

Residents Questions - 3 star, All Areas - for East Area Panel

E3.1 Council Staff's Lack of Responsiveness

Area in city	East
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	5 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Justine Harris
Officer job title	Head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	Justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.1 Question & Response

Issue	Senior and other Council staff rarely respond to residents' emails. This issue was raised as a three-star item at the meeting of 15 th December 2022, but was not addressed by Council officers, and did not appear in the Area Panel papers.]
Background	Residents are frustrated that they rarely receive responses from senior Council officers, and other Council staff. Issues that are raised by residents are frequently not followed up, in spite of promises to do so. In certain cases, residents have been waiting over 4 months for a follow-up response on issues they have raised. This situation has not improved since it was raised at the last East Area Residents Only meeting.
Request or Question	It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do senior Council officers not respond to residents' emails within the expected 10-day turnaround time? • What are senior Council officers doing to ensure there is an improvement to their response time, and that of their staff?
Response	Thank you for your question. The question that you put forward in December's meeting was withdrawn due to further clarification needed and therefore did not receive a response nor did it appear in the papers for Area Panel.

	<p>We're sorry that you feel that senior officers have not responded to your emails. All officers including senior officers aim to respond to all enquiries within 10 working days. However, sometimes we are unable to respond in time as the response can require input from many different departments, in this instance a holding response is usually sent.</p> <p>We are reviewing communication as part of our service planning, this includes information available on our web pages to improve self serve options for residents who can resolve their enquiry. This will enable officers to respond in better time to those residents who need help to resolve a query.</p> <p>In addition to emails, staff, including senior officers can be contacted at Area Panels, where the Assistant Director for Housing Management and Heads of Service within this directorate all attend regularly. Officers can also be contacted at estate visits, Home Group and other resident's meetings which take place throughout the week.</p> <p>Most new enquiries go through the Repairs Helpdesk at repairs.helpdesk@brighton-hove.gov.uk or telephone on 01273 294 409 or the Housing Customer Service team at housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk or telephone on 01273 293 030. Depending on the enquiry from there they may be allocated and assigned a dedicated contact, such as where there is ongoing anti-social behaviour, this enables a single point of contact to coordinate a response.</p>
Action	Take into account the points made by residents as part of the service review.
Start date	23.05.23
End date	ongoing

E3.2 Lack of Safety Certificates for Cladding

Area in city	East
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	5 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	26 th April at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Dan Walters

Officer job title	Building and Compliance Services Manager
Contact Details	Dan.Walters@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.2 Question & Response

Issue	The Council do not have safety certificates for buildings with cladding.
Background	Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the importance of safe cladding has been highlighted. However, it seems that the Council do not have the required safety certificates for buildings with cladding in the city. This has raised concerns that the cladding is not safe and is a major risk to the health and safety of residents. Leaseholders have reported having difficulties selling their properties and having issues with their mortgage providers because they cannot get the required safety certificates for cladding.
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does the Council not have required safety certificates for buildings with cladding? • Is the cladding on Council blocks in Brighton & Hove safe? • Is the building insurance still valid if there are no safety certificates? • Are residents' contents insurance still valid if there are no safety certificates? • What action is the Council taking to ensure the safety of their residents in buildings with cladding?
Response	<p>We have no legal requirement to provide the external wall system (EWS1) currently, our only duty is to provide a copy of the fire risk assessment of the property.</p> <p>We currently hold 15 current EWS1 forms and have appointed a consultant to carry out the remaining 28 re-inspections.</p> <p>We have full building information on our cladding systems and none of them are unsafe ACM combustibile material, on the Council's website is a list of the type of cladding on all our blocks over 6-storeys which is a government requirement.</p> <p>Building insurance is valid and residents' contents insurance is still valid</p>

	A Chartered Building Surveyor consultant regulated by RICS have been appointed to complete inspections of the external wall system.
Action	A Chartered Building Surveyor consultant regulated by RICS have been appointed to complete inspections of the external wall system.
Start date	March 2023
End date	October 2023

E3.3 Estate Development Budget Funding

Area in city	East
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	5 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Sam Warren
Officer job title	Community Engagement Manager
Contact Details	Sam.waren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.3 Question & Response

Issue	Unspent EDB funds going into the Housing Revenue Account.
Background	Residents were informed at the February 2023 Area Panel meeting that unspent EDB funds in the year were being put into the Housing Revenue Account, rather than going back into the EDB pot for the following year. Residents had been led to believe that any unspent EDB funds would be going back into the EDB pot.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why haven't residents been informed that unspent EDB funds were going into the HRA? • Has this happened in previous years or is it a new policy?

Response	I apologise that the information about how the underspend of EDB funds is managed from one financial year to the next was not made clear to residents. A report was brought to the Area Panels in 2019 detailing the plan to reduce the EDB budget, this was because a large reserve had built up over a number of years due to repeated underspend. The budget was reduced to £181,000 per year with this total being raised to £320,000 using the reserves. The reserves were ringfenced to EDB and would only be used for this purpose until they ran out. Any unspent funds from the budget were not ringfenced to EDB but stayed in the HRA. As part of the recent review of the EDB Process, the Task and Finish Group made a recommendation that the budget be kept at £320,000 after the reserves have run out, this is being considered.
Action	Keep residents updated in the relation to Reserves.
Start date	04.04.23
End date	Ongoing

N3.1 - Damp and Mould

Area in city	North
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	04/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	05/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5pm on 5 th May
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Officer job title	Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	Grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.1 Question & Response

Issue	The Council is still not taking enough action and not responding quickly enough to remedy serious damp and mould problems.
Background	The issue of damp and mould was raised at the last North Area Residents' Only meeting of 19 th December 2022. Resident reps across the North area have continued to monitor the situation and are dealing with a number of cases on behalf of tenants and residents in their neighbourhoods. A lot of the cases consist of serious mould and damp issues,

	<p>affecting young children and older people who, as a result, are suffering from asthma and other respiratory issues.</p> <p>These cases are not new – the problems have been going on for years and have been repeatedly reported to the Council. In spite of promises to take the situation seriously, and not to blame tenants’ and residents’ lifestyles, resident reps have found that the situation has not improved. There are several issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents/tenants are still being treated with a lack of respect by Council staff/contractors. Their concerns are not being taken seriously and they continue to be blamed for the problems of mould/damp in their properties – for example, being told to open windows to fix the problem. • In certain severe cases of mould/damp, tenants are not being offered alternative accommodation, in spite of the massive risks to their health while living under these conditions. • Council staff/contractors are coming to view properties with damp/mould issues, after which no further action is being taken. Residents/tenants do not hear back, and there is no follow up or communication after the visit. [Contact RA reps for details of cases] • Certain remedial jobs are started, and then suddenly dropped and the jobs remain unfinished. This seems to be happening in situations where the mould/damp issues are too severe and staff are unable to deal with the problem. • Where remedial work has been undertaken, the job is not being done properly and fully. The root causes of mould/damp problems have not been dealt with, so the mould/damp returns.
<p>Request or Question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents would like reassurance that the council will show tenants and their homes respect. They can do this by ensuring operatives do not lecture or blame tenants about the problem, recognising that to advise people to ‘open a window’ or ‘put on the heating’ during a cost of living crisis is unreasonable. Also to ensure operatives wear protective clothing and bring the correct equipment to avoid using tenants' furniture to reach areas to be treated. Can the council confirm how these changes will be implemented? • What is the timescale for addressing reported mould and damp, particularly in high-risk cases where the health and safety of tenants is a major concern? Residents would like the council to carry out an inspection to rule out external causes to reduce the impact of long term health damage. • How are tenants being kept informed of the progression of remedial works to their properties? • The symptoms of damp and mould are being addressed by wash downs and anti-mould paint, but it doesn’t address the cause. Can the council carry out a city-wide inspection of properties to assess the scale and severity of damp and mould to feed back to Area Panels?
<p>Response</p>	<p>As a council, we are committed to working with our tenants and residents to address the issues of damp and mould and to ensure the health and safety of those living in our homes. We have responded to the Social Housing Regulator with the information they have requested from all social landlords. We are also using the recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman, ‘It’s not lifestyle’, spotlight report on damp and mould issues as guidance when shaping our response to this issue and the impact on residents living with it.</p>

Our Housing Management service are working hard to maintain our continuous improvement of the standard of our council housing stock. Helping residents live in well insulated, efficiently heated, healthy homes is a key investment objective, supported through our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme. In terms of asset management, there is a particular emphasis on improvements in property insulation, window installation and mechanical ventilation. Our 2023/24 HRA budget includes investment of over £34m on improving existing council homes, including increasing our investment in damp and condensation measures as well as our overall investment in planned and major capital works.

Unfortunately, condensation dampness issues are affecting our housing stock. Different properties have different challenges, for example lack of adequate insulation or adequate ventilation, insufficient heating system, or the condition of the external fabric (brickwork, pointing etc).

The Council have a proactive approach to managing damp works. We have a dedicated team to manage reported damp concerns. Our approach is to work with tenants to understand the cause of the damp and mould issues they may face and work together to find a solution. While there are some measures a tenant can take to reduce damp and mould problems such as ventilating their properties, we recognise that there may be other factors outside of a tenant's control. This may be linked to issues such as: vulnerability; low income; overcrowding in some of our homes; increases in heating costs; a lack of clothes drying facilities in flats.

We also try to work with tenants and other stakeholders to recognise and remove barriers to residents reporting problems to ensure tenants are able to engage with our services, and to report issues, including damp and mould. As a service we have seen a significant increase in reports of dampness and condensation in our homes following the tragic case of Awaab Ishak. We updated January Housing Committee (in Chairs' communications) and February Housing Area Panels, that (as of 3rd May) we had 903 damp jobs raised with our Housing Repairs and Maintenance service.

As well as utilising our in-house Repairs and Maintenance resource, via the dedicated team who manage reported damp concerns, we have also increased our specialist contractor capacity to address the number of reports we currently have.

To support our in-house team and to extend the scope of our works we have appointed a number of specialist contractors. This will give us additional resource to respond to damp problems and be more proactive in dealing with the route cause. This group of contractors is designed to provide:

- Specialist surveying resource
- Specialist damp treatment works
- Specialist damp remedial works
- Cavity wall insulation

In addition to working to identify properties with damp and mould and raise awareness to the risks and the need to report cases, we are also working with colleagues in other council services, including Families, Children and Learning and Public Health, to identify families and vulnerable individuals particularly at risk.

	<p>We are currently focusing on our response to the cases identified through three stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the property to assess the extent of the mould, establish the priority and specify remedial works. 2. Wash down the affected area and apply anti-fungal treatment and anti mould paint. 3. In cases where penetrating damp is identified undertake remedial works to remove the source of the damp. <p>We are also beginning to use technical monitoring equipment. This measures the amount of moisture in the air and the temperature in the home. This data helps us analyse the environment and more accurately pinpoint the cause of the condensation. We can also leave air purifiers and dehumidifiers in residents' homes where necessary, pending the initial treatment. In addition to directly tackling the problem we are also increasing loft insulation where necessary and, in some cases, are installing cavity wall insulation.</p> <p>We continue to take this issue very seriously and understand the concern that this is causing. Particularly the impact this may have on vulnerable people, the old and the young. Given the significant increase in the number of reported cases, we are prioritising cases following a risk-based approach to ensure an effective and timely response to families and vulnerable residents potentially most at risk. We are working with our contractors to increase the number of calls we do a week and reduce the waiting time, while also adding to our resources and increasing our overall capacity to respond. Clearly this does have an impact on our HRA budgets.</p> <p>Information is being made available to help tenants who are worried about fuel bills and the general pressure on the cost of living. Information has been included on our web site and other information leaflets and we would encourage anyone worried by these issues to contact us.</p> <p>For general advice, our new 'Condensation, damp and mould in your home' webpage https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/condensation-damp-and-mould-your-home is now live and linked with an extra line on our main Ask for a repair to your council home webpage - https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/ask-repair-your-council-home. We also have a leaflet that we share with tenants which gives practical advice on prevention and early treatment of condensation and mould.</p>
Action	Improve response to damp and condensation repairs
Start date	23.05.23
End date	Ongoing

N3.2 - Poor Council Communication

Area in city	North
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	04/04/2023

Week of Area Panel	05/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Grant Richie
Officer job title	Head of Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	Grant.richie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.2 Question & Response

Issue	The general level of communication from the Council is unacceptably poor.
Background	<p>Residents are finding that there is a lack of communication on the part of Council staff, in all areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior officers and other staff frequently fail to respond to and follow up on issues raised by residents in a timely manner. • Residents are not kept informed of changes that affect them, such as changes to Council staff, staff leaving or changes to prior engagements made by the Council, such as the internal decorating scheme. • There is little or no follow-up or communication regarding repairs, e.g., mould and damp. • The website / links sent to residents (e.g., parking consultations in Hollingdean) don't work
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will residents be kept informed, in a timely manner, of changes within the Council Housing department and Council decisions that affect them? • Residents would like Council Housing staff, including senior Council staff, to respond to and follow up on issues that residents have raised in a timely manner. Can tenants be given a timescale of when they can expect an update once a repair has been reported? • What action will Council Housing staff take to ensure that communications with resident reps and residents is improved? • Tenants contacting Housing are still being given reason for delay as Covid, when can they expect the delays to be resolved? What action will Council Housing staff take to ensure that communications with resident reps and residents is improved?
Response	<p>Thank you for your question. We're sorry that you feel that there is a lack of communication with residents.</p> <p>There are many ways that the Council communicate with residents, in addition to our team of Community Engagement Officers who liaise with resident groups on a regular basis.</p>

	<p>We host various residents' meetings, including Area Panels, undertake estate visits with residents, following the pilot we will be undertaking a regular schedule of estate walks. This is as well as our quarterly newsletter Homing In, and via updates on our website.</p> <p>Any changes to Housing programmes that affect residents, including the internal decorating scheme are updated via our website. The council is a large workforce, and as such, staff do change roles, however, contact details for individual departments still remains the same.</p> <p>The Repairs service is still dealing with c 10,000 jobs which have built up since the start of the pandemic due to reduced availability of contractors. There has also recently been a dramatic increase in the number of reports of damp and condensation jobs following the tragic case in Rochdale, numbers have nearly doubled since January 2023 to 1,335. We have employed additional specialist contractors to address these problems and also increased staffing levels. Unfortunately, due to this backlog and high level of individual jobs raised, repairs are taking longer. We understand how frustrating this can be to individual residents. We are unable to comment on how long a repair will take without knowing the specific details. The Repairs service are also rolling out our Housing Online system which will allow residents to check on the status of their outstanding repairs.</p> <p>The Community Engagement Team are currently working on a new framework for engagement with residents. The review will hear the views of a range of residents across the city including people from minoritised communities, tenants, leaseholders and community groups. The Team are currently scoping the review and will let residents know at a future area panel.</p> <p>When we tested the links to the parking site they worked, but we have raised it with the IT team.</p> <p>We are starting a review of the web pages for Housing; this piece of work is starting in June.</p>
Action	Reviewing engagement framework, web pages for Housing, and rolling out Housing Online.
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

N3.3 - Anti-social Behaviour on Bates Estate

Area in city	North
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	04/04/2023

Week of Area Panel	05/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5pm on 5 th May
Name of officer responding	Janet Dowdell
Officer job title	Tenancy Services Operations Manager
Contact Details	Janet.dowdell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.3 Question & Response

Issue	Cases of anti-social behaviour are being reported, but no serious action is being taken by the Council.
Background	<p>A tenant at Aldridge Court is regularly throwing rubbish bags out of the window and the rubbish is getting strewn outside, attracting rats and seagulls. The tenant has been reported multiple times and has so far had three warnings from the Council and has been issued a fine, but has continued their behaviour.</p> <p>Drug-related anti-social behaviour is also a problem on the estate. In one case, a tenant has been defecating in the communal hallway of a block as a result of being in a drug-induced state.</p> <p>Tenants have been advised to record the time and date of incidents, and report these cases, but many are fearful of doing this.</p> <p>ACTION: Ian K to contact Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), and Rebecca Mann (Community Engagement Officer for North area) at Brighton & Hove City Council.</p>
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What action is the council taking when it comes to tackling tenants who are perpetrators of anti-social behaviour? What is the council doing with the police to address these issues? • Where tenants have been found guilty and served a sentence for ASB, and have breached their tenancies, are they able to return to their council home? What is the council doing to protect and support the victims of their behaviour?
Response	<p>The question refers to Aldridge Court, but we are assuming this is in relation to Hawkridge Court where we know there is an issue with a resident throwing rubbish bags out of a fourth floor window.</p> <p>This behaviour is causing a danger and a nuisance and must be really unpleasant for other residents. It is also a breach of tenancy.</p> <p>We are unable to share detailed information but have been able to take action and expect this behaviour will not be repeated, we will continue to monitor the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What action is the council taking when it comes to tackling tenants who are perpetrators of anti-social behaviour? What is the council doing with the police to address these issues?

	<p>Where we receive reports of ASB, we work with residents to gather the facts and gain an understanding of what's happened, when, whether there were witnesses and if any perpetrators can be identified. If the situation involves criminal behaviour, we will work closely with the Police by sharing information and intelligence to bring about solutions.</p> <p>The situation described in this question involves domestic waste thrown from one of the flats. we assigned a Housing Officer to investigate the situation and they have been in contact with the resident to ensure no repeat of this nuisance behaviour happens again.</p> <p>We are confident measures are in place to avoid any further issues, but residents can report repeat offences to Housing Customer Services, who will make sure the Housing Officer is aware.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where tenants have been found guilty and served a sentence for ASB, and have breached their tenancies, are they able to return to their council home? What is the council doing to protect and support the victims of their behaviour? <p>A Prison sentence alone does not bring the tenancy to an end.</p> <p>If a tenant has been convicted of a serious offence, the council will consider possession action. The decision whether to proceed shall be decided on the basis of the facts of the individual case, taking into consideration what actions are proportionate and reasonable, taking into account the experience of the victims.</p>
Action	Continue to monitor
Start date	04.04.23
End date	Ongoing

C3.1 - Laundry Review

Area in city	Central
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	03/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	12/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Geof Gage

Officer job title	Head of Housing Investment and Asset Management
Contact Details	Geof.Gage@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk

C3.1 Question & Response

Issue	There has been insufficient publicity about communal laundries.
Background	A review of the laundries is going to Area Panels in May. Laundries have been poorly publicised, which leads to underuse. There were concerns that closures would be suggested due to underuse, without considering that this could be a result of people not knowing about the facilities. Following on from the review clear information should be sent to every resident about the laundry facilities.
Request or Question	These points to be considered in the laundry review.
Response	Tenants in blocks with laundries should know about these facilities. BHCC Re-Housing has a database of all laundry sites which they consult as part of the sign-up process for new tenants. If a new tenant is moving into a building which has a laundry they are informed of this and of how to access it. Re-Housing have been doing this for some time, so both new and existing tenants will have been told about the facilities.
Action	Ensure any new residents are informed of the laundry facilities in their block if applicable
Start date	23.05.23
End date	Ongoing

C3.2 - Repairs: Getting Value for Money

Area in city	Central
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	03/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	12/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Officer job title	Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance
Contact Details	Grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.2 Question & Response

Issue	If non-urgent repairs are left for long periods of time it can lead to more extensive and expensive work being needed in the future.
Background	<p>The specific example given was at Parkmead, where a 20ft length of broken guttering is still waiting for repair six months after it was reported. Water is running down the wall, washing out the sealing between the bricks and causing damp to seep into the wall.</p> <p>So the delay in the first repair to the guttering has led to a second, more problematic and expensive repair.</p> <p>This is a general problem about the way the repairs service operates city-wide which is frequently raised by residents, who experience the knock-on consequences of delayed repairs. Residents are aware that the repairs service has been under pressure, but this is a long-term problem and it is not a rational or cost-effective way to run a repairs system.</p>
Request or Question	<p>The following questions were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are repairs prioritised? • Are the consequences of delaying non-urgent repairs taken into consideration? If not why not? • What is being done to provide a more cost-effective system?
Response	<p>Thank you for your question. Repairs are prioritised based on risk both to safety and the impact on tenants. As we have reported to previous Area Panels and Housing Committee the Repairs Service still have a backlog of outstanding repairs. We have seen progress this year with the service attending to over 30,000 repairs in the last financial year compared to 26,700 in the previous year. We have also seen an improvement in the response to emergency repairs with 97.4% being responded to within 24hrs. The Service has also had to respond to considerable pressures particularly around Damp and Mould where we have seen a 12-fold increase in reported cases. However, despite these pressures we have seen overall customer satisfaction maintained at 97%.</p> <p>So whilst the direction of travel is positive, I do acknowledge that there is still some way to go before we are providing the type of proactive and preventative repairs and maintenance that you refer to in your question. I do recognise the value of timely repair and planned maintenance. However, it is also important that we continue to respond to repair requests based on risk and urgency to minimise the impact on tenants. I also accept that there are potentially financial impacts of delayed responses to repair requests and believe that the maintenance of tenant comfort and safety should be prioritised over this potential financial risk.</p> <p>As we are all aware the past 18 months has been financially turbulent seeing significant increases in inflation. This has obviously also impacted the construction industry. However, we continue to work with contractors to ensure we are receiving value for money and follow the ridged rules set down by the Council when appointing and monitoring contractors.</p>

Action	No Further Action Required
Start date	
End date	

C3.3 - Lack of response from officers

Area in city	Central
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	03/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	12/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Justine Harris
Officer job title	Head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	Justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.3 Question & Response

Issue	Residents are not getting responses from officers when they send emails.
Background	Essex Place Residents Association are very frustrated by a lack of response from officers to emails. It is difficult to get quite simple things done and this is very demoralising. It was recognised that this is an issue across Central, not just for Essex Place.
Request or Question	The following questions were raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are officers required to answer emails within a certain time? • Do emails get ignored if officers think residents have not followed the correct procedure? • What can be done to improve this situation?
Response	Thank you for your question. We're sorry that you feel frustrated with the lack of response from officers. We aim to respond to all enquiries within 10 working days turnaround time, however, due to the complexity of these enquiries, as a response may be required from many different departments this isn't always the case

	<p>We can assure you that no emails are ignored, some may be passed on to the correct team or officer to deal with. It really helps if new enquiries go in the first instance to the Repairs Help Desk on phone number - 01273 294 409 or repairs.helpdesk@brighton-hove.gov.uk or the Housing Customer Service team on phone number 01273 293 030 or housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk.</p> <p>As well as contacting officers via email, there are many opportunities for residents to speak to officers in person. Council officers including Heads of Service and Assistant Directors regularly attend meetings with residents. In addition to the area panel, residents are now invited for an extra hour beforehand for a resident's 'surgery' where residents are invited to talk about any individual issues that concern them. Residents are also able to contact officers when on estate visits and at various resident's meetings that happen throughout the year.</p> <p>If there are any specific issues that you are referring to, it would be helpful to inform the designated officer below who will be able to investigate further.</p>
Action	Take into account the points made by residents as part of the service review.
Start date	23.05.23
End date	Ongoing

C3.4 - Boundary Changes

Area in city	Central
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	03/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	12/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Justine Harris
Officer job title	Head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	Justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.4 Question & Response

Issue	Do recent Ward boundary changes affect the composition of the North/Central/East/West areas presently used by Housing?
Background	N/A

Request or Question	Request information on any changes to Housing Areas as a result of changes to Ward boundaries. If there have been changes, to include a list of which Associations are now in which area.																											
Response	<p>The information below shows which wards are in which Housing Area. This will inform the Area Panel split.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="443 405 1487 831"> <tr><td>West</td></tr> <tr><td>Brunswick and Adelaide</td></tr> <tr><td>Central Hove</td></tr> <tr><td>Goldsmid</td></tr> <tr><td>Hangleton and Knoll</td></tr> <tr><td>North Portslade</td></tr> <tr><td>South Portslade</td></tr> <tr><td>Westdene and Hove Park</td></tr> <tr><td>Wish</td></tr> <tr><td>Westbourne and Poets Corner</td></tr> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="443 875 1487 1167"> <tr><td>North</td></tr> <tr><td>Coldean and Stanmer</td></tr> <tr><td>Hollingdean and Fiveways</td></tr> <tr><td>Moulsecoomb and Bevendean</td></tr> <tr><td>Patcham and Hollingbury</td></tr> <tr><td>Round Hill</td></tr> <tr><td>Preston Park</td></tr> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="443 1211 1487 1379"> <tr><td>East</td></tr> <tr><td>Rottingdean and West Saltdean</td></tr> <tr><td>Woodingdean</td></tr> <tr><td>Whitehawk and Marina</td></tr> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="443 1458 1487 1715"> <tr><td>Central</td></tr> <tr><td>Hanover and Elm Grove</td></tr> <tr><td>Kemptown</td></tr> <tr><td>West Hill and North Laine</td></tr> <tr><td>Regency</td></tr> <tr><td>Queens Park</td></tr> </table> <p>Until we have undertaken a review of Tenancy Services, the Area Housing team splits will differ to the Area Panel arrangements.</p> <p>Residents with already open cases will see no disruption to ongoing casework. The Housing Customer Service team will continue to be the first point of contact for new enquiries.</p>	West	Brunswick and Adelaide	Central Hove	Goldsmid	Hangleton and Knoll	North Portslade	South Portslade	Westdene and Hove Park	Wish	Westbourne and Poets Corner	North	Coldean and Stanmer	Hollingdean and Fiveways	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Patcham and Hollingbury	Round Hill	Preston Park	East	Rottingdean and West Saltdean	Woodingdean	Whitehawk and Marina	Central	Hanover and Elm Grove	Kemptown	West Hill and North Laine	Regency	Queens Park
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Regency																												
Queens Park																												

	<p>It also worth noting that the Complex Case team, work across all four areas and that teams are used to taking cases from other areas due to capacity.</p> <p>We will update residents with any changes to the way the area Housing teams operate.</p>
Action	Update residents in regard to any changes to the Area Housing Teams as a result of the boundary change.
Start date	Ongoing
End date	

C3.5 - Time between Resident meetings and Area Panel Meetings

Area in city	Central
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide Issue
Date question raised	03/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	12/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Sam Warren
Officer job title	Community Engagement Manager
Contact Details	Sam.Warren@Brighton-Hove.Gov.Uk

C3.5 Question & Response

Issue	Central residents would like a shorter time between Resident Only meetings and Area Panel.
Background	<p>Resident Only meetings happen 7-8 weeks before the Area Panel meetings. This is to give officers the chance to respond to questions raised by residents, but means there is a very long gap for residents between raising an issue and getting a response.</p> <p>It affects the continuity of issues and the value of Area Panel meetings and doesn't work well for residents.</p> <p>Central residents recognised that time was needed for a full response from officers but felt this could be balanced better so there wasn't such a long gap.</p>
Request or Question	Ask for a shorter period to be scheduled between Resident Only meetings and Area Panels.
Response	Thank you for the question. Whilst we do understand the issue for residents, we are sorry, but it is not possible to change the timescales.

Below is more detail to explain why; what happens within those 7 to 8 weeks, and what other channels residents can use which might involve less wait time.

We receive approximately 30 Resident Questions (RQ) from the 4 Area Panels, plus a further average 20 Actions from Area Panels. For all staff, this workload sits alongside other projects and pressures they will also have on.

Within the current framework the 7 to 8 weeks are taken up as follows:

- Resource Centre compile minutes of the 4 Resident Only meetings and send to Community Engagement Team (1 working week)
- Community Engagement Team format and upload all RQ and Actions onto shared cloud drives for staff to access. This time also includes preparation for Area Panel agenda setting meetings (1 working week)
- Housing staff allocate all RQ and Actions to a wide range of officers to respond with appropriate detail. Different staff will double check responses with colleagues. This time also includes gathering other reports for Area Panel agenda. (2 working weeks)
- Community Engagement Team compiles RQ's and Actions into appropriate areas, along with all papers for agenda information and send to Democratic Services (2-3 working days)
- Democratic Services upload all RQ's and Actions, alongside all other reports, into Area Panel Packs and distribute printed copies and digital copies for website publication (1 working week)
- Postal service distribution of papers (1 working week)
- Residents receive papers 2 weeks in advance of meeting. (2 working weeks)

Thus, there are pros and cons for residents having this formal Resident Questions' process; a written response which directly addresses a specific particular question is of great value. However, that means the process takes longer than other methods.

The Community Engagement Team would like to ensure all resident's associations know about the channels available to ask questions and raise issues. Those include:

- All departmental enquiries process
- Advice from your community engagement officers and the community engagement team admin team
- Quarterly Service Improvement Groups
- Direct contact with known staff
- Your elected local Ward Councillors who can raise questions on your behalf
- Corporate Feedback processes

	The Involvement & Empowerment Group (I&E) and Community Engagement Team are currently developing a Tenants & Residents Association Handbook. This includes a section 'How to Get Stuff Done' which will include an extensive list including the above, and all the many ways Residents Associations can chase up enquiries.
Action	The Involvement & Empowerment Group and Community Engagement Team to continue to work on the TRA Handbook and bring the specific second draft of the relevant section to I&E next meeting. When the Handbook draft is ready, the draft will be shared with Area Panel and Residents Associations for comment.
Start date	June 23
End date	September 23

W3.1 Void Properties Refurbishment Policy

Area in city	West
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	12 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Officer job title	Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	Grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.1 Question & Response

Issue	West residents would like clarity about what appear to be different standards for voids and exchanges.
Background	A property in Knoll was approved for an exchange without any work being required. The exchange didn't happen, and when the property became void, major work was done to ensure it met current standards. This meant a brand new kitchen and carpets in excellent condition were ripped out, although the property had been deemed safe for an exchange.
Request or Question	If updating and refurbishment of a void property is required to ensure it meets health and safety requirements, why is this not necessary when properties are exchanged?

Response	<p>Without the address we are unable to fully look into this query however there are a number of reasons why a mutual exchange inspection and works differ from those carried out when a property is empty.</p> <p>A condition of mutual exchange is that each tenant accepts the home in its current condition. Our role is to facilitate this exchange application and carry out all verification checks and all health and safety repairs such as fitting window restrictors, carrying out gas safety checks and carrying out electrical safety checks etc.</p> <p>We will still carry out repairs for which we are responsible but if the home the individual is moving to has any improvements or alterations carried out the incoming resident may be expected to take on their maintenance which would not be the same as a property going through the empty homes process.</p> <p>If carpets are left during a mutual exchange this would be due to an agreement between both parties, regardless of condition. In Empty Properties floor coverings are assessed for suitability and condition and removed where we believe they would not be in a good enough condition to leave for an incoming tenant.</p> <p>The extent of inspection during a mutual exchange is more limited – mainly due to the fact the property is not completely clear.</p> <p>Works carried out in empty properties are not always to meet basic health and safety requirements. When a property is empty the key elements of the property (electrical installation, kitchen, bathroom etc.) will be assessed for condition and remaining life and replaced where required and where they are deemed to be beyond economical repair.</p>
Action	No further action
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

W3.2 Street Sweeping and Health & Safety

Area in city	West
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	12 th June 23

Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Tomas Szalma
Officer job title	Lead Operations Manager-City Clean
Contact Details	tomas.szalma@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.2 Question & Response

Issue	West residents continue to have concerns about the health & safety hazard from wet, slippery leaves on the pavements. This is a particular problem for people with a mobility issues, but poses a risk of slipping and falling for all pedestrians.
Background	<p>Concerns about the level of street sweeping on outlying estates were raised at the February West Area Panel. The response was that it was not possible to keep areas completely free of leaves, both because of the extent of the task and because leaf fall is continuous, so an area cleared quickly becomes covered again. The centre of the city is swept more frequently than outlying areas because of the heavier use and litter issues.</p> <p>West Residents noted that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> West residents' experience is that there has been a deterioration in the level of street sweeping. Residents living in the areas represented at the meeting rarely, if ever, see a street-sweeper on their streets. A daily sweeping is required during autumn when the leaves are falling. Residents understand that more leaves will fall once they have been swept up, but there are different levels at which this can be managed, and this service needs to be improved. West residents thought the Council was not sufficiently alert to a lack of street cleaning as a health and safety issue and that it should be a high priority for Council resources.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improvement to the street sweeping service, and provision of daily street sweeping in all areas during the autumn weeks when there is most leaf-fall. Information on whether or not this service has been reduced from previous years. Information on the frequency of cancellations to regular street sweeping schedules – is the reality of what happens different from the scheduled 5 days-a-week? Information on what priority safe pavements have as a health and safety issue.
Response	

1) An improvement to the street sweeping service, and provision of daily street sweeping in all areas during the autumn weeks when there is most leaf-fall.

In 2022, we were short-staffed. This was due to several factors, such as sickness levels and resignations.

In the West area in 2022, we were short by 1x supervisor, 1x crew driver, 1x mechanical sweeper driver and 4x operatives.

In addition, we were short of leaf-blowing equipment due to maintenance delays and sweeper trucks due to a manufacturing technical issue that is still being resolved by the manufacturer.

Our improvements so far:

- All leaf blowers have scheduled maintenance prior to leaf collection season. In 2022, our full staff establishment was increased by one operative.
- Throughout 2022 and the present we are continually recruiting our vacant positions until we fill all positions.

2) Information on whether or not this service has been reduced from previous years.

The Service was reduced in 2015 due to the budget reduction. Please see below staff levels in 2022, the current staff level and the numbers when fully recruited.

West area staff level in 2022:

Supervisors x1

Drivers: x8

Operatives: x 18

West area current staff level:

Supervisors x2

Drivers: x8

Operatives: x 20

West area when fully recruited:

Supervisors: x 2

Drivers: x9

Operatives: x 22

3) Information on the frequency of cancellations to regular street sweeping schedules – is the reality of what happens different from the scheduled 5 days-a-week?

	<p>There are no cancellations of regular street sweeping. However, there are adjustments made to prioritise hot spots area by the level of public H&S risk. Consideration is taken by the level of leaf fall and risk of flooding.</p> <p>4) Information on what priority safe pavements have as a health and safety issue.</p> <p>As mentioned above, the priority is to identify roads at risk of flooding. This will be done in conjunction with Highways where on-street parking will be suspended and streets will be swept by a crew and mechanical sweeper. This will reduce response time and increase the speed of service. Prioritization of pavements will be made according to the level of leaf fall, high pedestrian footfall or inclines.</p>
Action	No Action
Start date	-
End date	-

W3.3 Improving Monitoring and Co-Ordination of Estate Walks

Area in city	West
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	12 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Justine Harris
Officer job title	Head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	Justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.3 Question & Response

Issue	Estate Walks can be a useful way for residents and the Council to work together to resolve local issues. West residents value this joint working but are concerned that it has become de-prioritised and its scope restricted to environmental improvements.
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Background	At the February West Area panel residents were told that the Estate Walks are focused on environmental improvements while external and internal repairs and decoration are dealt with through different programmes.
Request or Question	West Residents would like an overview of what is happening in their area, and some co-ordination of reports from both the Estate Walks and surveys of properties in the West Area. They asked for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A report at every West Area Panel meeting on the number of Estate Walks done in the West area since the previous Area Panel. b. A report at every West Area Panel meeting on what surveys have been carried out on properties in the West Area and what work has been suggested or is underway.
Response	<p>A successful Estate Walks pilot was undertaken last year and proposals are underway to start a programme of visits. This has been delayed due to staffing levels.</p> <p>The new programme will take into account feedback from residents which include points made above about communication. The detail of the programme will be published online, including when the Estate Walks will take place.</p> <p>Once the Estate Walks programme has begun, a verbal update will be given at the following Area Panel meeting.</p> <p>The Environmental Improvement Budget will continue to be reported at each quarterly Area Panel, this budget will be used to fund work arising for the Estates Walks.</p>
Action	Keep residents updated on progression of the programme of visits
Start date	04.04.23
End date	Ongoing

W3.4 Records of Housing Repairs

Area in city	West
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	12 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm

Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie & Geof Gage
Officer job title	Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	Grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.4 Question & Response

Issue	The loss of information about repairs, improvement and maintenance work means it is more difficult for the Council to do an efficient job in maintaining their housing stock. Ultimately, it is residents who suffer as a result of this.
Background	A report at the February Area Panel noted that “specific operative’s job notes and audit log details are not available for jobs attended between April 2010 – April 2020. There may also be some detail missing from major works and planned contracts carried out by Mears during their tenure. Full contract files should have been handed over on completion of works but it would have to be checked with HIAM where this information has been stored”. It was also noted that jobs carried out since April 2020 do include operatives’ notes and a full audit log for the job.
Request or Question	The situation where records kept by Mears have not been passed on to the Council, have been lost or are difficult to access is not acceptable. West Residents want assurance that measures are in place so this does not occur again. The following questions were raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why was a situation allowed to develop which meant the Council did not have access to information about their housing stock? b. Who was responsible for oversight of the Mears contract and allowed this to happen? c. What lessons have been learnt from this experience to ensure it never happens again?
Response	Regarding the major works information, it is incorrect to say that we do not have records of any major or planned works projects that were undertaken under the Mears’ contract. The contract administration and management was always undertaken and overseen by BHCC and this included the project management of these projects and we have full records and the necessary information which is required. In the main, these are in paper form and we are in the process of digitalising these with a view to be able to retain them for a period of 25 years which exceeds the statutory requirements of 7 years. - Geof Gage Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management. The fact that certain information did not transfer from the Mears IT system was due to the contents being commercially sensitive information and therefore could not be transferred to our IT system.

	<p>The information contained in the “specific operative’s job notes and audit log” do not generally relate to the details of the work. Operative job notes are typically notes from the operative for office use such as further works required or when a job for a different trade should be raised. The details of each job raised and associated photographs documents etc were retained.</p> <p>The audit log shows at what stage a job has been in during its life as an open task. It shows how a task has been administered by the Mears IT system but does not provide historic information that would be of use when researching a job history. Fundamentally, once a job is closed and we have the information relating to that job completion then this supersedes any previously recorded detail.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of introducing a new IT system which should be complete in the Spring of 2025. We are currently working with IT colleagues to identify all information that can or should be transferred. However, as IT systems differ it is not always possible to exactly copy all information from system to system. It should also be considered that as part of the reduction of carbon footprint relating to data storage, certain data should not be carried over if deemed not important.</p>
Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

W3.5 Working with residents: What does consultation mean?

Area in city	West
Star rating	Three Star – City Wide
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	12 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Sam Warren
Officer job title	Community Engagement Manager
Contact Details	Sam.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.5 Question & Response

Issue	West residents think meaningful consultation starts with finding out what tenants and residents think. The present structure often means tenants
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	get a choice about different options put forward by the Council but have not been involved in the process of developing these options.
Background	<p>These concerns were raised at the February West Area panel, giving the specific example about consultation around the laundry at Philip Court. A report from the Council at Area Panel made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council needs to be clear what they are asking for in engagement and consultation – eg giving information, asking for views or for a decision. The Community Engagement Team is refreshing the community engagement framework, which will set up new standards to clarify and improve current practice. • Any issues and concerns about consultation can be raised directly with CEOs. They are working to develop a genuine and inclusive approach. • The May Area Panel will have a paper on future options for laundries • Sam Warren will follow up with Philip Court specifically re laundry (this had not happened by 23/3/23)..
Request or Question	<p>West residents raised the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. There is concern that the paper proposed for the May Area Panels on the laundries will be another example of this problem; residents will be presented with a selection of options that have been constructed by the Council, instead of starting with the views and experiences of the people using the service. b. Will residents be involved in developing the new Community Engagement framework? What is the process for this?
Response	<p>The refresh of the community Engagement Framework is a significant piece of work and will be done between the Community Engagement Team and the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Team. The review will provide opportunities to hear the views of a range of residents across the city including people from minoritised communities, tenants, leaseholders and community groups. We are in the process of developing the scope for the review which will set up what the review will cover in more detail. In addition to the Community Engagement Framework the Community Engagement Team are developing more detailed guidance for consultation that will support the Community Engagement Officers to deliver good quality consultation, this will set out the methods and timescales for consultation. The team will also be developing some guidance for residents who may be doing some community consultation to support them to find out local views. A draft of this will be shared with the Involvement and Empowerment Group for comments.</p>
Action	<p>Share the scoping document for the refresh of the Community Engagement Framework Share the draft consultation guidance for CEO's and community consultations</p>
Start date	

End date	
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Residents Questions - 2 star (all areas)

E2.1 Major Works in Craven Vale – Window Replacement

Area in city	East
Star rating	Two Star – Local
Date question raised	23.03.23
Week of Area Panel	5 th June 23
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Ryan Mulliner
Officer job title	Windows & Doors Project Manager
Contact Details	

E2.1 Question & Response

Issue	Some of the new windows that have been fitted in Craven Vale were already broken - including damaged window frames - when they got fitted.
Background	New windows are being fitted as part of the major works at Craven Vale. There have been reports that the contractors (AD Windows) have been fitting windows that were already broken, including damaged window frames. Residents are concerned that there is insufficient oversight of the quality of the work being carried out.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the warranty period on the new windows being fitted in Craven Vale? • There should be an inspection of the work carried out on one block, before work is started on another block – are there such checks and inspections in place? • Is this contractor meeting the conditions of the contract? Who is monitoring this? • Will the Council ensure contractors not doing a decent job are replaced?

Response	<p>What is the warranty period on the new windows being fitted in Craven Vale?</p> <p>The warranty for the new windows is ten years for the frame, five years for glazing and two years for moving parts.</p> <p>There should be an inspection of the work carried out on one block, before work is started on another block – are there such checks and inspections in place?</p> <p>Due to the nature of the joint works with the external decorations programme, we are working on multiple blocks at a time. We would always look at completing one block before moving on to another. Unfortunately, due to resident's schedules, etc this is not always achievable as it will put a hold on works. All of the work is inspected by the contractor, then once officially handed over to BHCC we try to inspect 100% of properties to ensure the quality is in place.</p> <p>Is this contractor meeting the conditions of the contract? Who is monitoring this?</p> <p>We are currently two weeks behind schedule with regards to the project due to multiple reasons. There has been a very large amount of broken glazing units arriving on site, which is something we're currently looking into why this is happening as this is having an effect on residents needing to allow access on a following day for the glass to then be changed.</p> <p>Will the Council ensure contractors not doing a decent job are replaced?</p> <p>BHCC are currently monitoring works and having regular contract reviews with contractors to ensure contract obligations/targets are achieved. If there is poor performance in any aspect, this will be escalated and appropriate action taken.</p>
Action	Monitoring quality of works
Start date	Ongoing
End date	N/A

N2.1 - Refuse and Recycling Collections (Hollingdean, Bates Estate)

Area in city	North
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Star rating	Two Star – Local Issue
Date question raised	04/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	05/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5pm on 5 th May
Name of officer responding	Melissa Francis
Officer job title	Head of Operations, CityClean
Contact Details	Melissa.Francis@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N2.1 Question & Response

Issue	Refuse and recycling collections are not taking place when they are supposed to.
Background	The issue of missed recycling and refuse collections in Hollingdean has been raised at previous North Area Resident Only meetings and continues to be a problem. Bates Estate also raised this as an issue in their area. Resident reps have been in touch with Council staff and have been given different reasons for missed collections. One of the reasons given for missed collections has been access issues. However, residents know that access is possible, and is not a reasonable excuse for poor service.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents of Hollingdean and Bates Estate would like City Clean to resolve the problem of missed collections in their areas. Why is this an on-going problem? If access is an issue, what plans are there to provide vehicles or make alternative arrangements to ensure residents get a regular rubbish collection service?
Response	<p>City Clean are not aware of any specific issues in this area that resulted in repeated missed collections in this area. When a refuse or recycling collection is missed due to a vehicle breakdown, for example, this is usually covered the following day.</p> <p>A recycling round audit was carried out in December 2022 which led to some adjustment in collections. We have worked through these changes and again we are not aware of any underlying recycling issues in the Bates Estate.</p> <p>Regular collections have been impacted by access issues in the Hollingdean area. In particular for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brentwood Crescent Burstead Close Tintern Close Major Close Dunster Close

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wigmore Close <p>We have requested double yellow lines to be installed in these areas and are waiting on these to be put in place for us. We will continue to monitor these areas as we await this to ensure any missed collection will be picked up without delay.</p> <p>We apologise to the North Area Residents. We do acknowledge the impact and frustration non-collection of refuse and recycling will have on these residents. We are working hard to ensure a more reliable service and are monitoring this with a view to deliver a consistent service to residents.</p>
Action	Monitor the collections at Bates Estate and the Hollingdean Roads mentioned.
Start date	-
End date	-

N2.2 - Internal Decorating and Gardening Scheme

Area in city	North
Star rating	Two Star – Local Issue
Date question raised	04/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	05/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Mikila Beck
Officer job title	Operations Manager – Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	Mikila.beck@brighton-hove.go.uk

N2.2 Question & Response

Issue	Residents are not being kept informed of progress and changes to the scheme and waiting a long time for responses.
Background	<p>A Moulsecomb tenant's request for internal decoration and hedge-cutting was approved by the Council in April 2022. They were told this work would be taking place, but did not hear anything further. The tenant chased this last September, and again last month. They were then told that the internal decorating scheme would not be happening this year as the funds were now being used to deal with mould and damp issues. They were informed that a voucher would be given to purchase the paint and other materials, but they would have to source their own decorator. The tenant also discovered that the type of paint that was being used by the Council was one of the more expensive paints.</p> <p>Residents in Coldean and Bates Estate who are also waiting for works to take place were surprised to hear that the internal decorating scheme is not happening this year, as they had not been informed of this.</p>

<p>Request or Question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why have the Council not informed tenants that the internal decorating scheme has been postponed/cancelled this year? • Why have the funds for one scheme been transferred to other types of repair work? Why have funds for pre-approved work not been ringfenced to ensure that the agreed work can take place? • Why is the Council sourcing and purchasing the most expensive types of paint, if lack of funds is an issue?
<p>Response</p>	<p>Why have the Council not informed tenants that the internal decorating scheme has been postponed/cancelled this year?</p> <p>Information on the fact the decorating scheme has been put on hold was posted on the council's website, see below link and extract.</p> <p>Get help with decorating your council home (brighton-hove.gov.uk)</p> <p>Get help with decorating your council home</p> <p>Find out if you can apply for decorating materials for your council home.</p> <p>Apply for decorating materials</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>! Our Decorating Work Scheme is on hold whilst we focus on urgent repairs. We will re-open the scheme as soon as possible. You can still apply for decorating materials.</p> </div> <p>Apply for decorating materials</p> <p>If you can carry out decorating work yourself, or you have someone who can help you, you can apply for a decorating pack.</p> <p>You must be over 70 years of age and receive Housing Benefit.</p> <p>You can also apply if you're under 70 but receive Housing Benefit and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Living Allowance • Personal Independence Payment • Attendance Allowance <p>We may ask for proof of any benefits you receive.</p> <p>If we accept your application we'll send you a colour chart and a voucher. You can collect the materials from the branch of Brewers which is closest to your home.</p> <p>Repairs Customer Services deal with queries about the concessionary schemes so may be able to offer some more information on what communications were put out to tenants on the scheme.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the scheme was on hold and as stated above our intention was to re-open the scheme as soon as possible. Due to the service sourcing additional contractor resource we are pleased to confirm that from 15th May 2023 the scheme will be recommencing, the team will be contacting tenants to book in either the initial inspection or decorating works as appropriate, due to the amount of residents on the scheme it is likely to take several months before everyone has been contacted.</p>

	<p>Why have the funds for one scheme been transferred to other types of repair work? Why have funds for pre-approved work not been ringfenced to ensure that the agreed work can take place?</p> <p>No funds have been transferred, resource within the Repairs and Maintenance Service had been reassigned to deal with the unprecedented demand for works relating to condensation and mould. Following on from the tragic death of Awaab Isshak the Repairs and Maintenance Service received unparalleled numbers of requests for mould to be inspected and washed down. Due to the potential health implications of living in a property with mould the Service needed to urgently resource these works. The service has since been working to secure additional resource to take on the condensation and mould works to enable the decorators to move back to the concessionary scheme.</p> <p>Why is the Council sourcing and purchasing the most expensive types of paint, if lack of funds is an issue?</p> <p>As explained above lack of funds was not the reason for resource being moved away from the concessionary decorating scheme. The Repairs and Maintenance Service source quality materials as in our extensive experience the use of these reduces the amount of time required to complete redecoration work and provides a better finish and overall provides better value for money.</p>
Action	The team will be contacting tenants to book in either the initial inspection or decorating works as appropriate, due to the amount of residents on the scheme it is likely to take several months before everyone has been contacted.
Start date	15 th May 2023
End date	Ongoing

C2.1 - Cleaning at Essex Place

Area in city	Central
Star rating	Two Star – Local Issue
Date question raised	03/04/2023
Week of Area Panel	12/06/2023
Deadline for officer response	5 th May at 5pm
Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Officer job title	Estates Services Manager
Contact Details	Chloe.mclaughlin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C2.1 Question & Response

Issue	Residents at Essex Place are not receiving an adequate cleaning service.
Background	Problems with poor cleaning at Essex Place have been raised for at least six months. Residents are frustrated by the lack of improvement and often don't get any response when they raise complaints. They have been asking unsuccessfully for a copy of the cleaning rota, information on cleaners' hours and what jobs they are expected to do.
Request or Question	Raise at Central Area Panel both the inadequate cleaning service at Essex Place and the lack of response to residents' complaints and requests for information on this issue.
Response	<p>Following the concerns raised by residents about cleaning, the block was inspected by Estates Service Manager Chloe Mclaughlin and the team leader for the block George Brown, this was followed up by a spot check by a team leader from another area, Chris Goodwin. The Block was found to be of an acceptable standard. There were a few issues that were picked up in relation to the marks on the floors caused by rubber wheels. The cleaning schedule for Essex Place and other high-rise blocks is as follows:</p> <p>Daily tasks: Entrance lobby and inspection of bin areas Interior of lifts.</p> <p>Weekly: Litter picking of immediate areas around building, cleaning of accessible entrance glazing such as internal windows on the ground floor</p> <p>Monthly Cleaning of landings and stairwells All accessible glazing such as internal windows, fire doors Stairwells Lift doors</p>
Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

