

Residents Questions - 3 star, All Areas

C3.1 New process for City Clean complaints from Resident Only meetings

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star City wide issue
Date question raised	16 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Hannah Barker
Officer job title	Senior Community Engagement Officer
Contact Details	hannah.barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.1 Question

Issue	<p>At the December Area Panel it was agreed that there would be a trial run of a new process for reporting on-going problems with rubbish and recycling collections raised at Resident Only (RO) meetings. Persistent complaints taken to RO meetings will be written up on a standard form and will be directed to CityClean weekly meetings to review and resolve. The forms can be filled out with support from the Resource Centre after RO meetings, or taken by residents in attendance at the meeting to fill out and return to the Resource Centre or Community Engagement Team. It is hoped that this will get better results than the current system and will be evaluated and assessed after it's been in operation for a while.</p> <p>CityClean will not be attending Area Panel meetings in the future and complaints about CityClean cannot be raised directly at Area Panels.</p> <p>The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This new process should have been discussed with the Resident Only Chairs/Chairs of the Area Panel before being introduced. When it was taken to Central Area Panel the form was not available, so residents couldn't see the detail of the new system. • The definition of a 'persistent issue' on the form would not have been agreed by Central Residents if they'd seen the form in advance. • Residents in high rise blocks do not have a scheduled collection day for their rubbish, so it is not possible to say how many times the collection has been missed – the form does not work for them. <p>It is problematic if failures in the service provided by CityClean cannot come up at Area Panels. CityClean needs to be held accountable for the service they provide and at the very minimum they should attend on-line to answer issues raised by residents.</p>
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Background	N/A
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to give the new system a trial run with the following provisos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feed-back the problems with the form to the Community Engagement Team and ask for further consultation on this. • Ask for CityClean to attend Area Panels, at a minimum an on-line presence for residents' issues. • Ask for a date at which the trial period will end, and for a meeting to be held with Resident Only / Area Panel resident chairs to evaluate the new process at the end of this period.

C3.1 Response

Response
<p>As requested, on 5th March, a meeting is scheduled for Jonathan Pyle (Environmental Services Manager, City Environment (CityClean & CityParks) to meet with Co-Chair of Central Housing Area Panel and Chair of the Resident Only meeting, Emma Salcombe.</p> <p>Agenda for this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Feed-back the problems with the form', share concerns and suggestions regarding the new process. - Hear directly from City Clean regarding attendance at area panels - Hear about how else residents and residents' groups can communicate with the City Environment Department - Talk about how the process will be reviewed, and whether there is an 'end date'. <p>This date is after these papers go to print, but an update can be given at Central Area Panel at the end of March.</p> <p>-- (From Jonathan Pyle, ref late January)</p> <p>We received 2 separate City Clean cases via PDF on 17th Jan 2024 for investigation as a result of the recent West Residents Only meeting.</p> <p>I forwarded these to the relevant Operations Managers and included Melissa Francis, Head of Operations in the email to ensure they were thoroughly</p>

investigated, and a timely response sent back to me so that I could respond directly to both customers.

For one of these cases, I have agreed to conduct a site visit next Wed (it was due to be done today but the Ops Manager needed to reschedule) and the other case is in the process of being responded to, with Melissa helping co-ordinate the responses.

I plan to contact/update both residents by the end of this week via whichever method of contact they have stated as their preference.

The progress/success of this will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

C3.1 Action

Action	Meeting 5 th March as above Feedback to area panel meeting (week of 25 th March)
Start date	5 th March
End date	25 th March

C3.2 Maintenance of drains & gutters

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star City wide issue
Date question raised	16 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Sandra Cooke
Officer job title	Project Manager
Contact Details	sandra.cooke@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.2 Question

Issue	Residents consider it essential that there is a regular, scheduled programme of maintenance for drains and gutters. This provides value for money as it prevents future expensive repairs.
Background	

	<p>At the Central Area Panel in December 2023 a Residents' Question (C3.2) about the maintenance of drains and gutters was raised. At present the Council only responds to reported repairs and does not do regular maintenance work. The response to the Area Panel (from Sandra Cooke, Projects Manager) was that 'we are currently looking at options for introducing a programme of cyclical gutter clearance'.</p> <p>Central Residents considered this to be too vague a response given the importance of the issue and wanted a firmer commitment to a maintenance programme.</p>
Request or Question	Return this item to Area Panel, asking for a firm commitment to a maintenance programme for drains and gutters.

C3.2 Response

Response
<p>We are in the process of planning a gutter clearance programme for the City commencing April 2024.</p> <p>In addition to this planned programme, we have already completed over 900 gutter clears in this financial year.</p> <p>There is not a planned drain clearance programme. Any drainage issues should be reported as a repair to the repairs help desk.</p>

C3.2 Action

Action	As stated in the response above
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

C3.3 Inadequate clearance of bulk rubbish rooms in high rises

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star City wide issue
Date question raised	16 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Officer job title	Estates Services Manager

Contact Details	chloe.mclaughlin@brighton-hove.gov.uk
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C3.3 Question

Issue	The bulk rubbish rooms in high rise blocks are not emptied frequently enough, with overflowing rubbish encouraging vermin and posing a health risk.
Background	At Essex Place residents regularly have to complain because the bulk rubbish room is overflowing. They have to wait 10 days for removal following a complaint, unless it is considered a health and safety risk or there is a fire, in which case it is 24 hours. They have been told that there is only one truck available for these collections in the whole of Brighton & Hove.
Request or Question	Regular clearance and maintenance of the bulk rubbish rooms in tower blocks should happen as a matter of course, as part of the provision of a decent service. If this is not happening because of a shortage of collection trucks, the company should provide more vehicles.

C3.3 Response

Response
<p>Target times for bulk clearance is 10 days or 24 hours if an item is blocking an entrance or an exit.</p> <p>Bulk rooms are used only for Housing Estates staff to place items left in common ways whilst they await removal. Residents should not have access to this room, the lock will be changed.</p> <p>Residents should not be leaving bulk waste in common ways as this is a health and safety risk.</p> <p>If residents need bulk waste removed from their homes, they can contact City Clean on 01273 290798. There is a charge for this service. Getting rid of large and electrical household items (brighton-hove.gov.uk)</p> <p>The Estates Service Team will remove items of furniture that can be recycled and reused for other tenants. The team can be contacted on 01273 293030 to arrange collection.</p>

C3.3 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	N/A

End date	N/A
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C3.4 Communal Repairs

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star City wide issue
Date question raised	16 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Officer job title	Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.4 Question

Issue	If an individual raises a repair for a communal area, they are not kept updated on progress with the repair, told if the repair has been delayed, or asked for feedback about the repair.
Background	Individuals need to be kept informed about the progress of communal repairs they have reported, not just individual repairs. Sometimes they are also needed to enable the repair to happen (eg access to a garage/storage space) and further delays and inconvenience are caused.
Request or Question	N/A

C3.4 Response

Response
Thank you for your question. Communal repairs are managed in a similar way to repairs to people's homes. If a resident has requested a repair to a communal area, they can always contact us to check on progress or monitor progress through Housing online. I agree that how and what we communicate with residents could always improve, and we will be looking at this going forward.

C3.4 Action

Action	As stated above.
Start date	N/A

End date	N/A
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E3.1 Visitor Parking Permits

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	18 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	22 nd February 2024
Name of officer responding	Jenny Mitchell
Officer job title	Parking Customer Services Manager
Contact Details	jenny.mitchell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.1 Question

Issue	Officers were going to conduct a review of visitor parking permits but residents have not heard the outcome of this review yet or seen any changes.
Background	<p>The issue and questions about visitors parking permits was first raised as a 3-star item at the Resident Only meeting 29th June 2023, leading into the Area Panel meeting 4th September 2023.</p> <p>The response from Paul Nicholls, Parking Strategy & Contracts manager, was:</p> <p>“The visitor parking permit purchase process is being reviewed with a view to streamlining the process. This is a technical piece of work but work has started on this.”</p> <p>The problems still persist, and the visitor parking permit costs, structure and criteria for eligibility need to be reviewed. The problems raised were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking permits are too expensive • The limit of 50 permits per person needs review • Community assets, such as community centres, are currently not eligible to purchase parking permits • Parking permits are being re-sold at profit, e.g. to those going to the Amex stadium on football match days
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents request details about the review, and want to be informed about what changes are being proposed and/or implemented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the councils plans to mitigate instances of tenants selling their permits for profit
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E3.1 Response

Response
<p>A parking review is due to take place spring 2024, we will review this point at that time.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of exploring virtual visitor permits whilst still offering physical scratch cards.</p> <p>Visitor permits are issued to residents who meet the criteria, they must reside at the property 5 nights a week or more. They must be able to supply proof of address dated within the last 3 months, we are also able to check council tax records to confirm they are a resident of the property they are requesting permits for.</p> <p>Whilst we are using physical permits it is difficult to stop people reselling them, if we are informed that reselling is happening then we investigate further.</p>

E3.1 Action

Action	As stated in response above.
Start date	Spring 2024
End date	

E3.2 Decent Homes Initiative – Maintenance Schedule

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	18 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February 2024
Name of officer responding	Mikila Beck
Officer job title	Operations Manager
Contact Details	mikila.beck@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.2 Question

Issue	Residents haven't received updates or information about when they can expect their kitchens/bathrooms to be brought back to a decent standard.
Background	<p>The resident rep sought an update 6 months ago as to when kitchen and bathroom improvements were due to happen in Bristol Estate. He was told there was a backlog due to Covid, and hasn't had further updates on the situation.</p> <p>The issue of residents not having access to planned maintenance schedules and not having sufficient information about planned maintenance in their areas was raised at the RO meeting of 22nd June 2022 as a 3-star item.</p>
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents request an update on progress with the maintenance schedule. • When can residents expect improvements to their kitchen and bathrooms

E3.2 Response

Response
<p>The team have been working hard to catch up with the programme and have now completed the 2020 programme.</p> <p>All tenants who live in properties where a kitchen/bathroom was due for replacement in 2021, 2022 and 2023 programmes have been contacted asking for them to return a choice form (selecting a kitchen or bathroom replacement).</p> <p>The 2021 Programme have all had 3 letters regarding being on the programme, most have responded with a choice or have opted out.</p> <p>The last letters were sent in January, and this will be the last requesting confirmation of choice.</p>

Anyone that does not respond to this letter will be added to the waived list, this will allow us to move on to the following years programmes.

The 2022 and 2023 programmes have both now had 2 letters (sent out in January 2024) requesting confirmation of choice or to opt out.

The kitchen/bathroom programmes do not run by areas, instead has individual fail address based on previous stock condition surveys. If people have specific enquiries about when their kitchen or bathroom is due for replacement, they should email PlannedKitchensBathrooms@brighton-hove.gov.uk or call 01273 290338.

If a kitchen requires repair, then tenants should call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140.

With the additional installation resources, we are now in a position to increase the installation rate and aim to be ahead of the programme again within 2 years.

E3.2 Action

Action	As detailed above.
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

E3.3 Emergency Repairs

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	18 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February 2024
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Officer job title	Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.3 Question

Issue	It's not clear to residents what system the Council uses to class repairs as an emergency or a non-emergency.
Background	Residents have very different experiences of reporting emergency repairs. For example, one resident reported that it took 3 weeks for their

	<p>toilet to be fixed; another resident, who has mobility issues, reported a leak under the sink, which still hasn't been fixed.</p> <p>Residents said that individuals needed to know which prompts and words to use when reporting a repair in order to get it escalated to 'emergency' status – e.g. to mention that you're at risk or vulnerable, have a disability or that it's a security risk. However, not all tenants know that they need to do this in order to have their repair classed as an emergency. They also reported far speedier response times when calling the Repairs desk out of hours.</p> <p>It is understood that any repairs to do with electrics, water, or entry safety (insecure doors & windows), are currently classed as an 'emergency'. However, residents' experience of wait times for such repairs does not reflect this.</p>
<p>Request or Question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What system does the Repairs team use when classifying a repair as an emergency or not? • How are decisions made about what repairs get prioritised? • What is classed as an emergency repair?

E3.3 Response

Response
<p>Thank you for your question and I'm sorry that you are not receiving consistent responses to repair requests. We use a process known as repair finder which prompts colleagues to ask a range of questions intended to ensure that we have enough information to respond to the request. We do consider tenant vulnerability when setting priorities however a vulnerability alone would not make a repair an emergency. When something is classed as an emergency, it is more dependent on the nature of the repair and its impact on the property's tenants.</p> <p>The following repairs are identified by "The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 as requiring an urgent response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total loss of electric power • Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting • Total loss of water supply • Total or partial loss of gas supply • Blocked flue to open fire or boiler • Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 31st October and 1st May • Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack, or (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house) toilet pan • Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house) • Un-containable leak from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern

- Insecure external window, door or lock

E3.3 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

E3.4 Evictions Resulting from Anti Social Behaviour

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	18 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Richard Jordan
Officer job title	Housing Manager
Contact Details	richard.jordan@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.4 Question

Issue	Evictions resulting from anti-social behaviour seem very low.
Background	<p>It was noted that, in the Housing reports presented at the end of 2023, there was a figure quoted of 700 reports of anti-social behaviour for Brighton & Hove, and 1-2 evictions resulting from ASB.</p> <p>Given the high number of reports of ASB, the eviction rate seems to be very low.</p> <p>This doesn't make sense, given Council housing is in high demand. In addition, residents' lived experiences of ASB in their neighbourhoods is that of persistent behaviour and repeated offences – which should normally result in evictions.</p>
Request or Question	Residents would like to know why the eviction rate is so low, given the high number of reports of anti-social behaviour.

E3.4 Response

Response

A commitment following the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) review was to improve data collection and reporting on the types of enforcement action we use to address ASB. This includes, Community Protection Notices, Community Protection Warnings, Notices Seeking Possession, civil injunctions, Closure Orders, possession action. We expect to have a full quarter data at the end of June 2024.

Our priorities are to stop the ASB at the earliest opportunity, to protect victims and the community and to seek to change behaviour by tackling its root causes. We use enforcement actions as a measured response to ASB which enable us to take effective action to protect individuals and to end an unacceptable situation. We use them carefully and deliberately throughout a case where they are appropriate.

Early intervention actions taken by social landlords can be highly effective at resolving anti-social behaviour and actions including one to one visits, warning letters, and mediation, prove to be successful in resolving the majority of cases. Only a small number of cases require formal legal interventions. Where situations do not improve, we will take legal action to apply to close the address or to end the tenancy where it is necessary.

E3.4 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

E3.5 Sensitive Lets

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	18 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Janet Dowdell
Officer job title	Tenancy Services Operations Manager
Contact Details	janet.dowdell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.5 Question

Issue	It is not clear to residents what qualifies as a sensitive let, and what the tenancy conditions of a sensitive let are.
Background	N/A
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents would like to know exactly what constitutes a sensitive let.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are tenants of sensitive lets given licensee agreements or tenancy agreements?
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E3.5 Response

Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents would like to know exactly what constitutes a sensitive let. <p>Sensitive lets are used in exceptional cases, for housing management reasons. In most instances if a property requires a sensitive let the Homemove Team are notified before it is advertised. If the property has been advertised, we may not be in a position to offer the property to the person at the top of a shortlist. When this happens, the applicant is contacted by the landlord in writing with the reasons for this decision.</p> <p>As well as those that have been responsible for causing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and are refused, there may also be times when there are persons considered vulnerable and at higher risk than others to cope in an environment where there are known incidents of ASB.</p> <p>Officers contact any applicants on the shortlist that they feel are not suitable and explain that for housing management reasons they are being rejected from the shortlist for this property.</p> <p>It is not possible for us to request sensitive lets for all situations where there has been or is ongoing ASB and the process is designed for very exceptional situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are tenants of sensitive lets given license agreements or tenancy agreements? <p>Tenants are given a tenancy agreement in the usual way. This is a non-secure or Assured Shorthold tenancy agreement for temporary accommodation tenants, and an introductory tenancy for council tenants.</p>

E3.5 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

W3.1 Growing Fox Population

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	11 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024

Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Janet Dowdell
Officer job title	Tenancy Services Operations Manager
Contact Details	janet.dowdell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.1 Question

Issue	Foxes are growing in numbers and while many people like them, they can also cause a nuisance.
Background	At Ingram Crescent, as in other parts of the city, there are a lot of foxes. Some residents are feeding them and the foxes have become quite fearless and persistent. There have been some attacks by foxes on dogs. Notices have been put up asking people not to feed the foxes, but this hasn't stopped the problem.
Request or Question	Does the Council have any policy or proposals about how to make sure the growing and increasingly fearless fox population does not become a problem?

W3.1 Response

Response
<p>It would be difficult to achieve anything specific around relocating foxes from an area as foxes will return to the original area and it would only provide a temporary solution. We don't currently take this approach in the city.</p> <p>We do not have a specific policy for dealing with free roaming foxes on our estate. However, the area housing team would approach this as an issue which is potentially causing a nuisance to neighbours and would in the first instance, write to all residents asking them to stop feeding or encouraging foxes by leaving food out on the estate grounds.</p> <p>If we receive reports identifying who is feeding the foxes, the housing team would make direct contact with them and discuss the issue.</p> <p>We have not received any reports of dog attacks by foxes on the Ingram Estate.</p> <p>Please forward any concerns about the behaviour of a resident to our customer service team on 01273 293030 housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk</p>

W3.1 Action

Action	N/A
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Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

W3.2 PH Jones failing vulnerable residents

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	11 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Robert Mabey
Officer job title	Mechanical and Electrical Manager
Contact Details	robert.mabey@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.2 Question

Issue	There is concern that the heating contractors, PH Jones, are not providing emergency services to vulnerable residents when their heating breaks down.
Background	<p>A resident at Clarendon & Ellen was left without heating for over 7 days across the Christmas period. When she reported this to PH Jones she was told it was not classed as an emergency, as she had hot water. She made her situation clear - she is a wheelchair user, has COPD, uses a nebuliser, had been in hospital twice with pneumonia. The operator was rude and offered no help. Her flat was so cold she had to spend days in bed, fully clothed. It was a significant risk to her health.</p> <p>The resident involved has made a complaint and is following up her individual case.</p> <p>West residents raised city-wide concerns about how many other people this is happening to, who PH Jones considers to be vulnerable and eligible for emergency help, and what the Council will do to ensure other residents are not put at risk.</p>
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to ask the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria is used to decide who is vulnerable when determining eligibility for emergency heating repairs? • Who decides this, the Council or PH Jones?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What training are Council and PH Jones operators receiving so they understand how to respond to vulnerable people? • Is there anything in PH Jones’s contract about their commitments and required response to vulnerable people? • What sanctions are there on a contractor if they are not carrying out the terms of their contract? Has the Council used these?
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W3.2 Response

Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria is used to decide who is vulnerable when determining eligibility for emergency heating repairs? <p>Vulnerability is determined on a case by case basis by BHCC staff and can happen at any point in the tenancy for a number of reasons such as illness, age or complex needs. Vulnerability includes people over 70 years of age, people who are registered disabled, and seniors housing tenants, as well as tenants with complex needs (including mental health, learning difficulties and substance misuse).</p> <p>Vulnerabilities are logged on our database, NECH which then feeds through to PH Jones’ system automatically overnight.</p> <p>To log a vulnerability, please speak to our Housing Customer Services Team on 01273 293030 or email Housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who decides this, the Council or PH Jones? <p>BHCC has the capacity to add vulnerabilities to properties held on our database, NECH. PH Jones can suggest additions to this after their visits to properties if based on specific observations rather than speculative opinions. (E.g. Presence of oxygen breathing equipment observed at the property or similar).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What training are Council and PH Jones operators receiving so they understand how to respond to vulnerable people? <p>PH Jones’ Call centre staff have their own specific training to cover this. PH Jones are one of the bigger Social Housing Heating Contractors in the UK and have extensive experience in this field. From my experience, they are swift to deal with poor customer service experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything in PH Jones’s contract about their commitments and required response to vulnerable people? <p>The contract states that the supplier must make reasonable adjustments for resident vulnerabilities. The specific wording is: <i>“We also have equalities duties which means that even where someone is challenging to work with we need to ascertain whether they are vulnerable or whether there may be any underlying cause, for example mental health issues, which may be influencing their behaviour and this should be taken into account when deciding what action to take in response to their behaviour. If this is the case reasonable adjustment should be made in terms of their contact with the council.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sanctions are there on a contractor if they are not carrying out the terms of their contract? Has the Council used these? <p>The council’s Contract Manager monitors many KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) as well as complaints and general performance issues to do with the contract. As we are still in</p>

the first seven months of a new contract, we would focus on “Learning lessons” from undesirable situations with a view to ensure they do not happen again, but we can insist the contractor delivers an Emergency Action Plan to improve behaviours if they fall short. This Action Plan can lead to termination of the contract if improvement is not observed within set timescales. The specific incident that lead to this enquiry has been investigated as part of a Complaint and strong recommendations have been made about the conduct of the individual who handled that particular call. (It was an out-of-hours third party provider to PH Jones).

We have not put this contract onto an Emergency Plan at present. We have used it on other contracts which have ended in termination of those contracts.

W3.2 Action

Action	We will continue to monitor this contractor with weekly catch ups, Monthly meetings and Quarterly overview sessions by core group members to ensure robust systems are in place to prevent incidents like the one that lead to this complaint from happening again.
Start date	Start of contract 28 th June 2023
End date	27 th June 2028

W3.3 Regular Maintenance of hedges

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	11 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Officer job title	Housing Estates Manager
Contact Details	Chloe.mclaughlin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.3 Question

Issue	Routine maintenance is not carried out on overgrown hedges on Council land. Work only gets done when these become obstructions and residents complain.
Background	

	The example given was the hedge in Stonery Close. This needs trimming back as routine maintenance at least once a year, otherwise it obstructs garages and makes it difficult to park. This is never done until it becomes a nuisance and is chased up by residents. Jobs like this should be on a regular maintenance programme.
Request or Question	West residents would like regular maintenance of hedges and bushes on Council land to be an integral part of the Council's services. Residents pay for this in taxes and service charges.

W3.3 Response

Response
This is not on the current City Parks' contract. Originally these hedges belonged to the gardens of the houses, but they have now been fenced off. Going forwards, this will be looked at as part of the planned maintenance next year.

W3.3 Action

Action	To add to the City Parks maintenance contract from next year.
Start date	01.01.2024
End date	N/A

W3.4 Increased Garage Charges

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	11 th January 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 th March 2024
Deadline for officer response	Thursday 22 nd February
Name of officer responding	Benjamin Tedder
Officer job title	Car Parks and Garages Manager
Contact Details	benjamin.tedder@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.4 Question

Issue	Prices for garages have gone up, and regulations have changed, without consultation or prior communication with residents.
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Background	<p>Regulations have changed so you can no longer have a garage unless you have a fully road-worthy vehicle in it. A Knoll resident was sent a letter saying that the MOT on her bike had run out 2 weeks ago, and if it wasn't updated within a specified time the garage would be taken away from her. She had received no previous notification about this change in regulations or warning that this would happen.</p> <p>There were also a number of complaints about the steep increase in charges to lease a garage.</p>
Request or Question	<p>Request information on new regulations and charges and an explanation as to why there was no consultation or communication with people currently leasing garages.</p>

W3.4 Response

Response	
<p>The terms of the car parking and garage licence agreement states that garages and car parking spaces must be used for the daily storage of a vehicle which is in a roadworthy condition, this includes that the vehicle is taxed, insured and holds a current MOT. This condition has been included in the licence since 2007, when the Car Parks & Garages allocations policy was agreed, and has not changed since that time.</p> <p>There is a limited number of garages that we can offer to residents who want to park their vehicles and if residents suspect that garages are not being used correctly, or have any questions, they can contact the Housing Customer Services Team at housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk or on 01273 293030.</p> <p>The increase of 7.7% was applied to keep it consistent with the rent uplifts recommended to Committee.</p>	

W3.4 Action

Action	No further action
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A