

West Area 2 Stars

4.1 Role of Field Officers and Estate Inspections

Background

West residents thought that the West Area Panel on 14/12/21 had been unsatisfactory, with unclear papers, inaccurate minutes from the last Area Panel and inconclusive discussions.

Item 4.1: Role of Field Officers and Estate Inspections

Issue: West Residents asked when Estate Inspections will start up again and requested a timetable of Estate inspection dates.

Response from Housing: current plans are to have two Field Officers carrying out inspections in each of the four Housing areas. This is so they will get to know the Housing teams; build relationships with residents; become familiar with the different areas. Officers are currently planning how to start up estate inspections and what staffing resource will be needed. The aim is to provide information online as to when and how Estate Inspections will take place.

Response at the West Residents meeting: more discussion is needed with Residents Associations about Estate Inspections and how to make these an effective resource.

Various points were made:

- a) Residents have repeatedly asked for a return of Estate Inspections. While the latest response indicates this will happen at some point in the future, there is no timescale for this, or indication how residents will be involved in the process.
- b) The crucial ingredients for making Estate Inspections a success are quick follow-up, clear action times and good communication. When they are conducted by experienced, knowledgeable and efficient officers who know the area, understand the issues and work closely with residents, they are invaluable. This wasn't always the case in the past and an Estate Inspection could be followed by silence and inaction.
- c) A huge range of tasks seem to have been given to Field Officers and they may not have the capacity to conduct Estate Inspections in a meaningful way.
- d) Residents have repeatedly asked for clarification of the role of Field Officers detailing the range of work they have to do. This has still not been provided.
- e) If Estate Inspections are to be useful, residents' experience needs to be drawn on.

How will residents be involved in this process?

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Action

Residents are requesting a review and discussion of items 4.1 – 4.6 at the next West Area Panel.

4.1 Field Officers and Resident Inspectors - Residents would like a verbal response during the Area Panel on what the role of the resident inspectors and field officers are and what their timeline would like like.

Response

Justine Harris- Head of Tenancy Services - justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk / Theresa Reynolds - Field Officer Manager - theresa.reynolds@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Item 4.1: Role of Field Officers and Estate Inspections

Issue: West Residents asked when Estate Inspections will start up again and requested a timetable of Estate inspection dates.

Response from Housing: current plans are to have two Field Officers carrying out inspections in each of the four Housing areas. This is so they will get to know the Housing teams; build relationships with residents; become familiar with the different areas. Officers are currently planning how to start up estate inspections and what staffing resource will be needed. The aim is to provide information online as to when and how Estate Inspections will take place.

Response at the West Residents meeting: more discussion is needed with Residents Associations about Estate Inspections and how to make these an effective resource.

Various points were made:

a) Residents have repeatedly asked for a return of Estate Inspections. While the latest response indicates this will happen at some point in the future, there is no timescale for this, or indication how residents will be involved in the process.

Response: We are aiming to start resident inspections in April 2022. To start with we will do one geographic area each week on a rotational basis . Please see point below about residents involvement.

b) The crucial ingredients for making Estate Inspections a success are quick follow-up, clear actions times and good communication. When they are conducted by experienced, knowledgeable and efficient officers who know the area, understand the issues and work closely with residents, they are invaluable. This wasn't always the case in the past and an Estate Inspection could be followed by silence and inaction.

Response for February Area Panel: This is a really good point. Having the right officers in attendance will be crucial as is good communication.

To ensure we have officers with the correct expertise carrying out the Estate inspections, they will be coordinated by the Area Housing teams. A senior officer will be in attendance, along with a Surveyor, Estates staff who are able to undertake quick repairs when we inspect the housing blocks, or an Estates team leader when we inspect on street properties, as they will be able to respond to issues such as

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bulk waste removal, ground maintenance. The role of the Field Officers in the inspection process at time of writing is still be agreed. We are planning to have a Field Officer aligned to each area Housing office. Over time they will get to know the areas and housing reps.

c) A huge range of tasks seem to have been given to Field Officers and they may not have the capacity to conduct Estate Inspections in a meaningful way.

Response for February Area Panel: The role of the Field Officers will be to support this process not lead an inspection, they will get to know the local areas. Their role in the inspections will evolve once they start up. The key thing is to get them started.

d) Residents have repeatedly asked for clarification of the role of Field Officers detailing the range of work they have to do. This has still not been provided.

Response for February Area Panel: The Field Officer service will continue to become more flexible with the service currently offered under review, to see where we can best serve residents and work closely with partner agencies.

The Field Officer has a focus on how we deliver enforcement and inspection functions across services and working in our communities and with our communities to promote a more proactive and preventative way of working. Also, with a focus on delivering solutions and resolving problems.

Field Officer Team was created, with the aim of working flexibly across services, preventing duplication, reducing response times and improving the way customers access services, with improved customer satisfaction. In addition, working proactively with communities.

To facilitate an agile model of service delivery that remains focused on community and service needs, resources, and seasonal demands the team is continuing to work over 7 days 12.00 to 20.00. Each shift is 9.75 hours, and this enables the team to be flexible and work before 12.00, and/or after 20.00. This ensures they can provide a responsive service and have the ability to target resources effectively. It also provides a service at times when many other council services are not accessible and do not operate.

The functions being delivered by the Field Officer Team currently include commercial and domestic noise, other nuisance including dust and smoke and drainage investigations, street licensing cases, waste on private land, elements of planning enforcement investigations, and tented encampments. This has not included anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour investigations have remained with Housing Management for housing tenants and Community Safety for all other cases of anti-social behaviour. When requested Field Officers will support these services gathering evidence, information and intelligence.

Since the pandemic and the city's needs are changing and we are reviewing the service we offer. Ensuring we deliver the best service our customer needs and work closely with partner agencies.

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We have been supporting Emergency planning delivering food for those who were vulnerable during the 1st wave of lockdowns, supporting public health in delivery of communication to different areas of the community.

Working with the Police in operations and taking part in ASB week on the seafront and in the city , being more visible.

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4.2 Response to service requests and queries

Background

Item 4.2: Response to service requests and queries

Issue: West Residents raised concerns about poor communication and lack of response to emails and phone calls.

Response at Area Panel: Housing apologised and promised to make immediate improvements on follow up to actions discussed at Area Panels. This will be addressed as part of the Area Panel Review. Future plans also include information on residents' pages on the Council website, and bulletins on changes to areas of services.

Response at the West Residents meeting: The apology from Housing was noted. It was agreed to monitor this and report back if there hasn't been an improvement. Practically, for the February area panel the residents would like to know more about parking vouchers and how to get them now that they are not available at the Hove Town Hall

Action

4.2 The residents would like to know more about parking vouchers and how to get them now that they are not available at the Hove Town Hall and since the parking department was closed.

Response

*Thiago Pereira - Parking Customer Services Team Leader -
parkingteamleaders@brighton-hove.gov.uk*

All residents can apply for their visitor parking permits online through their MyAccount or by creating a MyAccount. Here is a link to MyAccount: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/myaccount>

Residents who use email but need help using our website or require access to a computer can visit us at Brighton Customer Service Centre. The customer service officers at the centre are trained to help customers with the website. They are not Parking Services staff and will not be able to answer parking enquiries

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The Parking Service Counter is closed and reception Staff at Hove Town Hall are unable to help with online assistance.

Residents who cannot use digital services can order their visitor parking permits through the postal application service. I enclosed the application form to this email. The form contains all information required in order to apply through the post.

If there is any more information that you feel would be helpful if given during your meeting on the 15/02/21, we can certainly look at the availability and possibly of sending an officer to answer questions during the meeting however, this would be solely to cover this subject and not for any other parking related issue.

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4.3/4.4 Task and Finish Group / Service Improvement Group

Background

Item 4.3: Task & Finish groups

Issue: West Residents asked for a list of all current groups including Task and Finish, Service Improvement Groups (SIG) and others such as the Tenant Disability Network (TDN), with details of the remit for each group.

Response at Area Panel: Agreed to provide this.

Response at the West Residents meeting: this has still not been received.

Item 4.4: Service Improvement Groups

Issue: West residents asked for copies of the minutes where it was agreed that the four service improvement groups will merge into two.

Response at Area Panel: the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy approved at Housing Committee March 2021 includes a recommendation to reduce the four Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) to two, minutes of that meeting can be found on the council's website: <https://present.brightonhove.gov.uk/documents/g10054/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Mar-2021%2016.00%20Housing%20Committee.pdf?T=1>). These groups will focus on 'People' and 'Buildings'. This will allow for time limited task and finish groups to focus on specific issues in detail and report back to Area Panels. Discussions have begun in the Home and Involvement & Empowerment SIGs on terms of reference for the two new groups. Further discussion is required and the intention is to bring the draft terms of reference for these groups to the Area Panels in Spring 2022 for approval.

Response at the West Residents meeting:

a) Reducing the Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) to two will impact on the level of resident involvement – agendas for the present SIGs are already too full and items don't get covered.

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- b) Concerns were raised about the level of consultation and involvement of residents in a decision that is then attributed to them. The objections raised by West residents did not get reported to Housing Committee, so it appeared that there was agreement when this wasn't the case.
- c) Papers for Area Panels are only available a week before the meeting – more time is needed for meaningful consultation (see item 6).

Action

4.3/4.4 Task and Finish group and Service Improvement group - The residents would like to receive the papers about the remits of each group before the Area Panel.

Response

*Keely McDonald - Community Engagement Officer East -
keely.mcdonald@brighton-hove.gov.uk*

A list of the Service Improvement Groups and their previous topics of discussion was provided to the members of the Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group on request at their meeting held on 2nd February 2022. This information has been included with the papers for this Area Panel meeting along with a description of each group's remit. If you have any further questions regarding Service Improvement Groups, please contact the Community Engagement Team via email communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk or call 07717302986 or 07717302872

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4.5 Weed Control

Background

Item 4.5: Weed Control Issue:

Issue: Concerns were raised about the difficulties of keeping pavements safe without the use of weed killer. What alternatives are there?

Response at Area Panel: it was acknowledged that managing weeds is challenging without the use of glyphosate herbicide. A private contractor is being used to clear areas of Housing land where weeds cause a health and safety hazard. Alternative herbicides such as Katoun Gold kill surface vegetation but not roots so there is quick regrowth, requiring frequent treatments. Housing will continue to monitor and respond to areas that may need more attention.

Response at the West Residents meeting: while some areas have seen improvements weed control and maintenance of garden areas continues to be a problem in others. The service seems very uneven across the area. West residents asked for details on:

- a) which areas private contractors have been used in and what is the criteria?
- b) who makes the decisions about where private contractors are used?

Specific concerns were raised about:

a) Isabel Crescent: bushes were stripped out rather than pruned and tidied up. These acted as a useful barrier and made it safer for children in the play areas. This is similar to the issue at Clarendon & Ellen, where bushes were torn out unnecessarily (this has now been resolved but residents had to push hard to get it done).

b) Wickhurst Road/Stonery Close: work has not been done.

West residents asked for information on:

- a) Who issues job specifications for the contractors/workers?
- b) What level of detail is used in the job specification?
- c) Are contractors/workers not given sufficient information about what needs to be done or are they failing to comply with the job specifications?

Action

4.5 Weed control - The residents are requesting a written response to their questions about weed control ahead of the Area Panel.

Response

Robert Walker - Head of Operations - City Parks - robert.walker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Item 4.5: Weed Control Issue:

Issue: Concerns were raised about the difficulties of keeping pavements safe without the use of weed killer. What alternatives are there? Response at Area Panel: it was acknowledged that managing weeds is challenging without the use of glyphosate herbicide. A private contractor is being used to clear areas of Housing land where weeds cause a health and safety hazard. Alternative herbicides such as Katoun Gold kill surface vegetation but not roots so there is quick regrowth, requiring frequent treatments. Housing will continue to monitor and respond to areas that may need more attention.

Response at the West Residents meeting: while some areas have seen improvements weed control and maintenance of garden areas continues to be a problem in others. The service seems very uneven across the area. West residents asked for details on:

- a) which areas private contractors have been used in and what is the criteria?
- b) who makes the decisions about where private contractors are used?

Response Robert Walker: Not something parks do.

Specific concerns were raised about:

- a) Isabel Crescent: bushes were stripped out rather than pruned and tidied up. These acted as a useful barrier and made it safer for children in the play areas. This is similar to the issue at Clarendon & Ellen, where bushes were torn out unnecessarily (this has now been resolved but residents had to push hard to get it done)

Response Robert Walker for February Area Panel: I'll look into this it is not resident funded beds

- b) Wickhurst Road/Stonery Close: work has not been done.

Response Robert Walker for February Area Panel: Up to date on all mowing & mowing season had now ended.

Shrub work Wickhurst odds – Pruning finished

Wickhurst Evens – Pruning is due Winter 21-22 will be complete before end of season

Stonery Close– No shrub work (there is a block within the estate that is not under our contract)

West residents asked for information on:

- a) Who issues job specifications for the contractors/workers?
- b) What level of detail is used in the job specification?
- c) Are contractors/workers not given sufficient information about what needs to be done or are they failing to comply with the job specifications?

Response Robert Walker for Area Panel: We very rarely employ contractors and I am not aware that we have had any in the west area.

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4.6 Dog poo bins in Greenleas

Background

Item 4.6: Dog poo bins in Greenleas

Issue: West residents requested more dog poo bins at Greenleas park as these are always overflowing.

Response at the West Residents meeting: the Bin Infrastructure Action Plan will be reviewing the locations of dog waste bins and seeking to replace with normal litter bins. Through this piece of work there is likely to be an increase in capacity for Greenleas Park. They were not able to provide timescales.

Response at the West Residents meeting: West residents are frustrated at being told they must wait for a city-wide Bin Infrastructure Plan, at an unspecified future date. This is a small, inexpensive, quick job which it should be possible to do immediately. In the meantime the problem of overflowing dog waste in a park where children play does not go away.

This is an example of how difficult it is to get even minor improvements done and why Resident Association representatives can feel they don't get anywhere.

Action

West residents were not satisfied with the response and are asking for larger bins to be put in to Greenleas park immediately.

Response

*Eduardo Costa - Team Leader Cityclean • City Environment (Cityclean & Cityparks)
- eduardo.costa@brighton-hove.gov.uk*

We visited the area today (27.01.2022) and we've got 8 dog bins in total between Greenleas and Benfield Valley. I just Spoke with the driver responsible for the collection and he told me that the dog bins in that area are collected every third day. Today is his day 3 and that's exactly the area he will be covering.

I notice that some of the bins are without stickers but I will be replacing them tomorrow morning. In summary there are a good number of dog bins in the area, and it will be reviewed as part of the bin infrastructure programme.

I hope this information will be useful but do not hesitate in contact me necessary. Please see the appendix for the dog bin locations.

West Area 3 Stars

Argus Article on changes to Estate Development Budget

Background

The Argus printed an article on 14th December about the changes to the Estate Development Budget (EDB). This was before the EDB paper had been discussed at Area Panel and it was felt that it pre-empted residents' decisions.

Not everyone at the meeting had seen the article, and the joint chairs agreed to follow up on this issue and if necessary put in a formal complaint.

Action

West residents asked if housing had sent a press release to the Argus which instigated the article 14/12/21 on the Estate Development Budget. If so, they asked to see a copy.

Response

Sam Warren - community engagement manager - sam.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

The Argus printed an article on 14th December about the changes to the Estate Development Budget (EDB). This was before the EDB paper had been discussed at Area Panel and it was felt that it pre-empted residents' decisions.

Not everyone at the meeting had seen the article, and the joint chairs agreed to follow up on this

The article in the Argus was written by journalist Sarah Booker Lewis who attends most of the Area Panel meetings and receives or accesses the papers from the public website. My understanding is that Sarah picked up the information from the report about Estates Development Budget in the public papers. The article was then based on this information. I'm very sorry but the residents saw this article before being aware that the papers had been made public on the council website.

In addition, I understand from talking to specific residents, that they were unhappy with content of the original report that the article was then based on. In this case I would request but these issues are taken to the Estates Development Budget task and finish group where they can be discussed and reviewed in more detail.

West Area 3 Stars

Area Panel Review and time for consultation

Background

An Area Panel Review was referred to in the responses given at the last West Area Panel. West Residents had not been aware this was going to take place and want to ensure that there is meaningful consultation with residents before any decisions are made.

West residents feel there is a history of proposals being taken to Housing Committee before disagreements and objections have been resolved and without meaningful consultation. Ways need to be found to improve on this.

An important step would be earlier distribution of papers. Area Panel papers are only available a week before the meeting. For many residents this will be the first time they see the proposals. Often these are detailed and lengthy and a week is insufficient time to read, consult members and draw together a response.

Action

West residents are asking that papers be published several weeks before Area Panels when they address major issues. Two current examples are the draft terms of reference for the new 'People' and 'Buildings' groups and the Area Panel review.

Response

Sam Warren - community engagement manager - sam.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the energy and effort it takes for the residents to read and digest all the papers and recognise that sometimes there is a lot of information and we want residents to feel their involvement is valued and has impact.

If there are large documents that have significant impact, we will try to ensure that these come to Area Panel in a timely manner. When something is going to Housing Committee, this is especially important, and officers have been asked to (where possible) bring these papers to Area Panels with time for comments to be taken on board and possible changes to be made. In addition, at the agenda setting meetings we would ask the resident Vice Chair to raise any items they would like to come forward onto the agenda.

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It is also a suggestion to have an annual plan for key priorities, so these can be scheduled in ahead of Housing Committee to ensure residents and officers can have a timescale to bring items to each AP.

In terms of managing the meetings the timescales for the Area Panels are very tight. I have attached the timetable so residents can see the process and hope that is helpful.

In relation to the Area Panel Review there is a timetable and scoping document attached with Feb 2022 Area Panel Papers that sets out the review process. There will be detailed and timely consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including AP's, Tenants and leaseholder associations and individual tenants and residents.

North Area 3 Stars

Buying back council homes

Background

The council has the power to buy back properties that have previously been sold under the Right to Buy Scheme, as described in the Home Purchase Policy Guide. Residents are concerned about the lack of affordable housing available in the city and the length of time people have to wait before being housed. With this in mind, there is concern that the council may not be actively pursuing all its options to buy back homes.

Action

Residents are requesting a report on what action is taken by the council to identify homes that they could potentially buy back, and whether all the funds allocated for this are being used. Also, could the residents have the data in how many homes are being bought back broken down into the four areas of the city? Including the data on Hollingdean and Colddean.

Response

Diane Hughes -Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager - diane.hughes@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Thank you for your question regarding the council's 'buy back' scheme where the council seeks to buy back former council owned homes.

As at 24 January 2022 this scheme has allowed the council to buy back 194 properties with offers currently accepted on a further 40 properties. We have purchases committed against the budget set for this year and we aim to fully use the budget each year.

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The council has a range of ways to identify properties for the scheme.

- Some owners are legally required to offer the council the right of first refusal if the Right to Buy has been exercised within the last 10 years. These owners need to approach the council directly
- Including information on the council's website Sell your property back to the council (brighton-hove.gov.uk) and through Homing in which results in direct approaches to the council to sell back a property
- Review properties for sale on platforms such as Rightmove and Zoopla and once ex council properties are identified direct approaches are made to estate agents to explore a potential purchase.

We will keep our publicity options under review and if necessary will expand publicity in order to meet our annual targets.

The breakdown across the four Area Panel areas is:

East: 43

Central: 67

West: 79

North: 45 (of which 22 are in the Hollingdean & Stanmer ward)

East and North Area

3 Stars

Citywide problems with rubbish and recycling

Background

The problems with rubbish and recycling collections across the city have not been resolved.

Examples were given from:

- Bristol Estate - see item 9
- Whitehawk - recycling wasn't collected for 6 weeks in one area
- Robert Lodge – recycling wasn't collected for a month and the bins smell so much that it affects residents when they are in their flats.
- Old Boat Walk – regular missed collections.
- Buttercup Walk Patcham - missed collections
- Dunster Close – miscollections.
- Wigmore Close – miscollections.

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting. Residents are requesting a review of the provision of bins throughout the city and the frequency of collections. This should include a plan of which bin areas should be de-odorized and how often. It is requested that Rachel Chasseaud attend the Area Panel to respond directly to residents' concerns.

Response

Melissa Francis - Head of Operations - Cityclean • City Environment (Cityclean & Cityparks) - Melissa.Francis@brighton-hove.gov.uk

- Bristol Estate - see item 9

This was first raised August/September time whether we could increase collecting until the bin stores were built. Unfortunately we did not have the resources to provide more frequent collections. This was at a time when we had driver shortages and on average 4 rounds not going out each day, and we couldn't commit resources when we were struggling to cover the normal service. We will review again whether it is possible to temporarily increase collections but we will need to consider capacity within the refuse and recycling collections service to take on this work.

- Whitehawk - recycling wasn't collected for 6 weeks in one area

We have worked with the Driver and crew on service improvements in to recycling within Whitehawk including a recent audit. The results of the audit will be implemented which will lead to further improvement. Hopefully residents are starting to see more regular recycling collections but please do notify Cityclean of any issues.

- Robert Lodge – recycling wasn't collected for a month and the bins smell so much that it affects residents when they are in their flats.

- Old Boat Walk – regular missed collections.

- Buttercup Walk Patcham - missed collections

We will undertake a review of these locations and report to the next Area Panel Meeting

- Dunster Close – miscollections.

- Wigmore Close – miscollections.

Dunster Close and Wigmore Close are on the small calls round which has struggled due to additional work being put on this round. We have acquired an additional vehicle and resources to supplement the small calls round and this will increase reliability of collections where a small vehicle is required.

East, West, North, Central Area

3 Stars

Repairs backlog

Background

West: there is an overall deterioration of the repairs and maintenance service. This does not seem to be improving, despite assurances from the Council that new staff are being employed. It was acknowledged that COVID has been a difficulty but felt that this wasn't the only problem with the delivery of the service.

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For example, there is differing information on the definition of emergency repairs. There can also be different interpretations between the Council and residents about whether a repair is an emergency or not.

North: Residents have been told that it will take 12 months to clear the repairs backlog (written response to Area Panels December 2021). This is extremely frustrating for all the tenants who are waiting for their repairs to be done.

East: Windows that are faulty and beyond repair are not being replaced. Residents are being told that they have to wait until this work is scheduled for their block under the planned maintenance programme. At the same time, many windows are being replaced under the planned maintenance programme that are perfectly good and do not need replacing.

Associations are receiving a lot of complaints from residents who have windows which do not keep the heat in, are draughty and let in rain. There is widespread concern about this because:

- It adversely affects the health of residents who are living for long periods of time with faulty windows
- People are paying higher heating bills because so much of the heat is escaping through the faulty windows
- Water coming in through windows can lead to further damage to the fabric of the building and more costly repairs in the long term
- This is hampering the council's plans to reduce carbon emissions as discussed at Housing Committee on 17th November 2021
- This is counter to the promises about the Decent Homes Initiatives made in BHCC 'Our plan 2020 to 2023'

Craven Vale Community Association (CVCA) and Bristol Estate Leaseholders, Tenants and Residents Association (BELTA) have both been trying to address this problem.

BELTA have been supporting residents who have reported faulty windows, by logging the deadline by which work should be done and chasing it up if it isn't done. This has been successful in some cases. BELTA has also found that replacing windows in high rise blocks is less of an obstacle than they thought, as this can often be done from inside a flat rather than requiring scaffolding.

Following a discussion at Craven Vale Community Association some residents chose to write to Cllr Nancy Platts. Cllr Platts followed this up but received an unsatisfactory response from officers stating that the residents concerned will have to wait years for windows to be replaced, as Craven Vale window replacements are being done at a rate of two blocks a year. Cllr Platts has suggested this matter could be brought to the Area Panel or Housing Committee if it is found to be a common problem experienced by many residents and the Residents Association is going to follow this up.

Central: Concerns around Sylvan Hall and safety of it because the windows do fall out. Martin Reid has undertaken a survey on feasibility of replace or repair in Sylvan Hall.

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Action

West: Residents are requesting information on:

- a) What does an emergency repair consist of?
- b) What are the timescales for emergency repairs? Is there a difference between the Council's stated timescales and what is actually happening now?

North: Residents are requesting a report on the progress being made by the repairs service to clear the backlog.

East: It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting.

Residents are requesting a review of the way windows are assessed for repair or replacement which specifically addresses the following issues:

- Ensuring that windows which are beyond repair are treated the same as all other routine repairs and replaced within 20 days
- Assessing windows prior to replacement under the planned maintenance programme to ensure the work is necessary
- Taking into account the impact on resident's health and fuel bills when there are potential delays to window repairs or replacements

Residents would like a report of this review to be brought back to Area Panels for discussion.

Central: response/update from Martin Reid on the survey on feasibility of replace or repair in Sylvan Hall.

Response

*Theresa Youngman - Contract Compliance Manager-
theresa.youngman@brighton-hove.gov.uk / Grant Richie - Head of Repairs and
Maintenance - grant.richie@brighton-hove.gov.uk*

West response: We are very sorry to hear that there is a general feeling of deterioration of the repairs and maintenance service. Since insourcing into the council in April 2020 the pandemic restrictions have posed (and continue to pose) enormous challenges on our service. Unfortunately, a large backlog of works has unavoidably accumulated during this time, which has led to long delays to non-urgent works. We appreciate how frustrating this is for our residents and we are working hard to schedule works according to priority need.

To help us reduce the backlog of works, we are recruiting additional staff, but this is not a quick fix. Recruitment of suitably trained / experienced staff and getting new staff up to speed does take time. We anticipate that normal service delivery will take approximately one year.

The definition of what constitutes an emergency repair is defined by the Government's Right To Repair legislation. All local authorities are required to attend within 1 day (24 hours) of an emergency priority repair being reported. Please see in the appendix the Government's list of emergency priority repairs. I hope this clarifies.

West Area Panel Residents Questions

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North response: Residents are requesting a report on the progress being made by the repairs service to clear the backlog.

Response: To help us reduce the backlog of works, we are recruiting additional staff but this is not a quick fix. Recruitment of suitably trained / experienced staff and getting new staff up to speed does take time. We anticipate that normal service delivery will take approximately one year. We appreciate this is incredibly frustrating for residents and we are working hard to schedule outstanding repairs according to priority need.

East: It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting.

Residents are requesting a review of the way windows are assessed for repair or replacement which specifically addresses the following issues:

- Ensuring that windows which are beyond repair are treated the same as all other routine repairs and replaced within 20 days
- Assessing windows prior to replacement under the planned maintenance programme to ensure the work is necessary
- Taking into account the impact on resident's health and fuel bills when there are potential delays to window repairs or replacements

Residents would like a report of this review to be brought back to Area Panels for discussion.

Response: We have commenced the city wide Planned Window Programme this year, and the areas / blocks being programmed are prioritised by those most in need of work. We are due to start on the Craven Vale Estate next year and have programmed in 2 blocks to start (the remainder will be phased over coming years). A further verbal update will be given at the East Area Panel meeting.

Central: response/update from Martin Reid on the survey on feasibility of replace or repair in Sylvan Hall.

Response: Works will be commencing at Sylvan Hall next year; residents will be updated by letter before this starts.

