newsletters and coffee mornings, however we recognise that these were interrupted for a time whilst further leasehold consultation was undertaken. We apologise if the cessation of the newsletters and coffee mornings has contributed to this issue in anyway.

On the 21st June, Paul Harrison (site manager) and Rob Daley (project co-ordinator) walked the site; however they could not find any areas where scaffolding is causing an obstruction for wheelchairs or persons with limited mobility. So, please can contact the team (contact details given below) and let the team know the access issues you are experiencing and they will try to resolve for you as soon as possible.

- Site Office - 01273 321376 (Message facility available)
- Sandra Cooke - 07872-672041 (Resident Liaison Officer).

4. Damp

When properties have severe damp problems a few bricks are taken out of the wall as part of the repairs process. Properties in Knoll have been left like this for up to 14 months, causing problems for the residents as rain and drafts come into the house. If residents don't constantly chase up the repair, it just gets left.

It was asked why these repairs are not being dealt with more swiftly and if there was a quicker and less disruptive way of resolving the problem.

Action: *III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

Response from Mears Danny Reddin, Mears Project Manager, Tel: 01273 574354

We are very sorry to hear that bricks have removed and are yet to be replaced in the Knoll area of the city. Danny Reddin, Mears Project Manager, has confirmed that following the unprecedented rainfall levels in the winter of 2013/14, we removed bricks from properties in the Knoll area in order to inspect the condition of the cavity wall insulation. Danny was unaware that some bricks have yet to be replaced and has therefore requested the addresses of these properties so that he can personally arrange for this to be rectified immediately. Please call the Mears Damp Team on 0800-052-6140 with the addresses affected.

5. Estate inspections

A number of points were raised about Estate Inspections:

- *It is different in different areas, but some Associations are not kept informed of when estate inspections are happening and are not given the opportunity to get involved.*
- *After an estate inspection, Resident Association representatives are given a report on what needs doing and what action is going to be taken. However, there is then no follow-up or communication with the Association to say when jobs have been done, or to inform them of any problems. Communication needs to improve – it is very frustrating for residents if they have put effort into resolving a problem and then nothing seems to happen.*
- *Following an estate inspection in Knoll, letters were sent to residents whose gardens are full of rubbish and really neglected. This has not led to any improvement to the gardens. What happens next? Will the Council continue to pursue this?*

Action: *Ill for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

Response from Robert Keelan, Neighbourhood Housing Manager, Tel: 01273 293261

a) Estate Inspections dates are set in a two year period and have recently been set for the timescale of April 2016 to 2018. Estate inspection booklets are set out in wards and are all available in the council's internet pages by typing "estate inspections" into the search box which takes you to the page below.

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/council-housing/estate-inspections>

Please note a few ward booklets are showing inspection dates to the end of 2017 and this is being updated at time of writing to take us up to April 2018. I appreciate that not everyone has access to the internet so if you would like the estate inspection booklet for your area printed and sent to you then please call 01273 293030 and the Customer Service Team will send one out to you.

b) Estate inspections happen six monthly so I strongly encourage tenants not to wait for an inspection to report an issue. Whereas estate inspections look for items that are broken or in need of repair, they are also for Neighbourhood Officers to spend time on estate and ideally talking with tenants and councillors about issues that need attention or improvement on the estate.

The point is heard about communication so my initial proposal is rather than one estate inspection being displayed, that we display the last two so that at least we can see progress between estate inspections.

The remit of the Neighbourhood Officer is a very large one and estate inspections are a relatively small part of their role. Each Neighbourhood Officer manages approximately 1000 properties so it is difficult to tailor communication to what each group or residents want. I would encourage any Residents' Associations to invite their Neighbourhood

Officer and Team Leader to a residents meeting and this can then be established locally.

We have also brought in an “I’ve been reported sticker” to attach to broken items which is removed when the repair is carried out. This should remove any confusion as to whether an item has been reported or not.

C) The state of gardens is a real concern for us and it’s a condition of the tenancy agreement that tenants sign, to keep their gardens in good repair. There is always a story behind a messy garden and some people have good reasons for not being able to manage their gardens and others less so.

The council is refreshing its recharge policy so that we can more readily recharge tenants if we have to go in and clear it. We do have a gardening scheme for some vulnerable residents but this is very limited and consistently over-subscribed.

We have run projects in other areas of the city where Neighbourhood Officers have run gardening campaigns and found time to do lots of door knocking and been hands-on in helping tenants clear areas. We would like to repeat these as resources allow.

It should be noted that many gardens in what looks like council properties are often privately owned properties that it is difficult for the Neighbourhood Officer to deal with.

6a) Role of EDB panel

The EDB panel's original remit was to agree Quick Bids. There was concern that this panel is now making policy about how the EDB overall is run, without decisions going through the Area Panels.

Why has this decision making power been taken away from Area Panels? What is the formal role of the EDB panel, and who agrees this?

6b) £750 limit on Quick bids

It was noted that 'rolling' bids are not allowed for EDB Quick Bids. Clarendon & Ellen requested posts to stop cars parking, which came to more than £750. They wanted to apply for two lots of Quick Bids, but were told to go to the main EDB budget for this instead. This would mean a long delay, as main bids are only put in once a year.

It was noted that more money going to one Association would mean less going to others, and that Quick Bids are specifically designed to be for smaller jobs. However, it was felt that there could be more flexibility about this and it should be open to discussion.

6c) Officers' role in making EDB bids

There was agreement that EDB bids should come from Residents Associations, not individuals or Housing Officers. There is a collective process undertaken by the Resident Associations, involving local consultation, discussion and agreement about what bids to make. This is undermined if the process can be side-stepped and the money available for Residents Associations bids reduced.

6d) What can the EDB be spent on?

The original idea was that EDB money was for improvements, but increasingly it is spent on work that the Council should be doing anyway. Why is this happening and who agrees the guidelines for EDB spending?

6e) Getting EDB work done quickly

After long delays and many problems with EDB work, tenants were assured that jobs would be completed within the year, but work is still taking longer than this. This is frustrating and demoralising for residents, and detracts from the overall benefit that comes from the EDB.

Why is this still happening, and what can be done to improve the situation?

6f) Conflict of interest between tenants and leaseholders

It was noted that there can be a conflict of interest between tenants and leaseholders over the Estate Development Budget. If work is not essential and leaseholders will incur costs, they are unlikely to agree it. This causes friction between members of the Residents' Association, and can have repercussions for the overall smooth running of the Residents' Association.

It was agreed that this is a difficult issue, and needed more discussion about how the EDB was organised, and if there was a way of preventing this conflict within Resident Associations. It was agreed to ask that when EDB bids are put in, the Association is clearly informed about the implications of their bids for leaseholders.

Action: *III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel*

Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, Tel: 01273 293022

6a) As discussed at the May EDB Panel the Panel can only make recommendations and do not make decisions on policy. The Terms of Reference of the Panel were recirculated to clarify this, one of the purposes of the Panel in, *“to review the processes for the Estate Development Budget and make recommendations for improvements”*. The Panel is currently working on the EDB review and will be contacting the Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) to get their views. A report will be going to the Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group in September, before going to the November / December Area Panels.

6b) The EDB Panel have always been really clear about the agreed process, one bid up to the value of £750 should be a quick bid, proposals that cost more than this must be a main bid. Clarification regarding rolling bids is part of the EDB review.

6c) EDB bids are not submitted by officers or individuals and ensuring there has been proper consultation is an important part of the checking process undertaken by the Resident Involvement Team. Some seniors housing schemes have no TRA, however bids are put forward at coffee mornings. There is wide support that areas without an association are entitled to EDB. There have been some bids from these areas. Often these areas are blocks that are particularly run down. The Resident Involvement Officer lets people know there will be survey/ s / and sometimes meeting/s and once there is evidence that the majority of people agree to a bid the form is submitted. Consultation about EDB is part of the review.

Response from Glyn Huelin, Business & Performance Manager, Property & Investment, Tel: 01273 293306

6d) Guidelines for EDB spending are agreed by Area Panels. This is currently being reviewed as part of the Resident Involvement review. The 2015/16 EDB guidance is:

“An Estate Development Budget (EDB) bid can be placed by resident associations or groups of tenants that have an idea for a community project that results in one of the following:

- an improvement to a council housing owned building or community facility
- an improvement to council housing owned land or local environment

- an improvement that benefits the community and the quality of life of tenants

6e) The EDB Panel of residents reviews progress against the work programme with council officers and staff from Mears on a monthly basis. In recent years the number of outstanding jobs has significantly reduced. Having said this some bids do take too long to complete and the Panel will work to improve the speed of completing jobs.

6f) Some bids will have implications for leaseholders, in particular when they relate to work to common ways in blocks. The EDB guidance includes a short paragraph on leaseholders which provides some helpful information for residents preparing bids:

“Do leaseholders have to contribute towards the cost of work?”

The cost of Estate Development Budget work is passed on to leaseholders in their service charge in the same way as any other work. However:

- leaseholders contribute only to costs incurred at their building
- leaseholders will only incur costs if their lease allows for the charge
- the law says that the costs must be reasonably incurred

This means that works to keep the building in repair such as flooring, painting or improvements like exterior lighting are normally passed on, but works to improve community facilities or the local environment are not. For more information contact the Leasehold Team on 01273 293074, as they can give general advice on leaseholder charges before a bid is placed.”

Area Panels: 25, 26, 27 and 28 July 2016

Summary: Housing Management Performance Report Quarter 1 2016/17

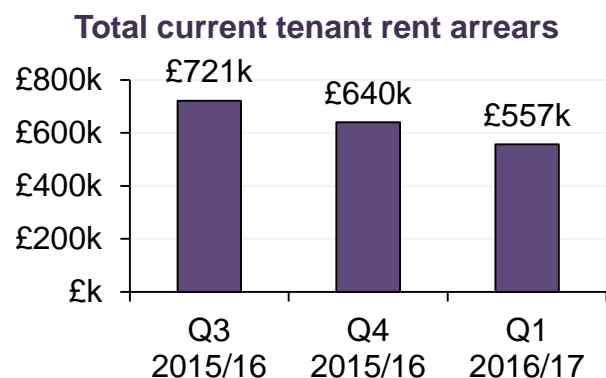
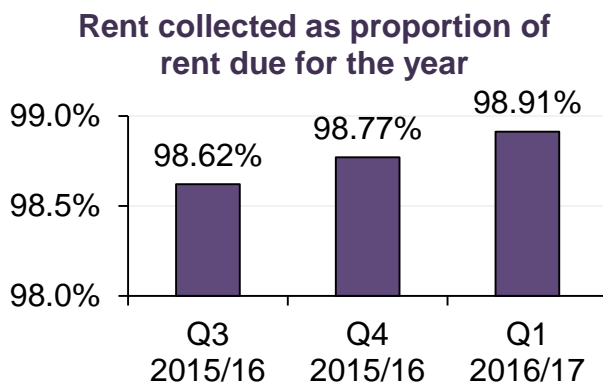
Background

The Housing Management Performance Report covers Quarter 1 of the financial year 2016/17. Due to the close timing of the end of the quarter to when papers are dispatched to Area Panel representatives, we are unable to bring the full performance report to Area Panels in July. However, information is currently available for this summary report for the Area Panels to note and comment on.

To ensure the timely reporting of performance information we would like to take the full report to Housing & New Homes Committee on 21 September 2016. We hope this will be acceptable to the Area Panels and we can on request provide representatives with a copy of the full report once it is available.

Rent collection and current arrears

- Rent collection rate at record high of 98.91%
- Current tenant arrears have fallen from £640k to £557k over the last quarter.



Customer services and Complaints

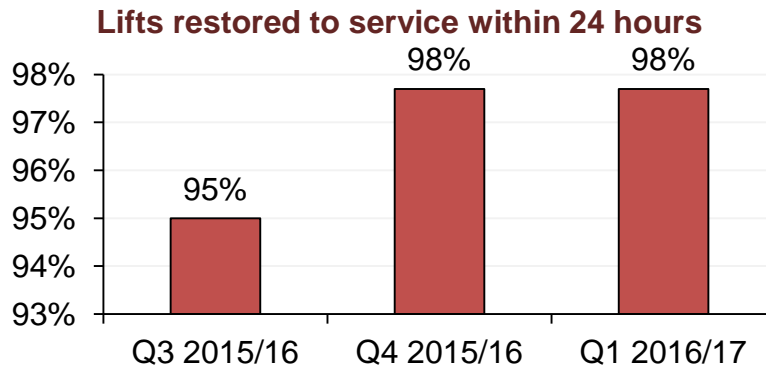
- 94% of calls answered
- 5 of 35 Stage 1 Complaints upheld (14%).

Empty home turnaround time

- 147 homes let, of which 110 general needs and 37 Seniors Housing
- 16 calendar days taken to re-let a home, excluding time spent in major works
- 100% of mutual exchange applications completed within 42 days.

Property & Investment

- 6,866 repairs completed
- 97% of appointments kept
- 96% of calls to repairs helpdesk answered.



Estates Service

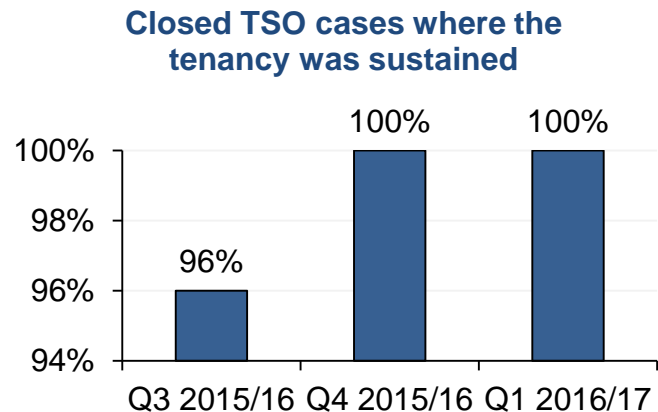
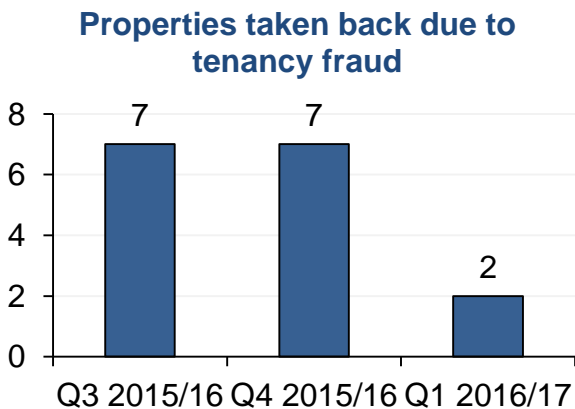
- 100% cleaning quality inspections pass rate
- 100% Emergency Response Team quality inspections pass rate
- 98% of Emergency Response Team jobs completed within 3 working days.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- 37 cases closed, of which 2 resulted in tenancy legal action
- 136 open ASB cases.

Tenancy management

- 2 properties taken back due to fraud
- 121 open fraud cases under investigation
- 34 tenancies sustained.



Area Panel: July 2016

Briefing Paper: Code of Conduct

Background

The Code of Conduct was developed as part of the Everyone Counts report that was agreed by the Housing Committee in December 2012. Having a robust Code of Conduct that explained expected behaviours was the most supported part of the report during the consultation process with residents.

Some residents from the Area Panels and Tenancy Service Improvement Group came together with the Resident Involvement Team to undertake a review of the Code of Conduct between February and May 2016. A huge thank you for this constructive piece of work.

The Resident Involvement Manager also met with the Tenancy, Neighbourhoods, Sheltered and Customer Services Managers, and the Resident Involvement Officers.

Key findings and recommendations

1. The Code of Conduct takes a long time to read, a shorter version is more user friendly.

The draft revised Code of Conduct is shorter, and the Breach of the Code of Conduct process is now a separate document.

A shorter set of Ground Rules for meetings has also been developed.

2. It has been useful to use at activities in the community room organised by the association.

The fact that the Code can be used in association and resident involvement activities has been made more explicit.

3. The Everyone Counts Report said the committee would sign the Code and it would be displayed at meetings, in practice the Code was simply circulated, is this sufficient?

The Model Constitution refers to the Code of Conduct so it is not necessary to get members to sign it. A laminated copy of the Code and the Ground Rules will be circulated to all meeting / activities organisers to display.

4. There is no guidance on when a resident resigns or is voted off a committee how long does this stand. Should there be different timescales for different levels of poor behaviour?

Residents have recommended that the person cannot take part in the following annual general or election meeting. This will be explained when a person offers their resignation.

Item 42

5. There is no guidance on when someone behaves poorly at a number of meetings. Can an association ask them not to attend future meetings, and if so how long would this be for? Or is this a local matter for associations to decide?

This should be up to associations to decide, a clause could be added to the constitution if agreed by members.

6. The unacceptable behaviour form is only of use for behaviours at meetings or activities.

The unacceptable behaviour form has only been used once regarding unwitnessed behaviour outside of a meeting. Otherwise breaches of the Code have been reported in person, over the phone or by email. The form should be removed.

7. The Code is useful for the behaviour of everyone at meetings and association activities as a person can be asked to modify their behaviour or leave.

The ultimate sanction is that it is requested that a person be removed from the committee or is removed from a Housing led meeting.

Anti-social behaviour is a breach of the Tenancy Agreement.

A section about reporting anti-social behaviour has been added. This is from the last Area Panel briefing note (December 2015) about the Code.

Contact:

Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Team

e: becky.purnell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

t: 01273 293022

This Code of Conduct is a common sense list of guidelines to make things more pleasant for everyone taking part in resident involvement activities. The purpose is to contribute to a positive and constructive atmosphere for all tenants and leaseholders, officers, contractors, councillors and guests, and to ensure that everyone understands what behaviour is expected from them.

If someone breaches the Code of Conduct at a meeting or activity they will be asked to modify their behaviour or leave. If a person continues to breach the Code of Conduct, despite having what is acceptable behaviour explained to them, they could be suspended from resident involvement activities.

General behaviour in resident involvement activities or groups

- Act with fairness, courtesy and respect.
- Listen to others views and don't interrupt or dominate discussions.
- Make positive contributions especially when offering constructive challenge.
- Work together to achieve objectives.
- Don't use insulting or threatening language, discriminatory remarks or raise personal disputes. This covers in person, by phone, written, text, email or on the internet.
- Make sure you are representing the groups' views when communicating on behalf of an association or residents' group.
- Don't expect preferential treatment from councillors, officers or contractors as a result of being involved.
- Always use the established procedures to report issues such as repairs, complaints, request for service, etc even if they have been reported before.

Before a meeting, training session, workshop, or association activity

- Send apologies if not able to attend.
- If there are papers read them in advance.
- Try to arrive in time for a prompt start.

Conduct in Meetings

- Contribute only 'through the chair' by seeking their attention.
- Not to interrupt the meetings by holding conversations with others.
- Operate within the rules set out in the terms of reference or constitution.
- Declare any potential conflicts of personal interest that can affect discussions.
- Make new residents, visitors and observers feel welcome, and give new participants the opportunity to speak and become involved.

- Accept that the purpose of council led meetings is to benefit tenants generally and not individuals.

Role of the Chair

- Manage the agenda and timing of meetings.
- Encourage all to participate and to allow all attendees reasonable opportunity to speak.
- Sum up at the end of each discussion topic from agenda.
- Ensure that no personal motives or interests affect a judgment of decisions or any actions.
- Undertake initial or regular training on 'chairing skills'.
- If someone breaches the code of conduct explain that if they do it again they could be asked to leave the meeting.

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 finance is involved:

- Take reasonable care in management and accounting of funds.
- Ensure that accounts are accessible and available for audit.
- Spend money only on things that have been agreed by the committee.
- Make sure funds are used properly and there is consultation with members about expenditure, (not required for small running costs).
- 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).

Breach of code of conduct procedure

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.

Challenging unacceptable behaviour

Any participant can challenge unacceptable or offensive behaviour through the chair or agreed lead person at a meeting, Housing resident involvement event, or association activity.

Outside of meetings any participant can challenge behaviour through a tenant representative or a council officer.

Behaviour that is unacceptable, offensive or in breach of the 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 the 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.
- 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.

Financial irresponsibility

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.

Breach of the Code of Conduct process

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

1. Person asked to apologise and modify behaviour.
2. If person refuses they are asked to leave.
3. Person written to within one week, given the opportunity to apologise in writing within two weeks.
4. Person offered to attend training where relevant.
5. If a potential breach of tenancy may be referred to the Tenancy Team.
6. If actions not taken up by the person the organisers of the meeting are notified.

Breach outside of a meeting

Behaviour when acting on behalf of the association or in capacity as a member of a housing working group

1. Attempt to resolve amicably when it occurs.
2. Refer to the service manager or Resident Involvement Team as soon as possible.
3. Relevant officer investigates and informally meets the person.
4. If a potential breach of tenancy may be referred to the Tenancy Team.
5. In most cases person apologises and commits to not repeating behaviour.
6. If the behaviour is repeated person asked to withdraw involvement.

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 housing working group.
4. The association might be asked to remove the person from the committee.
5. Tenancy action.
6. Referral for mediation.
7. Temporary de-recognition of a TRA.
8. Permanent de-recognition of a TRA.
9. Withdrawal of membership of the Area Panel.
10. Withdrawal of eligibility of Housing grant funding.
11. Withdrawal of eligibility to bid for the Estates Development Budget.

Length of withdrawal from resident involvement

When someone is no longer on a group due to the Breach of the Code of Conduct process they will be unable to take part in the next annual general or elections meeting.

This will be explained to the resident and will apply:

- When a person resigns from an association through this process.
- Is voted off the committee of an association through this process.
- Is asked to leave a Housing led resident working group.

Right to appeal

1. The person or residents' group who reported the breach, or the person or residents' group who have been asked to act in response to a breach of the code of conduct have the right to appeal.
2. In the first instance this should be to the Resident Involvement Manager or relevant service manager.
3. If not satisfied with the response refer the matter to the council's Standards and Complaints Team who will follow the complaints process.
4. Person or residents' group can contact and MP or local councillor to talk to Housing about the concern.
5. If have been through the complaints process and not satisfied can contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

Right to appeal if an association is de-recognised

1. It is open to a de-recognised association to appeal in writing to the Director of Environment, Development and Housing against de-recognition on the grounds that it complies with the policy.
2. During an appeal period the association shall not be entitled to the financial or consultation provisions made for recognised associations.

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.

Anti-social behaviour

The process of reporting anti-social behaviour (ASB) is through Housing Customer Services Team or by calling the police if it is an emergency.

This can be done in person at a housing office, by email Housing.CustomerServices@brighton-hove.gov.uk, or by telephone 01273 293030. They would then get advice on whether the matter should be recorded on the system only; or recorded and referred on for investigation by the Neighbourhood or Tenancy Enforcement Teams.

Another method of reporting is by using the on-line form on the council's website (search report a problem - council housing). The website states it is very difficult for the council to take action unless there are other witnesses or evidence to support what is being said by one person or the other.

The council cannot solve all neighbour disputes. While all ASB is recorded, the council provides funding to Brighton and Hove Mediation Service to solve some neighbour disputes and expects tenants who want to solve their neighbour disputes to participate in that process.

New homes for neighbourhoods Update



July 2016

Brighton & Hove City Council's New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme is now at full throttle, building much needed new council homes on council owned land. We work with local resident associations and ward councillors to improve council estates and neighbourhoods, while making best use of council housing land and buildings to help meet the city's housing needs. We are aiming to build at least 500 new homes across Brighton, Hove and Portslade.

125 new council homes are currently on site, 13 of which will be completed and let this summer at three former garage and car parking sites. That will bring the total to 24 much needed new homes for affordable homes for rent completed since summer 2015. We've applied for planning consent for another 41 homes at two sites, and ten other schemes are in the pipeline. All new homes are being let through Homemove.

Robert Lodge South and North - 15 new flats in Whitehawk



Nine one bedroom flats in the new Robert Lodge South block were completed within budget in just over a year and let in March. Robert Lodge residents old and new celebrated the opening, with the Chair of Housing & New Homes, councillors from all parties, staff and partners in the council's strategic construction partnership that built the scheme, including council in-house architects and Westridge Construction Ltd.

A survey of the tenants after three months in their new home demonstrated all are very satisfied with the overall quality of their new home and no-one is dissatisfied with any of the design, layout, decorations, cleanliness or equipment provided.

"My home is perfect. The property was spotless and really well finished, the layout is excellent and I don't hear any of my neighbours."



Six flats in a new Robert Lodge North block are now under construction and will be completed around the New Year. Meanwhile, after workshops with an artist, Robert Lodge residents have agreed the design of a new metal sculpture to be a work of public art for the communal gardens, under a planning requirement.

Darwell Court– 5 new homes in Kemp Town

The five new flats on the former Ardingly Street car parking site will be completed and handed over in July.

Shortlisted applicants who bid through Homemove are viewing the flats with the Re-Housing Officer, so the new tenants should start moving in by the end of the month.

The block has a two bedroom ground floor wheelchair accessible flat, a two bedroom maisonette and three one bedroom flats, each with their own private balcony.



Aldwick Mews - 4 new family houses in Hangleton

Prospective tenants will be viewing the four 3 bedroom houses at Aldwick Mews, on the former garage site at Hardwick Road in Hangleton in July, which are also close to completion.

One of the homes is designed especially for a household with a wheelchair user and the others to Lifetime Homes Standard.



8 more new family houses in Hangleton and Portslade

Another 4 new family homes on two former garage sites at Flint Close, Portslade, will also be completed and let this summer. And the frames of the 4 new houses at the former garage site in Foredown Road, Portslade are now completed. They are expected to be completed around the New Year.

Brooke Mead – 45 extra care flats in Albion Hill

A ‘topping out’ ceremony celebrated completion of the 5–6 storey concrete frame for the new extra care scheme at Brooke Mead in June. The 45 one bedroom flats and community facilities for residents with dementia will be ready by summer 2017.

Neighbouring residents can get involved in planning a new community garden next to the site at a September workshop. This scheme has created four new apprenticeships so far, with more to come as work progresses.



Kite Place – 57 new flats in Whitehawk



Our largest development to date on the former Whitehawk library site is now well underway, with the concrete frame for 57 new council flats now under construction.



The colourful, eye catching hoardings - with artwork from local academy pupils, graffiti art by the local youth group and a local graffiti artist and images of the new scheme - has won national Considerate Constructors Hoarding Competition Runner-up for 2016. We expect the two new blocks to be completed in autumn 2017.

A graphic with a blue and purple background. It features three stylized house outlines in white and purple. The text 'New homes for neighbourhoods' is written in white. Below it, the text 'Behind these hoardings, we're building new council housing to increase the number of affordable homes in the city' is written in white. At the bottom right, the Brighton & Hove City Council logo is visible.

New homes for neighbourhoods

Behind these hoardings, we're building new council housing to increase the number of affordable homes in the city

Investing in **homes** for the future Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove City Council

Wellsbourne site, Whitehawk – latest designs for 29 new flats



We have applied for planning consent for 29 new flats in two blocks on this empty site by the Whitehawk hub, school and health centre after another Planning for Real resident consultation event with Due East Neighbourhood Council in February.

Selsfield Drive, Bates Estate - latest designs for 27 new flats



After close consultation with Bates Estate Residents Association and a drop in consultation event for Bates Estate and other local residents, a planning application is being prepared for 27 new flats on the site of the old Selsfield Drive housing office on Lewes Road.

How do we make sure we achieve value for money?

We are testing out various ways to deliver new homes on council land for their value for money, efficiency and speed. Most of the programme is being developed through the council's strategic construction partnership of in-house architects, constructors and specialists including cost consultants. This market tested partnership develops homes quickly and economically, with the constructor, surveyors and sub-contractors all involved from an early stage to minimise design risks, get onto site more quickly and achieve efficiencies through economies of scale. The quantity surveyor checks and benchmarks costs and confirms that the project has achieved value for money.

To ensure that we achieve value for money over the lifetime of new homes, that we build to the high standards Housing requires and keep future maintenance costs low, we have developed a New Homes Design Specification. Residents from the Home Service Improvement Group were consulted on the specification and recently helped choose the preferred type of windows for new homes. We're also incorporating new tenants' feedback into the specification so we deliver the best homes that we can.

RIBA Design Competition for small sites

Architects' winning designs for former garage sites at Hinton Close, Hollingdean and Natal Road off Lewes Road are now being worked up to detailed design, during which we will consult residents again. More survey work is being carried out for the other two sites at Frederick Street and Rotherfield Crescent.



For more information on New Homes for Neighbourhoods

Email: estate.regeneration@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Phone: 01273 290591

Post: Estate Regeneration Team, Brighton & Hove City Council, Room 506,
Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2SR

Webpage: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/nhfn

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG) Item 43

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

Minutes of LAG Committee Meeting

Wednesday 14 January 2015, 6.00pm to 8:00pm
Hampshire Lodge

1. **Present:** Linda Shaw, James Corbett and Muriel Briault

Observers: Anthony Camps-Linney and David Croydon

Officers: Dave Arthur (BHCC), Pamela Cunningham, Reem Scott (BHCC) & Keely McDonald (BHCC)

Apologies: Apologies were offered for Beth Kent, Tony Worsfold and Dee Howland.

Introductions were given and the chair opened the meeting.

2. **Tenancy Enforcement** **-Pamela Cunningham & Reem Scott**

2.1 DA –explained to the group that Richard was unwell so Pamela and Reem were here to substitute for him and explain the new powers available to Tenancy Enforcement and answer questions from the group.

2.2 RS – the Tenancy Enforcement Team and Neighbourhood Team now deal with ASB. Tenancy Enforcement handle cases of high level ASB with the Neighbourhood Team being responsible for cases of low level ASB. However, in the first instance ASB should be reported to the Housing Customer Service Team (293030) who will forward it to the appropriate team. PC – both teams have daily duty officers who can be contacted in an emergency.

2.3 PC – Tenancy Enforcement deal with ASB on a case by case basis and are not patch based like the Neighbourhood Team. If a case of ASB is classified as being High Level a dedicated Tenancy Enforcement Officer will be allocated to the case and their contact details will be made available.

2.4 JC – asked what the success rate was for getting anti-social neighbours removed.

RS – ASB is dealt with on a case by case basis some are dealt with by mediation and others lead to eviction.

PC – stressed that it is the judge who makes the decision to evict and it will always be the last resort.

New Powers

2.5 PC –the new powers are being phased in from October 2014 and the onus is now on councils to do more. There are a lot more powers to resolve.

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

2.6 LS – one of the main areas of concern has always been the need to fill in diary sheets.

PC – they are still important as a means of providing evidence when taking a case to court.

2.7 DA – asked what had been the changes to serving an injunction.

PC – the age requirement has been lowered (-now 10), some positive requirements added and there has to be an adequate person available to monitor the injunction.

2.7 LS –how does this effect tenants of leaseholders who commit ASB?

PC – it is the same but, a different person would need to apply for the injunction. Tenants are responsible for their visitors and action would be taken against the leaseholder for breaching the lease.

DA – in extreme cases where litigation was needed the council would apply for forfeiture. However, this is rarely used as the majority of ASB caused by tenants of leaseholders is low level and dealt with by the Neighbourhood Team through mediation.

2.8 LS – can an article giving a summary of the changes be printed in Homing-In?

PC – the changes were mentioned and it was stressed that it would take time for them to be in.

LS – is it possible for a summary of the changes to go out with the next leaseholder update?

DA – it could go out with March's issue in bullet points and be mentioned that there will be an update in future.

PC –the Community Safety Team has a crib sheet outlining the changes.

Action: RS will email DA a copy of the Community Safety Team's crib sheet for distribution to leaseholders.

PC – would you like Tenancy Enforcement to produce an information sheet?

LS – Yes-that would be useful.

2.9 PC –circulated copies of a hand out to those present outlining the changes being introduced under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Action: RS –will send TJ an electronic copy of the hand out to go out with the minutes.

2.10 PC – then gave an overview of the changes mentioning:

- Criminal Behaviour Orders –first being served by end of January
- Community Protection Notices – council officers can now apply for these
- Breaches of injunctions – burden of proof now lower

2.11 LS –thanked PC and RS for attending.

3. Annual General Meeting

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

3.1 KM – mentioned the Strengthening Area Panel Task & Finish Group had amongst its recommendations suggested LAG elect a representative from each of the four areas to represent them at Area Panel meetings.

DA – we need to look at LAG's constitution for how representatives are elected to groups and whether they should be committee members or if any leaseholder can stand for election. Technically this means there are significantly more posts to elect to so it is important to set aside an appropriate amount of time on the AGM's agenda for holding the elections.

3.2 MB –asked where and when the AGM was going to be held?

KM – suggested the Clarendon Centre that was used to hold November's City Assembly and asked the group for their thoughts.

DA – we should be aiming to hold the AGM early in March.

After a general discussion it was agreed to look at holding the AGM on 7 March from 10.00am to 1.00pm at the Clarendon Centre.

Action: KM – will contact the Clarendon Centre to check the venues availability for 7 March and the cost for hiring the venue.

3.3 DA- asked the group for their views on the format for the AGM.

3.4 Having a section for questions was suggested.

LS – didn't think leaseholders found this helpful as the answers are generally non-specific. People want concrete information.

DA – thought it would be better to have information tables.

3.5 LS – it would be useful to have maps of the 3 year work programme available.

DA – there could be an information table especially for the 3 year work programme.

3.6 DA – do you want the AGM to be leaseholder led and then you report back to the council. Have officers present to conduct the elections but then leaseholders run the meeting.

3.7 After further discussion it was agreed the agenda would be:

- Information Tables 10.00am – 10.45am
- Leaseholder run plenary session 11.00am – 12.00noon
- Elections 12.00noon – 1.00pm

3.8 LS – it is important to supply information about the elections in advance.

DA – this can be done when we post invitations to leaseholders.

3.9 KM – provided copies of the lift replacement programme as requested at the previous meeting to those present.

LS –asked if there was an electronic copy available

Action: KM will email LS an electronic copy of the lift replacement programme.

3.10 LS – are there similar copies available for the window replacement and cladding programmes.

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

Action: KM –will look into providing copies of the window replacement and cladding programmes.

3.11 DA –will speak to GH about what would be the best information to provide for the information tables at the AGM.

3.12 DC – asked if the costs for works done to date and any problems encountered could be displayed at the AGM.

Actions: LS –will discuss with DA what charges can be shown.

KM – will bring it up with the Property & Investment Team.

DA –felt consultation meetings provide leaseholders with a better source of information on the likely costs involved with major works than the AGM.

4. Minutes of previous meeting & matters arising

4.1 Page 1 Point 3.1 LS – has received copies of the RIO and Neighbourhood Officers job descriptions as requested.

4.2 Page 1 Point 3.2 DA – still had no information regarding the painting of the railings at Chates Farm Court.

4.3 Page 1 Point 3.3 MB – has still to hear from the Neighbourhood Team when the next estate inspections will be held.

4.4 Page 1 Point 3.4 LS, MB and TW attended November's City Assembly and they all felt the Clarendon Centre was a suitable venue.

4.5 Page 1 Point 4.2 TW went to the SAPTFG meeting and has sent LS a copy of the minutes from the meeting.

Action: TJ –will send a copy of these with the minutes from today's Lag meeting

4.6 Page 2 Point 5.1 DA – we have to act on legal advice on what information we provide under RTB but, not for a sell on.

MB- why is RTB political?

DA –the Conservatives introduced RTB and want to sell as many Local Authority properties as possible so raise the discount given. Labour when in power will generally lower the amount of discount to stop Local Authority properties being sold. There are rules governing what councils can spend the monies raised by the discounts on.

4.7 Page 3 Point 6.2 LS –has had the Ning training.

4.8 Page 3. Point 6.5 LS –will ask Mears for information flyers.

Minutes – were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

5. Reports & feedback from LAG representatives on committees or consultative groups:

5.1 TW –had provided LS with a briefing note on the recommendations the SAPTFG had proposed for leaseholders. Those being:

- Leaseholders be represented at every Area Panel in future
- Subject to Housing Committee agreement
- If agreed then LAG have an indicative vote as to who represents them at Area Panel meetings.

And subjects relevant to leaseholders that are due for discussion at January's Area Panel meetings.

- Update on the new homes for neighbourhoods programme
- Level access showers
- High Rise security options
- Implications of ASB and Policing Act 2014
- EDB decision

5.2 MB –will be going to the first City Assembly sub-group meeting on 23 January at Sloane Court to begin arranging May's meeting and will report back at the next LAG committee meeting.

5.3 LS –as the other representatives are not at today's meeting there is nothing to report back from the Service Improvement Group's (SIG's).

6. Key Issues

6.1 DA –will add Tenancy Enforcement to LAG's key issues, delete Encouraging Participation and aim to complete this by the AGM.

Action: DA –will send committee members a copy of the Key Issues template for them to add any additional information.

6.2 DA –felt LAG needed to get to grips with the SIG's in the coming year and ensure all the posts available are filled at the AGM.

6. Update on reviewing the consultation arrangements for major works

6.1 DA –has spoken to Ben O'Kagbue and Glyn Huelin and the feeling is that it would be best to set up a working group from within LAG's committee to review the consultation arrangements for major works. The aim is to start this in April.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 There was no issues raised under AOB

8. Next Meeting.

8.1 Date for next LAG committee meeting to be confirmed.

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG) Item 43
'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'



Meeting	TDN		
Attendees	Jason Williams, Martin Cunningham, Muriel Briault, Ann Packham Council Officer: Rebecca Mann, Resident Involvement Officer		
Apologies	Jean Davis, Sarah Potter - Adaptations		
Meeting location	Hampshire Lodge	Produced by	RM
Date Time	14 March 2016		

Section 1 – Update on actions from previous meeting

	Description
1	RM updated on Multi steel doors – recognized issues with opening (door entry system) for those with mobility problems. Jamie Smith explained that auto openers are being replaced when a new multi steel door has been refitted. Suggestion is that he liaises with Simon if there are particular doors that need to be refitted within Simon’s budget.
2	Few meetings to be quorate – RM to encourage attendance. Done.
3	Minutes Agreed from January
4	
5	
6	

Section 2 – Items discussed, agreements and future action

Agenda item 1			
Agreement / Decision	Hereford Court door opener in foyer – some residents in wheelchairs or with mobility issues find it difficult to gain entry to building. Can this work be administered through Simon’s project		
Action(s)	RM (RIO) to look into	By Who RM	Deadline Next meeting
Agenda item 2			
Agreement / Decision	Muriel to feedback from Involvement and Empowerment Group as she is a member and rep from TDN		
Action(s)	Muriel to provide feedback from meetings	By Who Muriel	Deadline After each meeting
Agenda item 3			

Agreement / Decision	Newsletter. Ann and Jason happy to take this project forward. Alison may wish to hand information to Ann and Jason then they will go to Resource Centre and produce the newsletter.		
Action(s)	Ann and Jason to take forward in future	By Who	Deadline
Agenda item 4			
Agreement / Decision	Further discussion around recording meetings. Agreed needs to go to a vote		
Action(s)	For future meeting to decide.	By Who All member	Deadline Future meetings
Agenda item 5			
Agreement / Decision	Ann Packham provided feedback on the Fed's Health & Well Being meeting she had attended (as asked to by the group) She explained that she had difficulty hearing the meeting as there was no hearing loop. Information was quite basic and centred around the importance of '5 fruit and veg a day' and drinking more water.		
Action(s)	Ann will attend next meeting and see whether it is more informative.	By Who Ann	Deadline n/a
Agenda item 6			
Agreement / Decision	TOR – extend membership/broaden involvement		
Action(s)	Agreed to be carried forward to next meeting to discuss. Open to all who are interested	By Who All residents	Deadline
Agenda item 6			
Agreement / Decision	Update on budget. Brief discussion: everyone aware £20m needs to be saved. Council Tax to increase. DLA being reduced for some and Rent Reduction of 1% over (each) 4 years.		
Action(s)	Nfa	By Who All residents	Deadline

Section 3 – Agenda for next meeting

1	Welcome/Apologies
2	Update from Simon Pickles (report or in person)
3	Terms of Reference – vote to broaden involvement (invite Joe, Ted, Barry to become fully fledged members)
4	Newsletter
5	Adaptations
6	AOB
7	Dates of next meetings (reduced to 4 per year)



Meeting	Seniors Housing (Independent Community Living) Action Group		
Attendees	<p>Residents: Roy Crowhurst - Chair (Woods House), Bob Spacie, Elisabeth Tinkler (Laburnum Grove), Walter Sargison, Kath Davis (Broadfields), Jean Davis (Leach Court), Joyce Bean, Ray Goble, Eunice Goble (Elwyn Jones Court), Tony Brown (Evelyn Court), Allan Davies (Rosehill Court), Steve Nye (Elisabeth Court), Tomm Nyhuus (Somerset Point)</p> <p>Partners: Colin Vincent (Older Peoples Council)</p> <p>Staff: Hannah Barker (Resident Involvement Officer), Peter Huntbach (Older Persons Housing Manager)</p> <p>Mears staff: Delia Hills (Resident Liaison Manager), James Taylor (Site Manager), A Shaw (Project Manager), Steven Thompson, Dan Scott (Site Manager)</p>		
Apologies	Charles Penrose (Sloane Court), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services) Rob Nayan		
Location	Leach Court	Produced by	Hannah Barker
Date Time	09/03/16	completed	09/03/16

Section 1 – Update on actions from previous meeting

	Description
1	5.2 Re Fairness Commission evening Older People and Well-being on 16th March 2016 at Portslade Town Hall . Nothing has changed regarding timing of event (last meeting flagged as inappropriate for attracting older people.)
2	6.2 Peter Huntbach flagged up the paper on service charges that had been circulated
3	Intensive Housing Management charges breakdown will be made available soon following request.

Section 2 – Agenda items, agreements and future action

Agenda item 4 - Mears any questions – Delia Hills (Mears)	
Agreement / Decision	Delia not present at the meeting
Agenda item 5 – Scheme Managers cover	
Agreement / Decision	<p>Peter asked group; what should Scheme Managers (SM) do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should be there and available – doing calls only doesn't do anything for community building. • Residents might not know that a SM has been in the building • E.g. in far end of Evelyn Court, far away from the board, don't know if SM has been. 'I feel it's a waste for me to pay' • We are hampered by not having any spare SMs <p>Peter: It seems to be about visibility of SM – should we think about lengthening the time of cover? To include more time than just the daily calls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laburnum Grove has a white board – would like to see it say a defined

	<p>time about when SM will be around.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also board should show if SM on sick or annual leave or training. • Problem if person has disability can't get to see whiteboard. • Do we call or get a letter around to those who can't get to board? <p>Peter: We use 'text anywhere' service (to landline and mobile) – should we use that more?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elisabeth Court has a new alarm system being trialled • We have 25 SM over 22 Schemes (some have 2 SM due to size) • Suggestion to have at least one more SM whose sole responsibility is full time cover • Some residents unhappy at there being no cover at bank holidays & weekends. • We don't want to loose sight of 'Independent living' nor right to say do or don't want a call. <p>Peter: We are not nursing home/ residential care – service would be a different more expensive service to provide this. Some models of Sheltered housing nationally have automated button (for resident to notify they are well).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps do daily call in afternoon sometimes? • Monday morning call is important – after the wk/end <p>Peter: Basic premise is that the SM accounts for everyone during the week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human contact each day is important – sometimes needs to be more time for contact to be meaningful (over and above simple checking in) • Evelyn court some residents are trialling a buddy system to help get some residents out of isolation with help. <p>Peter: Very keen to offer support with initiatives like this. How can we help? What is a reasonable level of service as we can't afford to provide the full time cover you would like, but what is a better level of service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people don't care if the SM is there until they want them. 		
<p>Action(s)</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Chair proposed to carry on this conversation with Area Reps and come back again to the group. Could trial at one scheme with the groups consent.</p>	<p>By Who</p> <p>Roy</p>	<p>Deadline</p> <p>Next meeting</p>
<p>Agenda item 7 - Update on welfare reform – Nick Kitson (Performance & Improvement Officer)</p>			
<p>Agreement /Decision</p>	<p>Nick talked through the handout (appendix1)</p> <p>These changes are made at a National level, not by Nick, nor the council.</p> <p>Welfare Reform means changes to amount (usually a reduction) or method of payment.</p> <p>Universal Credit will indirectly affect Seniors Housing residents as there is a threat to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) . £14million over 4 years from rent being reduced.</p> <p>One positive is that we are in a position to help residents. People in private housing do not have this support.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Q: how much is predicted that HRA will lose through rent arrears?</p> <p>A: Nationally 85% of people getting benefits are in arrears by some sort. At</p>		

	<p>the moment, most vulnerable people are not getting universal credit. (UC) so arrears levels are not too bad, However, when they do and next year when many more people will be moved to UC this will change.</p> <p>Discussion: Re. recent Policy & Resources Committee. Nick Hibberd had recommended that the council utilize the National Governments offer to freeze rents for supported housing for next year. The conservative councilors put forward an amendment that it should be the same for everyone, which was passed. Thus, Seniors Housing tenants will have their rents reduced by 1% in the next financial year.</p> <p>Comment: Excellent description of upcoming changes – a document with clarity – thank you for putting together.</p>
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Agenda item 8 - Potential changes to laundry system – Rob Nayan (Projects Manager, Housing Programme Team)

Agreement /Decision	<p>Rob Nayan not at meeting. Apology received at end of meeting.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are elected representatives, we voted clearly against the proposals • The council then conducted a ‘sham’ and expensive consultation, which again gave 90% against changes. • Then letters went out at further expense which are unclear, don not give costs and is bias. • We have had no report or communications with us. • If they want to push through this card system then nothing can stop them. • They have treated SHAG reps and Tenants Associations with disrespect when they didn’t get the result they wanted. • This could open up a can of worms; if people who don’t have washing machines don’t pay for the service, what about people that don’t use a lift service? • Many people who have wash machines don’t have dryers so still use laundry. • More personal washing machines in the buildings could cause noise issues. • They could have simply put up the prices and no one would have complained • Tower blocks have had the card system for years. Cllr Anne Meadows wanted to have the same system across the city, but without an understanding of senior housing resident’s needs. 		
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Action	Chair will put together an official complaint about the Project Management team over the laundry communications and handling and will let tenants association reps know the response.	By Who	Deadline
8.1		Roy	Next meeting

Agenda item 9- Election to Tenant disability network

Agreement /Decision	Jean Davis put herself forward as the rep and the group agreed.		
Action	Hannah to let Resident Involvement Officer, Becca Mann know.	HB	This week

Agenda item 10 - Any other business			
Agreement /Decision	Tomm Nyhuus has raised scaffolding issue with Mears Ian Stone. Scaffolding appeared in Area Panel papers last blue pages.		
Actions		PH	Next few weeks
10.1	Peter will inform Laburnum Grove reps about lift replacement program		
10.2	Peter will let P&I know about scaffolding attending to repair leaking roof since before Xmas, still to be done at Rose Hill court and Evelyn Jones court.		
10.3	Hannah to send Reps Repairs Reporting process to Ray Goble, Allan Davis & Steve Nye.		

Section 3 – Agenda for next meeting 11th May 10am Leach Court

1	No suggestions made
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Future Meeting dates – all Wednesdays 10am – 12.30pm at Leach Court

13th July, 14th September (AGM) 9th November, 11th January 2017, 8th March , 10th May, 12th July, 13th September 2017 (AGM)

Appendix 1

Welfare Reform & Austerity Measures

Update for Seniors Housing Action Group

“Welfare reform” means changes to the amount of benefits that are paid (usually cuts) or changes to the way benefits are paid. “Austerity measures” are other ways the government reduces spending that don’t directly affect benefits, such as changing rent levels.

Pensioners will not be directly affected by any of these changes.

Under-Occupancy Deduction

- Sometimes called “**Bedroom Tax**” – since 2013 Housing Benefit has been reduced for people the government believes have “spare” rooms
- We have substantially reduced arrears for people affected in the last year
- We’ve held six **mutual exchange events**, with over 350 visitors since December 2014
- Incentive payments are available to most under-occupying tenants if they want to transfer or exchange

Universal Credit

- Combines several benefits into one, including Housing Benefit
- Benefits are now paid directly to the tenant instead of onto the rent account
- Active in Brighton & Hove since 2015, starting with single Jobseeker's Allowance claimants
- **21 tenants are now claiming the new combined benefit**, with new cases being added each week
- We expect to have around 100 by the end of the year, with a surge of new cases in 2017
- Arrears are expected to increase, because there is a 6 week delay in tenants receiving payment
- All new claimants are contacted by officers as soon as we know they are claiming, to offer support and make sure that they make a plan to pay their rent

Benefit Cap

- Benefits are capped at £500 per week but this **will soon reduce to £385 per week**
- Any money above this is taken from the Housing Benefit, which means tenants are expected to pay their rent from any other benefits they receive
- Disability benefits aren't affected and there are some exceptions
- The council is visiting all tenants who are capped to try to stop them being affected, or help them budget if this is not possible

Pay to Stay

- Pay to Stay is a proposal that any household where the top two earners together earn more than £30k will have to pay "market rent"
- The latest news is that it looks like this will now be raised to £50k with a "taper"
- Based on local market rents, families could pay up to £13k more per year
- The council has written to the Government to raise our concerns about how this change could affect our tenants
- These concerns include: the low threshold; very big rent increases; reduction in work incentives; increase in rent arrears and tenancy action; effects on communities and the cost to administer the scheme

Other changes

- All working age benefits are frozen for four years
- Tax Credits are being slightly reduced and the main rates frozen for four years
- Rent is being reduced over four years
- Benefits will not be paid for any children after the first two children, for anyone born after 1 April 2017
- From 1 April 2018 Housing Benefit is being limited to local private rent levels, which means there could be problems for sheltered housing schemes in parts of the country where rents are low, although this does not affect Brighton & Hove

Older People

- Although pensioners aren't affected, people approaching pension age still are, some of whom will live in seniors housing
- Friends and relatives will be affected, which could mean that older people are being asked for money more often
- The service as a whole will have less money if we collect less rent, which means there will be less to spend on all housing services including seniors housing

Available Help

Moneyworks

www.advicebrighton-hove.org.uk/moneyworks

Tel: 01273 809288

Brighton & Hove City Council

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/benefit-changes

Tel: 01273 293030

Department of Work and Pensions

www.gov.uk/government/policies/welfare-reform

**Tenancy Service Improvement Group
4 November 2015**

- Reviewed the succession letters- copies sent to non-attendees
- Agreed to look at conflict coaching and mediation
- Looking at fixed penalty notices for ASB
- Looking at a day in a life of Tenancy Officer
- Preventing fly tipping and developing respectful communities possible areas of work

**Home Service Improvement Group
19 November 2015**

- Asset Management Strategy - budget, affordability and report from resident consultation
- Sustainability plan - an overview for Housing stock, including solar panels on tenant's homes.
- Loft & Extension Scheme - Information and the change in criteria.
- Updates on jargon busting resident inspectors and resident action plan
- Elections of new reps to Estates Development Budget panel, Partnership Core Group, chair and vice chair

**Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group
26 November 2015**

- Planning 2016 calendar of community events to promote Resident Involvement on estates
- Finalising text for new Resident Involvement Handbook
- Residents giving quotes about how being involved has made a difference for handbook, online version, and You Tube video
- Exploring recognition scheme for tenants and leaseholders who make a difference
- Working on updated Tenant & Resident Association manual, including information on setting up informal resident groups

**Neighbourhood & Community Service Improvement Group
3 December 2015**

- Delighted to welcome guest speaker from the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
- Watched a video about community gardening and inspired to start one in Hove
- Will be consulting residents on the estate
- Idea to include neighbouring residents as well as the immediate community
- Fairly low cost, brings people together, and provides fresh produce

**Business & Value for Money Service Improvement Group
7 December 2015**

- Discussed alternative revenue streams for the council
- Agreed to encourage residents to look out for unused properties for possible use
- Discussed value for money of service charges
- Agreed to promote 'Jargon Buster' to residents to help simplify technical information
- Looked at the Council's Performance Report and commented on content