

Brighton and Hove City Council

Housing Committee

22 June 2022

Agenda Item 8 (b)

Brighton and Hove City Council

Member Questions for 22 June Housing committee.

Question 1:

Cllr Barnett to Chair of Housing Committee Phone services

The Argus has reported that phone lines for the council's housing customer service have not been fully operational for two years.

Can the Chair provide an explanation as to why a full phone service have not been fully provided for so long?

Supporting information:

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/20165779.council-brighton-fully-re-opening-phone-lines-housing-services/>

Question 2:

Cllr Meadows to Chair of Housing Committee Empty homes and Housing Repairs Backlog

Can the Chair provide the latest figures on:

- a. Empty Homes;
- b. Housing repairs backlog;
- c. Capital cost of accumulated backlog of repairs;
- d. Lost rent from empty homes for the 2021-2 municipal year.

Has there been any improvement from when the last figures were published in December 2021, when the housing repairs backlog was 8,801; there were 284 empty homes; and £1,042,000 in potential rent had been lost from empty homes in the first part of the 2021-2 municipal year?

Supporting information:

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/19800519.2-million-rent-lost-empty-brighton-council-houses/>

Question 3:
Cllr Meadows to Chair of Housing Committee
Private Contractors

Are private contractors being used to clear the Housing repairs backlog?

If so, which companies are being contracted, and how much has been budgeted for this?

Question 4:
Cllr Barnett to Chair of Housing Committee
Student flats

In recent years there have been hundreds of purpose built flats for students built across the city, including along London Road, Lewes Road and Circus Street.

We were told that building more students flats would free up family homes.

However, many students are saying that the purpose built accommodation is too expensive and they still prefer house shares.

How many of these purpose-built student flats were empty or vacant during the past academic year?

Question 5:
Cllr Barnett to Chair of Housing Committee
Allocations

Many council tenants who wish to downsize to smaller properties due to their circumstances are being told by the council that they not able to because one-bedroom flats are currently being reserved for homeless people.

What is the current allocations policy for council homes that become available?

What proportion of one-bedroom flats are being allocated to homeless people?