

Housing Management Panel: East Area

Date: 14 December 2021

Time: 7.00pm

Venue Hybrid Meeting – Zoom / In Person
Craven Vale Community Room
17A Hadlow Close, Brighton
BN2 0FH

Members: Councillor Brennan, Ward Councillors for the Area, Delegates of Tenants Association in the area.

Contact: Thomas Bald
Democratic Services Officer
thomas.bald@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Agendas and minutes are published on the council's website www.brighton-hove.gov.uk.
Agendas are available to view five working days prior to the meeting date.

Electronic agendas can also be accessed through our meetings app available through ModernGov: [iOS/Windows/Android](#)

This agenda and all accompanying reports are printed on recycled paper

AGENDA

PART ONE	Page
1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS 5 Minutes – Verbal Meeting Invitation Details Attached	5 - 6
2 ACTIONS AND MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING 10 Minutes – Minutes and actions in papers Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 (copy attached). Actions of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 (copy attached).	7 - 14
3 ESTATE DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 10 Minutes	
4 RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS 40 Minutes – Answers to Residents Questions	15 - 26
5 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT 10 Minutes + Report Attached	27 - 28
6 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS 5 Minutes – Verbal updates from attendees on positive things happening in the community.	
7 FUTURE FORMAT OF AREA PANELS 15 – Panel to discuss about in-person and hybrid meetings	
8 BUDGET UPDATE 15 Minutes – Verbal update from Ododo Dafe, Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement	
9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS 5 Minutes - Verbal	

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact , (01273 291354, email thomas.bald@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff.

It is vital that you follow their instructions:

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move some distance away and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

Date of Publication - Monday, 6 December 2021

East Area Panel – meeting invitation

Dear Resident,

On behalf of the East Area Panel, I would like to invite you to the next meeting. This will be a **hybrid meeting** with a limited number of people seeing face-to-face and others taking part on-line. You will be able to see and hear each other.

To book your physical place, please contact the Community Engagement Admin Team at 01273291518 / 07717302986 / communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk. **Please note** that due to limited capacity, physical places will be allocated on a first book first served basis.

When	Tuesday 14 th December 2021 – from 18:45 to 21:00
Where	<p>Craven Vale Community Room 17A Hadlow Cl, Brighton BN2 0FH</p> <p>and online on Zoom</p> <p>Please type the following address in your browser:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.tinyurl.com/EAP141221</p> <p>There's no difference between uppercase/lowercase letters. You won't need to enter meeting ID or password.</p> <p>If the link above doesn't work or you will join through the Zoom client instead, please use the following credentials:</p> <p>Meeting ID: 858 6689 2563 Passcode: 7dtNVH</p> <p>(no difference between uppercase/lowercase letters). You won't need to enter meeting ID or password.</p> <p>If you can't use a device able to connect to the internet, you can access the meeting through audio only, calling with a normal phone one of the following numbers and typing the meeting ID and passcode when asked:</p> <p>0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0203 901 7895, 0131 460 1196</p> <p>Meeting ID: 858 6689 2563 Passcode: 595513</p> <p>To mute and unmute yourself when calling by phone, press *6 (asterisk and 6)</p>

Please read the papers in advance of the meeting.

We can help with transport costs: please let us know **at least 7 days in advance** if you need the provision of bus tickets or taxi vouchers to get to the meeting, and we will send those to you in due course. If you drive, you can claim mileage and parking costs through your resident association grant. Taxi Vouchers can only be requested by people with mobility issues.

Please contact the Community Engagement Admin Team at 01273291518 / 07717302986 / communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk to get tickets or vouchers or to obtain more information.

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT AREA PANEL
EAST WARD – MINUTES – 12 OCTOBER 2021 – 1900HRS**

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Apologies from Cllr Platts.

2. ACTIONS & MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Rosemary Johnson asked if having your name associated with a comment in the previous minutes is an error or a change of policy, noting potential security reasons for not naming individuals.

2.2 Thomas Bald said he is unsure of any policy but will check with their manager.

2.3 Rosemary Johnson raised issue with previous minutes page 3 item 1.13, clarifying her position on the council listing people as being in arrears when they are not.

2.4 Rosemary Johnson reflected that point 1.16 of the previous minutes was referring to a specific meeting organised by Cllr Hugh-Jones regarding leaseholder payments that went very well.

2.5 Rosemary Johnson asked, in reference to point 1.19, if electric vehicles can be supplied with longer cables, she was informed by the interim head of repairs and maintenance that this is possible. Rosemary suggested placing car chargers on the right-hand side on a one-road street for accessibility purposes.

2.6 Justine Harris detailed ongoing issues regarding moss growth on Langley-crescent.

2.7 Justine is asked by Natalie if she has spoken to the individual who is responsible for fences and informed Natalie she is unsure if this has happened.

2.8 Cllr Simson stated that problems may be caused if the ownership of land is not clarified.

2.9 Justine Harris provided an update on a resident engagement review being undertaken to address issues, including the chairing of Area Panels, but the review had been delayed due to staff absence but when completed the review will be reported to area panels and the housing committee.

2.10 Keeley stated that there was not an established timeframe for this review.

2.11 Cllr Mears addressed concerns regarding the complexity of the review.

2.12 Chair stated that complexity arose when the councillor for the area became independent.

3. RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

3.2 The Chair asked why recycling bins have not been collected by Veolia if they are a separate private company to Cityclean.

3.3 Janet Gearing and Cllr Mears stated that both Viola and Cityclean are on strike.

3.4 The Panel was informed that Melissa Francis was an operations manager for CityClean.

3.5 The Chair expressed concern over fly-tipping.

3.6 Janet Gearing expressed concern over CityClean management.

3.7 Cllr Mears informed Janet the cause of the strikes wouldn't have been the decision of one manager alone.

3.8 Cllr Williams stated that East Brighton Councillors have been inundated with complaints about waste for some time and clarifies that the administration has engaged in 'independent negotiations' with the union and highlighted that senior Council management also needs to be pushed.

3.9 Rosemary Johnson stated that the author of the response to graffiti concerns should be present in the meeting and stated in response to the final line of the response that graffiti in Craven Vale is on Council (rather than private) property, and invited councillors, and the operations manager for CityClean, to come and see the graffiti for themselves. Alan seconded this and Rosemary asked for a further reply.

3.10 The Chair highlighted that progress was being made regarding the estate development budget task and finish group, but highlighted concerns about getting the chance to speak at these.

3.11 Rosemary Johnson criticised the estate development budget task and finish group, suggesting that a senior individual capable of implementing change should be in attendance.

3.12 Rosemary Johnson was informed that the task and finish group was established to inform the area panels where action is taken.

3.13 Janet Gearing asked Keeley if residents can put in an EDB bid for gym equipment worth £8000. Janet Gearing was informed that EDB funding would not be able to be granted for purchases already made, but informed Janet that there is an alternative to EDB funding and will talk to colleagues on the Environmental Improvement Budget Board about this.

3.14 Cllr Simson expressed concerns regarding EDB structures, stating that EDB is becoming 'Neighbourhood Renewal', highlighting importance of tenant's associations. Cllr Mears added that the EDB budget comes out of the housing revenue account, which is made up of tenants rent, and as such tenants should have the say as to what happens regarding EDB.

3.15 Keely McDonald confirmed that the budget is still resident-led and that officers do not make decisions regarding EDB.

3.16 Cllr Mears expressed further concerns regarding changes to the structure of EDB.

3.17 The Chair moved onto Ground Maintenance Service, highlighting large amounts of vineweed that has grown and stated that work does not get carried on.

3.18 Rosemary Johnson asked if there were any herbicides, rather than pesticides, that can be used.

3.19 Alan Cooke asked if it was the responsibility of the residents, rather than the council, to maintain an item that had been secured through an EDB grant, using plants as an example. Alan Cooke was informed that it is the responsibility of the residents, unless the item is large like a hedge.

3.20 Cllr Williams suggested that members of the panel receive training from Bethan Hudson regarding the development fund.

3.21 The Chair revisited concerns regarding weeds, stating that individuals have caught their feet in them.

3.22 The Chair highlighted, in regard to tackling anti-social behaviour in high rise blocks, that it can be difficult to get the police involved.

3.23 Rosemary Johnson highlighted concerns about individuals using their flats for illegal purposes, citing page 21 of the agenda. The Chair recommended reporting illegal activities to the police. Alan Cooke highlighted difficulties in enforcing evictions of individuals in breach of the law.

3.24 Bethan Hudson mentioned that under 'Any Other Business' there is an anti-social behaviour policy review.

3.25 Cllr Mears stated that she has been contacted by residents across the city that flats are being used for drug dealing.

3.26 Ododo Dafe informed the Chair that 'EDN + B Request' was a typo that was intended to read 'EDB Request'.

3.27 The Chair communicated, in regard to vaping in flats, that it is the resident's business what they do in their flat as there is no evidence of harm from vaping so long as it is not done in communal areas. Rosemary Johnson expressed concern regarding the effect of vaping in communal areas for those with asthma.

3.28 The Chair communicated a written response from Miles Davison regarding future gas central heating.

3.29 Cllr Williams stated that residents can obtain more detailed answers from officers by requesting this from the answering officer. Cllr Williams also stated that it is possible for residents to adopt a 'no vaping' policy in communal living areas.

3.30 Justine Harris confirmed she would look into signage options for vaping and smoking.

4. EAST BRIGHTON SKATE PARK

4.1 Cllr Williams communicated that she has contacted a firm called 'Maverick' regarding a skate park and was given a price estimate of £250,000. Cllr Williams stated that they, along with Cllr Platts, have contacted local police officers who were in support of a skate-park due to its community benefits. Cllr Williams mentioned a 'police community fund' that may be able to be utilized along with a potential sponsorship from the racecourse. Cllr Williams suggested the establishment of a young person lead project board to allow them to get involved, stating that Maverick have agreed this would be possible.

4.2 The Chair was informed that a recent survey had identified four potential sites for the skate-park.

4.3 Daniel Harris, representing the Park Life Group, stated that the survey received 223 responses regarding four potential locations, reporting that the Crew Club was the most popular location followed by East-Brighton Park.

4.4 The Panel had no disagreements to having a skatepark in East-Brighton when asked by Cllr Williams.

4.5 Cllr Williams was informed that a neighbourhood consultation would need to take place facilitated by the community engagement team.

4.6 Caroline agreed that it would be possible to establish a young-persons project board and expand on the survey, stating that feedback from the Crew Club could be necessary.

4.7 Daniel Harris stated that 56 email addresses had been collected from individuals who wanted to be involved and informed the panel that Park Life suggested involving skaters from Brighton Youth Centre in the consultation as most respondents to the survey were over the age of 26.

4.8 Daniel Harris stated that the demographic for skate-park use extended to people over the age of 30, and expressed interest in having a separate area in the skate-park for learners and beginners.

4.9 Alan Cooke was informed that the age-range of the young-persons project board would be between 14-26 years old.

4.10 Cllr Simson stated that the bulk of the money granted to Woodingdean skate-park was given by Veolia and the project was driven by a young-persons consultation project. Cllr Simson also stated that Woodingdean skate-park caters for individuals as young as 3 years old, commending its inclusivity.

4.11 The importance of addressing individual concerns, particularly of those who might live close to the skatepark and offered support as a TDC, was highlighted.

4.12 Tony informed Cllr Williams Sport's England would be interested in supporting the skatepark, stating it would be worth looking into their priorities to secure potential funding.

4.13 It was stated that Richard Ricardo (Skatepark Development Officer) helped with the Moulsecoomb skatepark.

4.14 Rosemary Johnson was informed of the location of the Crew Club.

4.15 The Chair highlighted success of skatepark in Shoreham.

4.16 Justine Harris highlighted success of skatepark in Newhaven, suggesting a site visit.

4.17 Tony was informed that there is a BMX track planned for Black Rock.

4.18 Cllr Simson informs the panel there is a swimming pool planned near Peter Pan Playground.

4.19 Cllr Williams suggested setting up a working party and a meeting, exclusively on skateparks, to begin action on the skatepark.

5. POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

5.1 Alan Cooke mentioned the week of events, commending the community barbecue and stating that 80-100 people attended. He also stated that the community has obtained a table-tennis table from the table tennis club which has brought benefit to the community.

5.2 Rosemary Johnson stated that the vale community centre is open every Tuesday for tea, coffee and cakes and informed the panel that there is a combined quiz and darts night starting on Friday 15th October.

5.3 Janet Gearing informed the panel that the gym is being constructed and asked Keeley McDonald if a bid could be put in for extra funding for the gym.

5.4 Janet Gearing was informed by Keeley that EDB funding would not be able to be granted for purchases already made, but informed Janet that there is an alternative to EDB funding and will talk to colleagues on the Environmental Improvement Budget Board about this.

5.5 Tracey Silsby asked the panel's thoughts on the installation of a 'pod' installed at the north of Whitehawk for use by children to keep them off the street in the area, citing concerns that there is not currently enough for them to do.

5.6 Daniel Harris stated that Parklife fully supports Tracey Silsby's idea, offering toys if needed.

5.7 Tracey Silsby highlighted that children don't feel comfortable travelling across Whitehawk citing this as a reason for the installation of a 'pod'.

5.8 The Chair agreed with Tracey Silsby, iterating the North/South divide in Whitehawk.

5.9 Cllr Simson suggested that the panel acquire a container from New England Hill, informing the panel that Brighton Housing Trust would be the contact.

5.10 Tracey Silsby suggested putting a unit down by the new park for use as a café facility.

5.11 Daniel Harris supported Tracey's idea.

5.12 Ododo Dafe stated their support for the ideas presented.

5.13 Janet Gearing suggested having the skatepark in a neutral location so that it can be used by children in both the north and south of Whitehawk.

5.14 Tony agreed with Janet and suggested that Tracey meet with Daniel to discuss their ideas.

5.15 The Chair stated that party for local food producers went well and that a plaque had been installed regarding their presence.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 The Chair read the ASB policy review from the Agenda.

6.2 Rosemary Johnson was informed that if an individual lets their flat to the council and the property is damaged, the council pay to restore it.

6.3 The Chair called the meeting to an end at 21:03.

East

Actions of Area Panel Meeting October 2021

Action	Who	Response
Thomas Bald to chase up manager about policy regarding the inclusion of resident's full names in the minutes and would report this back to the next panel.	Thomas Bald	Thomas Bald will give an update about including resident's names in minutes at the next meeting. It will be discussed how residents prefer to go forward.

Central and West Area 3 Stars

Task and Finish Groups

Background

Structure of Task and finish groups Central: The Environment Task and Finish group and the Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish group should be chaired by residents and facilitated, not directed, by officers. These groups were established following requests from residents and focus on issues that have been consistently raised as problems of major concern. It's important that they are resident led and properly explore the concerns of residents, which can be more effectively done with a resident Chair. The officer's role is to facilitate and support this process.

West: These are all the task and finish groups, all services improvement groups and any other groups for example TDN. It has always been recognised that the reps are voted for on Area Panel meetings every two years and we would get a list of the groups and reps. The officer's role is to facilitate, enable, support, take minutes in this process.

Action

Request that the Environment Task and Finish group and the Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish group are restructured so they are chaired and led by residents and focus on the concerns of residents. Barry Hughes will also bring this issue to the attention of the Chairs of Housing.

West: Could we please be provided with a list of all current groups including task and finish with a list of the reason behind each group?

Response

The Residents Associations, Service Improvement Groups and Citywide Groups/Sub-Groups are chaired by residents and we're wary of overburdening individuals with additional meetings and responsibilities, however we would like to offer to trial this suggested approach for the calendar year 2022/2023. As Task and Finish Groups are set up with a specific purpose and are time limited, we would require chairs to undergo additional training in order for them to be able to guide these meetings to be as productive and focussed as possible.

We'd be happy to provide the West Area Panel Representative with the list of current groups

Central and West Area 3 Stars

Role of Field Officers

Background

Central residents would like an update on the role and function of Field Officers. Central residents do not have much contact with Field Officers and are unsure of their value and purpose. Residents Associations used to have regular Estate Inspections with Housing Officers, which formed a useful and important part of Resident Associations' work. It was hoped that Field Officers would take over this role.

West: When will there be Estate inspection dates? We understand Estate inspections seem to have started up again?

Action

Request a report (needs to include how many officers there are currently) on the Field Officer programme, covering what work they do, what this costs the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), what the benefits are to residents and Residents Associations and whether they can do Estate Inspections. Theresa Renolds should be invited.

West: Please provide a timetable of inspection dates.

Response

The Field Officer team consists of 6 x full time and 2 x Part time members of staff. Their core working hours 12pm-8pm. The team returned to carrying out visits in April this year. The HRA funds £51,000 per year towards the cost of Field Officers.

They have carried out witnessing tasks for Housing in the last few months and are currently working with Housing colleagues on linking their work to estate inspections. Currently we are planning to have two Field Officers carrying out inspections in each of the 4 Housing areas. This is so that they will get to know the Housing teams and build relationships with residents. This will also enable them to become familiar with the different areas. We are currently planning how we start up estate inspections and what staffing resource will be needed. We aim to get to a position where we are including information online in relation to the inspections as to when and how they will take place.

A further update will be provided at the next round of Area Panels.

Central and East Area 3 Stars

Sustainability

Background

Home Insulation: Central residents would like to see money allocated in the 2022-3 budget for a programme of home insulation. There is an urgency to reduce carbon emissions and a programme to insulate homes could be started on immediately. It is important that this is carried out to a high standard and problems currently experienced with poor retrofitting work are addressed. Practically, for example insurance about insulation in the roof and cooling in housing blocks during the summer.

Transfer to low-carbon heating: Information has not been circulated clearly to residents about how the Council proposes to manage a transfer from gas to air source or ground source heat pump technology for heating council housing stock. This issue was discussed at the Citywide Conference, but this discussion has not reached the majority of tenants and leaseholders. Leaseholders, in particular, need to be kept informed about plans that will incur costs to them.

Action

It was agreed to ask the council for a report detailing their plans for moving from gas heating to air source or ground source heat pumps for existing and new council housing properties.

Response

Please see the attached report, Carbon Reduction in Housing. This was considered at Housing committee on the 17th November and provides an update on actions and future plans to reduce carbon across the city's housing stock.

As you will see in the report it is acknowledged that the transition away from gas fired heating and hot water services to renewable sources. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) will have a significant role to play in this alongside more efficient forms of electric heating and new technologies as they are developed and scaled up. We have experience of installing ASHPs on a small scale but expect to see the installation of these significantly increase in the next few years. Housing is installing its first GSHP at the Victoria development in Portslade.

As you will see in the report over the coming months we will be developing a more detailed plan as to how Housing will improve our stock to contribute towards the 2030 carbon Neutral target, we will continue to update residents as this develops as we recognise how important this is to you and the key role residents will play in delivering on the plan. There will be further reports to housing committee in the next few months that will also give more detail and context as to how heating and hot water services will be provided in the future, in particular a new contract for these services from 2023 onwards.

East Area Panel Residents Questions

December 2021

There is a budget allocation for 2022/23 for energy efficiency and renewable projects and this budget is likely to be increasing significantly over the coming years, these will be detailed in the budget papers to be considered by committee in the new year.

We recognise the potential impact on leaseholders and acknowledge the concern this may cause. As we develop workstreams and specific projects on blocks of flats or neighborhoods we will ensure that we engage at an early stage to gather views and address any concerns we can at an early stage.

East Area

2 Stars

Chair of the East Area Panel

Background

The chair of the East Area Panel, Nikki Brennan, does not attend meetings, and Chris has been asked to stand in as chair with very little notice. The issue of chairs of Area Panels was not discussed at the Housing Committee meeting on 22nd September. As far as residents are aware, there has been no progress in resolving this unsatisfactory situation. See item 4 from East Meeting minutes 2nd September 2021, Item 4 from 24th March 2021 and Item 3 from 23rd June 2021

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and reiterate the request from residents to have a new chair of the East Area Panel.

Response

We appreciate that Residents have raised concerns over the chairing of the East Area Panel meeting previously, I can confirm that this will be looked at as part of an upcoming review of the Area Panel meetings in the new year. The review will start in January 2021, a further update at the next Area Panel meeting will be given.

East Area

2 Stars

Communal gardens in Langley Crescent, Woodingdean

Background

Some residents have fenced off parts of the communal area to use as their own private gardens. At the Area Panel on 12th October 2021, officers took on to “establish whether there are any fire safety, land ownership or general Health and Safety reasons why the residents should not fence off their areas and we will need a consistent

East Area Panel Residents Questions

December 2021

approach so the message is clear to all residents.” See item 6 from East Meeting minutes 2nd September 2021

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting to ask for an update on the outcome of this task.

Response

Using Environmental Improvement Budget funding, we have agreed a £7,000 project to improve the appearance of the rear communal areas in Langley Crescent and to improve security.

The Health & Safety Team has confirmed that the rear pathway is not a fire exit route. The front doors of the properties are the fire exits.

Sold properties can fence the rear area when it is within the boundary of their property, in accordance with the deeds at the point of sale. Tenants cannot do so, as it remains communal council-owned land. Permission may be given for fencing as long as it does not prevent access to the communal pathway.

East , North and Central Area

3 Stars

Grounds maintenance service and weeds

Background

The increasing weeds, overgrown shrubs and uncut grass are becoming a hazard for residents. The council's decision to stop the use of glyphosates has not been matched with an increase in staffing levels to ensure the city is kept tidy and safe. Residents felt that the council should investigate the option of using alternative, safe herbicides to address this problem. This issue was raised at the Area Panel on October 12th and the response was “We are now exploring use of a contractor, who is able to weed without use of chemical pesticides.” Residents felt that this response did not address the question raised, which was about alternative (non-glyphosate) herbicides.

Weeds: There has been an ongoing problem with grass cutting and weeds growing over pavements since the council stopped using glyphosate. While the council have started to allocate more resources to this and that the grass has been cut, weeds have been left to grow on the pavements and along the kerbs.

This is a health and safety hazard: the weeds get slippery during wet weather, people are unable to see the edge of the kerb and likely to trip, and it's difficult for those with walking difficulties or disabilities to negotiate the pavement.

East Area Panel Residents Questions

December 2021

Action

It was agreed to raise this again at the Agenda Setting meeting and request a report from CityParks on non-glyphosate herbicides.

Residents would like to know what the Council's plan is for removing weeds on pavements and kerbs in the area on a regular basis.

Response

Thank you for your question. CityParks currently use two non-glyphosate herbicides. Icade: for the treatment of tough, invasive and woody vegetation; specifically used to treat outbreaks of Japanese Knotweed.

Katoun Gold: a natural herbicide for hard surfaces and around obstacles. It is a 'contact' not a 'systemic' herbicide, meaning it kills surface vegetation it touches but is not transmitted through the plant's system to kill underground roots. The result being more rapid regrowth requiring more frequent treatments.

As set out in the response to the last Area Panel meeting, managing weeds is challenging without the use of glyphosate herbicide. Since the last Area Panel Housing have deployed the use of a private contractor to clear areas of Housing land where health and safety hazards. The hard surfaces team have also continued with weed clearance using mechanical means. I appreciate this is an important issue for residents, we will continue to monitor and respond to areas that may need more attention.

East Area 3 Stars

Officer attendance at Area Panel meetings

Background

Written responses to residents' questions are often not the best way to get information across. The meeting felt that it would be better to ask officers responding to residents' questions to attend the Area Panel meeting and give their responses personally. This would enable residents to clarify or ask additional questions. For example, the responses to two of the questions raised by East Residents at the October Area Panel (Grounds maintenance and Graffiti) misunderstood or didn't fully answer the actual questions submitted. Because the officers were not present at the Area Panel, residents have to repeatedly raise issues again, instead of being able to follow up immediately with further questions and clarifications

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and ask if officers giving responses could also agree to be present at the meeting (even if this is only for a few minutes) to ensure that their response adequately addresses the questions.

East Area Panel Residents Questions

December 2021

Response

I appreciate the feedback from residents on this part of the Area Panels meetings, I do recognise that there is sometimes difficulty in resolving an issue due to follow up questions not being able to be answered at the time the response is discussed. It is important to balance the opportunity for attendees to ask relevant questions and clarify points with the other topics on the agenda. Whilst it might not always be possible for the responding officer to attend, this will be looked at as part of the Area Panel review planned for early next year.

East Area

3 Stars

Allergies

Background

The allocations process should take into account issues in the immediate environment of properties being let, which may make them unsuitable for some tenants. Craven Vale Community Association has installed a beehive on the estate, following a process of full consultation with the Neighbours. Subsequently, a family moved into a neighbourhood property, who were unaware that the beehive was about to be installed, and were unhappy due to a phobia or allergy to bees.

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and ask if a note can be made on HomeMove of which properties have beehives (or other potential allergy triggers) nearby in order to make this information available to potential bidders.

Response

We have explored the possibility of including this information, I can confirm that unfortunately we cannot safely and reliably update the Homemove system with information regarding proximity to beehives or other potential allergens / phobic triggers.

North Area

3 Stars

Tackling anti-social behaviour in high rise blocks

Background

Residents have been told by Council officers that nothing can be done about tackling

East Area Panel Residents Questions December 2021

the reported issues with anti-social behaviour, particularly in reference to the situation at Nettleton Court and Dudeney Lodge (See Minutes of North Area Residents Only Meetings: Item 4 from 24th August 2021). They have been told to report problems to the police. The police have been called on numerous occasions (Agenda Setting items from North Area Residents Meeting 26th October 2021 Page 2 of 5), but they are unable to resolve the problem in the long-term. The impact of years of daily antisocial behaviour is detrimental to other tenants' lives and well-being.

Action

Residents asked for a report on what immediate steps will be taken to resolve the issue at Nettleton and Dudeney Lodge. Residents are not satisfied with the council's response and lack of action with regards to tackling the issues of anti-social behaviour in blocks of flats: the council have a responsibility to all council tenants to keep them safe. Residents ask for a report on the steps the council is actively taking to:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour in council properties in the city;
- Improving allocations policies so that both the needs of the new tenant and existing tenants are taken into consideration;
- Improving tenancy support, including provision of support to vulnerable people;
- Better supporting residents moving from temporary accommodation into settled accommodation;
- Ensuring perpetrators of anti-social behaviour receive support, and are able to sustain to tenancy without their behaviour impacting on others.

Response

As discussed in the last Area Panel the points raised are being considered as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Review. This review is currently underway. In the last Area Panel response we set out how we are seeking to further enhance tenancy support, including consideration of provision of support to the most vulnerable tenants. This will include the transitional support residents receive when moving from temporary into settled housing. We have also significantly increased the provision of Housing First and Housing Led Support accommodation.

We currently have ten cases of ASB open at Nettleton and Dudeney. Immediate steps being taken include referrals for extra support for people who need to modify their behaviour and assigning each a dedicated Housing Officer to respond to the reported issues. The Housing Officers are pro active in engaging with the alleged perpetrators of ASB. There is an additional complicating factor in that there are currently a few properties within Nettleton that are void and the void works are also creating a noise nuisance which we believe are linked to at least one of these reports.

We hope residents continue to work with officers to respond to the issues arising and thank you those participating in the antisocial behaviour policy review.

North Area 3 Stars

Repairs

Background

Residents are having to wait a long time for repairs to get done, and the Council has reported that this is because there is a backlog due to Covid.

Action

Residents would like to know why there is still a backlog to deal with both urgent and routine repairs, and asks to know what the Council is doing to resolve this problem.

Response

The insourcing of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service was completed on 1 April 2020 during the first national Covid lockdown. The service transferred with approximately 1500 repairs in progress. 132 Mears staff transferred to the council as part of the new Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service. This was fewer staff than anticipated would join the council.

In line with Government Covid-19 pandemic guidance during the first lockdown, the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service was only carrying out essential repairs to council housing, health and safety maintenance checks, and repairs to empty properties where possible until July 2020. During this period, repairs were still being reported and booked but due to Covid restrictions only essential works actioned. This created a backlog of routine repairs across most trades and was first reported to Housing Committee on 16 September 2020. From July 2020 the definition of essential repairs was expanded for all trade teams to include repairs that, if left unattended in the long term, would have an impact on the residents and on properties. Examples were heating and hot water repairs, containable leaks, and condensation wash downs. However, Covid 19 provisions continued to apply.

In addition, some residents were reluctant to have operatives in their homes to address non-essential repairs during the pandemic. The pandemic also had a significant impact on the service staffing resources with operatives and office staff being off work as a result of positive Covid tests received by them or a member of their household or shielding because they or a family member were in a Covid vulnerable category. The Service is seeking to clear the backlog and are currently recruiting trade operatives and office-based staff to expand capacity to complete more repairs. We have estimated it will take 12 months to clear the backlog.

North and West Area 3 Stars

Communications between Council and residents

Background

North: Residents feel that the level of communication between the Council and residents is unsatisfactory:

- There is no follow-up by Council officers with resident reps after Area Panel meetings.
- Residents are not being informed in a timely fashion of changes that affect them: for example, the Repairs system, the Estate Development Budget process.

West: Why is there a lack of communication? Officers very difficult to get in touch with. Phone calls go unanswered and messages/emails ignored. This is especially the case for EDB and Task and Finish groups.

Action

North: Residents would like to see an improvement in how the Council communicates with them. They would like:

- Council officers to follow up on their actions after Area Panel meetings and contact reps with updates.
- To be consulted and kept informed in a timely fashion of any changes to Council Housing services that affect them.

West: What is the solution?

Response

Thank you for raising the matter of communications, and I am very sorry that tenant representatives have found some areas of communications between themselves and the Council to be unsatisfactory, and that some calls have not been returned. Your request for us to follow up on actions discussed at Area Panels and provide you with updates is perfectly reasonable, and we will make immediate improvements on this as well as addressing it as part of the Area Panel Review.

In the fullness of time, our ambition will be that any answers to questions raised at Area Panel, whether via resident's questions or during the meeting will be posted on the resident pages on the council's website.

This will enable any interested residents to easily see issues being raised on their behalf and the responses to them. Naturally, this can be extended to matters raised in other meeting – e.g. Task & Finish Groups. This will also be taken forward as part of the review of Area Panels.

With regard to consulting with you and keeping you updated on matters, again please accept my apologies if information is coming to you late. Where there are changes to

East Area Panel Residents Questions

December 2021

areas of our service that we need to communicate, we will make sure that you receive a bulletin so that you are all updated.

Please do get in touch with the Community Engagement Team with any specific information you expected, as it's helpful for staff to understand where the communications failure has occurred and how it could be prevented in future.

North Area 3 Stars

Estate Development Budget

Background

There is a general lack of information and clarity around the Estate Development Budget forms, bids and overall process. There is only a 2020-21 EDB quick bid form available to download on the Council website. Residents have been told that this is out of date and is no longer valid. There are no other available downloadable forms. Residents have been told they have to fill these out online. The EDB task and finish group were told there would be simplified EDB forms, but have not yet been sent or seen these yet.

Action

Residents would like to know why the new 2021-22 Quick Bid forms are not available to download on the Council website yet, and when it will be available. Residents would like to see the new, simplified EDB forms. Residents would like to point out that not everyone has access to, or can easily fill out online forms, and would like EDB forms to be made more accessible.

Response

The council website sets out the process for EDB applications, including step by step pages taking residents through the process. It also includes a link to the downloadable form and contact details – email and telephone number for support. Estate Development Budget (brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Apologies that this year's downloadable forms were in not available, this is now resolved. We continue to explore the use of an on-line form similar to many council and grant funding processes and remain mindful of ensuring accessibility in its development. We will update residents when one is available to use via the EDB pages on the council's website.

The EDB Task and Finish group reviewed the existing EDB forms in August and suggested changes to simplify the form to make it more accessible for applicants. The draft simplified version is to be discussed and agreed by the Task and Finish Group in the new year and forwarded to Area Panel for approval as soon as possible thereafter. If the Area Panels approve it's use, it will be widely shared on the council web pages and with Resident Groups.

East Area Panel Residents Questions

December 2021

As always support through the EDB process is available from the Community Engagement Officer (CEO) for the relevant area and the EDB officer Lucy - Lucy.beasley@brighton-hove.gov.uk

To clarify the EDB bid form can be either filled in via downloading the form (Forms and guidance document for estate development budget bids (brighton-hove.gov.uk)) from the website or by requesting a paper copy from the Community Engagement Team. This can be through the CEO, EDB Officer or the Team's inbox community.engagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

West Area **3 Stars**

Service improvement groups

Background

The is confusion about the different service improvement groups.

Action

Please provide clarification on when the four service improvement groups merged into two and copies of the minutes.

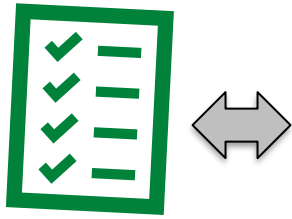
Response

The Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy approved at Housing Committee March 2021 includes a recommendation to reduce the four Service Improvement Groups to two, minutes of that meeting can be found on the council's website (<https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/g10054/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Mar-2021%2016.00%20Housing%20Committee.pdf?T=1>).

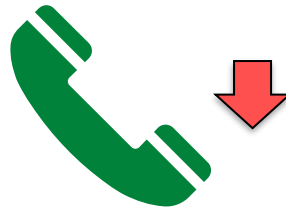
These groups will focus on 'People' and 'Buildings'. This will allow for time limited task and finish groups to focus on specific issues in detail and report back to Area Panels. Discussions have begun in the Home and Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Groups on a Terms Of Reference for the two new groups. Further discussion is required and the intention is to bring the draft Terms Of Reference for these groups to the Area Panels in the Spring 2022 for approval.

Council housing performance

Quarter 2 2021/22 (Jul to Sep 2021)



100%
Gas safety
compliance



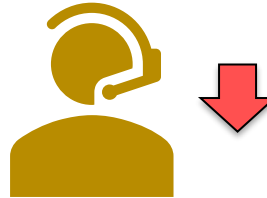
93%
Repairs calls
answered



66 days
Empty home
re-let time



92.9%
Dwellings
meeting Decent
Homes standard



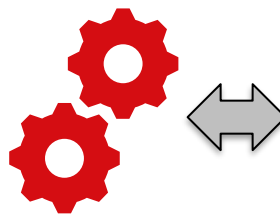
87%
Customer
services calls
answered



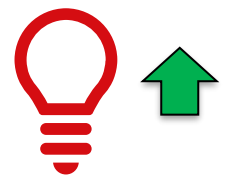
97%
Tenancies
sustained



85%
Complaint
responses within
10 working days



91%
Lifts restored to
service within
24 hours



68.1
Energy efficiency
rating out of 100

Performance since previous quarter is:



Better



Same



Worse



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Quarter 2 2021/22 council housing performance – key trends

Top scores (compared to target)

1. Calls answered by Repairs Helpdesk (93% vs 85% target)
2. Tenancies sustained following difficulties (97% vs 90% target)
3. Stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days (85% vs 80% target)
4. Council homes with a valid Landlord's Gas Safety Record (100% vs 100% target)

Bottom scores (compared to target)

1. Average re-let time excluding time spent in major works (66 days vs 21 day target)
2. Stage two complaints upheld (47% vs 18% target)
3. Lifts – average time to restore service when not within 24 hours (9 days vs 7 day target)
4. Energy efficiency rating of homes out of 100 (68.1 vs 76.8 target)
5. Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard (92.9% vs 100% target)

Biggest improvements (since previous quarter)

1. Average re-let time excluding time spent in major works (88 to 66 days)
2. Tenancies sustained following difficulties (92% to 97%)
3. Stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days (81% to 85%)
4. Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard (92.1% to 92.9%)
5. Energy efficiency rating of homes out of 100 (68.0 to 68.1)

Biggest drops (since previous quarter)

1. Stage two complaints upheld (9% to 47%)
2. Lifts – average time taken to restore service when not within 24 hours (9 to 12 days)
3. Calls answered by Housing Customer Services (87% to 82%)
4. Calls answered by Repairs Helpdesk (94% to 93%)

Please note there are fewer indicators to compare than usual because several are temporarily absent from this report while work is underway to develop new reporting systems following the switchover of our main housing management IT system since the start of July 2021. Please see the full version of the performance report for more information.