

CABINET ADDENDUM

2.00PM, THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CABINET

4.30pm 18 JULY 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sankey (Chair) Taylor (Deputy Chair), Burden, Daniel, Muten, Pumm, Robins and Williams

PART ONE

21 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

21a Declarations of interests

21.1 There were none.

21b Exclusion of the press and public

21.2 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), the Committee considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

21.3 **Resolved** That the public are excluded from the meeting from items listed on Part 2 of the agenda.

22 MINUTES

22.1 **Resolved-** That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as the correct record.

23 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

23.1 The Chair provided the following Communications:

Good afternoon and welcome everyone to our July Cabinet meeting. It's fair to say that a lot has happened since we last met. It's hard to believe that it was just two weeks ago that Labour swept to victory in the General Election. I'd like to start by congratulating all of our local MPs on their election and extend my congratulations to Peter Kyle on his appointment as Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology.

Our Labour administration is naturally delighted by the result and stands ready to work with Prime Minister Keir Starmer and the new Labour Government to deliver change at pace for our city and country.

The King's Speech announced yesterday contained a raft of new legislation which sets out the first steps our Labour Government will take to rebuild Britain. We particularly welcome the announcements on house building, reform of planning laws and delivering the long-awaited ban on no-fault evictions for renters.

The launch of GB Energy will provide a much-needed boost to investment in renewable energy projects. While the English Devolution Bill will help to unlock the potential of city regions like ours and give us the powers and budget to drive change in our community.

This morning I attended a meeting at Downing Street to discuss the opportunities around this and relay our city's priorities. Our Cabinet leads have also written to new Secretaries of State to outline the challenges and opportunities in their areas. We will continue this engagement with government over the coming months as legislation is brought forward, to ensure our city reaps the benefits of these new opportunities.

One of the absolute priorities of this Labour government is to drive economic growth following years of stagnation and falling living standards. I am very pleased that today Cabinet will agree our three-year Economic Plan which sets out our vision for economic growth in Brighton & Hove.

I was also pleased to be elected as Chair of the Greater Brighton Economic Board this week and I look forward to working across the city region to build partnerships which will help drive growth and bring new investment to our region. On Tuesday, in my new capacity as Chair, I was pleased to launch Sussex Energy; a collaboration between public and private sectors across Sussex which aims to join forces to achieve net zero status by 2040.

Today our administration is also bringing forward proposals for 67 new affordable homes in Hollingbury, Portslade and Moulsecoomb, through our New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme. We are on a mission to fix the housing crisis in our city and we are exploring every avenue possible to do so. We're buying back properties previously sold under the Right to Buy scheme at a rate of more than one a week as part of our efforts to provide people with secure and affordable housing.

Cabinet will also be considering options for the King Alfred leisure centre, following extensive consultation and options scoping over several months. We have listened to residents and today Cabinet will consider options for building a new leisure centre on the current site.

Our report today on performance, shows the areas where the council has made improvements and helps to identify areas for improvement which we need to prioritise. Our administration made clear that getting the basics right is a priority and the early results of the work we have done over the past year are beginning to show. This includes a significant reduction in complaints to CityClean or Parking services and reduction in the number of reported missed refuse & recycling collections. I am extremely proud that the report shows that our city is thriving as a visitor destination with a 14% increase in visitors compared to 2021. And there is no doubt that this is in part due to the fantastic open spaces we have to offer.

With that in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our City Parks team and all of our park volunteers, on the announcement that 7 of our city's parks have been awarded prestigious Green Flags for excellence. This is great news for our city and a

reminder of how fortunate we are in this city to have access to so many excellent open spaces. Two of our parks – Stanmer and the Wild Park Rainscape – have also been shortlisted for prestigious South Downs Design awards. Congratulations to all council staff and all the partners involved in delivering such innovative and creative park projects.

24 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

(a) Public Questions

1) King Alfred

24.1 Mary Sandell read the following question:

Given that you have provided rough costings, could you tell me what Low stack and high stack mean with regard to leisure facilities (types) and housing (quantities).

24.2 Councillor Robins provided the following reply:

As set out in the cabinet paper, the business case examined two options for constructing the sport and leisure centre on the current site. The first of these occupies 20% of the total site, and as such would need to be built over more levels to accommodate all the features of the new facility. We have referred to this version as the ‘stacked design’. The outline design work suggested one or two levels of parking below ground and three to four stories of construction above ground. So, a maximum of four stories above ground.

The second option used half the site, with surface car parking, and would require two stories of elevation to accommodate the same specification.

The paper refers only to the new sports and leisure facility. A key lesson learned from past projects is to keep the design and build of the facility separate from any residential development on the site. Any proposals for residential development on the remainder of the site will be dealt with through the planning process.

2) King Alfred

24.3 Laura King read the following question:

The King Alfred is a significant building on Hove seafront, yet nowhere in the latest report on the King Alfred does it mention heritage.

How does our council justify the demolition of one of the last remaining coastal Land Ships in the country, training 22,500 men and women for WWII naval Service, in between doing double duty as a south coast destination leisure centre, rather than the restoration and rebirth of this seafront art deco, community leisure centre asset like Saltdean Lido?

24.4 Councillor Robins provided the following reply:

The existing building has always been a purpose-built leisure centre for the local community rather than an MoD facility. We recognise that, like many buildings across the country, it had a temporary use during WW2 as a naval training facility. That’s a piece of history we are keen to remember. However, remembering that short period of the facility’s use should not prevent the city from having the modern, sports and leisure facility it deserves.

As the project moves forward, we will be looking to engage an archivist to document the history of the building and to make sure that any historic artifacts are collected and preserved. We would also look to commemorate the history of the site in a suitable way within the new facility, for example a pictorial display to show its history and the development of the site over the last century. As with other similar projects, we'll look to involve local groups and stakeholders to agree how best that can be achieved.

3) King Alfred

24.5 Diane Montgomery read the following question:

The decision as to whether to demolish the King Alfred Centre and build a new sports centre should not be made until a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon (WLC) Emissions Assessment has been completed. This would consider the embodied carbon in the existing building; the option of retrofitting as opposed to demolition and would ensure that the project is fully consistent with the Council's commitments to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Can the Council provide an assurance that any major decisions regarding the future of the King Alfred Centre will not be taken until a WLC Assessment has been completed and made publicly available?

24.6 Councillor Robins provided the following response:

I understand that Cllr Robinson has been in discussion with you on this topic and has provided you with responses to similar questions.

Carbon reduction is an important part of the overall case for delivering the city's new leisure centre. However, as set out in the cabinet paper, there are other equally important factors which the council is considering, and which will inform the approach we adopt. Those factors include maximising value for money, minimising the risk to practical delivery, and improving the health of the city's residents through increased participation in active leisure.

The cabinet paper also makes clear that the design and layout of the current building mean that a refurbishment could never bring it up to modern industry standards. Our structural engineers have investigated the building's current condition and identified what work needs to be undertaken to address the most serious issues and keep the leisure centre open. Their assessment is that the recommended works would extend the life of the facility for around 10 years after which replacement would be required. That also means that a refurbishment could never be cost effective. This is set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.6.

Outline benchmarking work undertaken by architects Faulkner Brown has shown that a new facility will deliver lower whole life carbon emissions than a refurbished facility and much lower than the current facility. More detailed WLC assessment will be completed as we progress into the design stages of the project, when we will have more detailed designs on which to base those assessments.

(b) Deputations

1) King Alfred Leisure Facility

24.7 Cabinet received a deputation relating to proposals for the King Alfred leisure facility.

24.8 Councillor Robins provided the following response:

Thank you, Anne for coming along today to present your deputation. The proposals before us today do not recommend a relocation to Benfield Valley. I found your deputation submission and your presentation today very informative and congratulate you on all the good work yourself and other volunteers are undertaking in the community.

25 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

(b) Written Questions from Members

23.1 A copy of the questions received was circulated ahead of the meeting. Responses provided are as follows.

(1) Councillor McNair- Council Performance Update

“This drop in the percentage reflects a national trend. Locally, our current recycling sorting facility has limitations, there remains a high level of contamination of the recycling that we do collect, and this is exacerbated by our unique communal bin system. Labour values a clean city and we are working hard to get our rates up, and I’m going to run through two sets of activities, covering what we will do in the near future, and what we’re already doing
Changes in technology will allow lower-grade plastics to be recycled soon, and we plan to be ready for this in line with the new recycling requirements from the Environment Act. We’re also going to start collecting food waste. Both these changes should be happening by 2025/26”.

(2) Councillor McNair- Council Performance Update

“We’re very keen on seeing improvements in this area. While post pandemic recovery seems like a very distant memory for many of our services, the same can’t be said for the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service, but we’re working in partnership with two contractors to complete the outstanding repairs, and remodeling the existing contractor framework , all of which should be completed by the end of this year”.

(3) Councillor McNair- Council Performance Update

“Quite a few things is the short answer. A longer answer is that we've filled staff vacancies, and we have an active recovery plan in place to reduce arrears. The impact of the Department for Work and Pensions delays in paying Universal Credit on time continues to remain a challenge for income collection. This is beyond our control but we will be keen to take this up with our new Labour Secretary of State for Work & Pensions.
Where we do have control, the Housing Income team are newly aligned with the Council’s Corporate Debt Policy on the training standard for debt collection. And where we believe it’s necessary, we’re pursuing enforcement action through the courts. We prioritise early intervention before getting to this stage, but if any residents

are unfortunate enough to receive a notice of enforcement, they have support during the notice period.

A key element of the recovery plan is the further development of the rent management system to help categorise, prioritise and automate some of the casework, this is expected to go live this Winter”.

(4) Councillor McNair- Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 2024/25 Month 2 (May) and Council Productivity Plan Response

“The council’s Education, Finance and HR teams work closely with schools that are experiencing financial challenges to help them identify potential efficiencies and cost savings, including reviewing their staffing structures, buildings usage, and supplies and services costs. There is also a wealth of guidance and comparative information available to schools provided by both the council and DfE to help them review and improve their cost base. We are also utilising School Resource Management Advisors (appointed sector experts) who provide peer challenge to schools to help them identify ways to optimise the use of capital and revenue resources available to them. The learning from these reviews can help all schools.

In response to falling numbers of children in the city, there is also a wide range of work being undertaken across the school community to explore structural models of provision to improve the long-term financial sustainability of our schools while ensuring educational outcomes continue to improve. This includes possible federation of school clusters, reviewing Published Admission Numbers (PANs) and other possibilities.

Some schools have had more persistent deficits for differing reasons but the underlying issue remains falling roll numbers in most cases. This creates a year-on-year problem where, even though schools do find some savings, they find it hard to ‘keep ahead’ of the growing problem, which therefore becomes a cumulative financial challenge. This is further compounded by DSG grant settlements which government has not increased in line with inflation and, in particular, national pay awards”.

(5) Councillor Meadows- Estate Management

“The question doesn't make a lot of sense, given it refers to “the land”, but doesn’t state which site. I assume it refers to Patcham Court Farm.

The proposed development by Royal Mail will be subject to a planning application that will go to planning committee.

Costs associated with the site would be part of any transaction – and would be born by the party buying the land (not the council), and therefore considered as part of price offered”.

(6) Councillor Meadows- Estate Management

“As above, any development of this site would be subject to a planning application, which is determined by the planning committee. Protection of the aquifer would form part of the planning process that would need to ensure the aquifer is protected through mitigating drainage proposals and solutions. This is essentially why planning process exists – to determine what developments are appropriate in which areas”.

(7) Councillor Shanks- Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 2024/25 Month 2 (May) and Council Productivity Plan Response

The Council did an independent review of our in house respite provision Drove Road and Tudor House for children with complex needs. The review's purpose was to explore whether we could use Tudor House as a full-time residential home to bring children and young people currently residing outside the city back home. To do this, we needed to expand the use of Drove Road to accommodate all those children and young people currently accessing Tudor House, so that no families lost their short breaks. We had also intended to expand the use of Drove Road once the full-time residents transitioned to longer term placements so that we could provide more short breaks for those families who currently don't have access to this support.

The £504k saving would have been generated by bringing children back because it costs less for us to provide them with the support they need in-house.

However, the outcome of the report confirmed that Tudor House would not be suitable to accommodate the profile of need for the children and young people we need to bring back and Drove Road would need extensive building work to meet the legal requirements to make the building suitable for children and young people who are wheelchair dependent.

This meant we could not use Drove Road for those children and young people who may be displaced by Tudor House becoming residential home.

Therefore, we have taken the decision, to consider other sites for the full-time residential provision as per the recommendations in the report. We have now identified a suitable property that is owned by the Council and have been successful in securing capital funding from the Regional Care Co-operative capital bid programme. Work is now progressing and further information will be shared once we are in a position to do so.

(8) Councillor Sykes- King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

“To develop the business case we engaged specialist consultants who have developed many Green-book businesses cases that have successfully secure grant funding for many local authorities. The project's team also includes officers who have developed Green Book business cases for local authorities that have successfully secured millions of £ pounds of funding from the Town Deal, Local Growth Fund, and Housing Infrastructure Fund. I am therefore content that the approach used was rigorous, thorough, and compliant with HM Treasury requirements. Particular attention was given by the consultants to ensuring that the business case would be best oriented to securing any potential future government grant funding.

The business case includes detailed analysis of costs and the value of the social benefits (nominal and Net Present Value) which have been summarised for brevity in section 4 of the paper. To briefly respond to some of the councillor's specific points:

Table 1 is taken from the economic case and shows the value of the costs and benefits in net present value (NPV) terms. These NPV figures have been converted from the nominal figures in the financial case by (i) stripping out background inflation, (ii) adjusting for optimism bias, and (iii) discounting for present values. The economic benefits shown in the table are made up of the social benefits and land value uplift as set out in paragraph 4.3.

The Green Book recommends an optimism bias of between 2% and 24% for standard buildings. For this business case, a value at the higher end of that range (20%) was chosen as construction contracts are not yet in place.

Quantity surveyors (Stace) were engaged during the production of the business case and provided detailed cost estimates for each delivery option on which the capital build costs are based. The revenue estimates have been calculated based on well-framed assumptions about the future levels of use and running costs for the facility, as advised by our specialist consultants Continuum Sport and Leisure.

Tables 2 and 3 are taken from the financial case, and these therefore use nominal figures rather than the NPV values used in the economic case and in table 1.

The critical success factors of strategic fit, value for money, supplier capacity, affordability and achievability have all been considered in forming the decision on the preferred option.

The detailed business case has been shared with cabinet members but due to reasons of commercial sensitivity has not been shared more widely”.

(9) Councillor Sykes- King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

“The paper (paragraph 9.1) indicates that the new facility will be designed to BREEAM ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ standards. Where possible, it will embody principles of Passivhaus construction. Officers have been examining best practice examples of new sports and leisure centres such as the new facilities at Spelthorne, Winchester, and the Ravelin Sports Centre at the University of Portsmouth. When we come to appoint the design team for the next stage of the project we will ensure that they understand sustainability is a key priority for us.

One of the key objectives for the new facility is to create a modern, energy efficient, sustainable leisure centre. The new facility will enable us to reduce running costs, and will reflect the council’s commitment to the climate emergency and improving environmental sustainability.

Outline benchmarking work undertaken by architects Faulkner Brown has shown that a new facility on either site will deliver lower whole life carbon emissions than a refurbished facility and much lower than the current facility. More detailed work will be done as we progress into the design stages of the project, which will include a transport plan as well as a more detailed examination of whole life carbon”.

(10) Councillor Sykes- Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 2024/25 Month 2 (May) and Council Productivity Plan Response

“The increased cost may mean that reductions in other services are ultimately required, however, the council will always first explore options to improve economy and efficiency or generate funding or income to balance its budget. This comes down to priorities; the city needs a high-quality leisure centre that will serve the city for decades”.

(11) Councillor Davis- King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

“HM Treasury guidance is clear that any Benefit Cost Ratio greater than ‘1.0’ is acceptable. With that in mind, either of the options modelled at the current site have the potential to secure grant funding.

Whilst the BCR is a key piece of information in making an investment decision, it is not the only element. Central government departments and their executive agencies take into account other salient factors in making their investment decisions, as do we.

In this case, we have highlighted a number of factors in paragraph 4.7 of the paper that were considered alongside the BCR – planning matters, legal constraints, loss of green space, and the responses to public engagement.

In awarding grant funding, government departments and their executive agencies recognise that other relevant factors mean that the option with the highest BCR does not always represent the best decision for the local community”.

(12) Councillor Shanks- Council Performance Update

“I always think it’s worth looking at national averages to gauge where we are – and nationally, the average is 92%. Currently we’re at 87% occupancy – and this is an improvement from the 82% vacancy rate we had in May. But we can do better.

We’ve looked at what has slowed down lettings in the post Covid period. The main problem has been re-enabling site reps to let plots, which was severely restricted by our interpretation of GDPR regulations. We have reviewed this and will be encouraging site reps to undertake training, allowing us to share waiting list information with them, and improving the turnaround time for the letting process. In addition, we have sped up clearance of vacant plots.

It’s hoped that within a year, this will mean we’ll reach at least the national average, if not performing much better”.

(13) Councillor Hill- An Economic Plan for Brighton & Hove

“The Economic Plan is focused on developing a new economy and adapting our approach.

To support the delivery of the city’s ambitions, an initial 12-month Action Plan has been developed that sets out measurable actions to commence our journey. This first year’s action plan is set out in Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report.

This initial programme of activities will support the development of future interventions that will be designed to support key aspects of the city’s economy, facilitating greater engagement and involvement which will help to build community wealth across the city”.

26 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE

There were none.

27 REPRESENTATIONS FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS

There were none.

28 KING ALFRED LEISURE CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT

29.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval on the preferred site to deliver the new ‘West Hub’ facility to replace the King Alfred Leisure Centre.

29.2 Councillors Sankey, Robinson, Pumm, Nann, Taylor, Muten, Daniel, Alexander and Robins contributed to the debate of the report.

29.3 **Resolved-**

That Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees that part of the existing seafront King Alfred site is the preferred site on which to take forward the development of the new sports and leisure facility to replace the existing King Alfred Leisure Centre.
- 2) Approves the indicative capital budget for the project of up to £47.4 million to be included in the Medium Term Capital Investment programme to be funded from a combination of capital receipts, government grants and council borrowing.
- 3) Approves an initial allocation of £2.7m of these resources to progress the project to planning application stage funded from council borrowing.
- 4) Agrees to the commencement of design work for the development of the Leisure Centre on the preferred site, to include procuring the lead architect and professional team to deliver the new facility and delegates authority to the Corporate Director to approve the procurement of the associated professional team and to progress the project to planning application stage.
- 5) Notes the inclusion of £1.07 million estimated ongoing revenue commitment within the Medium Term Financial Strategy to recognise the potential net financing costs of the project from 2025/26 onwards.
- 6) Notes that as the project progresses to key decision points further reports will be presented to cabinet in line with the timetable set out at 4.16.

29 AN ECONOMIC PLAN FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE 2024-27

- 23.1 Cabinet received a report that sought approval for the Economic Plan for Brighton & Hove, which strongly aligns with core outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of the Council Plan 2023-27.
- 23.2 Councillor Taylor, Goddard, Robins, Nann, Pumm, Alexander and Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

23.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet agrees to recommend to Full Council that the Economic Plan (attached as Appendix 1) is adopted as part of the delivery of the Council Plan 2023-27.

30 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 23.1. Cabinet considered a report that sought a full construction budget for a package of council-led residential schemes capable of delivering 67 new affordable homes, and approval to enter into relevant contracts subject to project costs clearing the Council's financial hurdles.

23.2. Resolved-

That Cabinet

- 1) agrees an anticipated budget for the redevelopment of the former Hollingbury Library, Portslade Village Centre and Eastergate Road Former Garage site ("the schemes") in accordance with the detail set out at Part 2 of this report.
- 2) agrees to the progression of the development of the schemes and delegates authority to the Corporate Director of City Services to take all necessary steps to enter into the relevant contracts for the development of the schemes in accordance with the terms as set out in this report, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes and Acting Corporate Director for Housing, Care and Wellbeing (Housing Lead).
- 3) agrees the appropriation of land necessary for the redevelopment of Portslade Village Centre from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account for the value outlined in the Part Two report.

31 HOUSING SUPPLY REPORT: UPDATE ON POTENTIAL ACQUISITION

- 31.1 Cabinet received a report that presented an off plan purchase opportunity for the Council to acquire 21 homes in Nicolson Place and Vaughan Williams Way, Rottingdean. These form part of the former St Aubyns School, High Street, Rottingdean site and comprise the rented element of the affordable homes provided at this scheme. The opportunity enables the Council to meet a range of housing need by purchasing homes within a new build development that provide a mix of general needs accommodation including wheelchair accessible housing.
- 31.2 Councillors Taylor, Goddard, Nann, Sankey and Robins contributed to the debate of the report.
- 31.3 **Resolved-**
 - 1) Cabinet agrees to the Council making a formal offer to purchase 21 homes at Vaughan Williams Way and Nicholson Place, Rottingdean for a sum to be negotiated up to the maximum set out in the Part 2 paper and agrees the budget required as outlined in the Part 2 paper to support this purchase.
 - 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Acting Corporate Director – Housing, Care and Wellbeing (Housing Lead) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes to take the steps necessary to agree and complete: (a) the purchase of 6 houses 15 flats on the terms set out in the Part 2 paper and (b) any other relevant ancillary legal and financial documents necessary to deliver the project and to give effect to recommendations 2.1 and 2.2.

32 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE UPDATE

- 23.1 Cabinet considered a report that outlined the progress made against the delivery of each of these outcomes and highlights both the areas where progress has been made and the areas where improvement is needed. It also includes a proposed set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and their targets for 2024/25, which will help focus work in particular on areas where improvements are needed.
- 23.2 Councillors Sankey, Williams, Pumm and Muten contributed to the debate of the report.

23.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet notes the progress made in relation to delivering the Council Plan in 2023/24 as outlined in section 3 and with full details in appendix 1.
- 2) Cabinet approves the recommended Corporate KPI set and the proposed targets these KPIs for 2024/25 as detailed in section 4.
- 3) Cabinet notes the report in line with the requirement of Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code as detailed in section 5 and with full details in appendix 2.

33 TARGETED BUDGET MANAGEMENT (TBM) 2024/25: MONTH 2 (MAY) TARGETED BUDGET MANAGEMENT (TBM) 2024/25 MONTH 2 (MAY) AND COUNCIL PRODUCTIVITY PLAN RESPONSE

- 23.1 Cabinet considered a report that set out an early indication of forecast risks as at Month 2 on the council's revenue and capital budgets for the financial year 2024/25 and the response to the Government's Productivity Plan request.
- 23.2 Councillors Sankey, Burden, Goddard and Robins contributed to the debate of the report.

23.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet notes the forecast risk position for the General Fund, which indicates a potential forecast overspend risk of £10.137m.
- 2) Cabinet notes the forecast outturn includes a forecast overspend risk of £1.600m on the NHS managed Section 75 services.
- 3) Cabinet notes the forecast overspend risk for the separate Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is an underspend of £0.020m.
- 4) Cabinet notes the forecast overspend risk for the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant, which is an overspend of £0.456m.
- 5) Cabinet notes the forecast position on the Capital Programme which is an underspend variance of £0.339m.
- 6) Cabinet approves the capital budget variations and re-profiling requests set out in Appendix 5.
- 7) Cabinet approves the new capital schemes requested in Appendix 6.
- 8) Cabinet notes the Treasury Management Update as set out in Appendix 7.
- 9) Cabinet notes the council's Productivity Plan response at Appendix 8.

34 AGEING WELL SERVICES

23.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval to commission Ageing Well Services for the city for a further six-year period (4 +2).

23.2 Councillors Galvin and Goddard contributed to the debate of the report.

23.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet approves the procurement of Ageing Well services for a further six-years (four + two)
- 2) Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Housing, Care and Wellbeing to carry out the procurement and award of a contract for a Brighton & Hove Ageing Well Service with a term of six years (four + two)

35 ESTATE MANAGEMENT

35.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for the retendering of the Estate Management Service for the Commercial and Agricultural portfolios for a five year period with an option for up to a two year extension.

35.2 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet agrees to the retendering of the Estate Management Services for the Commercial and Agricultural portfolios for a five year period with options for up to two year extensions.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and City Regeneration to:
 - (a) Award the five year contracts for the Commercial and Agricultural portfolios following the recommendations of the working group evaluation panel and the results of the tendering processes; and
 - (b) Approve extensions of up to two years to the contracts if required dependent upon performance.

36 CORPORATE WATER SUPPLY

23.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for a corporate contract provision of water and wastewater services to Brighton & Hove City Council's operational portfolio from 26th October 2024.

23.2 Councillor Robinson contributed to the debate of the report.

23.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet grants delegated authority to the Corporate Director of City Services to enter into a call off contract using the YPO (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation) Central Purchasing Body framework (Water, Wastewater and Ancillary Services – 1181) for the Council's water supply and wastewater services, for a maximum term of 48 months.

37 CORPORATE ENERGY SUPPLY

37.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought delegated authority for the continuation of Brighton & Hove City Council's ('the Council') electricity and gas purchasing strategy.

37.2 Councillors Robinson, Muten and Taylor contributed to the debate of the report.

37.3 Resolved-

1) Cabinet agrees to the continued use by the Council of the Crown Commercial Services Energy Procurement framework until 31st March 2029 and grants delegated authority to the Corporate Director of City Services to continue to purchase electricity, gas, and associated metering services through the Crown Commercial Services Energy Procurement framework [RM6251] until 31st March 2029 at the latest.

38 KING ALFRED LEISURE CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One report.

39 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One report.

40 HOUSING SUPPLY - UPDATE ON POTENTIAL ACQUISITION (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One report.

41 ESTATE MANAGEMENT (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One report.

42 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LETTINGS

23.1. Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for the completion of two commercial leases and delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Services and the Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the cabinet member to approve terms and take the necessary steps to complete the transactions.

23.2. Councillor Robinson contributed to the debate of the report.

23.3. Resolved-

1) Cabinet agrees to the completion of two commercial leases and delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Services and the Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the cabinet member to approve terms and take the necessary steps to complete the transactions.

43 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LETTINGS (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One report.

44 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

- 44.1 **Resolved-** That Cabinet agrees that the confidential items listed on the agenda remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 7.00pm

ID	Strategic Action	Deliverables / Milestones	Housing strategy focus area	Council plan priority	Lead Officer(s)
Priority 1. Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability					
HS01	Ensure the council complies with Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 and meets the four consumer standards that underpin the legislation.	Continue engagement with regulator in relation to compliance against the consumer standards and support further action if required - collate evidence to demonstrate compliance - improvement plans are delivered on schedule for each of the four consumer standards	1.1 Improve the quality of council homes and estates	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability	Head of Tenancy Services
HS02	Provide a repairs and maintenance service for council owned housing	- Reduce / end backlog of routine repairs - Remodel the existing contractor framework by August 2024. - Deliver action plans aligned to key priority actions in the Housing Health & Safety Action Plan 2024/2025 for electrics by March 2025. - Deliver planned works for cold water service replacement ongoing (5 year plan) - Undertake more planned maintenance/rolling upgrade of stock including completing conditions survey of cold water main and electrical main service in high rise buildings and begin at least one other project	1.1 Improve the quality of council homes and estates	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability	Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance
HS03	Invest in building and fire safety to meet new duties under the Building Safety Act and new Fire Safety (England) Regulations and ensure we are compliant with Health & Safety.	- Deliver action plans aligned to key priority actions in the Housing Health & Safety Action Plan 2024/25 for gas, electric, water, asbestos, lifts, and fire risk by March 2025 - All major refurbishment works to comply with Fire Safety and Building Safety Registration national requirements and to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator as part of the project - Review capacity requirements and procurement options by August 2024	1.2 Prioritise building and fire safety improvements	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability	Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management
HS04	Deliver planned and major works capital programmes	Implement the five-year programme for planned and major works Updated Asset Management Strategy to be agreed by March 2025	1.2 Prioritise building and fire safety improvements	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability	Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management
HS05	Improve the condition of private rented sector accommodation	Additional Licensing Scheme (citywide) introduced 1 July 2024 Selective Licensing Scheme (4 wards) introduced 2 September 2024 Application to Secretary of State for 13 ward Selective Licensing Scheme March 2025 Take enforcement action where appropriate Review private sector housing enforcement policies and information to reduce the threat of tenants being exploited and ensuring homes are well managed and safe to live in.	1.3 Improve standards in the private rented sector	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability	Head of Housing Strategy & Supply

HS06	Work with partners to provide advice and support to residents on home energy efficiency.	Work with Energyworks and the Local Energy Advice Partnership to provide energy advice, home energy checks, money advice and fuel vouchers for vulnerable residents in urgent need Deliver Warm, Safe Homes Grant programme for home owners and private sector tenants on low incomes who are struggling to keep their homes warm.	1.3 Improve standards in the private rented sector	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability	Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management Head of Housing Strategy & Supply
HS07	Improve the energy performance of council homes	- Solar PV – 220 – 450 installs in 2024-25 dependent on budget approval - Decarbonise heating hot water – technical surveys with outline options appraisals carried out on all communal heating and hot water systems in 2024, leading to a decarbonise programme being in place from 2025 onwards - Planned programmes (doors, windows, roofing, external decorations including insulation) – delivery of planned programmes, enhance the external decs. Programme to include cavity wall surveys on all jobs to identify opportunities to install replace failed CWI, explore external funding opportunities for these works - Delivery of project FLASH in partnership with EDF – funded by DESNZ to install and trial 25 domestic batteries alongside solar PV systems - Explore opportunity to bid for Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to fund measures in hard to treat, low EPC rated homes - Delivery of a revised HRA Energy Strategy aligned to a revised Asset Management Strategy to set out opportunities and outline action plan aligned to the city wide Zero Carbon targets	1.4 Improve sustainability and energy efficiency	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability	Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management
Priority 2. Deliver the homes our city needs					
HS08	Set new housing development targets through the City Plan, shape development and design of land use and the city's built environment, including delivery of infrastructure to meet the city's needs.	Key Issues Consultation Autumn 2024 - early engagement on key housing issues the plan needs to address - identifying the housing target set for the city under the draft National Planning Policy Framework and options for accommodating additional housing development in the city - identify future need for affordable homes.	2.1 Increase the supply of high-quality homes that meet the needs of our communities	Increase housing supply	Head of Planning

HS09	Reduce the number of private sector long-term empty homes in the city	<p>Establish strategic partnership to strengthen collaborative working</p> <p>Review and make use of all powers available for BHCC to bring Empty Homes back into use</p> <p>Bring 35 long term empty homes (2 years plus) back into use by March 25</p> <p>Minimum 5% reduction in long term empty homes measured via New Homes Bonus calculation in Oct 24</p> <p>Empty Property Working Group to develop new protocols by March 25</p>	2.1 Increase the supply of high-quality homes that meet the needs of our communities	Increase housing supply	Head of Housing Strategy & Supply
HS10	Increase supply of affordable homes - rented and low cost ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 78 additional council homes delivered by the council (new build, acquisitions & conversions) by March 2025 - Deliver Year 1 of the Local Authority Housing Fund (phase 3) programme - 357 affordable homes due to be delivered in 2024/5 by Registered Providers and Build to Rent developers - Support planning policy to enable the provision of non-council affordable housing supply in the city - Review existing council assets to establish the best opportunities for developing more affordable homes - Moulsecoomb Hub contractor appointed by October 2024 - Cabinet agreement on next site for Homes for Brighton & Hove - Future sites secured through Homes for Brighton & Hove to achieve 1,000 new homes over the lifetime of the project - New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme in 24/25 - on site at Hollingbury Library site (9 homes) and procured contractors for the following projects - Windlesham House (15 homes), Portslade Village Centre (28 homes), Rotherfield Crescent (3 homes) and Eastergate Road (30 homes) - maximise use of 'meanwhile' sites for modular and other innovative forms of housing whilst awaiting longer term development 	2.2 Increase the supply of affordable homes	Increase housing supply	Head of Housing Strategy & Supply / Head of Regeneration
HS11	Create new social housing lets by reducing under occupancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop an under-occupancy process for council housing by March 2025 - Work with Registered Providers to develop a wider under occupancy approach 	2.2 Increase the supply of affordable homes	Increase housing supply	Head of Tenancy Services
HS13	Reduce the number of short-term lets and second homes in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare for potential changes in legislation in relation to short term lets - assess other options available to tackle short term lets where appropriate - prepare to introduce a 100% Council Tax premium on second homes with effect from 5 April 2025 	2.2 Increase the supply of affordable homes	Increase housing supply	Head of Housing Strategy & Supply Head of Planning

Priority 3. Prevent homelessness and meet housing need					
HS14	Implement the Homelessness Transformation Strategy - improving the customer journey for people facing homelessness and maximising opportunities to prevent homelessness	- Align service with the aims of the city's Multiple Compound Needs programme	3.1 Increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Homelessness & Housing Options
HS15	Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation	- Deliver actions identified in the Temporary Accommodation Reduction action plan - develop further proposals as part of the refresh of the homelessness & rough sleeping strategy by March 2025	3.2 Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Temporary & Supported Accommodation
HS16	Implement a new Housing Allocations Policy.	- Final proposal for Allocations Policy completed by August 2024 - New Allocations Policy agreed by cabinet by September 2024 - New Allocations Policy adopted by November 2024 - New Allocations Policy implemented including all systems change by March 2025	3.2 Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Homelessness & Housing Options
HS17	Review and update the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	- Refresh Homelessness and Rough Sleeping partnership arrangements by Sep 2024 - Revise existing action plan by Dec 2024 - Develop & agree new strategy by March 2025 - Through the strategy refresh align with the aims of the city's Multiple Compound Needs programme	3.3 Focus our assistance on people who need most help	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Homelessness & Housing Options
HS18	Commission single homelessness and rough sleeper supported accommodation.	- Monitor new contract to ensure delivery - Review performance and address any issues	3.3 Focus our assistance on people who need most help	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Temporary & Supported Accommodation
HS19	Develop joined up approaches for those most at risk of harm or where there is greater impact if they become homeless	- Agree the 16 to 17 Joint Protocol for homeless young people - Review our provision for pregnant single women - Provide support and safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse - develop Pan Sussex reciprocal arrangements for survivors of domestic abuse - develop a VAWG resource toolkit for frontline staff	3.3 Focus our assistance on people who need most help	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Homelessness & Housing Options Head of Temporary & Supported Accommodation Regulatory Services & Safer Communities Manager AD Children's Safeguarding
HS20	Support and resettle refugees	- deliver our commitments as a City of Sanctuary - Support the Refugee Resettlement Programmes including identifying suitable properties in the private rented sector - other properties to be acquired through the Local Authority Housing Fund in 2024/25 - meet our goal of resettling at least 40 households (184 individuals) over the the duration of the Afghan programmes (2021 to 2025) by the end of March 2025	5.2 Ensure our housing services are accessible, fair and inclusive	Work to reduce inequality	Head of Housing Strategy & Supply Head of Communities, Equalities & Third Sector
Priority 4. Support improved health and wellbeing for all					

HS21	Ensure that people can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes	- work to align neighbourhood housing teams and health and social care integrated community teams - consult on new Hate Incidents Policy for council tenants and leaseholders Autumn 2024 - identify and target geographical ASB hot spots	4.1 Work with partners to develop safe, healthy and inclusive estates and neighbourhoods	Create safe public spaces that are accessible for all	Head of Tenancy Services Regulatory Services & Safer Communities Manager
HS22	Support older people to be independent and resilient	Increase referrals to preventative health and wellbeing services. - Increase use of assessment tools to support older people to live independently such as the falls prevention toolkit. - Increase the number of people applying for and being supported into sheltered housing and extra care.	4.2 Support people to live independently	A healthy city where people thrive.	Head of Tenancy Services Head of Commissioning
HS23	Support people with additional support needs to be independent and resilient.	- Deliver Move On Project action plan for 2024/25 - Deliver the elements of the learning disability strategy housing action plan, autism action plan and mental health action plan where resources have been committed by partners and seek further resources where these are not available. Undertake construction of Brickfields, Hove. To be completed March 2026 Develop and agree joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers ensuring this is aligned with Best Practice Guidance by October 24	4.2 Support people to live independently	Improve housing support for residents	AD Commissioning & Partnerships Head of Regeneration Head of Disability Services AD Children's Safeguarding
HS24	Develop a Supported Housing Strategy to ensure we meet the needs of vulnerable households who need support.	-Review provision of exempt supported housing - Identify resources to develop & agree strategy - Support registered charities to claim Housing Benefit subsidy for exempt accommodation	4.2 Support people to live independently	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Housing Strategy & Supply AD Commissioning & Partnerships
HS25	Enable people to live independently in their homes by providing housing adaptations	Provide and deliver adaptations for those in need - £3.97m of investment in 2024/25 (£1.6m for council owned homes and £2.37m for privately owned homes through Disabled	4.2 Support people to live independently	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Housing Strategy & Supply
HS26	Tackle damp and mould	- implement new damp & mould protocol - raise tenants awareness of damp & mould and the support available - tackle damp & mould in council owned properties - advise private sector landlords of their current responsibilities & take enforcement action where necessary - prepare for the anticipated extension of Awaab's Law to the private rented sector	4.3 Promote healthy housing for our residents	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability Enable people to live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives	Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance Head of Housing Strategy & Supply
HS27	Work to ensure that people's homes are adequately heated and properly ventilated	Deliver the Warmth for Wellbeing public health programme, providing money advice, small grants and home energy visits Review and update the Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth (FPAW) Plan	4.3 Promote healthy housing for our residents	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability Enable people to live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives"	Consultant in Public Health

5. Provide resident focused housing services

HS28	Ensure that tenants' views are at the heart of decision-making about the delivery of our landlord services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - take a resident centred approach to developing future options for the regeneration of LPS blocks - Consultation and implementation of Building Safety Regulator High Risk Blocks Resident Engagement Strategy - complete review of existing community engagement framework - Quarterly Area Panel meetings - strengthen use of non-traditional engagement methods (e.g. surveys, focus groups & social media) to improve engagement, inclusion and accessibility - engage and consult residents on policy and proposals; reviews for example, hate incidents policy, laundry review; budget priorities - repeat annual STAR survey to assess tenant satisfaction 	5.1 Listen to and engage with our residents	Meet the needs of our residents and other customers	Head of Tenancy Services
HS29	Optimise the local benefits and social value of our inhouse repairs and maintenance service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilise the new materials supplier to replace existing arrangements to deliver benefits in the following key areas: availability, logistics, best value, sustainability, and social value - Maintain our apprentice promise to engage 20 apprentices at any one time. - Provide a local schools offer for work experience and longer placements to enhance employment skills and opportunities. - Continue to incorporate recruitment practices identified in the directorates Fair and Inclusive Action Plan to ensure that the workforce reflects the city's diverse communities 	5.2 Ensure our housing services are accessible, fair and inclusive	Work to reduce inequality	Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance
HS30	Provide housing information and advice appropriate to the needs of our diverse communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include information on access to housing on the Easy Read Hub - review the customer journey and information on housing services webpages 	5.2 Ensure our housing services are accessible, fair and inclusive	Meet the needs of our residents and other customers	Assistant Director Housing Needs & Supply Assistant Director Housing Management
HS31	Ensure that our housing workforce has the relevant skills and competencies to deliver an effective service to all residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to roll out training and support to develop trauma informed practice in our front line staff - Increase frontline staff understanding of supporting people with learning disabilities and people with autism in mainstream housing and support services through training 	5.3 Deliver effective, high quality housing services	Improve housing support for residents Our ways of working	Assistant Director Housing Needs & Supply Assistant Director Housing Management
HS32	Work with other social landlords to share intelligence, pool resources and work on shared priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Brighton Hove Social Landlord Network - Organise Housing Summit for October 2024 and agree shared priorities - Agree and implement a Preferred Developer Partners Charter 	5.4 Work with our partners to agree and deliver shared priorities	Improve housing quality, safety and sustainability Increase housing supply Improve housing support for residents	Head of Tenancy Services

HS33	Work with NHS and other partners to improve services and support for people with multiple, compound needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop & agree business case - Implement integrated community teams model by November 2024 - begin consultation on proposals for integrated multiple compound needs service by March 2025 - continue to develop proposals for a homeless health hub 	5.4 Work with our partners to agree and deliver shared priorities	Improve housing support for residents	Programme Director - Integrated Service Transformation
HS34	Work with our partners in the Third Sector, other public sector bodies, people with lived experience and the wider community to address homelessness and rough sleeping in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review & refresh existing partnership arrangements - Develop and agree joint priorities through the development of a new homelessness & rough sleeping strategy 	5.4 Work with our partners to agree and deliver shared priorities	Improve housing support for residents	Head of Homelessness & Housing Options

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 63

Subject: Improving Housing Services: Responding to the Regulator for Social Housing's Judgement

Date of meeting: 26 September 2024

Report of: Cabinet Member for Housing and New Homes

Contact Officer: Name: Anthony Soyinka
Email: anthony.soyinka@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

Action Required of Cabinet:

- 1) To receive and note the Minute extract of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 September 2024.

Place Overview and scrutiny Committee
15:00 23 September 2024
Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall

Draft Minutes Extract

Present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Cattell (Vice Chair), Hewitt, Winder, Czolak, Sykes, Meadows, Mary Davies (Older Peoples Council)

8a) Substitutions: Cllr Sykes for Cllr Maclay, Cllr Meadows for Cllr Lyons, Cllr Czolak for Cllr Sheard.

Apologies: Cllr Thompson, Cllr Sheard, Cllr Lyons, Cllr Fowler, Mark Strong, Sarah Fulford.

8b) Declarations of interests: There were none.

8c) Exclusion of the press and public: There were no Part 2 items.

9) Chairs Communications. The Chair gave the following communication:

10) Public involvement: There was none.

11) Member involvement: There was none.

12) Housing Regulator Judgement: Report to Cabinet.

12.1 Cllr Gill Williams (Cabinet member for Housing and New Homes) spoke to the committee to provide background to the report. Cllr Williams said that this was a very serious issue. She said the council had over 12,500 homes in its housing stock many of which were older, some built in the 60s, and needing attention. Problems were caused by years and years of lack of investment, but now the council was dealing with the issue. She said that from April 2024 new powers to regulate social housing were brought in and she welcomed these, as councils were being held to a higher standard because of the Grenfell tragedy. Cllr Williams highlighted that this issue is not new and was reported through the previous Housing Committee on a regular basis and at area panels. She said that she was not surprised that the regulator found the council wanting in a number of areas, as there was a lot to do in a very short space of time. Cllr Williams reminded the Committee that this is the report of a regulator and not a court, and that they can tell the council what they need to do to get to 100%, as the council is not there yet. She said that the Council had formed a plan to get there as quickly as possible. This included putting in £15m, bringing in more contractors to get to the compliance standard and to stay there. Cllr Williams said that she wanted Scrutiny to oversee this with monthly reports and updates.

12.2 Martin Reid (Interim Corporate Director) said that the health and safety of residents was a priority, as well as those who visit and work on our homes. He said that following a period of engagement with the Regulator of Social Housing a number of serious failings in safety and quality compliance around certain areas of health & safety and a backlog of routine repairs were identified. He said that the issue had been brought to the Housing and New Homes Committee four times and that area panels were regularly being updated on the issue. He explained that the report updates on plans in place and progress on addressing the remaining

issues. He said that there was a commitment to provide good and safe homes for residents. Martin Reid said that progress was being made with investment of £15m, fire risk assessments in high rise and medium rise blocks, they were prioritising electrical safety, proactively testing and moving to a five yearly programme by 2026 with earlier priority dates in some areas. He said that the council were progressing with ensuring all homes have smoke detection and we have a record of this, water risk assessments are being carried out, prioritising higher-risk homes with additional contractor capacity brought in. He said that there were 6,000 routine repairs with contractors brought in to support clearing our backlog, but that this was going down and that 77% of routine repairs were now on time. Martin Reid said that a range of surveys were being carried out to find issues with the housing stock. He said that the regulator had said that Brighton and Hove City Council needs to know its stock and its tenants and that these surveys will pick up more issues that will be dealt with.

12.3 Justine Harris (Acting Assistant Director Housing) said that the council were taking this very seriously and understood that these were peoples' homes being discussed.

12.4 Cllr Anne Meadows said that the regulator expects this plan to be shared with tenants and asked how much this would cost. She warned that if one or two flats in a block did not have smoke detectors or sprinklers then that would endanger the rest of the block. She asked a question about why there was 100% compliance on carbon monoxide alarms but not smoke alarms. She said that she had previously asked at Housing and New Homes Committee about electrical safety testing but had been told it was not needed, and now it is needed. Cllr Meadows spoke of a sheltered accommodation block in her ward that had contaminated water and why weren't the council testing more for legionnaires. She said that the council have known since Covid that there was a backlog of repairs and highlighted the case of an 82-year-old in her ward who had been waiting more than five years for repairs. She asked how many in the backlog were repeat visits. Cllr Meadows ask questions around EPC certificates, saying that the council should have them for all properties and that they should be a minimum rating of D, but many were E or even F and deemed not suitable for habitable living. Cllr Meadows said that if private landlords were housing people like the council is, they would be taken to court. Cllr Meadows asked questions on the budgets mentioned on page 15 of the report and said that she could not marry up the figures being spent on the issue with the funding agreed at the budget in February and believed that there were discrepancies. She asked where the money was coming from and what would be stopped to pay for it. Cllr Meadows suggested that the council had been too busy attacking private landlords and taking them to court when the council are the biggest landlord in the city. She asked why the council wasn't taking itself to court over the issue. The Chair replied that the council would not be taking itself to court but that the regulator has powers over the council as a social landlord.so. Martin Reid replied that the cost was within the budget, the full costs in the cabinet report and that no capital or planned works would be set back by it. He said that post-Grenfell Tower Tragedy the council knew that Housing Revenue Account budget planning would need to reflect our plans to pay for these works. Regarding smoke detectors he said that the council had to show validated figures, which were at 84% of all homes, but that there could be more that the council are unaware of. He said that there had been publicity that had asked tenants to let the council know if they did not have smoke detectors and that they were fitting both battery-operated ones as well as hard wired ones. He said that the council is making sure that they meet compliance on fire safety and that sprinklers were not an obligation, but the council is fitting them in new builds and some other homes. Martin Reid went on to say that with leaseholders the council have fitted new fire doors with no additional charge in order to comply with post Grenfell Tower tragedy standards, and that they look at other charges on a case-by-case basis, only charging

where they have to. Regarding electrical safety he said that the council are repeating electrical testing in communal areas and homes, reiterating that the council wants to get to a five-year testing cycle. He said that the council had set out how the communal electrical testing programme prioritised community supplies to high rise blocks and blocks converted for residential use with a target date for completion by December 2024 and that it was not just a case of getting to compliance but staying there. Regarding water testing he said that additional sample testing found some issues in some seniors housing and that the council are dealing with them. He said that no cases of legionella had been reported. The issues were in some communal areas and not in people's homes. Martin Reid said that the more testing the council does the more issues it will find and have to deal with. Martin Reid gave statistics that over 95% of emergency repairs had been completed within target, in quarter 1 of 2024 97%. He said that they were bringing in additional resources to deal with the routine repairs backlog which had reduced by over 1,000. Regarding energy efficiency he said that the council were investing in solar panels, doors, and windows to make sure that people live in good quality energy efficient homes. Cllr Meadows said that she agreed with most of what Martin Reid had said but that she still could not marry up the figures in the report with the budget. The Chair suggested that Cllr Jacob Taylor, the cabinet member for finance and city regeneration could possibly provide Cllr Meadows with a written response on that point.

12.5 Cllr Pickett asked how the comments from the committee would be going to cabinet, if this would be a report or if Cllr Williams would be taking them back. The Chair answered that the minutes of the meeting would be added to the agenda for the upcoming Cabinet meeting, and that the committee would also be regularly updated.

12.6 Cllr Hewitt asked Cllr Williams if the lack of investment that she mentioned was from central government and if she could put a figure on it. He also asked if the regulator could carry out mock inspections such as CQC and OFSTED to find areas needed improvement before a full inspection. Cllr Williams said that the figure for a lack of investment probably could not be quantified but that central government had starved councils of funding for years and years and that with an aging housing stock this has caused a serious problem. She said that Brighton and Hove was not the only council to be in this situation, other council's, including Bristol were in a similar place. She said that if the council had had more funding in the past then they could have made improvements but also reiterated that these are new standards post-Grenfell. She said that although £15m was being invested it would probably take more as they don't just need to reach compliance but to stay there. Martin Reid said that these are new regulations post-Grenfell Tower tragedy and that the council had been engaging with the regulator since October 2023. He said that this report was not based on inspections but that, under the new regulations covering large social landlords with over 1,000 homes, there would be an inspection once every four years. He said that officers would plan for mock inspections and peer reviews. Martin Reid also said that they would learn lessons from those inspected before Brighton and Hove

12.7 Cllr Cattell asked what is in place to stop the backlog rebuilding, if she could wave a magic wand and make the current backlog disappear overnight. She asked if the council had the right IT systems to help make repairs run more smoothly and efficiently. She also asked if it would be possible to have a report on regeneration works. The Chair said that she would be happy to have a report on regeneration. Cllr Williams said that regeneration was a good point, and that the council was hiring a new Director for regeneration starting soon. She said that the council would need to do a lot of regeneration work because of the age of the stock, but that they would need to find out what needs regeneration, what tenants want, and where the money

would come from. Martin Reid said that the council wants to clear the routine repairs backlog and is currently doing 2,500 to 3,000 repairs a month. He said the council plans more planned preventative repair work as this would stop the backlog building up. He gave the example of more planned maintenance being done on windows and communal plumbing. Regarding IT he said that the council have made good progress but had a number of different ICT systems inherited from Mears and the council. He said they would be getting a better system soon to improve data so that all information is held in one place, and that this was something the regulator said was required. Cllr Cattell asked if staff were part of the culture change and happy doing this. Cllr Williams said that Cllr Robinson was in charge of contract management and procurement and that the council needed to make sure that the customer was happy and did not keep having to come back for repairs. Martin Reid said that the council were not just relying on contractors but had a significant in house service and an apprenticeship scheme to train up our own staff. Cllr Cattell said that growing our own staff and training them up would help going forward.

12.8 Cllr Sykes asked how the council got into this situation? He said that the council didn't want to end up doing a patch response and then getting back into the same situation. He said that he felt record keeping and data collection had been an issue, as well as Covid and the lack of access to properties. He said that it was a very useful report but light on the learning and how the council had got to this point. Martin Reid said that that the council would need to continue improving. He said that the council have additional resources and have hired a programme manager to support with analysis of what we need to do to ensure that the council does not end up in the same situation again. He said that learning was happening going forward. He said that insourcing of housing repairs & maintenance services has seen high customer satisfaction rates. He said that they wanted to do more preventative work instead of reactive work. Cllr Williams agreed that it was a good point and said that going forward regeneration projects would help as because of the age of the housing stock once one issue was resolved often another would start. She said that most important were the residents who would be affected and that she hoped the new government would be generous and help.

12.9 Cllr Czolak said that up-to-date data on homes is brilliant news and would be valuable to solve these issues. He wanted to be kept up to date on this. He said that on page 17 9.7 says that the regulator expects the council to develop a plan and share this with tenants. He asked if we had an expected delivery for this or a goal to inform people. Cllr Williams said that they had carried out over 460 one-to-ones with tenants in Large Panel System buildings where issues had been found, to make sure that they know as meetings and letters don't always work. She said that the council needs to take tenants with them and keep them informed. Martin Reid said that engagement was such a big issue going forward and that they would be increasing tenant visits. He said that an action plan had gone to the Housing and New Homes Committee in September last year but that they would reflect on it and improve it. He said that there were other things coming up including Awaab's Law around damp and mould. Justine Harris said that point 7 on page 14 onwards in the report talks about engagement. She said that as well as in writing in quarterly Homing In magazine that is posted out to tenants, at meetings, at drop in, they would look at different engagement methods to improve engagement levels.

12.10 The Chair asked a question on behalf of the community and voluntary sector reps who could not make it to the meeting. They asked if the council were the right people to rebuild trust with tenants. Martin Reid said that as the landlord they had to rebuild trust with tenants, and that they would be reaching out to more people in different ways and in different settings. He

said that they wanted to make engagement more effective, including to reflect the diversity of the communities the council provides services to.

12.11 Cllr Winder asked if the preventative programme was linked with the repairs programme and also if those carrying out repairs were looking at the conditions people were living in to find any other issues requiring repairs or that needing raising with others. Martin Reid said that staff are looking at the backlog of repairs to see what preventative work could be done. He said that there were 16,000 calls to the repairs desk in quarter 1 of this year. Justine Harris said that housing officers and repair operatives are now working much more closely to raise issues found such as struggling to cope or hoarding and that this was a much more efficient way of working. She said that everywhere there is reporting of more isolation and more issues because of the cost of living. Martin Reid added that the council are encouraging staff to report things that they are concerned about when visiting properties.

12.12 Mary Davies (Chair Older Peoples' Council) asked a question around the assessment of risk and equalities implications and health and wellbeing, including fuel poverty and chronic health conditions and if the council was integrating the risk analysis of properties with the vulnerability of tenants such as those in seniors housing. Martin Reid said that the council risk assesses both and that there was a priority for fire and water assessments in older peoples housing. He said that they carry out risk assessments on both the property and the vulnerability of the tenant and match them to make sure that nothing is missed. Cllr Williams said a good example is recent visits carried out to help know who is a vulnerable resident who would need evacuating.

12.13 Cllr Shanks asked about the role of ward members as the report said that they would be essential. She said councillors get lots of emails on housing and she didn't think that they get answers quick enough, and often answers are defensive. She said that tenants don't feel looked after or that that they are being listened to. She said that she wanted to see a much more collaborative approach with empowered tenants. Cllr Shanks went on to say that places like Theobald house in her ward used to have a caretaker who knew the residents, now they don't. She said that it was worth thinking more radically about the issue, as CVS had said, is the council the best to deal with the engagement. Cllr Shanks said that she would like the report and the response sent to all members, not just the committees, as all members deal with residents with housing issues, possibly in the form of a council briefing. Martin Reid said that he was open to more ways of engagement, working with the council's community engagement team, who are not part of the housing department but corporate. He said he was sorry if residents don't feel that they get responses and would look into this. He said he wanted to make sure that people feel heard. He went on to say that feedback to the Housing service is that tenants want to get more involved as they live in these homes and can help and that we will encourage that.

12.14 Cllr Fishleigh asked about the two contractors who were employed to tackle the backlog, asking for their names, how many staff were employed, and if they were on fixed term contracts or rolling contracts. Martin Reid said that 6,000 jobs had been given to two contractors, United Living and Axis Europe to help address the backlog of routine repairs.. He said that they were doing lower risk level jobs while the in house team were doing urgent and more recently arising routine repairs.

12.15 The Chair spoke about statistics that she had learnt as Chair of the East Sussex Fire Authority, that East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove) was 6th in the country in term of the

number of high rises. She said that when including medium rise Brighton and Hove is second only to London. She said the Fire Authority was concerned that they were not adequately funded to fulfil additional post-Grenfell regulatory burdens even under the current funding method and were already lobbying for increased funding ahead of the new government's spending review

12.16 The chair put the following recommendations to the committee:

- 2.1 That Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the Cabinet report on the Social Housing Regulator Judgement (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 That Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider and comment upon the proposed Overview & Scrutiny oversight recommendations as set out in section 6 of the Cabinet report and outlined below. Comments or recommendations on these arrangements to be shared with Cabinet members ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 26 September.

These were agreed unanimously, and the chair closed the meeting at 16:22.

