

Place Overview & Scrutiny

Date: **22 July 2026**

Time: **4.00pm**

Venue:

Members: **Councillors:** Evans (Chair), Cattell (Deputy Chair), Fishleigh, Goddard, Lademacher, Meadows, Miller, Sykes, Wilkinson and Winder

Contact: **Anthony Soyinka**
Head of Democratic Services

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Chief Executive
Hove Town Hall
Norton Road
Hove BN3 3BQ

Date of Publication - Tuesday, 14 July 2026

AGENDA

Part One

Page

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) **Declaration of Substitutes:** Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) **Declarations of Interest:**
 - (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests;
 - (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
 - (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare:

- (i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;
- (ii) the nature of the interest; and
- (iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.

If unsure, Members should seek advice from the committee lawyer or administrator preferably before the meeting.

- (c) **Exclusion of Press and Public:** To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: *Any item appearing in Part Two of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.*

A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls and on-line in the Constitution at part 7.1.

2 MINUTES

7 - 16

To approve the draft minutes of the 24th March 2026 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting,

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATION

4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following items raised by members of the public:

- (a) **Petitions:** To receive any petitions presented by members of the public to the full Council or to the meeting itself;
- (b) **Written Questions:** To receive any questions submitted by the due date of 10am on 16th July 2026
- (c) **Deputations:** To receive any deputations submitted by the due date of 10am on 10th July 2026

5 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by Members:

- (a) **Petitions:** To receive any petitions submitted to the full Council or to the meeting itself.
- (b) **Written Questions:** A list of written questions submitted by Members has been included in the agenda papers.
- (c) **Letters:** To consider any letters submitted by Members.
- (d) **Notices of Motion:** To consider any Notices of Motion.

6 HOUSING SAFETY AND QUALITY COMPLIANCE - PROGRESS UPDATE 17 - 96

Contact Officer: Natalie Sacks-Hammond
Ward Affected: All Wards

7 CITY PLAN UPDATE 97 - 104

Contact Officer: Steve Tremlett Tel: 01273 292108
Ward Affected: All Wards

8 REPORT OF THE HERITAGE TASK & FINISH GROUP 105 - 176

Contact Officer: Natalie Sacks-Hammond
Ward Affected: All Wards

9 VISITOR ECONOMY TFG SCOPING REPORT 177 - 192

Contact Officer: Natalie Sacks-Hammond
Ward Affected: All Wards

10 DEVOLUTION UPDATE 193 - 206

Contact Officer: Tom Cottam
Ward Affected: All Wards

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The closing date for receipt of public questions and deputations for the next meeting is 12 noon on the fourth working day before the meeting.

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Infra-red hearing aids are available for use during the meeting. If you require any further information or assistance, please contact the receptionist on arrival.

Further information

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Anthony Soyinka, (email Natalie.Sacks-Hammond@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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- Padlocks, chains and climbing gear;

- Items that make a noise (e.g. whistles, loud hailer, megaphones); and,
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In most meetings, there are no incidents and Council is not disturbed. We hope this continues so there is no need for the Mayor or any Chair of a meeting to take these actions.

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- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.00pm 24 MARCH 2026

HOVE TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Evans (Chair) Cattell, Oliveira, Fowler, Goddard, Mackey, Meadows, Winder, Earthey and Shanks

Other Members present: Mark Strong (CVS), Michael Creedy (OPC)

PART ONE

65 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

65.Procedural Business

65a Declarations of substitutions

65.1 Cllr Earthey attended as a substitute for Cllr Fishleigh

65.2 Cllr Shanks attended as a substitute for Cllr Sykes

65.3 Michael Creedy was invited to the meeting to represent the Older Peoples' Council as Bernadette Kent was unable to attend.

65b Declarations of interest:

65.4 Cllr Cattell is a member of the Seafront Development Board.

65c Exclusion of the press and public

65.5 There were no Part Two items so the press and public were not excluded.

66 MINUTES

66.1 **RESOLVED–** that the minutes of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on 19th January 2026 were approved

66.2 **RESOLVED–** that the minutes of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on 21st January 2026 were approved

- 66.3 **RESOLVED**– that the minutes of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on 19th February 2026 were approved

67 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATION

- 67.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Today we will be looking at three reports and will end with a discussion on our next topic for a Task & Finish Group. We will start with an update on the recommendations from our first Task & Finish Group that was on short-term lets. The recommendations were approved by cabinet in June last year although some were dependent on actions having been taken by central government before they can progress.

We're going to change the order of the agenda at this point to accommodate Cllr Taylor. We will be looking at the Seafront Development Board Prospectus which is being developed to present a unified vision for the seafront and attract investment. The prospectus belongs to the Seafront Development Board and they will be seeking an endorsement from Cabinet. We are being asked to note the report.

Our final presentation is looking at the Memorials Policy that aims to assist anyone considering installing a memorial on Council-owned land in the city. It explains the different options, timescales and the application process. We are being asked to note the report.

We will end with a discussion on our next Task & Finish Group topic.

In the interests of time, can I please request that both those asking and answering questions are as brief and to the point as possible, as we want everyone who wishes to contribute to have the opportunity to do so. We also don't want the meeting to overrun too much into the evening. I'm going to ask those presenting to keep their introductions as brief as possible to allow as much time as we can for questions. Thank you.

68 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- 68.1 There were no public engagement items.

69 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

- 69.1 There were no member questions.

70 UPDATE ON SHORT TERM LETS REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 70.1 The item was presented by Cllr Jacob Taylor, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration, and Nicola Hurley, Head of Planning. Cllr Taylor summarised the recommendations from the last Task & Finish Group on short-term lets that were accepted and passed at Cabinet last year; he grouped them into 3 categories: lobbying, things that can be done now, and planning policy. They have been lobbying government to take action on this topic and encouraging the introduction of a licence or registration scheme that at some point will become mandatory. They are in discussions with the government who are developing an online platform for this, and the Council have made it clear that they would like to be part of shaping and testing it. The recommendations that can be implemented more immediately are the information on the website and assigning someone as the dedicated officer for this which is forthcoming. The changes to planning policy will be explored via the City Plan process, which is likely

to take 30 months. They have commissioned a Visitor Accommodation Study which is ongoing and this will inform their plans.

- 70.2 Cllr Evans asked for clarification on the name “City Plan 2041” as it sounds like there will be no changes until 2041. Cllr Taylor explained that this is misleading and the policies will be effective from the date the City Plan is approved.
- 70.3 Cllr De Oliveira asked about the issues with data on the number of short-term lets in the city and what enforcement measures are being put into place now. Cllr Taylor said that the Council does enforce against improper short-term lets at the moment. Nicola Hurley added that the use of a property as a short-term let might need planning permission depending on the duration and frequency it is being used for that purpose. If it is investigated and found to be a full time short-term let then it constitutes as a change of use and needs enforcement. The government are introducing a licensing scheme which should provide more reliable data on the number of short-term lets in the city as it will be mandatory and they must be registered in order to operate.
- 70.4 Cllr Meadows asked about the timelines for the licence, Visitor Accommodation Study and Cabinet member oversight as everything rests on central government and could all get held up. Nicola Hurley said that they are in discussions about the named officer and it depends which department will be operating the license scheme. City Plan will come back to scrutiny once it has been developed more. The testing of the government’s licensing scheme should be late 2026 or early 2027.
- 70.5 Mark Strong (CVS) asked whether the Visitor Accommodation Study will say what the capacity will be for short-term lets in certain areas, and whether a specific parking permit will be introduced for short-term lets. He suggested leaving information in the property to inform visitors of public transport and parking advice. Cllr Taylor said the licensing scheme is key for this as the Council will then know exactly who is registered and who needs to be aware of this. In relation to parking, owners can use their limited supply of visitors parking permits if they wish. Mark Strong asked about hotels block booking parking spaces; Cllr Taylor said some have permission to do so but it is essentially using their visitor permit supply to do so.
- 70.6 Cllr Shanks said residents in her ward in the North Laines are annoyed that it’s become “Air BnB Land” and is there more the Council can do with their existing powers to visit the address and investigate. Nicola Hurley said there is information on the website that tells residents what they can do regarding short-term lets, there is an enforcement enquiry form that assigns the case to an officer who will go out and investigate. However, they are very short staffed. Cllr Taylor said that if someone thinks a property is being used as a short-term let, they can report it. At the moment this is the only way they can find out about them without the license. Cllr Evans added that funding is the issue here and that Westminster Council has a large number of enforcement officers, but it is sometimes difficult to prove how often a property is being used as a short-term let.
- 70.7 Cllr De Oliveira asked about safety standards and equalities assessment. Cllr Evans said if the license comes into force, a full EIA will be undertaken.

- 70.8 Cllr Shanks asked about the Visitor Accommodation Study. Cllr Taylor said they can put any policy they want into the City Plan but there needs to be evidence to support it. They will look into the amount and usage of visitor accommodation and whether it is having a disproportionate effect on certain areas. They need to see what's needed for the tourist economy and local businesses as they rely on visitors for income. Nicola Hurley said they will be looking at hotels, BnBs, and short-term Lets as there is no definitive information out there. The study will help inform policies like zones etc.
- 70.9 RESOLVED – that the report is noted.

71 MEMORIALS POLICY

- 71.1 This item was presented by Cllr Jacob Allen, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and the Public Realm, and Ian Baird, Outdoors Events Development Manager. Cllr Allen said that this is pre-decision scrutiny and the Memorials Policy has been drafted to bring clarity to a situation where there is very little. It is looking at both temporary and longer-term memorials and that an application is required for those lasting longer than 14 days. He gave the example of flowers left at a bus stop after a road traffic accident that was there for years, which upset some people. There needs to be due diligence and accountability. They go via the Tree Trust Fund for those wanting to plant a tree and they need to plan properly for those wanting a memorial bench, to ensure the proposed location is appropriate. The application process asks for the design, location and materials for the memorial, a plan to fund ongoing maintenance and evidence of community support. For much longer-term memorials, the policy says they need to wait for 20 years to ensure the longevity and relevance of memorialising something. For any public gathering or vigil, the Safety Advisory Group needs to be involved. Ward councillors are also involved, particularly if the memorial is divisive. The subject of memorials needs to be approached sensitively, compassionately and inclusively and meet the needs of the public realm.
- 71.2 Cllr Evans said she wasn't sure about asking someone who has just had a bereavement to go online and complete a form within 14 days. 28 days might be better.
- 71.3 Cllr Fowler said there was a memorial in her ward for a baby and lots of people left flowers and teddy bears but after a while it looked bad with dying flowers. It will hopefully now be replaced with a nice tree. She said a resident wanted a bench in a park as a memorial but was told "no". In Telscombe Cliffs, there is a park with a memorial area with lots of butterflies and insects; it is a wooden post in a circle with people's names on it. Cllr Allen said there is some wider work being done in cemeteries, which is more of a reflective space. There is no tension there because people are generally sombre and respectful in a cemetery.
- 71.4 Michael Creedy (OPC) said that longer standing memorials, such as in the Peace Park in Patcham are very run down. Cllr Allen said that there are some very old monuments around the city that are in a sorry state. There are lots of heritage assets in the city and the Grade 1 listed sites take priority over the others which tend to miss out on funding.
- 71.5 Mark Strong (CVS) said this policy was catalysed by the memorial in Palmeira Square which was incredibly important to people; it is not mentioned and should be acknowledged, to recognise people's strong feeling to commemorate an event. 20 years

is too long. They should differentiate between local, national and international memorials and the waiting period should be somewhere between 14 days and 20 years. An authorised semi-permanent memorial could be there for a year. Expecting someone to apply for a memorial is difficult. He gave the example of ghost bikes laid where cyclists have died. He said that the Southampton Memorials policy is clear and well-defined with a 10-year period rather than 20 years. Cllr Allen said they are discussing the policy, not past events; that there maybe be exceptions to the 20-year rule which will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and with locals. It has been built into the policy that there maybe cases where the 20-year rule may not apply. Memorials pop up in conservation areas and there are planning considerations and listed building consent to consider. Ian Baird said that public spaces need to be maintained for everyone who moves through them and there is an impact when things are put in the public realm.

- 71.6 Cllr Goddard said he was conflicted and was this bureaucratising something that shouldn't be, he asked what other Local Authorities did. He expressed concern over the 14 days and that 20 years was too long; what would happen if the Council didn't get back to the applicant after 14 days, which wouldn't be humane. He wasn't sure if this was something the Council should get involved in and was the policy needed. Cllr Allen said the policy was solving a problem where ward councillors and council officers are put in a difficult situation, such as with Palmeira Square and had no clarity. It's not fair for them to make decisions on this and a policy is needed to have a process to follow and have clarity for everyone. Staff had been put under stress and the Council has a duty of care for them.
- 71.7 Cllr Winder said there should be a policy and was in support of SAG getting involved to make sure it's safe. However, the rules are restrictive and could be toned back. She asked when the application comes in, who makes the decisions and suggested there could be a standing committee that comes together in difficult situations to give more of an independent view, not necessarily involving the ward councillors because they might know the person who died. It needs more consultation. Cllr Allen liked the idea of a standing committee but explained that they included the ward councillors because they know their area best. There are pros and cons with the idea but it is worth considering. Ian Baird said they do need to make sure the right decision makers are in that group and that ward councillors are best placed to get the right people in the room. The SAG is there to provide support for gatherings of people, not to make decisions; they will give resources and advice. It is the police's remit to say whether a vigil can go ahead or not.
- 71.8 Cllr Meadows said there needs to be a middle ground and gave the example of the Hillsborough disaster where people wouldn't have waited 20 years to memorialise. 28 days is still a tight timescale for people who are grieving. Ward councillors understand the sensitivities of issues and have more of a background context as to why flowers may be placed in certain areas. Cllr Meadows thought it was a good idea to formalise this but it needs discretion and respect.
- 71.9 Cllr Shanks wanted clarification on whether people were being asked to apply to put flowers on a lamppost following the death of a loved one and agreed that the memorial at Palmeira Square had been problematic. Cllr Shanks said you can get a dead person's name on a bus fairly quickly and didn't understand why people couldn't put a plaque on an existing bench, especially if it was their favourite place to sit. She wasn't sure what the point was with the policy and felt it was heavy handed. It makes sense for a

permanent memorial but not a temporary one. Cllr Allen said the application was for memorials present for more than 14 days.

- 71.10 Cllr Earthey said he is also conflicted and would prefer 28 days over 14, but wouldn't want to interfere in spontaneous outbursts of grief. He has a lot of older people in his ward having road accidents as well as people sadly jumping off the cliff. There are issues with long-term monuments as yesterday's heroes are today's villains and to be careful about celebrating people who turn out to have done wrong. Memorialising conflict is difficult because there are always two parties involved and he wouldn't want to be a referee in a situation like the Palmeira Square memorial and felt the Council should either let people commemorate what they want or say no and memorialise in your own way but not in a public place. Mark Strong said the whole point was for others to realise that these things happened. He said that they would need to be really careful about removing anything they saw as "politically divisive".
- 71.11 Cllr Fowler asked if flowers would be removed after 14 days following a road traffic accident. Cllr Allen said the flowers will have probably withered by then. If they were being refreshed then the Council needs to know about it so they don't accidentally remove them. Cllr Fowler said there are sites where flowers are being constantly refreshed and have been there for years, it would feel wrong to tell them to stop.
- 71.12 Cllr Goddard said that the reasoning for the policy has not been articulated clearly enough. He gave his own personal example of the solace gained from visiting a tree memorial and how profound it is. He wasn't sure if this is something the Council should be involved in and that the language in the policy needs re-working.
- 71.13 Cllr De Oliveira said the underlying premise is grief which is complex, it comes and goes, and this policy is pigeon holing grief.
- 71.14 RESOLVED – that the report is noted.

72 SEAFRONT DEVELOPMENT BOARD PROSPECTUS

- 72.1 This item was presented by Cllr Taylor, Max Woodford, Director for Place, and Sam Smith, Head of Place Making. Cllr Taylor presented the slides and explained that the Seafront Development Board was established last year with 3 councillors as members (Cllrs Taylor, Miller and Cattell) and 9 other members who have experience in areas like leisure, retail, development, etc. The Board was set up to give a strategic vision for the seafront, treating it as one asset. Its areas of focus are infrastructure improvement, place making, zero carbon, and stakeholder engagement. There was a consultation event that sold out quickly with 100 people in attendance. The discussions there fed into the survey asking how people felt about the seafront, what they liked about it and what they would like to see improved. The Council and the Board will publish a shared strategic vision for the seafront looking at assets and attractions, which is genuinely exciting. They hope to attract funding over the next 2 -3 years. They are looking at specific sites and potential areas for development to get investors interested. They are looking at commercialisation or new activities for areas like Madeira Terrace to give visitors a reason to visit that section of the seafront. Black Rock is ready to be

developed but, in the meantime, will be host to temporary events such as the NoFit State Circus and the fan zone for the World Cup. The King Alfred has a live planning application and is progressing. Pool Valley is being reimagined and they are looking at “station to the sea”, Queens Road that acts as the gateway to the seafront and is the first place visitors see. There are plans for active travel schemes. They are looking at the smaller things too including more cafes, places for children to play, more sports facilities and accessibility initiatives like the new boardwalk that allows wheelchair users to access the beach. The document sets out the ambition for the seafront to take to the government and other funders to generate excitement and money.

- 72.2 Cllr Earthey asked if the undercliff walk will feature in the plans as it needs some love, currently being covered in shingle which impedes pedestrians and cyclists. The path is currently cleared by volunteers but as it is a 3 mile pathway, it is a major contribution to active transport. Cllr Taylor spoke favourably about the undercliff walk and the entrance to Rottingdean. It is unlikely there will be big developments to the east but there are areas to be unlocked for cafes or sports. People are excited by big projects but maintenance is important, such as the seafront shelters and shingle clearance.
- 72.3 Cllr Mackey said that residents to the east of Palace Pier are on board with the development and asked how they will ameliorate while construction is going on to ensure older people and those with disabilities are not adversely affected. Cllr Taylor said the new lift on Madeira Terrace will be completed at the end of this year, and that the 2 entrances, one by the pier and the ramp by Dukes Mound will enable access and it is important to keep the parking spaces there. Cllr Cattell said there is a wheelchair user on the Seafront Development Board who provides insight into accessibility issues.
- 72.4 Cllr De Oliveira asked about democratic accountability for the Seafront Development Board as it is independent to Cabinet and how will they ensure the seafront is shaped by residents. Cllr Taylor said the Board cannot make Council decisions and is there to make recommendations to Council. The individual members are involved in different projects and are very experienced people. Any decision made by Cabinet can be called-in and are subject to member questions and deputations.
- 72.5 Michael Creedy (OPC) said that at both Brighton and Hove train stations, it is unclear how to get to the seafront and that he has seen people take a taxi there because they didn't know it was within walking distance. It would be good to have a circular bus route that served both stations and went to areas like Black Rock to take visitors to other parts of the city rather than staying between the two piers. He asked about toilets provision if more events are going to happen and that the seafront plays a part in the bigger picture, which is the Sussex Bay Project and is a great financial benefit to Sussex, not just Brighton & Hove. Cllr Taylor said the bus idea was good and they will need to get the transport provision right once something more permanent has been set up at Black Rock. The front of Brighton station is the welcome to the city but at the moment it doesn't look immaculate, and he would like to see a boulevard to the sea with more planting, footpaths and good signage. Toilets for events need to be provided and are included as part of the event planning process.
- 72.6 Cllr Meadows said she would like to advertise the survey to her ward residents but can't find it on the website, and asked if the new attractions will be for wealthier residents or free. Cllr Taylor said the link to the survey had been emailed to all councillors and would

welcome promotion of it. It is also on the Your Voice platform. The seafront will always be open and free for everyone and this is just looking at ways to commercialise through more shops, art galleries, attractions etc.

- 72.7 Cllr Shanks said Brighton beach is always so crowded and that visitors don't realise they can go to other sections of the beach. She asked about Hove Beach Park and the trees that are now dead; that new things need to be maintained to continue to look as good as they did when they first opened. Padel is really well used and why isn't the Council running it themselves? Cllr Taylor said the wrong type of trees were planted at Hove Beach Park and that lessons have been learned. There used to be lots of people working for councils maintaining the areas such as mowing lawns and pruning trees but there isn't enough staff to do that now. The Council does get some income from the Padel Courts. They have recently hired a Commercial Director to bring in more new opportunities. Sam Smith added that capital budgets include maintenance costs.
- 72.8 Mark Strong said there was a concern in the Community Voluntary Sector that the people on the Board were chosen to be developer-lead rather than resident-lead. The consultation event was full and so, the CVS members could not attend; it would be good to have a long-term relationship with the Board for co-engagement and wider participation. He asked about the active travel corridor and whether it includes Marine Parade and whether a bus could run along the upper road linking to the marina. The marina has a lot of shops closing and is looking a bit desolate. Max Woodford said that the Council owns the freehold for the marina and that the leaseholder is on the Seafront Development Board. Cllr Taylor said it was not developer-lead and that they have all sorts of people on the Board: an award-winning gardener, rugby player, heritage expert, yoga business owner etc. The Board does a lot of engagement with local groups such as the Hove Civic Forum, schools and colleges and putting on events. They will look to do more and work with the Community Voluntary Sector. Cllr Miller said that the marina wants to work with the Council and are interested in the direction of travel for Black Rock; there are some interesting plans for it to become a very exciting part of the city.
- 72.9 Cllr Winder asked how we get from vision to reality in a reasonable timeframe and how will we identify funding limitations. They need to find a way to extend the use of the community along the coast and involve them in plans. The shape of the city might need to change and more resource might be needed for the seafront. Cllr Taylor said this gives a chance to be aspirational and that the prospectus sets out steps and individual opportunities to build investment. They need to think of the whole stretch of the seafront and how things lead into another. Considering the development of Black Rock, there is a big car park at the marina that is never full, the terraces could be used as a gateway to facilities at Black Rock, and these areas are not as well used and accessed; there is a real chance to unlock the space and make it available to communities. He suggested that area could have a more wellness and arts vibe.
- 72.10 Cllr Goddard said this was exciting and very positive, it is not only a visitor bonus but for residents as well. It is about having a holistic view of a major asset for future residents and about people having a connection to where they live. He agreed that there is no welcome at Brighton Station and looking at the "station to the sea" needs big thinking and he liked the boulevard concept.

72.11 Cllr De Oliveira said they need to be mindful that the commercial regeneration doesn't deepen carbon emissions, flooding and coastal erosion and they need to consider climate resilience. Cllr Taylor said there will always be inherent tension between construction and climate resilience and a lot of this will form part of the planning application. As part of the local visitor economy, there is a benefit for residents to visit parts of the seafront they normally wouldn't go to. This is also good for the environment as people stay local and use the train or walk to the seafront. Max Woodford said that it is difficult to invest in an area of flood risk and that Black Rock had the seawall heightened to prevent this.

72.12 Mark Strong said people in Whitehawk have their access to the sea blocked by the road and that other cities don't have the same level of traffic as Brighton. He raised the issue of the information monoliths around the city that are out of date and covered in graffiti, and that wayfinding is unclear. Cllr Robins said that the seafront goes further west than people think and it includes the fully working port bringing wood over from other countries. People living in Portslade have the road and canal blocking access to the sea. Cllr Mackey said as soon as visitors get off the train there should be signs directing them to where they want to go, using the example of illuminated signs in Barcelona.

72.13 RESOLVED – that the report is noted.

73 DISCUSSION OF THE NEXT TASK & FINISH GROUP

73.1 Cllr Evans introduced the two notices of motion being considered as the next topic for the committee's Task & Finish Group and asked for other ideas from members. The suggested topics were:

1. Co-operative Housing (NoM)
2. Winter and nighttime economy (NoM)
3. Public realm
4. Educating for climate change – possibly more relevant for People Committee
5. Green spaces and community support
6. Transport in the city

73.2 Cllr Goddard said that it would need to be something that the Council can actually affect and not to be reliant on national government

73.3 Cllr Meadows felt the winter economy topic would be timely as it would end before the winter and it is something that needs looking at.

73.4 Cllr Evans said that the co-operative housing topic would be timely as legislation is going through government and they would be pushing at an open door ahead of other councils. It could also offer a solution to the housing crisis, citing Zurich where 20% of people live in co-ops.

73.5 Cllr Mackey said the co-operative housing topic is good because it is a moving piece at the moment with changing legislation and we need to be on top of that. The nighttime economy is also a good topic because it is fundamental to Brighton & Hove as a city.

- 73.6 Cllr Evans said as there is not consensus, we will email around the full texts of the two notices of motion and ask for votes from the shortlist.

The meeting concluded at 6.43pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 6

Subject: Housing Safety and Quality Compliance - Progress update

Date of meeting: 22nd July 2026

Report of: Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Natalie Sacks-Hammond

Email: Natalie.sacks-hammond@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with the latest position on the council's housing safety and quality compliance progress following the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) regulatory judgement of August 2024. It forms part of the bi-annual reporting cycle to Cabinet and Scrutiny.
- 1.2 The most recent progress update, dated June 2026, is attached at Appendix 1, with the corresponding updated performance indicators provided at Appendix 2. For reference, the original report considered by Cabinet on 14th May 2026 is included at Appendix 3, together with the supporting appendices presented at that meeting. These comprise the Housing Improvement Plan (Appendix 4) and the May 2026 performance indicators (Appendix 5).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the progress made in addressing the issues identified by the Regulator of Social Housing.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 In May 2026, Cabinet endorsed the Housing Improvement Programme 2026/27, which sets out the council's approach to delivering sustained improvement and addressing the underlying causes of non-compliance. The programme forms part of the council's wider ambition to become a "Great Landlord", with a focus on safe and compliant homes, improved services and stronger resident engagement.

- 3.2 The May 2026 report demonstrated significant progress across the areas identified by the regulator, including improvements in electrical safety, smoke detection, water safety and fire risk assessment actions. However, it also highlighted ongoing challenges, particularly increasing demand for repairs and damp and mould works, together with the need to improve stock condition information across the housing stock.
- 3.3 The latest update, dated June 2026, shows that progress has continued. Compliance levels have increased further across key safety areas, with substantial reductions in outstanding fire safety actions and improvements in electrical, water safety and smoke detection compliance. While challenges remain around repairs demand and service capacity, work is underway to increase resources, strengthen asset information and embed improvements as business as usual.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is invited to support the actions outlined in the report or provide feedback

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The council continues to engage residents on its housing safety and quality improvement journey through Area Panels, targeted engagement with residents in high-rise and Large Panel System blocks, and regular updates through the *Homing In* newsletter. Resident feedback is used to inform service delivery and governance, while the *Creating Great Homes Together* programme has involved residents and staff in co-designing improvements that will help shape priorities within the Housing Improvement Plan and support the council's ambition to become a Great Landlord.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 This proposal is consistent with the approved HRA Budget and Capital Investment Programme for 2026/27, which includes ongoing revenue and capital investment to support regulatory compliance, building safety, fire safety and wider health and safety requirements across the council's housing stock. The 2026/27 Capital Programme includes £17.731m for Health & Safety investment.
- 6.2 Any ongoing or future financial implications will need to be considered as part of future budget setting and capital programme approvals. Expenditure will be monitored through the council's TBM process, with any significant variations or emerging financial risks reported through routine budget monitoring.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ferrise Hall
Date consulted 08/07/2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 This is a for note report and so there are no legal implications as to any steps required. Fire safe and regulatory compliance are a central and core theme of the responsibility of all social landlords. Failure to address these areas can lead to regulatory intervention across a range of agencies and so ensuring best endeavors to address requirements is critical.

Name of lawyer consulted: Simon Court Date consulted 06 July 2026

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 Not specifically for this scrutiny report. Please see the Cabinet report at Appendix 3 for further details.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Although this report is to note and does not seek a decision, the Housing Improvement Programme has significant equality implications. Improvements to housing safety compliance, repairs, damp and mould treatment, and stock condition information are expected to have positive impacts for all council tenants, particularly older people, disabled residents, people with long-term health conditions, pregnant women and families with young children, who may be disproportionately affected by unsafe or poor-quality housing conditions.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Not specifically for this scrutiny report. Please see the Cabinet report at Appendix 3 for further details.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 Not specifically for this scrutiny report. Please see the Cabinet report at Appendix 3 for further details

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is asked to review this report and feedback on the planning and progress toward achieving full compliance. The Committee's oversight is sought to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with regulatory requirements.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Housing Safety Compliance and Quality Update June 2026

2. Housing Safety Compliance Performance Indicators June 2026
3. Cabinet report 14th May 2026
4. Housing Improvement Plan
5. Housing Safety Compliance Performance Indicators May 2026

Housing Compliance Safety and Quality update

RSH meeting

June 2026

Areas and issues to note June 2026

Fire safety. Newly arising FRAs are now completed as BAU, actions within timescales. Bristol Estate Enforcement Notices, project issue for AOVs due to design complications subject to discussions with ESFRS. FED door installations are on track for completion, 3 blocks have had waking watch removed due to alarm installs being completed.

Water Safety. Transition from historic backlog position continues to indicate sustained recovery. Compliance is stable and the presence of a dedicated and embedded Responsible Person, together with supporting resources provides ongoing confidence in data quality and assurance. All high-risk and priority water safety risks remain controlled and on a positive trajectory.

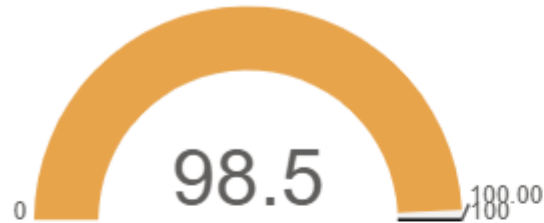
Repairs. Repairs outstanding beyond target timeframes continue to increase, with rising year-on-year demand placing sustained pressure on the service. Capacity constraints are driving higher levels of outstanding work, although there is some progress in reducing the oldest cases through targeted prioritisation. Additional resources have been approved, and recruitment and procurement processes are underway, but improvements will take time, alongside a longer-term shift toward proactive works to reduce reliance on responsive repairs.

Smoke detection. 9 tenanted properties where the presence of working smoke detection has not yet been verified. Actively being progressed including sensitive situations and formal no-access procedures.

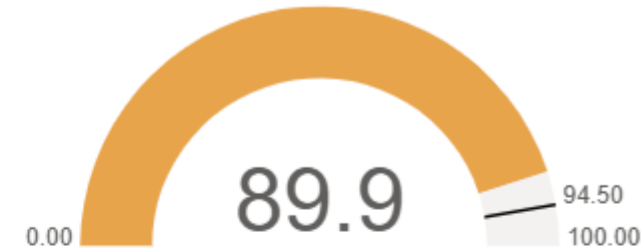
Communal Electrical. Communal testing resources are also supporting rising and lateral mains testing in with UKPN. 11 communal installations tested in the last month. Target completion for testing communal installations (excluding rising and lateral mains) by August 2026.

Housing Safety and Quality Key Indicators Dashboard for DLT

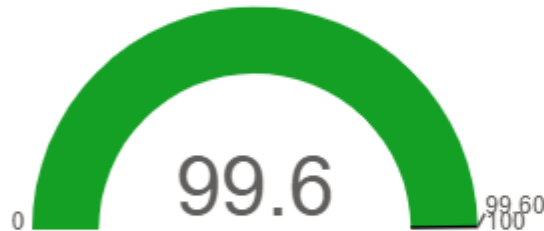
Electrical safety 5-year testing: % of domestic dwellings with satisfactory certification



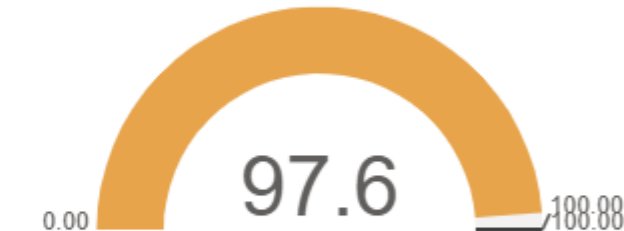
% of communal electrical supplies with full satisfactory certification



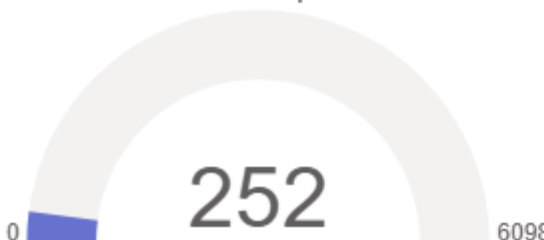
% of domestic dwellings with smoke detection



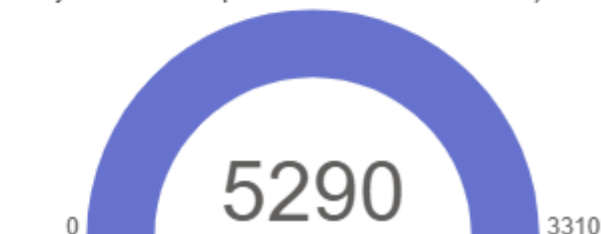
% of dwellings with in date water risk assessments



Number of open FRA remedial actions compared to result 12 months ago



Number of routine repairs open over 28 days compared to result 12 months ago (HRA only: includes damp works raised after 27/10/25)



This dashboard presents the latest results for a selection of key indicators from the latest version of the monthly **'Health & Safety Quality Assurance Tracker'** compared to their latest targets, where these have been set. Please note this dashboard does not show 'live' data from our Housing IT system (as the tracker sources data from a variety of sources) and will be updated monthly, shortly after each Housing Safety & Quality Assurance Board.

Areas identified by RSH as not compliant

	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb26	Mar26	Apr26	May26	Expected date of Compliance
Smoke alarms/ detectors (% of homes)	95.7%	96.3%	97.5%	97.7%	98.3%	98.5%	98.8%	98.8%	99.1%	99.3%	99.4%	99.5%	99.6%	99.6%	99.6%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	Compliant*
5 Year EICR domestic testing (% of homes)	67.9%	70.7%	72.6%	75.5%	78.1%	80.9%	84.1%	87.1%	89.4%	91.8%	93.0%	93.9%	94.4%	95.2%	96.1%	96.8%	98.2%	98.9%	Oct 2026**
10 Year EICR domestic testing (% of homes)	80.9%	82.9%	84.6%	86.7%	88.3%	90.2%	91.9%	93.2%	94.5%	95.8%	96.6%	97.0%	97.4%	97.8%	98.1%	98.4%	99.0%	99.2%	Aug 2026
Communal EICRs (% of communal areas)	43.9%	45.1%	45.4%	48.5%	51.6%	54.3%	61.0%	66.9%	71.3%	76.6%	77.3%	77.3%	80.8%	81.6%	83.3%	85.7%	86.9%	89.9%	Aug 2026
Repairs over 28 days – HRA***	6,950	5,357	4,399	4,134	3,588	3,310	2,898	2,622	2,942	2,496	2,479	2,870	3,409	3,697	4,279	4,802	5,033	5,290	-

*9 tenanted properties where the presence of working smoke detection has not yet been verified. Excluding voids.
**Excluding voids from April 2025.
***Includes Responsive Repairs and Damp and Mould from 27 October 2025.

Areas identified by RSH continued

	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb26	Mar26	Apr26	May26	Expected date of Compliance*
FRA in High Rise buildings (% of buildings)*	100.0%	71.7%	60.9%	30.4%	50.0%	47.8%	58.7%	65.2%	91.3%	97.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	Compliant
FRA in Medium Rise buildings: (% of buildings)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	Compliant
FRA Low Rise buildings: (% of buildings)	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	Compliant
FRA remediation actions (snapshot number of live actions)	8,268	7,554	7,287	6,420*	6,211	6,119	6,071	4,855	4,459	3,180	2,918	2,917	2,869	2,294	2,082	1,466	104	252	Jun 2026
Legionella Risk Assessments (% of buildings covered (of 12,712))	57.1%	60.7%	61.1%	62.1%	65.4%	71.3%	81.0%	85.4%	83.7%	90.4%	93.3%	90.4%	95.1 %	95.8 %		96.7 %	96.7 %	97.6%	Dec 2026

Note: Legionella Risk Assessments number not available for February 2026 due to switch to reporting in current month.

* FRA remediation actions now exclude Best Practice from March 2025 and includes newly arising actions.

**Increased criteria introduced to validate actual completions following a quality review as part of performance recovery.

Wider Safety and Quality compliance data

Carbon Monoxide Detection / Alarms	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb26	Mar26	Apr26	May 26
Total detection in domestic dwellings	97.9%	98.3%	98.6%	98.8%	99.0%	99.2%	99.6%	99.7%	99.79%	99.83%	99.86%	99.88%	99.88%	99.92%	99.92%	99.93%	99.94%	99.95%
Gas/ Fuel Safety	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb26	Mar26	Apr26	May 26
Communal Boilers certification in date - annual	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Domestic dwellings certification in date – annual	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Properties with a capped gas supply - reduction in numbers	24	16	28	19	21	20	20	21	21	22	23	22	23	25	21	21	22	21
Asbestos Safety	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb26	Mar26	Apr26	May 26
Common ways – Total rolling compliance	99.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	98.4%	98.4%	97.4%	82.3%	86.4%	99.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	98.4%*	89.6%*
Asbestos Re-inspection programme – Common ways. Rate of progress	94.9%	97.9%	100.0%	100.0%	Restart in May	17.7%	24.7%	36.4%	49.5%	60.7%	73.6%	85.5%	99.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	8.0%**
Lift Safety (lifts & lifting equipment)	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb26	Mar26	Apr26	May 26
Communal (Passenger) lifts (LOLER) servicing	100.0%	99.2%	100.0%	98.35%	100.0%	98.35%	98.35%	98.35%	100.0%	97.54%	100.0%	100.0%	96.7%	98.4%	98.4%	99.2%	100.0%	92.6%***
Domestic lift and stair lift, equipment servicing	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	66.7%****

* Properties have fallen outside rolling compliance due to the supplier attending earlier than instructed for the 2025-26 programme.

**Program of inspections runs from May-December. Supplier had left 21 blocks until the 28th/29th of May to attend, awaiting confirmation of actual final compliance figures as of 29 May 2026.

***Inspections outstanding: 4 due to lifts being under repairs, 1 due to lift motor room door being swollen/wedged closed, 1 asbestos contamination of lift shaft, 2 Zurich surveyor resource, 1 planned w/c 01 June.

Fire Safety update

- FRAs are operational at BAU levels. The process is to complete, validate and surveys within 14 days of the month end and to issue works by the end of the month and then have works completed within the correct timescales as issued. This is working as per process. While operating within BAU, we still report open actions from newly arising FRAs, hence the numbers of open actions increasing, but now project to complete these actions within FRA timeline
- PEEPs are at 80% of those identified as needing a PEEP have had one completed. There is still scope for more residents to be contacted and this figure will fluctuate.
- Bristol Estate update. Protected stairwells are 100% complete, Allamanda, Cherry and Calendula fire alarms are 100% complete with 8 detectors outstanding across the estate. Fire doors are on schedule with standard access and resident issues covered by Director, Homes & Investment chaired weekly cross service access meeting.
- Reg 10 fire door checks for Q2 are complete. Passive works are scheduled; this is minor work. We have an issue with the AOV design at Bristol Estate HRRBs and have re engaged with Fire Engineers. We have also asked, again, that the BSR de-register these from HRRBs and apply legislation.
- Cladding Safety Scheme funding from Homes England has been approved on 8 blocks. A report is going to June Cabinet to allow for spending of CSS funding: [Improving Fire Safety in Council Homes.pdf](#). Appointments to the professional team have commenced.

Fire Overdue remediation actions (4 Month Trend)

High risk	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
In Date	0	0	0	11
1-3 Months	3	2	0	0
3-6 Months	1	0	2	1
6-12 Months	0	0	0	0
12 Months+	0	0	0	0
Total	4	2	2	12

2020

Note. Includes remedial and new FRA actions

Medium risk	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
In Date	1	0	0	3
1-3 Months	0	0	0	0
3-6 Months	0	0	0	0
6-12 Months	0	0	0	0
12 Months+	0	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0	3

Note. Includes remedial and new FRA actions

Low risk	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
In Date	63	13	9	144
1-3 Months	96	147	90	90
3-6 Months	102	44	1	1
6-12 Months	169	48	2	1
12 Months+	1,647	1,212	0	1
Total	2,077	1,464	102	237

Note. Includes remedial and new FRA actions

Of the 252 total open actions, 94 are from the back log (all overdue) and 158 (currently all In Date) from the new FRA started.

Of the back log, this is broken down into 1 high risk action and 93 low risk actions:

- 1 high risk action is overdue by 3-6 months (door replacement with no access but now void and due to complete 05 June).
- 90 low risk actions are 1-3 months overdue, 1 is 3-6 months, 1 is 6-12 months and 1 is over 12 months.

Repairs and Damp and condensation update

- Repairs outstanding over 28 days have increased by 257 since last month, with May 2026 demand significantly higher than 2025 (+391) and 2024 (+1,015), demonstrating sustained pressure on the service.
- Continued progress in reducing cases over one year and a continued focus on tackling the oldest repairs.
- External procurement support has been engaged and is working with the service to fast-track access to additional contractor capacity.
- Additional directly employed capacity has been agreed and recruitment is now underway with the aim of having this in place by September 2026.
- In line with approaches adopted by Adult Social Care, the Repairs Service aims to use additional capacity to support the introduction of a “waiting safely” model. This would involve contacting residents whose repair requests have been outstanding for more than 28 days to confirm that conditions have not deteriorated and to provide updated information on expected waiting times.
- We have implemented a new triage tool for damp and mould reports. This assesses the location (habitable or non-habitable), extent, severity, and any resident vulnerabilities. It improves our ability to prioritise works effectively, ensuring resources are targeted towards residents with the greatest need.

Repairs HRA and Damp and condensation orders by month

Month	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar26	Apr26	May 26	18-month Total
HRA Orders raised	2,763	3,758	3,481	3,339	3,096	3,406	3,638	3,732	3,013	4,066	4,075	3,332	3,335	3,746	3,543	3,805	3,372	3,184	62,684
Damp orders raised*											232	970	888	1,137	1,200	1,153	1,011	617	7,208
HRA Orders Completed	3,370	4,076	3,750	3,387	3,125	3,429	3,716	4,005	3,053	3,995	3,914	3,304	3,189	3,336	3,140	3,470	3,295	2,690	62,244
Damp orders Completed*											45	407	521	688	806	974	937	568	4,946
HRA Progress	-607	-318	-269	-48	-29	-23	-78	-273	-40	71	161	28	146	410	403	335	77	494	440
Damp progress*											187	563	367	449	394	179	74	49	2,262
Total Orders raised											4,307	4,302	4,223	4,883	4,743	4,958	4,383	3,801	69,892
Total Orders Completed											3,959	3,711	3,710	4,024	3,946	4,444	4,232	3,258	67,190
Total Progress											348	591	513	859	797	514	151	543	2,702

*Separate work programme to allow reporting in line with Awaab's Law from 27 October 2025.
Note: Table revised to also show HRA plus Damp and Condensation total related repairs.

Repair volumes remain significantly higher than in previous years. Overall productivity and completions has increased compared to 2024 and 2025, but surge demand has exceeded capacity.

Repairs Overdue actions

	In date (31/05/26 to 01/05/26)	1-3 Months (30/04/26 to 01/03/26)	3-6 Months (28/02/26 to 01/12/25)	6-12 Months (30/11/25 to 01/06/25)	12 Months+ (31/05/25 or before)
7 Day	18	8	3	0	0
14 Day	76	139	95	7	0
Routine (28 Days)	1,852	2,391	1,559	621	20
90 Days	46	152	126	24	0
120 Days	1	0	0	2	0
1 Year	10	19	27	0	0
Grand Total	1,810	2,709	1,810	654	20

*Table revised to ensure compliance with Awaab's Law and above includes repairs related to Damp and Mould.

The service continues to focus on reducing our oldest overdue work. Surge from increased demand from our proactive outreach on damp and condensation and increased reporting of other repair issues continues to impact overdue actions.

Damp and Mould focus (4 Month Trend) 1

	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
Total number of open cases	2,240	2,439	2,401	2,418
Open cases more than a year old	0	1	0	0
Open cases between 6 months & 1 year old	24	16	48	108
Open cases between 3 months & 6 months old	349	463	608	721
Open cases between 0-3 months including	2,067	1,959	1,745	1,589
Open cases within 28 days	1,025	842	715	586

Note: Table includes data prior to and from Awaab's Law from 27 October 2025. To be discontinued with transition to next slide and closure of open cases before Awaab's Law.

Open cases over 3 months (excluding over 1 year) has increased since last month, as works raised during the surge in demand for damp and condensation-related repairs over the autumn and winter are now entering this age category. The majority of the works outstanding are for installation of extractor fans and to upgrade radiator size following heat loss calculations. This work can be disruptive for tenants and therefore often more challenging to book for completion.

The service continues to work proactively with residents to arrange access and complete outstanding works. This is being supported by Legal Services and Tenancy Services in cases where access issues are preventing repairs from being carried out.

Open cases within 3 months of being raised are reducing as the weather improves and less tenants report instances of damp and mould. The service continues to focus on resolving older outstanding cases of reported damp and mould. .

The service is currently undertaking a review of damp and condensation cases to better understand the nature of the issue (whether damp or condensation), how this impacts on different property types, condition and locations, and households with differing needs, for example overcrowding.

Damp and Mould focus (4 Month Trend) 2

	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
Investigate any potential significant hazards within 10 working days of becoming aware. (<i>Damp Technician Visit Date within 10 working days</i>).	34.0% (100 of 294)	34.1% 104 of 305)	29.8% (93 of 312)	48.7% (94 of 193)
Residents provided with a written report within 3 working days of the investigation visit. (<i>Date report sent to tenant within 3 working days</i>).	42.5% (122 of 287)	17.5% (48 of 275)	23.6% (66 of 280)	4.2% (9 of 214)
Remedial repairs completed within the timeframes stipulated by Repairs and Maintenance. (<i>Supplementary work all priorities</i>).	48.1% (234 of 486)	43.6% (292 of 669)	36.1% (219 of 606)	35.1% (176 of 501)

Note: Table for data relating to Awaab's Law from 27 October 2025.

Damp Technician overall average attendance time has improved to 18 days (from 21 days). We have made strong progress in gaining access to properties where formal no-access procedures had been initiated, as well as in cases requiring extensive communication and engagement to secure appointments. Many of these cases are aged and contributed to higher overall attendance times during this period.

Reports within 3 working days has declined primarily due to an increase in report volumes following the successful recruitment of Damp Technicians, combined with shortfall of 3 planners. Service Management has implemented interim support arrangements while recruitment to these roles is underway. With additional resource we anticipate a significant improvement in performance in the coming month.

Number of outstanding remedial repairs has reduced which shows progress.

Since 27 October 2025 to the end of May 2026, there have been 1,677 no-access instances recorded, relating to 902 individual addresses.

At present, analysis of damp and condensation repairs issued to directly employed operatives shows there are currently 374 outstanding work orders where access attempts have been unsuccessful. These outstanding cases relate to 337 individual addresses.

Water Safety update

- Capital programme design and delivery is progressing with early identification of three primary sites for water system and tank upgrades. In addition, pilot programme for remote water monitoring sensors is at an advance stage for the Seniors Housing stock. This will strengthen legionella compliance, improve oversight of occupancy-related risks and address overreliance on manual reporting mechanisms. The proposal moves the control framework from reactive to preventative, demonstrating a maturing service.
- Other efforts continue to centralise and improve audit capabilities through the adoption of a SaaS software for compliance monitoring. This will provide opportunities for greater data insight and scalability.
- Although improved data capture has seen increased volumes, risk recommendation inflows has remained low and controlled. Overdue actions have reduced, including improved aging across most timeframes. WIP also continue to reduce with 98% in the 1–3-month short timeframe. This demonstrates strong delivery grip and forward planning addressing any systemic risks.

Water - Remedial actions

	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
WATER - RECOMMENDATIONS TOTAL OPEN at month-end	404	4,288	4,461	4,610	3,402	3,487	2,741	3,100	2,638		1,176	1,928	1,924
WATER - RECOMMENDATIONS TOTAL COMPLETED this month	18	447	292	334	1,332	508	567	612	305	210	237	117	117
WATER - RECOMMENDATIONS TOTAL RECEIVED this month	57	1,548	133	203	493	194	340	371	119	287	129	50	45
WATER - RECOMMENDATIONS TOTAL OVERDUE at month-end	336	788	2,758	3,798	2,695	2,801	2,084	2,281	2,020		1,061	1,740	1,131

Water Remedial actions breakdown (June 2026)

Risk level / overdue (timescales)	Overdue	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12 months +
PCAF (1 day)	126	27	25	56	18
Red (30 days)	516	185	138	187	6
Amber (60 days)	796	158	293	332	13
Green (365 days)	55	55	0	0	0
TOTAL	1,493	425	456	575	37
Percentage of total		28%	31%	39%	2%

Overdue actions have reduced from 1740 to 1493 indicating improved delivery and operational control.

Though 55% now sit within the 0–6-month timeframe, total actions in that period has reduced from 947 to 881. PCAF risks are actively managed through enhanced flushing and other interim remediation actions.

Water Remedial actions (4 Month Trend Detailed)

	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26		Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26		Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
OVERDUE PCAF RECOMMENDATIONS		63	110	81	OVERDUE RED RECOMMENDATIONS		277	573	367	OVERDUE AMBER RECOMMENDATIONS		688	1,057	628
0-3 MONTHS		0.00% (0 of 63)	25.45% (28 of 110)	14.81% (12 of 81)	0-3 MONTHS		6.86% (19 of 277)	24.78% (142 of 573)	27.25% (100 of 367)	0-3 MONTHS		7.12% (49 of 688)	19.68% (208 of 1,057)	15.76% (99 of 628)
3-6 MONTHS		0.00% (0 of 63)	7.27% (8 of 110)	20.99% (17 of 81)	3-6 MONTHS		16.25% (45 of 277)	34.73% (199 of 573)	23.98% (88 of 367)	3-6 MONTHS		5.96% (41 of 688)	34.25% (362 of 1,057)	29.30% (184 of 628)
6-12 MONTHS		88.89% (56 of 63)	59.09% (65 of 110)	44.44% (36 of 81)	6-12 MONTHS		71.84% (199 of 277)	37.70% (216 of 573)	47.14% (173 of 367)	6-12 MONTHS		84.88% (584 of 688)	44.75% (473 of 1,057)	52.87% (332 of 628)
OVER 1 YEAR		11.11% (7 of 63)	8.18% (9 of 110)	19.75% (16 of 81)	OVER 1 YEAR		5.05% (14 of 277)	2.79% (16 of 573)	1.63% (6 of 367)	OVER 1 YEAR		2.03% (14 of 688)	1.32% (14 of 1,057)	2.07% (13 of 628)

Note. Numbers not available for February 2026 due to switch to reporting in current month.

Water Current Remedial Actions WIP (not yet overdue)

Risk level (timescales)	Forecast	1-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12 months+
PCAF (1 day)	0	0	0	0	0
Red (30 days)	98	98	0	0	0
Amber (60 days)	295	295	0	0	0
Green (365 days)	38	28	4	6	0
TOTAL	431	421	4	6	0
Percentage of total		98%	1%	1%	0%

WIP has increased due to improved capture of remediation activity, but risk remains tightly controlled, with 98% of all actions within 1-3-month timeframe.

There are no PCAF risks and all high-risk actions are short term and actively managed. Focus remains on maintaining delivery pace and preventing ageing, supporting a controlled, forward planned trajectory

Stock conditions

	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26**	May 26
Number of homes which have had Stock Condition Survey*	9.1% (1,163 of 12,828)	9.7% (1,249 of 12,828)	10.7% (1,356 of 12,680)	11.2% (1,419 of 12,683)	11.9% (1,495 of 12,696)	12.8% (1,626 of 12,701)	13.7% (1,736 of 12,715)	14.4% (1,827 of 12,715)	15.1% (1,915 of 12,715)	15.5% (1,975 of 12,714)	16.1% (2,048 of 12,716)	16.9% (2,144 of 12,718)	17.5% (2,230 of 12,716)	18.5% (2,351 of 12,729)	19.3% (2,466 of 12,751)	19.8% (2,527 of 12,768)	20.0% (2,557 of 12,770)
Number of Stock Condition Surveys (dwellings) undertaken - monthly	1.0% (131 of 12,828)	0.7% (87 of 12,828)	0.8% (107 of 12,680)	0.5% (63 of 12,683)	0.6% (76 of 12,696)	1.0% (131 of 12,701)	0.9% (110 of 12,715)	0.7% (91 of 12,715)	0.7% (88 of 12,715)	0.5% (60 of 12,714)	0.6% (73 of 12,716)	0.8% (96 of 12,718)	0.7% (86 of 12,716)	0.9% (117 of 12,729)	0.8% (108 of 12,751)	0.5% (70 of 12,768)	0.3% (35 of 12,770)



Note: includes all dwellings owned & managed by BHCC, plus Seaside.
*Period starts with move onto new business system March 2024 and this reporting from January 2025 including cross over from Business Objects to Power BI.
**Corrected number (as compared to 2,257 as previously reported).

The number of Stock Condition Surveys has been impacted by surveyor resource availability in April and May, and unable to recruit an additional surveyor to increase in-house capacity. Recruitment options are being reviewed.

Procurement of the contractor for our 100% stock condition survey is now complete. We are currently working on contract formation and preparing for mobilisation, summer 2026.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
HHSRS Data - % of dwellings with Category 1 Hazard (A-C)	0.4% (48 of 12,182)	0.4% (46 of 12,680)	0.4% (46 of 12,683)	0.4% (46 of 12,696)	0.4% (46 of 12,701)	0.4% (46 of 12,715)	0.4% (46 of 12,715)	0.4% (17 of 12,715)	0.1% (7 of 12,714)	0.05% (6 of 12,716)	0.06% (8 of 13,323)	0.06% (8 of 13,320)	0.04% (5 of 13,332)	0.04% (5 of 13,355)	0.01% (2 of 13,364)	0.02% (3 of 13,375)
HHSRS Data - % of dwellings with Category 2 Hazard (D-J)	25.8% (3,137 of 12,182)	24.7% (3,128 of 12,680)	25.0% (3,171 of 12,683)	25.2% (3,206 of 12,696)	25.6% (3,256 of 12,701)	26.2% (3,327 of 12,715)	26.2% (3,327 of 12,715)	26.2% (3,327 of 12,715)	24.9% (3,170 of 12,714)	24.7% (3,138 of 12,716)	24.1% (3,209 of 13,323)	23.9% (3,181 of 13,320)	23.8% (3,176 of 13,332)	23.5% (3,144 of 13,355)	23.2% (3,102 of 13,364)	23.2% (3,100 of 13,375)

Note: includes all dwellings owned & managed by BHCC, plus Seaside.

There were 3 Category 1 hazards in May (see latest updates below):

- 1 Complicated case (Excess cold, band C) with no resolution close. Tenants are not residing at the property and repairs team have halted the works pending a decision, a Housing Officer has been allocated to this case to resolve the tenancy issues.
- 1 Private Sector Lease (Falling between levels, band B). The property is to be handed back to the landlord as they are unwilling to do the work, and our tenant is being rehoused by the temporary accommodation team.
- 1 New (Excess cold, band C). With Repairs team and contractor, and investigating reasons for portable heaters rather than central heating system.

HHSRS Category 2 Hazards (4-month trend)

Category 2 description	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26
Asbestos (and MMF)	749	723	710	695
Biocides	0	0	0	0
Carbon monoxide and Fuel Combustion Products*	106	101	21	21
Collision and entrapment**	74	56	55	56
Crowding and space	215	210	208	206
Damp and mould growth	1,036	1,031	1,031	1,027
Domestic hygiene, Pests and Refuse	103	98	99	95
Electrical hazards	884	859	233	227
Entry by intruders	430	397	392	380
Excess cold	448	444	434	430
Excess heat	31	27	26	26
Explosions	8	3	3	2
Falling between levels	315	309	306	301
Falling on level surfaces etc	466	454	448	440
Falling on stairs etc	373	368	368	364
Falls associated with baths etc	288	287	290	288
Fire	1,713	1,688	1,693	1,684
Flames, hot surfaces etc	472	461	456	454
Food safety	517	479	475	464
Lead	34	31	31	30
Lighting	11	7	7	7
Noise	22	17	18	18
Personal hygiene, Sanitation and Drainage	651	628	619	604
Position and operability of amenities etc	111	110	111	112
Radiation	0	0	0	0
Structural collapse and falling elements	151	152	150	148
Uncombusted fuel gas	101	89	81	77
Volatile organic compounds	1	0	0	0
Water supply	29	27	26	26
Grand Total	9,339	9,056	8,291	8,182

*Carbon monoxide and Fuel Combustion Products includes Nitrogen dioxide and Sulphur dioxide and smoke (separate reporting lines in NECH business system).

**Collision and entrapment includes Collision hazards and low headroom (as above).

Downward trend of overall Category 2 hazards has continued.

Ongoing tracking of new hazards referred to Repairs team for works is ongoing, and hazards status updated in line with any repair work completions.

Tracking new survey visits to remove any hazards in NECH no longer identified by a subsequent HHSRS survey.

End



Appendix 2: Housing Safety and Compliance Performance Indicators

Areas identified by RSH as not compliant

	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	May 26
Smoke alarms/ detectors (% of homes).	81.5%	89.4%	95.7%	97.7%	98.8%	99.3%	99.6%	99.9%
5 Year EICR domestic testing (% of homes).	53.0%	60.1%	67.9%	75.5%	84.1%	91.8%	94.4%	98.9%
10 Year EICR domestic testing (% of homes).	72.0%	76.4%	80.9%	86.7%	91.9%	95.8%	97.4%	99.2%
Communal EICRs (% of communal areas).	20.8%	33%	43.9%	48.5%	61.%	76.6%	80.8%	89.9% %
Repairs over 28 days – HRA.	9,653	6,599	6,950	4,134	2,898	2,496	3,409	5,290
*Include Repairs and Damp and Mould from 27 October 2025.								

Areas identified by RSH as not compliant (continued)

	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	May 26
FRAs in High Rise buildings (% of buildings).	100%	100%	100%	30.4%	58.7%	97.8%	100%	100%
FRAs in Medium Rise buildings: (% of buildings).	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
FRAs Low Rise buildings: (% of buildings).	20.9%	92.9%	99.4%	99.8%	98.8%	100%	100%	100%
FRA remediation actions (snapshot number of live actions).	4,253	8,228	8,268	6,420	6,071	3,180	2,869	252
*Exclude Best Practice from March 2025 and includes newly arising actions.								
Legionella Risk Assessments (% of buildings covered (of 12,712 as of May 2026).			57.1%	62.1%	81.0%	90.43%	95.1%	97.6%

Wider Safety and Quality compliance data

Carbon Monoxide Detection / Alarms	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	May 26
Total detection in domestic dwellings.		96.6%	97.9%	98.8%	99.6%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%

Gas/Fuel Safety	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	May 26
Communal Boilers certification in date – annual.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Domestic dwellings certification in date – annual.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Properties with a capped gas supply - reduction in numbers.	40	32	24	19	20	22	23	21

Asbestos Safety	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	May 26
Common ways – Total rolling compliance.	99.4%	99.6%	99.8%	100%	100%	97.38%	99.5%	89.6%
Asbestos Re-inspection programme – Common ways. Rate of progress.		17.06%	94.9%	100%	24.7%	60.7%	99.5%	11.5%

Lift Safety (lifts & lifting equipment)	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	May 26
Communal (Passenger) lifts (LOLER) servicing.	100%	100%	100%	97.5%	98.35%	97.54%	96.7%	92.6%
Domestic lift and stair lift, equipment servicing.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	66.7%

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 188

Subject: Housing Safety and Quality: Our Improvement Journey – Progress Update.

Date of meeting: Thursday, 14 May 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Housing

Lead Officer: Name: Corporate Director Homes & Adult Social Care

Contact Officer: Name: Martin Reid

Email: Martin.Reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key:

Reason(s) Key: Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report provides a six-month update on the Council's response to the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) C3 Regulatory Judgement (August 2024) relating to the, Safety and Quality Consumer Standard. It sets out the current position across key areas of compliance – fire, water, electrical, smoke detection, and repairs – and evidences the improvements delivered since the judgement, alongside the work already underway before it. The report also sets out ongoing areas of challenge, including, sustained demand pressures within repairs and maintenance, driven by proactive activity to support compliance with Awaab's Law, and the need to increase the number of council homes with a recent stock condition survey. The report seeks Cabinet endorsement for the Housing (Safety & Quality) Improvement Programme 2026/27 as the foundation for becoming a Great Landlord, delivering a safe, compliant and resident focused service, embedding improvement rather than short term recovery.
- 1.2 This report aligns with the Council Plan 2023–2027 priorities of Homes for Everyone and a Responsive Council with Well-Run Services, reaffirming the council's commitment that compliance is the floor, not the ceiling, and that every resident lives in a safe, high-quality home. The report reflects core Housing Strategy 2024-29 priorities to: improve housing quality, safety and sustainability; and, provide resident-focused housing services. Continued Cabinet oversight aligns to an external audit recommendation and remains central to maintaining transparency, accountability, and confidence in the council's continuing improvement journey.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet note and comment on progress made with compliance against the Regulator of Social Housing, Safety & Quality Consumer Standard since the last update in December 2025.
- 2.2 Cabinet endorse the Housing (Safety & Quality) Improvement Programme 2026/27 and our work toward becoming a Great Landlord outlined in the report and attached as Appendix 1.

3. Context and background information

Progress since the Regulatory Judgement

- 3.1 On 9 August 2024, following intensive engagement, the Regulator of Social Housing issued a C3 Regulatory Judgement for Brighton & Hove City Council, identifying failings against the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard, one of the four RSH Consumer Standards. A C3 Judgement means the Regulator found the council was failing to meet the required consumer standard for the safety and quality of homes and significant improvement was required. The Regulator highlighted weaknesses in the council's management of electrical, fire, water and smoke-detection safety, a significant repairs backlog. Since that time the council has remained in formal intensive engagement with the Regulator. The council has taken decisive action to address each area of concern. The Regulator has confirmed that the judgement can only be amended through a formal inspection visit that is likely to take place within the next eighteen months.
- 3.2 The report reflects and forms part of the council's formal intensive engagement with the RSH in relation to this standard and demonstrates that the overall direction of travel remains positive. Strengthened leadership, clearer accountability, and better data quality have provided a stronger foundation for sustained improvement. The council is now shifting from short-term recovery towards a more mature, systems-led approach where compliance activity is routine, data-driven, and verified through governance and resident assurance.
- 3.3 The report updates on the council's continued improvement journey and includes our Housing (Safety and Quality) Improvement Programme, informed by, and building on, the Root Cause Analysis previously shared with Cabinet that explored the underlying reasons for previous compliance failures and systemic challenges to be addressed.
- 3.4 The Housing (Safety and Quality) Improvement Programme informs our wider work toward being a Great Landlord, which also incorporates our planning around how the council will achieve and evidence compliance with all RSH Consumer Standards and fulfil our ambition on being more than compliant by being responsive to our residents' voices through our 'Creating Great Homes Together Programme'.
- 3.5 The council's wider improvement journey began prior to the regulatory judgement with early actions on governance and compliance. These actions have been accelerated and consolidated through our continued intensive

engagement with the RSH, supported by the Housing Safety & Quality Assurance Board, Great Landlord Board, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Cabinet-led oversight. Cabinet have considered reports on 'Responding to the Regulator for Social Housing's Judgement' in September 2024, and a 'Housing Safety and Quality Compliance Update in May 2025'. December 2025 Cabinet considered a further update report, 'Regulator of Social Housing - response to Regulatory Judgement including Procurement of Stock Conditions Contractor'. Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the Housing Regulator Judgement, Report to Cabinet in September 2024 and Housing Safety and Quality Compliance Updates in January and September 2025.

Table 1: progress since RSH judgement against areas identified as non-compliant.

Areas	RSH Judgement (August 2024)	Position then (October 2025)	Position now (March 2026)
Electrical safety (domestic Electrical Installation Condition Report, EICR, and communal EICRs)	Around 3,600 homes without a current EICR and no evidence of a current certificate for over 600 communal areas.	93 percent homes with a valid 5-year EICR. 77.3 percent communal areas with a valid communal EICR.	96.8 percent homes with a valid 5-year EICR. 85.7 percent communal areas compliant.
Smoke alarms	Cannot evidence compliance with legal requirements for smoke detectors.	99.4 percent of homes had a working alarm in 12,227 dwellings.	99.8 percent of homes have a working alarm in 12,253 dwellings.
Water safety (risk assessments and remedial actions)	More than 600 buildings require a risk assessment" and "more than 500 overdue water safety remedial actions."	90.4 percent of buildings with a valid risk assessment.	96.7 percent of buildings with a valid assessment. 1,061 overdue actions. This aligns to the significant increase in inspections.
Repairs backlog	A backlog of around 8,000 low-risk, low-priority repairs.	2,479 repairs older than 28 days.	4,802 repairs older than 28 days. Includes damp and condensation demand increase from 27 October.
Fire safety remediation	RSH raised concerns about	2,918 FRA actions.	1,466 live FRA actions.

Areas	RSH Judgement (August 2024)	Position then (October 2025)	Position now (March 2026)
	delays in completing over 1,700 fire safety actions identified across the stock.		2 high, 0 medium and 1,464 low risk. Target for BAU is by June 2026

- 3.6 Over the past year and a half, the council has moved from recovery to sustained improvement and has made significant progress on compliance. Priority has been given to closing critical safety actions, building workforce capacity, strengthening leadership and governance, improving data quality and rebuilding confidence in the safety of council homes.
- 3.7 Governance and assurance have been strengthened through director-led oversight and the Housing Safety and Quality Assurance Board, supported by specialist fire, building and water safety officers. Delivery and financial risks (including access, contractor capacity, inflationary pressures and temporary waking-watch costs) are managed through the Corporate Risk Register, reported to CLT and the Cabinet Member, and reviewed monthly.
- 3.8 A risk-based approach is being maintained to prioritise the highest hazards and prevent regression, supported by monthly performance monitoring, data assurance and early-warning triggers. Key mitigations include escalation under the no-access procedure, increased both in house and contractor capacity and routine checks on compliance activity. Residents are seeing clearer communication and faster responses to safety issues, and the council will continue to work with residents to improve access and build confidence that homes meet modern, compliant safety standards.

Progress against areas identified by the Regulator as non-complaint

Overall position, key strengths, risks and mitigations.

Strengths

- 3.9 The council has demonstrated positive, continuous and measurable improvement across the key compliance areas previously assessed as non-compliant, including smoke detection, water safety, fire risk assessment (FRA) remediation actions and electrical safety. Transparent data reporting, with regular reporting cycles and a clear governance framework, continues to strengthen assurance and accountability. The work has been underpinned by positive partnership working, including with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Building Safety Regulator, UK Power Networks and Homes England. The council's risks are well understood with mitigations in place and clear, time-bound timelines for reaching full compliance.

Risks

- 3.10 Key risks relate to sustained demand pressures within repairs and maintenance, which continue to exceed current available capacity, driven in particular by proactive activity to support compliance with Awaab's Law.,

Damp and mould volumes are increasing faster than they can currently be resolved. Some areas of delivery remain subject to external dependencies including UK Power Networks with regard to work on rising and lateral electrical mains and Building Safety Regulator/East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service around classification of some high-rise residential buildings. In addition, commencement of the enhanced programme to increase the number of homes with a recent stock condition survey is imminent and achieving full stock condition coverage within two years carries delivery and outcome risks that require active management.

Mitigations

- 3.11 Mitigations underway include additional contractor and staff resourcing across fire safety, building safety, damp & mould remediation and water safety, alongside a shift towards planned preventative maintenance models to alleviate pressures on the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service and respond to the outcomes of the planned stock condition surveys. The council is also continuing to review and strengthen data assurance and performance reporting, including through our intensive RSH engagement and council governance processes, such as our Health Safety and Quality Assurance Board tracker, to support oversight and early identification of emerging issues.

Key areas of compliance

Electrical safety

- 3.12 Electrical safety was identified as an area for improvement by the RSH due to the number of overdue inspections and incomplete records. As of March 2026, 96.8% of our homes are within a compliant 5-year domestic testing programme, compared to just over half of all homes at the time of the Judgement. All Category 1 (C1) and Category 2 (C2) hazards identified at inspection are addressed as part of our certification. The electrical testing programme remains on trajectory to achieve full compliance by December 2026. The focus for the coming year is to sustain throughput, complete communal inspections, which have been undertaken on a risk prioritisation basis and now cover 85.7% of all communal areas.
- 3.13 The council continues to progress work with UK Power Networks (UKPN) to carry out proactive testing of mains electrical installations in high-rise blocks where the council cannot isolate the supply. Contracts have been let and works are progressing to replace and upgrade the incoming, rising and lateral mains in the six blocks identified in the January 2026 Cabinet report, Wiltshire House, Hereford Court, Warwick Mount and the Allamanda, Viscaria and Cherry blocks on the Bristol Estate.

Smoke detection

- 3.14 The council had previously lacked consistent assurance that alarms were fitted and working in all homes. Positive progress continues to be made with validated compliance at 99.8% of homes having smoke detection, with 58 remaining properties, including empty homes, complex cases, and cases subject to no-access procedures. Future reporting will exclude empty homes to better reflect occupied stock compliance.

Water safety

- 3.15 Water risk assessment compliance continues to rise to cover 96.7% of buildings following contractor consolidation. However, water safety remains a fragile area of compliance. Overdue remedial recommendations are reducing.. A new Water Safety & Legionella Compliance Manager commences in post in April 2026. The council is also re-engaging the incumbent Water Safety Contractor via a short-term contract award to secure a stable, compliant contractor resource and service while developing a longer-term procurement strategy.
- 3.16 The council recognises that it is not yet where it should be on water safety, and this remains a top priority. The next stage is to embed improved oversight, mobilise the updated contract arrangements, including planned preventative maintenance programme, continue to improve contractor performance and data resilience.

Repairs and maintenance

- 3.17 Repairs and maintenance were highlighted by the Regulator in August 2024 because of a significant backlog of overdue routine repairs. In June 2024, the total number of open repairs over 28 days stood at 9,653, reflecting historic backlogs that built up during and after the pandemic. By October 2025, this had reduced to 2,479, representing a reduction of almost three-quarters. September 2025 recorded the highest inflow of new repairs since Council records began, driven by proactive damp-and-mould outreach ahead of the implementation of Awaab's Law.
- 3.18 Repairs demand continues to rise, with over 1,000 more repairs reported than in March 2025, and the number of repairs open for more than 28 days has increased due to sustained high volumes. In particular, caseload continues to grow due to proactive council outreach to ensure compliance with Awaab's Law, including: Increased tenant self-reporting; greater hazard-identification by damp & mould technicians; wider staff reporting from home visits.
- 3.19 The service continues to prioritise completion of the oldest cases, with reduction in repairs open for over a year. To mitigate these pressures, the council is also planning to procure additional contractor resources, reviewing in-house operational capacity and working to improve alignment with planned works programmes.
- 3.20 The service continues to monitor completion rates and resident satisfaction to ensure sustained improvement.

Fire safety

- 3.21 Fire safety was one of the Regulator's key areas for improvement, with assessments and remedial actions not previously completed in a timely way. In 2024 the total number of live fire-risk-assessment (FRA) remediation actions across the housing stock peaked at 8,228 following completion of updated fire risk assessments across all our blocks. As reported to December 2025 Cabinet, as of October 2025, this number had reduced to

2,918, a reduction of more than 60 per cent. Within this total, the number of high-risk actions fell from 417 in August 2025 to 14 in October 2025, and medium risk actions fell from 456 to 32 in the same time period. At that time 2,872 low-risk actions remained.

- 3.22 As of March 2026, there are 1,466 FRA remediation actions. The February 2025 figure was 7,287. The number of open high risk actions falling to 2 and open medium risk actions falling to 0. 1,464 low risk actions remain open. Each action is tracked to completion managed through the council's dedicated fire-safety programme, prioritised by building risk and monitored through the fire-safety tracker.
- 3.23 The council have successfully applied to the Government Waking Watch Replacement Fund and Homes England Cladding Safety Scheme (CSS) which will mitigate the costs of fire safety measures to the Housing Revenue Account and leaseholders. The council does not have any Grenfell Tower type cladding on any of our blocks. We have bid to the CSS to fund remediation works where we have some high-rise blocks with elements of façade or curtain wall material that may be deemed to pose a high risk of fire spread. Where we have such situations, the Council has also put additional fire mitigation measures in place as required, such as a waking watch or upgraded fire alarm system.
- 3.24 Completion of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans is progressing supported by additional resourcing.

Other areas of safety and quality compliance

- 3.25 As part of our commitment to being a Great Landlord for our tenants and leaseholders we not just focused on the specific areas of compliance cited in the Regulatory Judgement. Although not raised in the Regulator's judgement, the council continues to monitor and improve performance across all other statutory key Safety & Quality compliance areas.
- Gas and fuel safety: All domestic and communal gas certificates are in date. 100%.
 - Carbon monoxide detection: 99.9% of dwellings have carbon monoxide detection / alarms.
 - Asbestos management: Rolling re-inspection programme covering common ways is continually in progress to ensure full compliance is maintained.
 - Lift and lifting equipment safety: Servicing compliance under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations is in progress to ensure full compliance is maintained.

Housing (Safety and Quality) Improvement Programme 2026/27

- 3.26 The Housing (Safety and Quality) Improvement Programme has been developed in response to the Root Cause Analysis and sets out the council's approach to resetting Housing Services as a safe, compliant and resident-focused landlord following the Regulator of Social Housing C3 judgement. The Programme is focused on delivering sustained, embedded improvement, rather than short-term recovery, by addressing the underlying

causes of non-compliance with the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard and putting in place clear controls, ownership and evidence to prevent repeat failure.

- 3.27 Completion by March 2027 will enable the council and residents to have confidence that homes are demonstrably safe, statutory checks happen on time and follow-on actions are closed promptly. Residents should receive clear, consistent communication with fewer handoffs and repeat issues. Decisions are evidence-led, with risks surfaced early and performance reporting reflecting lived resident experience. Residents should experience a stronger voice shaping priorities and investment, faster follow-up with fewer long-running repairs and clearer updates on changes, alongside a visible “you said, we did” learning culture across the service.
- 3.28 The Improvement Programme is structured around six themes aligned to the Root Cause Analysis: resident voice; workforce capacity and capability; data quality and use; clear responsibility for compliance; prioritisation and focus; and leadership and culture. Together, these themes underpin a shift in the housing operating model to strengthen day-to-day grip on risk and compliance through clearer ownership and escalation routes, a routine of data validation, sampling and quality checks to test that reported performance reflects reality, and a learning-organisation approach that connects complaints, Ombudsman findings, resident insight and service performance.

Being a Great Landlord

- 3.29 The Housing (Safety and Quality) Improvement Programme is part of a system of programmes with the intention of supporting the council’s ambition to become a Great Landlord. The other two programmes – Consumer Standards Programme and Creating Great Homes Together Programme – are set out below.



Consumer Standards Programme

- 3.30 Our Consumer Standards Programme reflects the latest position across all services, including new actions and resets around how we will achieve and evidence full compliance with all of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. There is a regular senior management review of progress, ensuring sustained oversight and prompt resolution of risks or delays. Key exceptions—whether emerging risks, stalled actions, or areas requiring strategic decisions—are escalated to the Great Landlord Board for visibility, challenge, and support.
- 3.31 Overall progress remains positive, with strong momentum and the majority of actions in delivery—particularly those linked to longer-term programmes such as tenant engagement, complaints learning, stock condition surveys, asset management planning and compliance frameworks. A smaller number of actions are not currently resourced or are temporarily paused, largely due to capacity pressures (for example, equality impact assessments, policy follow-on activity and information reviews), while a significant number are now complete, including work on governance, policy updates, safety procedures and preparations for Awaab's Law.

There are four consumer standards: 1. Safety & Quality, 2. Transparency, Influence & Accountability, 3. Tenancy and 4. Neighbourhood & Community. Overall progress remains positive, with strong momentum and the majority of actions in delivery, such as tenant engagement (listening and responding to tenant voices), learning from complaints (for continuous improvement), stock condition surveys (to be an intelligent client in terms of asset management and planning), and compliance (with regulatory frameworks for RSH, Building Safety regulator, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, etc). Capacity/resourcing continues to be a challenge so taking a risk-based approach and prioritisation are key for successful delivery together with bringing in expertise from strategic partners.

Creating Great Homes Together

- 3.32 The Creating Great Homes Together programme is underpinned by a co-produced Improvement Plan: In April 2025, we held a series of tenant workshops across the city to explore key improvement themes emerging from complaints, Ombudsman findings, tenant perception surveys, member enquiries, and informal engagement. Workshops focused on: repairs; customer service; health & safety; ASB; and complaints handling. Frontline staff worked directly with tenants to co-design solutions and better understand priorities. We used the workshop insights to shape ongoing work and to design the Creating Great Homes Together improvement plan. We have already:
- Delivered complaints handling training for housing staff.
 - Improved our procedures and tenant guidance in key areas for improvement.
 - Restarted estate inspections.

- Strengthened our repairs material supply chain, reducing repeat visits.
 - Consulted tenants on repairs and tenant handbooks (now under review).
 - Procured digital tools to enhance damp & mould responses.
 - Between November–December 25, tenants helped prioritise the improvement plan to be delivered in two phases (2026–2028).
- 3.33 Our priorities focus on improving the day-to-day tenant experience across repairs, customer service and complaints. In repairs and maintenance, we will strengthen quality, transparency and confidence including by improving digital repair tracking, increasing “Right First Time” outcomes, providing clearer information about planned and major works, collecting more meaningful satisfaction feedback, and reducing handoffs through better diagnosis. Alongside this, we will modernise how tenants get in touch and improve service culture by building stronger ownership and empathy, reducing unnecessary handovers, embedding trauma-informed and neuro-inclusive communication, and applying an “Every Contact Counts” approach across all channels.
- 3.34 We will also work to build safer, more supportive communities and strengthen tenant voice. A major safer communities improvement project (with a focus on ASB and adoption of the Housing Hate Incident Policy) will improve awareness of reporting routes and escalation, ensure consistent advice and staff training, and introduce Community Commitments that support positive behaviour. In complaints, we will make the process more open and accessible through earlier and more transparent communication, personal contact at the start of a complaint, regular staff training, better tracking with senior involvement, improved mediation options, and simpler online reporting. Finally, our tenant engagement work will create new informal ways to get involved, broaden and diversify participation, provide training so tenants can take part with confidence, explore scrutiny groups, and refresh the overall tenant engagement strategy.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Social Housing Regulation Act came into effect from 1 April 2024 and requires social landlords to comply with the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing. Following the regulatory judgement the RSH expects the council as landlord to develop a plan that will drive significant change and to share that with tenants.
- 4.2 The issues identified in the report are also relevant to the council’s ability to meet multiple legal obligations and regulatory standards. As well as the RSH, compliance falls under the scrutiny of the Building Safety Regulator, the HSE and the fire service.
- 4.3 All of the above regulators have very substantial powers of enforcement available should the council not meet legislative and regulatory requirements obligations, leaving no alternative options but to ensure compliance.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The council continues to engage residents on progress since the Regulator of Social Housing's C3 judgement. Quarterly Area Panels receive updates on safety and quality, performance, and planned next steps, with questions captured and fed back into service delivery. These sessions provide a standing forum for scrutiny and for tracking progress against the themes highlighted by the Regulator.
- 5.2 Dedicated engagement continues at high-rise and Large Panel System blocks, including the Bristol Estate. Residents are informed through letters, notices, drop-ins and on-site tenancy visits. These activities support access for inspections and works, explain changes to evacuation strategies where relevant, and provide a route for individual concerns to be resolved quickly.
- 5.3 The council uses the tenant newsletter Homing In to provide regular citywide updates on safety, compliance and planned programmes. This includes plain-English explanations of what residents can expect before, during and after inspections or works, and signposts to further support.
- 5.4 Engagement feedback from Area Panels, building-specific activity at LPS and Bristol Estate, and Homing In will continue to be collated and reported through housing governance so that resident insight informs decisions and supports the council's vision of becoming a Great Landlord.
- 5.5 The Creating Great Homes Together consultation has involved residents and staff in considering key themes identified through analysis of existing housing customer insight data and in co-designing service improvements. The council will use the findings to inform priorities in the Housing Improvement Plan and to shape how services communicate and deliver at block and neighbourhood level. Engagement with residents is ongoing. Workshops are planned to inform work across housing compliance areas.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations made in this report. The 2026/27 HRA budget set out the revenue and capital investment relating to health and safety works.
- 6.2 Officers will continue to closely monitor the costs associated with the works required, reporting any variances via the councils TBM process and to help inform future budget reports.

Name of finance officer consulted: Mike Bentley
22/04/26:

Date consulted

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 This report provides an overview of Brighton & Hove City Council's progress in addressing housing safety and quality compliance.
- 7.2 The Social Housing Regulation Act came into effect from 1 April 2024 and requires social landlords to comply with the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). On 9 August 2024 the Regulator of Social Housing

issued a C3 regulatory judgment that there are serious failings in the Council as landlord delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and significant improvement is needed specifically in relation to outcomes for the national Safety and Quality Standard.

- 7.3 The Regulator expects the Council as landlord to continue to drive significant change. The Regulator has very substantial powers of enforcement available but is not proposing to use enforcement powers at this stage, provided Brighton and Hove CC continues to seek to resolve these issues. The RSH also has powers to conduct full planned inspections of social housing providers at least every four years to assess their delivery of services against four Consumer Standards, those standards being Safety and Quality; Neighbourhood and Community; Tenancy; and Transparency, Influence and Accountability.
- 7.4 The issues identified in the report are relevant to the Council's ability to meet multiple legal obligations and regulatory standards. As well as the RSH, compliance falls under the scrutiny of the Building Safety Regulator, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The Council must comply with the enforcement notices issued by the fire service.
- 7.5 Proper management of water systems is crucial to prevent the growth and spread of Legionella bacteria. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council has a legal responsibility to ensure tenants are not exposed to health and safety risks, and must follow the HSE Approved Code of Practice (HSE ACoP L8) and accompanying technical guidance.
- 7.6 There is the potential for the council to be exposed to compensation claims arising from disrepairs which have not been addressed on a reasonable timescale. Awaab's Law came into force for the social rented sector from 27 October 2025 whereby social landlords must address emergency hazards and damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants to fixed timeframes.

Name of lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson Date consulted Date: 5 May 2026

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 Delivery risks include organisational resilience, further unforeseen events that divert capacity, capacity constraints, and shifting expectations. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), indicates a growing underlying deficit in the HRA and identifies mitigations that can be actioned to address this. These risks will be managed proactively and transparently. Mitigations include taking a one council approach, continued alignment of the HRA budget to compliance duties based on risk-based prioritisation tools, and empowering all tiers of staff to collaborate and maintain focus on compliance as a priority for maintaining safe and high quality stock.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Improving housing safety and quality has clear equality benefits. The council's compliance programmes address risks that disproportionately affect some residents, including older and disabled people, families with young children, and those living with long-term health conditions. Reducing hazards such as fire, damp and mould, cold and electrical risk supports better health and wellbeing and helps to narrow inequalities in housing outcomes.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The housing safety and quality programmes described in this report contribute positively to the council's wider sustainability objectives by improving the condition, efficiency and lifespan of homes. Our programme of stock-condition surveys will provide detailed information on the state of the housing stock, which will support future planning for energy efficiency, decarbonisation and resource use.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 The council's compliance and safety programmes have a direct positive impact on residents' health and wellbeing. Safer, warmer and well-maintained homes reduce the risks of fire, damp and mould, electrical hazards and cold-related illness. They also contribute to improved mental wellbeing by providing greater security and reassurance for residents

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 In order to be a Great Landlord, we recognise that over and above our in-house workforce for compliance and maintenance, we require contractors to provide additional capacity and as appropriated expertise to support the safety and quality of our housing stock. This means that sufficient procurement capacity is being secured to support appointing the relevant capacity and capability.

13. Crime & disorder implications:

- 13.1 There are no crime & disorder implications arising directly from this report.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 The council remains in formal engagement with the Regulator of Social Housing following the C3 Regulatory Judgement issued in August 2024. The direction of travel continues to be positive, with measurable progress across all areas of safety and quality and strengthened governance now in place. Progress toward compliance, including integrating compliance data, will continue to receive focused attention through senior leadership oversight.

- 14.2 The next phase is to embed improvement as business as usual. This will be driven through the Housing Improvement Programme and the outcomes of the Creating Great Homes Together consultation, creating one framework for delivery, accountability and resident engagement.
- 14.3 The actions and progress outlined in this report seek to strengthen compliance with the Consumer Standards, provide a sound foundation for long-term stewardship of the housing stock and demonstrate the council's continuing commitment to its Great Landlord vision: to ensure every resident lives in a safe, well-maintained and high-quality home.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Appendix 1; Housing Improvement Programme 2026/27.
2. Appendix 2, Housing Safety and Compliance Performance Indicators.

Housing Improvement Programme 2026 to 2027

Brighton and Hove City Council

Homes & Investment and Housing People Services

Summary

This plan sets out how the council will become a great landlord that residents can have confidence in. It brings together the impact we want to have on resident experience, what the Regulator expects through the consumer standards, and what the Housing service must do to deliver safe, good quality homes and a resident focused, data led, reliable service.

The plan is focused on addressing systematic issues that led to the Regulatory Judgement, continuing to address root causes and reduce the risks of similar issues recurring. The Plan seeks to ensure that the council remains compliant with relevant regulatory and legislative requirements as the foundation for working toward being a Great Landlord, focused on outcome, service quality and the experience of tenants and residents. It sets clear commitments, the controls that embed them, and the evidence that will show sustained progress. It is designed to support strong transparent governance and systematic improvements in day-to-day delivery.

Our vision is to be recognised as a Great Landlord – doing the right things because we are driven by what our residents tell us and not just what regulations require of us.

What residents will notice by March 2027

- ✓ A stronger resident voice, in how we deliver and review our services, decide on budget and other priorities and proactively invest in our homes and communities.
- ✓ Residents feel safer and more confident in their homes and blocks because checks happen on time and follow up happens quickly.
- ✓ Residents get clear, consistent updates, including when access is needed and when plans change.
- ✓ Residents are passed between teams less often because ownership is clear and handovers work.
- ✓ Repairs and safety actions are completed properly first time more often, with fewer repeat visits and fewer long running outstanding actions.
- ✓ The council addresses the most serious issues first, is transparent and engages on priorities in an accessible way and how these priorities may change.
- ✓ Residents can see a learning organisation in operation, a service focused on building and sustaining improvements in the quality of tenant experience and outcomes, including how feedback, complaints, and Ombudsman decisions have led to specific changes, through a clear “you said, we did” audit trail.
- ✓ Residents get a better, more consistent, accessible service and feel treated fairly, regardless of who they speak to, because the council uses the same standards and quality checks across Housing Services.

PART A: CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Regulatory context and why this plan exists

From 1 April 2024, social landlords have to meet the Regulator of Social Housing consumer standards under a strengthened regime, with more proactive regulation and inspections.

Brighton and Hove City Council must be able to demonstrate, with evidence, that it is consistently meeting those standards and sustaining improvement. This plan exists to provide one clear, auditable line of sight from the issues that need fixing, to the controls and governance that prevent repeat failure, to what residents should notice.

The consumer standards

The consumer standards set the outcomes residents should experience from their landlord services.

Safety and Quality: Homes are safe and well maintained. Legal duties are met. Checks happen on time and actions from safety assessments are completed and verified.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability: Residents are treated with fairness and respect. Services are accessible. Residents can influence decisions. Complaints are handled properly and learning is used to improve.

Neighbourhood and Community: Landlords take reasonable steps to keep shared spaces safe and work with relevant partners to support wellbeing in the areas where they provide homes.

Tenancy: Tenancies and allocations are managed fairly and transparently and landlords support tenancy sustainment where relevant.

These standards matter because they set the minimum compliant service residents can expect, including safe homes, timely follow up, clear communication, and a fair complaints process.

The council's C3 judgement and formal engagement

On 9 August 2024, following responsive engagement, the Regulator published a regulatory judgement for Brighton and Hove City Council, identifying failings against the Safety and Quality Standard and issuing a consumer grading of C3. The judgement states:

'that there are serious failings in delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and that improvement is needed, specifically in relation to the Safety and Quality Standard'.

The Regulator highlighted weaknesses in the council's management of electrical, fire, water and smoke-detection safety, a significant repairs backlog.

Since that time the council has remained in formal intensive engagement with the Regulator.

The Regulator expects an improvement plan that drives significant change, addresses root causes of non-compliance and reduces the risks of similar issues recurring, and that it is shared with tenants.

What the Regulator expects to see from the council now

The Regulator will be looking for evidence that improvement is systematic, sustained, and embedded in business as usual, not a short-term recovery. In practice, the council needs to be able to show the following, consistently and with a clear audit trail that demonstrates the impact upon outcomes for residents, including, compliance, service quality and tenant experience.

A plan that reflects and builds upon the learning from our root cause analysis to understand why the council did not fully comply with the RSH Safety and Quality Standard and how to ensure failings are not repeated.

A plan that drives significant change: Clear priorities and realistic commitments, with clear ownership and clear evidence, so progress can be tested rather than described.

Effective control of Safety and Quality: Checks completed on time, actions raised and closed properly, quality verified through proportionate checking and rechecking, and exceptions handled quickly so risk does not drift.

Confident and consistent information about homes and services: Confidence that records and key datasets can be relied on, so decisions are made using evidence rather than workarounds and missing information.

Resident accountability and learning: Clear evidence that resident feedback, complaints, and Ombudsman learning are shaping decisions and preventing repeat failure, alongside transparent reporting and a clear approach to tenant accountability.

Sustained improvement through governance and leadership grip: A consistent set of routines that record decisions, track follow through, escalate early when something slips, and test reality through sampling, so performance reporting matches what residents experience.

How we got here

The Regulator's judgement and the council's Root Cause Analysis, reported to Cabinet in June 2025, [Housing Safety and Quality Compliance Update.pdf](#) and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2025, [Housing Safety and Quality](#)

[Compliance Update.pdf](#) were clear that the issues were not only about individual services.

The analysis reveals that the issues stem not only from operational failures but also from deeper systemic and cultural challenges. While corrective actions have begun, the findings clarify the structural, cultural, and delivery changes needed to achieve lasting compliance and improve outcomes for residents.

This includes how the council listens, learns sets priorities, leads, builds capability, uses data, and assures compliance.

This work supports the Council Plan priorities of 'Homes for Everyone' and 'A Responsive Council with Well-Run Services', and the Housing Strategy priority of 'Improving Housing Quality'

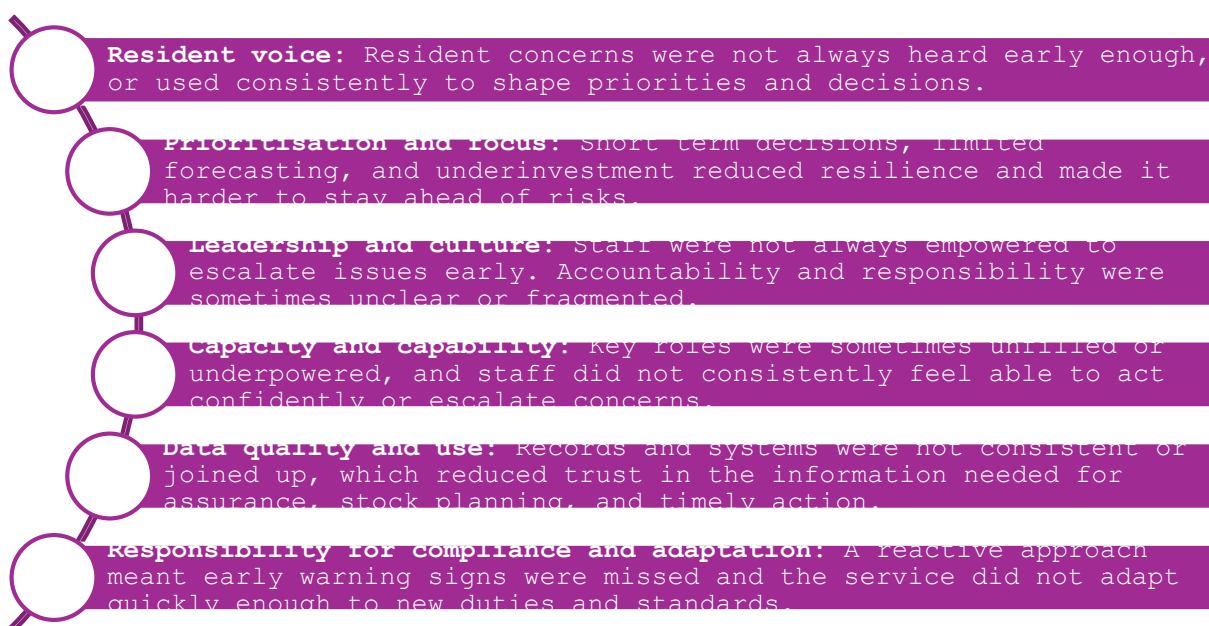
Since August 2024, the council has stabilised and improved delivery and compliance and started to change how it runs. Progress is not only work completed. It is the shift to a controlled improvement system that prevents repeat failure and can be evidenced through routine assurance evidence, exceptions reporting, sampling, and re checks.

Root causes and what has changed in the operating model

These six themes from our root cause analysis have been reframed as priorities for organisational change. We are adopting a strengths-based approach that focuses on learning from and addressing areas for development, as well as systems that support us to be a Great Landlord.

Strengthening each of these areas and improving their alignment is essential for sustainable improvement. The council remains committed to continuous learning and collaborative action, using this analysis as a foundation for building a robust improvement plan with internal teams, residents, and elected members.

Transparency, accountability, and measurable progress are central to this approach. Monthly highlight reports and the development of the core NEC Housing system as a single source of housing compliance data ensure clear oversight. Updates to the Housing Safety & Quality Assurance Board, Great Landlord Board, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Cabinet members, Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee reflect our commitment to ensure that the safety and quality of our council homes remain our priority.



The operating model is now changing in practical ways.

- ✓ Leadership is stronger. Issues are escalated earlier when something is off track. Decisions are recorded and followed through.
- ✓ Ownership is clear, with named leads for key risks and priorities and clear escalation routes into decision points.
- ✓ Information management is improving. NEC Housing is used more consistently to inform decision making, supported by routine checks, so leaders rely on evidence rather than informal updates.
- ✓ The Learning Organisation framework is being embedded. Resident insight, complaints and Ombudsman learning, performance monitoring, compliance assurance, and quality checks are reviewed together and inform decisions and tracked actions.
- ✓ Target Operating Model work for Homes & Investment is setting clear roles, processes, and controls so improvement is sustained across teams.
- ✓ Quality checks and sampling are used to improve systems and consistency, reduce rework, and target supervision and training. Focus is on learning and support, not blame.
- ✓ Continued investment in workforce capacity and capability, including in a new Damp & Mould team supporting our proactive approach to implementing Awaab's Law, significant development of our apprenticeship programmes aligned to identified skills gaps, additional building safety and fire safety roles and increased Head of Service capacity
- ✓ Improving resident engagement continues to be a priority area of focus, with resident workshops held at our annual tenant conference, contacting all residents as part of our proactive response to implementing Awaab's Law, increasing resident engagement in repairs and asset management.

What has already improved

The council has made significant progress across all areas where the RSH identified non-compliance and has remained compliant in other areas of health & safety not subject to the Regulatory Judgement. The judgement focused mainly on how well the council was delivering against outcomes of the Safety and Quality Standard, but the learning is wider than safety alone and is being applied across Housing Services.

Electrical safety and smoke alarms: Most homes now have up to date electrical safety checks and working smoke alarms. The remaining gap is mainly access and follow up, with a focus on completing final access cases to reach full coverage.

Repairs backlog and service grip: Very overdue repairs have reduced. The service is more in control of what is outstanding, with clearer prioritisation and stronger follow up. Residents are starting to experience fewer very long waits and fewer repeat jobs.

Fire safety action and risk-based delivery: The highest priority actions are nearing completion and the medium priority remediation actions are reducing. Fire risk assessments are improving in quality so actions better match risk and priority. Residents are starting to experience clearer communication in blocks, supported by improved quality checks.

Water safety recovery: Coverage is improving and delivery capacity is stronger. This remains an area for improvement and retains senior management oversight.

Knowing our homes and planning investment: The December 2025 Cabinet approval to award a two-year Stock Condition Survey Contract will enable full survey coverage of all council homes, leading to an improved understanding of the condition of the council's housing stock, and provide the robust evidence base required for long-term investment planning and regulatory assurance. This decision was a direct response to the council's Root Cause Analysis arising from the Regulator of Social Housing regulatory judgement which identified Data Quality & Use, and Prioritisation & Focus as core drivers of improvement.

Areas	RSH Judgement (August 2024)	Position then (June 2024)	Position now (January 2026)
Electrical safety (domestic Electrical Installation Condition Report, EICR, and communal EICRs)	Around 3,600 homes without a current EICR and no evidence of a current certificate for over 600 communal areas.	53 percent homes with a valid 5-year EICR. 20.8 percent communal areas with a valid communal EICR.	95.2 percent homes with a valid 5-year EICR. 81.6 percent communal areas compliant.
Smoke alarms	Cannot evidence compliance with legal	81.5 percent of homes had a working alarm.	99.6 percent of homes have a working alarm.

Areas	RSH Judgement (August 2024)	Position then (June 2024)	Position now (January 2026)
	requirements for smoke detectors.		
Water safety (risk assessments and remedial actions)	More than 600 buildings require a risk assessment” and “more than 500 overdue water safety remedial actions.”	52.1 percent of buildings with a valid risk assessment. (Nov 2024, no June actions count published).	95.1 percent of buildings with a valid assessment. 2,281 overdue actions (Dec 2025). This aligns to the significant increase in inspections.
Repairs backlog	A backlog of around 8,000 low-risk, low-priority repairs.	9,653 repairs older than 28 days.	3,697 repairs older than 28 days. Focus on oldest work orders and average time continues to reduce.
Fire safety remediation	RSH raised concerns about delays in completing over 1,700 fire safety actions identified across the stock.	4,253 FRA actions. Peaked at 8,268 in December 2024 with completion of updated FRAs on all blocks.	2,294 live FRA actions.

PART B: DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

What success looks like by March 2027

Progress is reviewed quarterly. Priorities only change when evidence shows a change is needed, and the decision is recorded and explained.

Homes are safe and well maintained. The service is accessible. Problems are fixed properly and do not keep coming back. When plans change, residents get clear explanations and realistic timescales.

Success means residents can see, and the council can show, that commitments are being delivered and problems are being addressed in a systematic way.

Resident outcomes

- ✓ Residents feel safe and confident in their home and block because safety checks happen on time and follow up happens quickly.
- ✓ Residents get clear, consistent updates they can rely on, including when access is needed and when plans change.
- ✓ Residents are passed between teams less often because ownership is clear and handovers work.
- ✓ Repairs and safety actions are completed properly first time more often, with fewer repeat visits and fewer long running outstanding actions.
- ✓ The council deals with the most serious issues first and is transparent and engages on priorities and how priorities may change in an accessible way.
- ✓ Residents can see a learning organisation in operation, a service focused on building and sustaining improvements in the quality of tenant experience and outcomes, including how feedback, complaints and Ombudsman outcomes have led to specific changes through a clear “you said, we did” audit trail.
- ✓ Residents receive a better more consistent, accessible service and feel treated fairly and with respect, regardless of who they speak to, because the council uses the same standards and quality checks across Housing Services.
- ✓ Works to residents’ homes and blocks feel more planned and less reactive over time because investment and repairs decisions are based on stronger knowledge of homes and risk.

The council assurance view

The council can show it is compliant, proactive and in control across Housing Services. This means decisions are recorded, exceptions are visible, actions are closed, and checks confirm the issue is fixed.

Evidence is held through decision records, action and exceptions, compliance assurance evidence, contract performance, and sampling.

Theme 1 - Resident voice

Theme of non-compliance: At the foundation of the six interdependent themes identified by our root cause analysis lies resident voice, where a hierarchical culture focused on national policy initiatives and organisational priorities was not always responsive to resident concerns.

What is changing:

- Expansion of the Community Engagement Team including a digital communications officer;
- Diversification of the resident voice, over 400 residents have expressed an interest in engagement opportunities.
- Co-production of the service improvement programme rather than residents being engaged separate to staff.

What does it look like to be a Great Landlord:

- Diversity and depth of resident involvement.
- Resident insight shaping decisions.
- Increased trust in engagement and follow through.

Outcome on service quality and tenant experience:

Residents can see that their experience shapes what we do and how we do it. We don't make fewer decisions about residents without residents. Standards and updates are clearer. When residents tell us something is not working, we act and we explain what changed.

This theme exists because resident experience has not always shaped priorities and decisions. When insight is collected but not used in day to day decisions, we miss early warning signs, repeat the same mistakes, and lose trust.

In 2026 to 2027 we make resident influence routine and visible. Creating Great Homes Together is the main route for resident led improvement. We treat resident experience as essential evidence, alongside performance, compliance assurance, and quality checks. We show the link from what residents told us, to the decision we made, to what changed, and what residents can now expect.

Residents will be engaged on thematic resident oversight groups, including on Fire & Building Safety. We will also increase the transparency of information sharing with residents.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
We publish a “you said, we did” update regularly, linked to real service changes and clear explanations.	Residents can see what changed, including when we cannot do something and why.	Feedback without visible change feels pointless and drives complaints.	Updates state what residents will notice and where to go for help.	Published updates plus an internal link to decision records and closure evidence.	Sponsor: Director Housing People Lead: Housing Strategic Communications Manager.	Start reporting you said we did at Area Panel meetings. Area Panel review starts in April 2026
We keep an up-to-date view of resident experience as part of the intelligence loop through the Great Landlord Board, that reviews themes from complaints and Ombudsman learning, surveys and member enquiries themes.	Clearer, more consistent messages, and visible action on what residents raise.	If insight is not reviewed in one place, it gets lost, early warning signs are missed, and problems repeat.	The summary is a standing agenda item. It is reviewed routinely. Actions and decisions are recorded with owners and tracked to closure.	Agenda items include the summary each cycle. Decision records show what changed because of it, with a small set of examples linked to closure evidence.	Sponsor: Corporate Director. Homes & Adult Social Care. Lead: Director of Housing People Services.,	We will continue to track and monitor participation and diversity of resident engagement. Action Plan on Resident Engagement is reported to at Great Landlord Board, Directorate Leadership Team and Cabinet Member Briefing.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
						Directorate Leadership Team & Corporate Leadership Team monitor and act upon themes and learning from complaints, member enquiries and Ombudsman Decisions.

How we will evidence that this has been achieved.

- Annual Survey of Tenants & Residents (STAR) and Tenant Satisfaction Measures. [Housing performance – how are we doing?](#)
- Resident satisfaction measures in performance reporting (shared quarterly with Housing Area Panels: [Performance reports - council housing](#)
- Annual Housing Complaints Report & Self-Assessment: [Annual Housing Complaints Report and Self assessment.pdf](#)
- Council Plan progress updates to Cabinet which include Housing KPIs [202526 Mid-year Council Plan progress update.pdf](#)
- Annual monitoring report aligned to the Housing Strategy: [Housing Strategy 2024-29 Annual Monitoring Report 202425.pdf](#)
- Promotion and review of resident engagement measures and participation: [Resident groups, community engagement and neighbourhood funding](#)
- Housing Revenue Account Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (for investment in Community Engagement Team and neighbourhood funding: [Budget Capital Investment HRA Programme 2026-27 and MediumTerm Financial Strategy.pdf](#)

Theme 2 - Prioritisation and focus

Theme of non-compliance: Prioritisation & Focus ensures that resources are aligned with long-term asset condition and compliance resilience; however, short-term decisions, limited forecasting, and underinvestment undermined the council's ability to strengthen these areas.

What is changing: With finite resources, we will take a risk-based approach to ensure that effort and investment are aligned to fulfil all of our compliance duties, Improvement Plan and resident impact.:

- We continue to make consistent positive progress toward compliance, including significant reductions in the backlog of routine repairs.
- Promotion of psychological safety.
- Clear distribution of leadership and decision-making responsibilities through a scheme of management.
- Embed a more connected council with leadership that brings critical resources together to deliver Council Plan outcomes.
- Use of data to measure individual and team performance.

What it looks like to be a Great Landlord:

- Stronger frontline involvement in planning.
- Data and evidence-based prioritisation and planning.

Outcome on service quality and tenant experience:

This will be clear about and keep our commitments to residents and explain clearly when priorities change. We focus on the work that reduces risk, improves everyday service, and prevents repeat problems.

In 2026 to 2027 we make prioritisation practical. We prioritise and are realistic about our commitments and focus of service and investment. We use the consistent data and resident voice to inform evidence and decide our priorities first. We are transparent in sharing information and decision making.

Through our Creating Great Homes Together Action Plan 2026 we aim to improving service quality, transparency, and tenant experience across Repairs & Maintenance, Safer Areas, Customer Service, Complaints, and Tenant Engagement.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/Deliverables
We use stock condition survey data and up to date asset insight to set priorities that inform planned preventative maintenance programmes and reduce responsive repairs.	Fewer responsive and repeat repairs and more remedies that deal with the cause, not only the symptom.	Without stock condition survey insight we maintain a high volume of responsive repairs and don't make best use of capital investment to proactively improve the quality of residents homes.	Use emerging stock condition survey information and repairs intelligence to target investment in planned preventative maintenance to reduce responsive repairs and proactively improve the quality of residents homes and satisfaction with the council as a landlord.	Stock condition survey and repairs intelligence is used in prioritisation of investment decisions. Trend increased understanding of our stock monitored through monthly reports to Housing Safety & Quality Assurance Board and progress toward HRA Budget MTFS aim of reducing the pressure of responsive repairs and increasing planned preventative maintenance and proactive capital investment in our homes. Shows a decline in volume of	Sponsor: Director of Homes & Investment. Lead: Head of Asset Management & Investment and Head of Repairs and Maintenance.	Procure and award a two-year Stock Condition Survey Contract to enable additional resource to ensure 100% of homes surveyed over this time to support a data led and resident led Asset Management Plan to inform investment decisions. Mobilise spring 2026 complete spring 2028.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
				responsive repairs over time.		
We operate as a connected and responsive council focused on clear ownership and accountability. Review areas that cause repeat contact and failure demand. Make ownership and accountability for actions clear at every point.	Clearer ownership and updates. Faster action when an issue is identified. Fewer hand offs, one council approach.	Ensuring fewer handoff's reduces risk and ensures clear ownership and prioritisation of risks tasks and actions. rework, and loss of trust.	Quantitative review of repairs raised to understand the source, including whether raised by tenant, operative in site or via another team. Review repairs by property to understand high volumes in particular homes or property type. Qualitative review in partnership with tenant focus groups / via tenant engagement.	Resident feedback confirms clearer ownership and updates. Regular review of repairs reports to increase % of repairs that are resolved first time where possible. Measuring prevalence of repeated visits both qualitatively and quantitatively to track reduction.	Sponsor: Director Homes & Investment Lead: Head of Housing Asset Management & Investment	Improved resident satisfaction measured through reporting outlined below in evidence of how er will achieve. Review via Housing Safety & Quality Assurance Board which tracks responsive repair and other key health, safety

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
						and quality activity

How we will evidence that this has been achieved

- Annual Survey of Tenants & Residents (STAR) and Tenant Satisfaction Measures. [Housing performance – how are we doing?](#)
- Performance reporting (shared quarterly with Housing Area Panels: [Performance reports - council housing](#)
- Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates reported to Cabinet on a 6-monthly basis: [Procurement of Housing Stock Condition Contractor.pdf](#).
- Regular Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee: [Housing Safety and Quality Compliance Update.pdf](#).
- Council Plan progress updates to Cabinet which include Housing KPIs [202526 Mid-year Council Plan progress update.pdf](#)
- Scheme of management now in place, to be kept up to date.
- Staff Survey and regular 'Pulse' surveys.

Theme 3 - Leadership and culture

Theme of non-compliance: Leadership & Culture provides the platform for effective governance and decision-making; however, organisational culture sometimes disempowered staff, created psychological unsafety to share concerns or ideas, delayed escalation of issues, and diluted responsibility for managing risk through ambiguity and fragmentation.

What is changing: We will ensure consistent, robust leadership and clarity around when and how concerns are escalated, so that issues are surfaced early and addressed decisively, including:

- Promotion of psychological safety;
- Distribute leadership and decision making through a scheme of management;
- Embedding a more connected council with leadership that brings critical resources together to deliver Council Plan outcomes.
- Use of data to measure individual and team performance.

What it looks like to be a Great Landlord

- Stronger frontline empowerment in risk identification.
- Data informed performance management.

Outcome on service quality and tenant experience,

Residents feel the difference when decisions are made faster when something goes wrong. Ownership is clear. Updates are clearer. Problems are resolved consistently.

In 2026 to 2027 we will embed the culture of being a learning organisation – Staff will receive relevant training and support to give them the confidence to report concerns and mistakes; the senior leadership will promote a no-blame and learning culture so that staff have the psychological safety to own problems, feel empowered to resolve issues and where there are concerns and mistakes, report them at the earliest opportunity.

How we will evidence that this has been achieved.

- Scheme of management now in place, to be kept up to date.
- Staff Survey and regular 'Pulse' surveys.
- Council Plan progress updates to Cabinet which include Housing KPIs [202526 Mid-year Council Plan progress update.pdf](#)

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
Senior leadership will ensure that there are opportunities for staff to meet residents where they are (outside of applying their trade), share concerns and ideas, feel confident to try things and know that they working in a no blame culture that promotes learning from experiences and applying that learning to service improvements.	A confident workforce that hears and values the voice of residents. When visited for a repair, operatives raise other issues that they've noticed need doing.	A confident workforce will listen carefully to the voices of residents and spot the need or opportunity to act early or create preventative programmes of works	Senior Leaders holding staff drop-ins, attending toolbox talks and shadowing staff. Frontline staff attending resident meetings in the places that the residents' home is to discuss the issues that they are experiencing.	TSMs for customer satisfaction re repairs and the quality of their home, and being listened to increases. Compliments from tenants and leaseholders about the quality of the interactions they have with staff. A reduction in complaints about the time waiting for, and/or the quality of repairs	Sponsor: Corporate Director Homes & ASC Lead: Business Improvement Manager	Monthly Staff drop ins. An annual roadshow of attending toolbox talks or <i>In-person, in conversation</i> events with corporate leadership team
We apply the learning organisation	Residents notice that we are a	Residents need to know that we have 21 st	The leadership creates opportunities for	Briefing notes and case studies	Sponsor: Director	The directorate is standing up a Learning for

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
framework throughout the organisation so that we learn from our mistakes and spread good practice	connected council – they report once and it is resolved first time. Residents interact with a confident workforce who explain what we can do, how we will do it, take ownership of issues that may not be within their role, and embraces innovation and creative solutions to service delivery.	century expectations about customer service and we are seeking 21st century solutions to managing stock that was mainly built in the 20th century.	learning such as team meetings, workshops, etc	considered at various management meetings.	Homes & Investment Lead: Programme Director Regulatory Response	Improvement Lab that will review test and learn initiatives across the directorate to promote learning and transferrable benefits from pilots.

Theme 4 - Workforce capacity and capability

Theme of non-compliance: Workforce Capacity & Capability is essential for action; however, key roles were at times unfilled or held by staff who in some cases lacked the relevant competency, experience or ownership of issues. Some staff did not consistently feel empowered to escalate concerns or act confidently.

What is changing: Skilled, confident staff are our most valuable resource. We will: invest in staff development including apprenticeships, technical skills, particularly in areas like fire safety, surveying and data analysis; design structures that create capacity for leadership development in all tiers of management; support a culture of trust and empowerment that enables action to be taken and areas of concern to be raised without fear of blame: and, use digital solutions for transactional/administrative activities so that staff have time to plan and focus on relational activities.

- Managers are working closely with corporate services to develop a 'grow your own' plan, including significant investment in apprentices
- Managers are working closely with HR colleagues to recruit to key compliance roles, including deploying increased staffing resources, over 20 new posts, aligned to additional £1.1m revenue [2025/26] investment to meet health & safety and building safety requirements.

What it looks like to be a Great Landlord:

- Senior leadership understand what people resources in terms of number and competency/expertise is required to fulfil its duties
- Senior leadership have a plan for recruiting and retaining sufficient staff to fulfil its duties
- Resource planning is data-led and evidence-based

Outcome on service quality and tenant experience:

Residents get a more reliable service because the right skills and cover are in place in the roles that keep people safe and work moving. Residents experience fewer handovers, clearer updates, and fewer delays caused by gaps in capacity or unclear responsibilities.

In 2026 to 2027 we continue to invest in our workforce to sustain compliance and service quality. Our approach to service delivery and investment continues to be shaped by feedback from residents and staff gathered through the Creating Great Homes Together consultation, regulatory consumer standards, and our vision for being a Great Landlord. This continued investment in recruiting a Neighbourhood Officer team, a team dedicated to tackling damp and mould, 19 apprentices in the trades of electrics, carpentry, and plumbing, as well as remedial works related to fire safety, water safety and repairs.

We continue to set clear expectations for managers and supervision, and strengthen contractor and client side capability where risk is highest. We will continue to invest in learning and development and work toward a Learning and Development Policy and Code of Conduct for Housing staff, developed with tenants under the Competence and Conduct Standard which comes into effect in October 2026. We will review how we use technology and digital solutions to free up officer capacity so that they can spend time with residents rather than paperwork; and how we involve residents in how we design or improve services.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
We are clear on ownership and accountability for critical roles that are responsible for meeting health & safety compliance requirements and ensure resources are in place to cover any gaps.	Improved consistency and clarity with benefits for compliance and customer service.	Ensure workforce capacity and agility where roles remain unfilled to ensure we have appropriate competencies covered to deliver a safe, compliant, high quality service.	Review market supplement for recruitment as well as learning and development and apprentice programmes to ensure skills required to deliver a safe, high quality compliant	Workforce development plan to be put in place to ensure we have appropriate staff resources to enable a safe, high quality, compliant service.	Sponsor: Director Homes & Investment Lead: Heads of Service, supported by HR Business Partner for Housing.	Evidence measures as outlined below through performance reports, health, safety and compliance monitoring and resident satisfaction, including learning from complaints.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
			service are in place.			Delivery of workforce development plan and apprenticeship programmes.
We ensure that Housing staff are confident and feel empowered to be a strong client and take a relational and performance led approach to contract management to maximise the contract benefits and ensure delivery against specification.	A consistent, high quality, compliant, resident focused contractor experience. Council contractors meeting the expectations of the contract and council to deliver full service benefits and any contractual social value.	Inconsistent contract management risks poor value for money, compromised compliance and a poor quality service experience for residents.	Improved workforce capacity and confidence, including through appropriate learning and development to develop stronger contract management skills. Monthly contract review for contracts. Risk based quality checks.	Increased resources strengthen client function. Learning & development strengthens contract management skills. Audit through regular checking of monthly contractor meetings outcomes, KPIs,	Sponsor: Director Homes & Investment. Lead: Heads of Service	Directorate Procurement Board to review priority contracts. Evidence measures as outlined below through performance reports, health, safety and compliance monitoring and resident satisfaction, including

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
			Corrective actions recorded, time bound, and followed up. Escalation used where performance does not improve.	quality assurance and delivery of social value. Improved compliance, service delivery and resident satisfaction.		learning from complaints.
We focus learning support and development on competencies and skills that keep residents safe, services reliable and high quality. Focus on priority areas, starting with Health & Safety, with a view to build on this to meet the	Engagement with a consistently competent, skilled and knowledgeable workforce delivering safe proactive and compliant services. Clear, consistent and timely responses.	Consistency of resident experience and a service delivered by a capable, correctly resourced landlord is key to tenant experience of our service and resident satisfaction.	We will continue to invest in learning and development and work toward a Learning and Development Policy and Code of Conduct for Housing staff, developed with tenants under the Competence and Conduct Standard which	Increased resident satisfaction measured through both quantitative performance reporting, resident STAR survey and engagement with tenants in qualitative	Sponsor: Director of Homes & Investment Lead: Heads of Service, Compliance leads supported by Learning and Development Lead.	By October 2026. Review of learning & development priorities to ensure compliance with Competency and Conduct Standard. Evidence measures as outlined below through

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
Competence and Conduct Standards			comes into effect in October 2026.	service review and experience. Continued progress in compliance demonstrating ownership, accountability and proactive addressing of risks.		performance reports, health, safety and compliance monitoring and resident satisfaction, including learning from complaints

How we will evidence that this has been achieved.

- Housing Revenue Account Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (for investment in resources including apprentices: [Budget Capital Investment HRA Programme 2026-27 and MediumTerm Financial Strategy.pdf](#))
- Staff Survey and regular 'Pulse' surveys.
- Annual Survey of Tenants & Residents (STAR) and Tenant Satisfaction Measures. [Housing performance – how are we doing?](#)
- Performance reporting (shared quarterly with Housing Area Panels: [Performance reports - council housing](#))
- Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates reported to Cabinet on a 6-monthly basis: [Procurement of Housing Stock Condition Contractor.pdf](#).
- Regular Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee: [Housing Safety and Quality Compliance Update.pdf](#).

- Council Plan progress updates to Cabinet which include Housing KPIs [202526 Mid-year Council Plan progress update.pdf](#)

Theme 5 - Data quality and use

Theme of non-compliance: Data Quality & Use is critical to sustainable compliance but was undermined by inconsistent maintenance of records, poor data quality, and systems that did not communicate or integrate effectively – weakening assurance about stock condition, maintenance activity and investment priorities, and proactive long-term decision-making.

What is changing: Reliable, well maintained electronic records will underpin planning, assurance and sound decision making. Strong management systems and procedures will safeguard the accuracy, completeness and quality of our data and its effective use to inform and support compliance and our Improvement Programme:

- Significant investment in new Housing ICT infrastructure and compliance monitoring capacity has been undertaken, including moving toward a one system approach through Housing NEC System and use of The Compliance Workbook.
- The consistent performance in electrical compliance has been a blueprint for use of data to inform planning and monitor delivery.
- We have progressed provision of assurance available via electronic records.
- Data is being used to prioritise works and model the resources required to complete identified works.
- Governance is in place to test assurance of data quality, overseen via our cross-directorate Housing Safety & Quality Assurance Board.

What it looks like to be a Great Landlord:

- A great landlord knows the quality of the stock that they own, what works have been undertaken and when, and can use the information held to plan for preventative maintenance and longer-term capital investment in planned and major works programmes.
- A great landlord ensures that their records are up to date and that the data quality informing those records is good.

Outcome on service quality and tenant experience:

We will know our residents and know their homes through consistent and accurate record-keeping. Residents get clear, consistent updates about what is happening in their home and their block. The council spots trends and risks earlier, acts sooner, and explains

progress more clearly. This means that the service becomes proactive and not always reactive. We strengthen stock knowledge so we can prioritise investment and reduce avoidable repairs demand over time.

In 2026 to 2027 we focus on the essentials. We continue work to ensure the datasets we rely on are robust and informative. Management will regularly sample our electronic record systems.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
We use sampling and case file reviews, to ensure there is accurate record keeping.	Fewer repeat failures that sit behind headline numbers. More consistent outcomes across teams.	Performance can look acceptable while residents still experience poor outcomes, especially where follow up and communication are weak.	Small risk based sampling plan for priority pathways. Findings trigger corrective action with owners and dates. Re check confirms it is fixed.	Sampling record and findings. Actions taken and re check results. Evidence that repeat issues reduce in sampled areas over time.	Sponsor: Director Homes & Investment Lead: Heads of Services	A sampling plan is in place for priority pathways, with a routine record of findings, actions, and re checks.

How we will evidence that this has been achieved.

- Annual Survey of Tenants & Residents (STAR) and Tenant Satisfaction Measures. [Housing performance – how are we doing?](#)
- Performance reporting (shared quarterly with Housing Area Panels: [Performance reports - council housing](#)
- Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates reported to Cabinet on a 6-monthly basis: [Procurement of Housing Stock Condition Contractor.pdf](#).

- Regular Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee: [Housing Safety and Quality Compliance Update.pdf](#).
- Council Plan progress updates to Cabinet which include Housing KPIs [202526 Mid-year Council Plan progress update.pdf](#)

Theme 6 - Responsibility for compliance

Theme of non-compliance: Responsibility for Compliance and Adaptation requires proactive monitoring and response to emerging risks; however, a reactive compliance model missed early warning signs and did not adapt quickly enough to new duties and standards.

What is changing: We will define clear roles and accountabilities for stock quality, safety and compliance. Risk management must move beyond silos. Joined-up teams, and meaningful resident involvement will strengthen trust and meaningful engagement between staff and residents:

What it looks like to be a Great Landlord:

We will know our residents and their homes, be responsive and decisive, and make compliance decisions grounded in evidence, risk, impact, and residents' voices.

Outcome on service quality and tenant experience:

Residents feel safe and more confident in our homes and services. Checks happen on time, follow up happens quickly, and the council gives clear updates when access is needed or when plans change.

This theme exists because unclear duty holder arrangements, weak end to end control, and inconsistent quality checks create repeat failure.

In 2026 to 2027 we will continue to embed controls that ensure compliance.

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
Ensure that principal accountable persons are supported to	Residents will have confidence about the decisions or recommendations made by the council.	Good health and safety management relies on knowledge and clarity to create	Support the culture of accountability by ensuring that the Scheme of Management is	Confidence to proactively engage with regulators, advocate for resources and	Sponsor: Director Homes & Investment	Scheme of Management accurately reflects who is the PAP for

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
fulfil their duties	Senior leadership will know that advice will be rooted in professional knowledge.	a culture of robust risk management.	clear about who is the PAP and the council ensures that there are arrangements and opportunities to support personal capability and organisational capacity.	clarity between advisory and mandatory actions. Scheme of Management reflects the responsibilities related to safety compliance	Lead: Head of Housing Safety and Regulatory Compliance	each area of compliance. Recruitment of Head of Housing Safety and Regulatory Compliance Service Plan for Housing Safety and Regulatory Compliance
Ensure that all staff understand their duties as part of being a social landlord responsible for ageing stock.	Staff give consistent advice in relation to issues such as fire safety in communal areas	Consistent advice means that residents trust the advice and act on it to keep themselves and their neighbours safe.	Directorate Health and Safety Plans identify mandatory training.	The directorate's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board monitors the number of staff that should complete the mandatory training	Sponsor: Corporate Director Homes & Adult Social Care Lead: Business Improvement Manager and Health and Safety Business Partner.	100% completion of mandatory training

Commitment	What residents notice	Why it matters	How we stop repeat failure	How we prove it	Leadership and delivery	Milestones/ Deliverables
Ensure that the overall structure as ways of working within the directorate support the council being a responsive landlord	The council has no wrong door, offers a seamless experience of services and takes a proactive approach to planning service delivery and programmes of works.	Residents need a reliable and responsive council that it can be confident in, in terms of the safety and quality of their homes and estates	Appoint consultants to support developing a Target Operating Model that reflects the council being a 21 st century landlord responsible for mainly 20 th century stock	The Target Operating Model will inform the workforce plan for Housing Safety and Regulatory Compliance and Housing Investment and Asset Management	Sponsor: Director Homes & Investment Lead: Business Improvement Manager.	A Workforce Plan that supports staff being proactive about safety and plans programmes of work focused on preventing or reducing reactive repairs.

How we will evidence that this has been achieved.

- Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates reported to Cabinet on a 6-monthly basis: [Procurement of Housing Stock Condition Contractor.pdf](#).
- Regular Housing Safety & Quality Compliance Updates to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee: [Housing Safety and Quality Compliance Update.pdf](#).
- Regular Updates to Housing Area Panels, including [Performance reports - council housing](#).
- Audit Standards & General Purposes Committee, Code of Corporate Governance and Risk Management Framework: [Code of Corporate Governance and Risk Management Framework.pdf](#)
- Audit, Standards & General Purposes Committee, External Auditor's Annual Report to Audit & Standards Committee [VFM cover report JH.pdf](#)

Appendix 2: Housing Safety and Compliance Performance Indicators

Areas identified by RSH as not compliant

	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
Smoke alarms/ detectors (% of homes).	81.5%	89.4%	95.7%	97.7%	98.8%	99.3%	99.6%	99.8%
5 Year EICR domestic testing (% of homes).	53.0%	60.1%	67.9%	75.5%	84.1%	91.8%	94.4%	96.8%
10 Year EICR domestic testing (% of homes).	72.0%	76.4%	80.9%	86.7%	91.9%	95.8%	97.4%	98.4%
Communal EICRs (% of communal areas).	20.8%	33%	43.9%	48.5%	61.%	76.6%	80.8%	85.7%
Repairs over 28 days – HRA.	9,653	6,599	6,950	4,134	2,898	2,496	3,409	4,802
*Include Repairs and Damp and Mould from 27 October 2025.								

Areas identified by RSH as not compliant (continued)

	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
FRAs in High Rise buildings (% of buildings).	100%	100%	100%	30.4%	58.7%	97.8%	100%	100%
FRAs in Medium Rise buildings: (% of buildings).	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
FRAs Low Rise buildings: (% of buildings).	20.9%	92.9%	99.4%	99.8%	98.8%	100%	100%	100%
FRA remediation actions (snapshot number of live actions). *Exclude Best Practice from March 2025 and includes newly arising actions.	4,253	8,228	8,268	6,420	6,071	3,180	2,869	1,466
Legionella Risk Assessments (% of buildings covered (of 12,730 as of March 2026).			57.1%	62.1%	81.0%	90.43%	95.1%	96.7%

Wider Safety and Quality compliance data

Carbon Monoxide Detection / Alarms	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
Total detection in domestic dwellings.		96.6%	97.9%	98.8%	99.6%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%

Gas/Fuel Safety	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
Communal Boilers certification in date – annual.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Domestic dwellings certification in date – annual.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Properties with a capped gas supply - reduction in numbers.	40	32	24	19	20	22	23	21

Asbestos Safety	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
Common ways – Total rolling compliance.	99.4%	99.6%	99.8%	100%	100%	97.38%	99.5%	100%
Asbestos Re-inspection programme – Common ways. Rate of progress.		17.06%	94.9%	100%	24.7%	60.7%	99.5%	100%

Lift Safety (lifts & lifting equipment)	Jun 24	Sep 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jun 25	Sep 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
Communal (Passenger) lifts (LOLER) servicing.	100%	100%	100%	97.5%	98.35%	97.54%	96.7%	99.2%
Domestic lift and stair lift, equipment servicing.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 7

Subject: City Plan Update

Date of meeting: 22 July 2026

Report of: Chair of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Steve Tremlett

Email: steve.tremlett@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All wards

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove's Local Plan (known as the City Plan) is the city's key planning policy document. It sets out a vision for the city's future development and evolution and has clear links to the delivery of Outcome 1 of the Council Plan 'A city to be proud of', particularly the aim of 'developing Brighton & Hove as a place where people want to live, work and learn'.
- 1.2 The City Plan will set the direction for how our city will grow and thrive, shaping the places where people live, work and enjoy to create a better Brighton & Hove for all. It will show where new homes and commercial spaces should go, how development should respect the city's unique character and heritage, and how sustainable growth will be matched with the right infrastructure and green spaces.
- 1.3 The City Plan was last discussed at Scrutiny Committee in July 2025 and members noted the work that had been done to that point. This report provides an update on the work undertaken since then and changes to the planning system and national planning policy that will affect the scope of the plan and the way that it is prepared.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview & Scrutiny notes the progress to date and future timetable for the new City Plan.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove's new Local Plan (which will now be known as the 'Brighton & Hove City Plan' rather than 'City Plan 2041' as previously) will, on adoption, be the primary development plan document for the city and will set a clear vision and planning strategy for the city moving forward. It will replace the existing City Plan Part One and Part Two with a single document.
- 3.2 Work on a new City Plan has been underway for some time, with a first stage of consultation scoping the Key Issues the new plan should address being undertaken from 4 November 2024 to 20 January 2025. This consultation generated a good response from the public and other consultees, with over 700 responses received and provides a robust evidence base to support the new plan. This consultation was the focus of the last discussion at Scrutiny in July 2025.
- 3.3 In February 2025, after the completion of the Key Issues consultation, the new government announced it intended to continue a process of planning reform started by the previous government by introducing a new system for plan-making through implementing relevant provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Transitional arrangements were put in place to enable plans already in production to continue under the existing system if they could be submitted to government for examination by a hard deadline of 31 December 2026. As the City Plan was at a very early stage of preparation, achieving this deadline would have been extremely challenging. Given the risk of significant aborted work if the deadline was missed it was considered prudent to bring the plan forward under the new system.
- 3.4 The City Plan could not progress further under the new system until regulations implementing it came into effect on 25 March 2026. Key aspects of the new system are:
- Plans to be simpler and shorter
 - Plans to be produced within a 30-month timescale
 - A more proportionate approach to the required evidence
 - A series of three 'Gateway' assessments. Gateway 1 is a self-assessment of an authority's readiness to begin the 30-month plan-making process, including establishing project management and governance arrangements, the approach to consulting and engaging on the plan and the anticipated plan content. The second and third gateways involve assessments by the Planning Inspectorate and are intended to identify issues with plan content and evidence at an early stage to ensure plans only proceed to the final public examination process when they are ready.
- 3.5 It should also be noted that an updated National Planning Policy Framework is expected in July 2026. This will introduce clearer national decision-making planning policies that apply everywhere in England. These national policies now deal with many matters which apply consistently across England that were previously set out in local plans. The scope of the City Plan will therefore be more limited than before.

- 3.6 The extent of work already completed means the council has been able to commit to formally starting work on the Plan promptly after the introduction of the new system and has therefore been awarded £108,000 of government funding to assist with its preparation in line with the accelerated timescale.
- 3.7 The plan will cover the council's existing administrative boundaries, excluding the area that falls within the South Downs National Park. Guidance has been sought from MHCLG as to whether the formal commencement of plan-making should be paused to await the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The advice is that it should be progressed based on the council's existing boundaries and not reflect any changes that may result from LGR. This is because any change would not come into effect until April 2028 so the council would not be in a position to plan for any extended area until then. This position is being queried with the ministry as it could result in the council adopting a new City Plan that does not align with amended administrative boundaries.
- 3.8 A Local Plan Timetable was agreed by Cabinet in May and is included in Appendix 1. This sets out the key dates in the process to prepare a 'new-style plan'. The first step is to publish a 'notice of the intention to commence plan-making', a formal public announcement indicating that the council is starting the process of preparing a new local plan. There then begins a minimum 4-month 'getting ready' period before the Gateway 1 self-assessment which will set out details of the council's readiness for formally beginning the preparation phase of the City Plan.
- 3.9 During this 4-month period the new regulations require a 'scoping consultation' to be undertaken. The 'Key Issues' consultation was undertaken in winter 2024/25 was also effectively a scoping consultation, and it is unfortunate that the new regulations require this previous stage to be largely duplicated. It is also unfortunate that government deadlines for securing additional funding mean that the consultation must take place over the summer. Summer holidays may reduce awareness amongst residents and businesses and other stakeholders, and staff holidays will reduce the available resources to prepare for, hold and attend events. This has been mitigated to some extent by extending the consultation period to begin on 14 July and end on 7 September, much longer than the minimum 21 days set out in government guidance.
- 3.10 To minimise the risk of consultation fatigue and to avoid asking for the same information twice, a streamlined, focused approach was agreed by Cabinet for this consultation stage. A short, simple, document has been produced which succinctly outlines what the City Plan is, and the headline topics that it is proposed to address, framed as building on information provided through the Key Issues consultation and in the new draft National Planning Policy Framework. In line with the legal requirements it will also ask how respondents would like to be involved in shaping the plan once the formal preparation phase begins following Gateway 1, expected to be in October 2026. It makes clear that a major consultation on the Plan's Content and Evidence will take place in 2027.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The option of not progressing a Local Plan is not considered a reasonable alternative option because the council has a statutory duty to produce one.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 A Key Issues consultation took place from 4 November 2024 to 20 January 2025 which involved extensive efforts to reach all parts of the local community. Over 700 responses were received, far exceeding the total at the equivalent stage for the existing City Plan Part Two. A summary of the responses has been published on the council's website. Key headlines include broad support for exploring all means of increasing housing density to meet the city's high housing need figure, including gentle densification in the suburbs and taller buildings in appropriate areas. The affordability of housing was a key concern, with strong support for the provision of genuinely affordable housing, especially more social housing.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report as it is for noting. The cost of officer time, document production and consultation associated with City Plan will be funded from existing revenue budget within the Development Planning service.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted (03/06/26):

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 This report is for noting only and does not involve a decision; therefore there are no direct legal implications arising.
- 7.2 The preparation of the City Plan is subject to statutory requirements and the Council will be required to comply with these requirements to minimise the risk of legal challenges during the progression of the Plan.

Name of lawyer consulted: Katie Kam Date consulted (01 06 2026):

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 A detailed risk-log is maintained to support work on the City Plan. This has been updated to reflect the publication of the new plan-making regulations.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The new City Plan will help deliver equalities outcomes from new development. A Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEQIA) will be carried out on draft policies to ensure that they are coordinated to address equalities, and health and well-being outcomes throughout the city.

- 9.2 Data collected through 315 responses to the optional equalities questions in the Key Issues consultation indicated that respondents' profiles were within 10% points of the city average (2021 census) on characteristics of disability, ethnicity, religion, sex and gender identity. Sexual identity was within 15% of the average.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The City Plan is required to be accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The intention is to broaden the scope of this to ensure that the social and economic aspects of sustainable development are also included to ensure a more well-rounded consideration of sustainable development.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 10.1 A Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEQIA) will be carried out on draft policies to ensure that they are coordinated to address equalities, and health and well-being outcomes throughout the city.

Other Implications

11. Procurement implications

- 11.1 None relevant to this report.

12. Crime & disorder implications:

- 12.1 None relevant to this report.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 The Place Overview & Scrutiny is asked to note the work that has been completed to date and the future work programme for the new City Plan.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices [delete if not applicable]

1. City Plan Timetable

2. Background documents [delete if not applicable]

1. Key Issues Stage – Interim Consultation Statement (March 2025)

Brighton & Hove City Plan timetable

First published: 1 June 2026

Timetable

The government has introduced a new 30-month timescale in which we have to produce the City Plan. The timetable includes 3 Gateway Assessments with government to check our progress. Our timetable for preparing the City Plan is published below, in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations.

Plan event	Date
Publish Notice of Intention to Commence	23 June 2026
Scoping consultation	14 July to 7 September 2026
Gateway 1 Self Assessment	28 October 2026
Proposed Plan content and evidence consultation	12 July to 13 September 2027
Gateway 2	1 November 2027
Proposed City Plan consultation	20 June to 15 August 2028
Gateway 3	11 September 2028
Submission of proposed City Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination	25 October 2028
Full council to consider adoption of the proposed Plan	March 2029

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 8

Subject: Report of the Heritage Task & Finish Group

Date of meeting: 22nd July 2026

Report of: Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Natalie Sacks-Hammond

Email: Natalie.sacks-hammond@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Heritage Task & Finish Group (TFG) for consideration and review by Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The report looks into the issues faced in preserving the city's heritage assets and investigates what other initiatives or measures can be put in place to help the council support owners, residents and community groups to look after their buildings at a time where there are limited resources available.
- 1.2 The report has produced 15 recommendations based on evidence gathered during the TFG process. The report is included as Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the Task & Finish Group report on Heritage attached as Appendix 1
- 2.2 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee refers the findings of the Task & Finish Group on Heritage to Cabinet for consideration.

3. Context and background information

3.1 Task & Finish Groups

- 3.1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council's Constitution permits Overview & Scrutiny Committees to establish informal task & finish groups (TFGs) to look in depth at specific issues.
- 3.1.2 A Notice of Motion was agreed by Full Council in July 2025 calling for better protection of local heritage and noting the significant reputational damage

the council suffers when heritage is left to deteriorate. At the 14th October 2025 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee, members agreed to establish a TFG to explore issues related to preserving heritage assets in the city. The group's aim was to develop a report with recommendations that will support the development of the council's new Heritage Strategy.

- 3.1.3 TFGs typically hold a series of meetings with witnesses, potentially including council officers, executive members, other councils, public sector partners, national organisations, businesses, and members of the public. Using the evidence gathered, the TFG agrees a report with recommendations which is then submitted for consideration, initially by the parent O&S committee. If the parent O&S committee so decides, the TFG report is then referred to the appropriate decision-making body, such as Cabinet or Council for consideration.

3.2 The Heritage TFG

- 3.2.1 The Heritage TFG consisted of: Cllrs Amanda Evans (Chair), Julie Cattell, Amanda Grimshaw, Carol Theobald, Ollie Sykes, Mark Earthey, and Mark Strong (Community Voluntary Sector).
- 3.2.2 The TFG held 7 evidence-gathering sessions between December 2025 and April 2026, hearing from 20 witnesses. In May 2026, the TFG agreed a report which included a series of recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.
- 3.2.3 The Task & Finish Group recognised that the definition of heritage can encompass a wide range of elements, including cultural, historical, and social aspects. However, for the purposes of this work, the focus was on historic buildings, structures and artefacts in the city, including lesser known, but still 'at risk' assets.
- 3.2.4 The Heritage TFG was established to look at the challenges facing the preservation of Brighton & Hove's heritage assets and to identify practical measures to support their long-term sustainability. The deteriorating state of heritage assets across the city has been raised by residents and councillors. Acknowledging the current difficulties in local authority funding and the high demand from statutory services, the council wants to reimagine its role as facilitator in helping people to look after their buildings.
- 3.2.5 There are high costs involved in maintaining heritage assets, which can make them unaffordable to custodians. This is further impeded by strict planning policies and the effects of climate change. There is a lack of funding available and national pots like the National Lottery are becoming increasingly competitive. It is difficult to restore assets to a reasonable standard from which they can explore financially sustainable models. There is a strong level of public interest in heritage with residents and community groups keen to help; it would make sense for the council to harness this and find new ways to work collaboratively for the benefit of the city.
- 3.2.6 The report planned to focus on the following areas:

- To better understand the barriers that owners and residents face when looking after heritage assets and what kind of support would be useful
- To explore how the Council might reimagine its role as a facilitator, especially in the context of reduced funding, by identifying alternative solutions and sources of funding for heritage projects
- To understand how other councils and relevant organisations ensure heritage sites are protected and whether there are initiatives or examples of best practise that the council might want to adopt
- To explore how the council might work with community groups to assist them in leading on some heritage projects.

3.2.7 The TFG engaged with a wide range of witnesses throughout the process, including council officers from heritage teams and Visit Brighton; custodians of heritage assets such as local residents, community groups and the University of Sussex; representatives from heritage societies and trusts; and officers from other local authorities to share best practice. The group also heard from Cllr Birgit Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, who outlined the administration's vision for the city; and a representative from Historic England, who provided insight into the national funding landscape.

3.3 Recommendations from the report

3.3.1 The TFG has made 15 recommendations. These are:

Council support

- The council to undertake a review of signage and wayfinding in the city in partnership with community groups
- To review council owned heritage assets and consider the different Trust models that exist that could allow community groups to take on the responsibility for some assets, whether through direct ownership or management; and to support groups to do so
- To support community groups to develop plans or strategies for heritage assets, ensuring that well-prepared, fundable proposals are in place so projects can move forward quickly when funding opportunities arise.

New Initiatives

- To support community groups in creating art and heritage trails to encourage visitors to disperse more around the city and visit areas they wouldn't normally go. To consider using incentives to increase participation.
- The council to support joint-ticketing and promotional partnerships between larger heritage assets (such as the Royal Pavilion) and smaller assets (such as the Regency Town House) to raise their profile, increase visitor numbers, and improve their long-term financial sustainability
- To explore alternative funding mechanisms where people can choose to invest in parts of the city/heritage assets
- The council to enable and support community-led maintenance of heritage assets.

Managing expectations

- To introduce a “code of conduct” or “service agreement” between the council and community groups when working in partnership.

Pooling resources and knowledge

- Create a network of community groups who can provide advice and mentorship to other community groups wanting to look after a heritage asset.

Lobbying government

- Depending on the outcome of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, the council should lobby central government to review and streamline planning requirements for routine building maintenance of listed buildings to reduce barriers for custodians
- Alongside Historic England, lobby central government to introduce more preventative funding for historic structures

Changing attitudes

- To add a paragraph to the Heritage Strategy committing to open and honest conversations about commemorating difficult periods in the city’s past and sensitively explaining and contextualising their impact for local communities
- To ensure the Heritage Strategy protects and restores heritage assets, reflects the full range of the city’s history, and supports good quality new development, so that heritage is not frozen in time but can continue to change and be used in ways that benefit the city and its communities.

Specific actions

- Consider adding Brunswick Square pavements on the local list (see appendix 1 p17)
- To support the installation of a sculpture in the Pavilion Gardens commemorating the Indian Soldiers in the First World War

3.3.2 The TFG report (Appendix 1) provides more information and context for each of these recommendations.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 Having noted this report, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee could choose not to refer the findings of the TFG report to Cabinet.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The TFG included a co-optee from the Community Voluntary Sector and the group spoke to a wide range of witnesses. It will be presented to all members of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this process.

Name of finance officer consulted: I CHAGONDA Date consulted
(dd/mm/yy): 12/06/26

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The recommendations provide that the report of this informally constituted Task & Finish Group be noted only by Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee before being referred to Cabinet for its consideration. As a result, no direct legal implications have been identified at this stage.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 16.06.2026

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 There is a risk that some recommendations would require a certain amount of time from a relevant council officer, and it is acknowledged that there is low staff capacity in this area. This may affect the implementation of some recommendations.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The report makes a number of recommendations aimed at improving the inclusivity and accessibility of heritage assets, including enhanced wayfinding, the introduction of heritage trails across the city, stronger partnership working with residents and community groups, and a commitment to representing the city's full history within museums and heritage sites. In areas of higher deprivation, where residents may face barriers to accessing heritage, a focus on community involvement, skills development and better connections between groups could help encourage wider participation, particularly among those who may not traditionally engage with the city's heritage.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The report has positive sustainability implications, promoting the long-term preservation and active use of heritage assets through preventative maintenance, adaptive reuse, and community involvement. These approaches support environmental sustainability by reducing the need for new development and minimising deterioration. However, there is a need to balance the preservation of heritage assets with adaptation to modern standards and the impacts of climate change, to ensure they remain viable and contribute to a greener future.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 Heritage assets contribute to a sense of place, community pride, and social connection. The proposed heritage trails, better wayfinding and community involvement can encourage walking, outdoor activity, and greater engagement with the city's environment. Strengthening partnerships with community groups and enabling local participation can also support social cohesion and volunteering opportunities, which are positive for personal wellbeing.

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

12.1 None identified

13. Crime & disorder implications:

13.1 None identified

14. Conclusion

14.1 The committee is asked to refer the findings of the Heritage Task & Finish Group report to Cabinet for consideration. The TFG recommendations are based on a robust process of hearing and evaluating evidence from a number of witnesses.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Report of the Heritage Task & Finish Group
2. Minutes from the Task & Finish Groups

Report of the Heritage Task and Finish Group

Reporting to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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Chair's Foreword

Like much of the UK, Brighton & Hove has a lot of history, and its journey from fishing village to royal playground and high society getaway, and then by stages to the popular and diverse cultural city-by-the-sea we all know and love has made it the unique place it is today.

However, again in common with many other towns and cities across the country, we have found ourselves over recent decades struggling to look after even our most famous heritage assets, with iconic structures like Madeira Terraces and the Royal Pavilion requiring more love – and money – lavished on them as the years go by to keep up with the ravages of age and climate change.

And if it is difficult to find creative ways to maintain our most famous treasures, how much more so to find solutions for the many lesser-known but still much valued buildings dotted around the city that need upkeep if we are not to lose them?

So, this task-and-finish group set out to talk to community groups old and new, charitable trustees from various local and national organisations, our expert officers in-house and those from other councils about their many and varied experiences with their own historical assets, to see if we could come up with a slate of recommendations that might help a bit in finding a way forward in these straightened times.

It's such a big subject, and we had some absolutely fascinating conversations along the way – we really wanted to make (self-funded!) site-visits to hear more about many of the places we discussed, but alas time wasn't on our side. At the end of it all I think we still wish we could have covered so much more, but we hope that we have added something to the conversation that can help inform the next Heritage Strategy for the city, as well as assist in building proper partnerships between the council, resident and community groups, funders, trusts and businesses to take our vibrant, growing and fantastic city forward to the next stage of its living history.

All that remains is for me to issue heartfelt thanks to the members of the TFG and all the people who came to talk to us for their huge part in those fascinating conversations I mentioned, as well as the brilliant work of scrutiny officer Natalie Sacks-Hammond, without whose input we'd never have made it to here!



Cllr Amanda Evans – Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Executive Summary

The Heritage Task & Finish Group was established to look at the challenges facing the preservation of Brighton & Hove's heritage assets and to identify practical measures to support their long-term sustainability. Through a series of evidence-gathering sessions with residents, community groups, local authorities, custodians of heritage assets and heritage organisations, the group explored barriers to maintenance, funding, and effective partnership working. The findings are intended to inform the development of Brighton & Hove City Council's new Heritage Strategy.

The group found that many heritage assets across the city are deteriorating due to a combination of rising repair costs, limited funding, and regulatory requirements. Strict planning and conservation policies, while essential for protecting historic integrity, can increase costs and delay essential maintenance. This often results in a cycle of decline, where preventative work is unaffordable and reactive repairs become significantly more expensive over time.

It is vital to secure sustainable funding to keep buildings open and in use. There is heavy reliance on competitive external funding avenues, which often do not meet demand, particularly for smaller or lesser-known heritage assets. While larger, high-profile sites may attract investment, this can limit opportunities for other assets. The group identified the need to explore alternative funding mechanisms, including income generation, partnerships, and innovative financing approaches to support heritage conservation.

Community groups play a vital and growing role in protecting and promoting heritage assets. They bring local expertise, commitment, and fundraising capability, and in some cases have successfully delivered major restoration projects. However, they face challenges including limited capacity, funding constraints, and difficulties navigating council processes. The group concluded that stronger, more structured partnerships between the council and community organisations are essential, supported by clearer communication, shared expectations, and opportunities for collaboration.

The report also highlights the importance of adopting a more flexible and forward-looking approach to heritage management. This includes enabling sensitive adaptation of historic buildings to meet modern needs, including climate resilience, sustainability, and the long-term health of the building, while ensuring that heritage policies do not prevent innovation or viable reuse. The group emphasised that heritage should not be preserved in a way that freezes the city in time, but instead should support a vibrant, evolving urban environment.

Additionally, the group recognised the importance of inclusive storytelling and the need to better reflect the entirety of the city's history, including more difficult or underrepresented narratives. This approach can strengthen public engagement and ensure heritage remains relevant to all communities.

Overall, the group recommends a shift towards a more preventative, collaborative, and enabling approach. The council's role should increasingly focus on facilitating action, supporting asset owners and community groups, improving access to funding, encouraging partnership working, and promoting innovative uses of heritage buildings. These changes will help ensure that Brighton & Hove's heritage is protected, enhanced, and sustained for future generations while continuing to contribute to the city's identity, pride, and economy.

Recommendations

Council support

1. The council to undertake a review of signage and wayfinding in the city in partnership with community groups.

Throughout the Task & Finish Group meetings, signage and wayfinding in the city was brought up, referring to old street signs that were misleading, and the out-of-date wayfinding information on ‘monoliths’ around the city. The monoliths need to be kept clean from graffiti and stickers with the information being regularly checked and updated. Nick Tyson of the Regency Town House said that having a simple brown sign on Western Road pointing to the Town House would help with promotion and increase footfall as passer-bys were his target audience¹. Charlotte Barrow from Visit Brighton agreed that wayfinding was outdated and needed a review². When meeting with Helmut Lusser from the Hove Civic Society, the group learned that the society were seeking to take over responsibility for updating the Hove Heritage Boards and if they were to get funding, they would work in partnership with local societies, historians and the museum. The Council could encourage and support a community group to take on the audit of signage and wayfinding. Potential funding sources could be explored such as Active Travel England, parking revenue, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Seafront Development Board.

2. To review council owned heritage assets and consider the different Trust models that exist that could allow community groups to take on the responsibility for some assets, whether through direct ownership or management; and to support groups to do so.

Brighton & Hove City Council owns a large number of heritage assets, and it would be beneficial to take a proactive and strategic approach to reviewing them. This should include consideration of their condition, costs, community value, and whether the council is best placed to continue managing them. The council could explore alternative models that involve communities more directly. The group heard about a range of trust models, including full transfer of ownership to a trust, as demonstrated by the Historic Coventry Trust, where it was noted that: “There is a lack of money, focus, time and too much else going on for councils that it makes sense to transfer the ownership over to organisations like the Historic Coventry Trust.”³ Other approaches include community led management, with the council retaining ownership, such as the model used for the Royal Pavilion. In the best interests of some heritage buildings, it may be beneficial to transfer ownership or responsibility for certain council-owned assets to community groups, provided they have the necessary resources and capacity, with support available to help them become a Trust. National Lottery funding can be obtained to cover set up costs and there is advice and free support for this available from Community Works.

3. To support community groups to develop plans or strategies for heritage assets, ensuring that well-prepared, fundable proposals are in place so projects can move forward quickly when funding opportunities arise.

Alfie Stroud from Historic England said that the ‘Kingsway to the sea’ project didn’t need much help from his organisation because “it was well conceived and ready to go when the funding became available”⁴ which demonstrates that being proactive and prepared can lead to gaining funding quicker. Helmut Lusser from the Hove Civic Society said that “... if there is already a plan in place, it can be implemented as soon

¹ Nick Tyson, TFG Meeting 1

² Charlotte Barrow, TFG Meeting 2

³ Ian Harrabin, TFG Meeting 1

⁴ Alfie Stroud, TFG Meeting 1

as the investment has been found. If there is no plan, then nothing happens.”⁵ and Guy Smyth from “Friends of the Pepper Pot” felt that a “micro-area strategy” was needed⁶. Supporting community groups to have plans in place through providing advice and expertise could help them with funding opportunities and ensure heritage assets are restored more quickly.

New initiatives

4. **To support community groups in creating art and heritage trails to encourage visitors to disperse more around the city and visit areas they wouldn't normally go. To consider using incentives to increase participation.**

Throughout the Task & Finish Group meetings, the idea of heritage or art trails was raised. Charlotte Barrow of Visit Brighton said that it would be good to disperse visitors across the city more and that trails are a good way to do this, which could incorporate the more obscure heritage assets and raise their profile. It was noted that there are many trails in other cities including London and Stevenage, which are popular. Derek Wright wanted to create a trail that went through every ward in the city and end up on the Downs with information boards or QR codes providing information along the way⁷. The Hove Civic Society has already started an open-air sculpture trail on the seafront and are looking for half a million pounds for the next 2 sculptures⁸. Mark Strong said that adding incentives to these trails can be very effective as people enjoy ticking things off and remain engaged. It would be beneficial to have both printed and digital versions of these trails. Although Cllr Evans pointed out that “having everything listed as a heritage trail would bring people visiting the major attractions to also see the more obscure ones if they happened to be on the route. Although this would help with tourism, it wouldn't necessarily result in money being raised and spent on the upkeep of those assets.”⁹ There is an appetite for this, and it could be something the council supports and encourages community groups to create, possibly via Visit Brighton, Community Works or another similar organisation.

5. **The council to support joint-ticketing and promotional partnerships between larger heritage assets (such as the Royal Pavilion) and smaller assets (such as the Regency Town House) to raise their profile, increase visitor numbers, and improve their long-term financial sustainability.**

Brighton & Hove has a large amount of heritage assets, with the Royal Pavilion being the biggest and most renowned. This means that smaller or lesser promoted heritage assets can feel a bit forgotten about. Nick Tyson, the curator of the Regency Town House, said that they would benefit from more support from the council to help raise its profile, that it suffers when it comes to grants because the Royal Pavilion always gets the funding. “The council could develop a business model with joint tickets with the Royal Pavilion as they get hundreds of visitors. The Town House can only deal with a small number of visitors but could sell up to a practical limit with a joint ticket, which would instantly mean they are more financially viable and could use this money to finish the restoration.”¹⁰ This idea was echoed by Ian Harrabin of the Historic Coventry Trust, who described the “National Trust effect”; his organisation

⁵ Helmut Lusser, TFG Meeting 6

⁶ Guy Smyth, TFG Meeting 4

⁷ Derek Wright, TFG Meeting 5

⁸ Helmut Lusser, TFG Meeting 6

⁹ Cllr Evans, TFG Meeting 4

¹⁰ Nick Tyson, TFG Meeting 1

was losing £100k pa on running the Charterhouse before partnering with the National Trust. Ian Harrabin said “the National Trust has 5 million members so all they do is put the building in the brochure on their website and people turn up! It instantly brings in people and it’s vital to sustain this.”¹¹ The council could explore opportunities for discounted tickets with local transport providers including the bike-hire scheme and consider whether the development of a “city card” would be viable. Visit Brighton could coordinate these partnerships.

6. To explore alternative funding mechanisms where people can choose to invest in parts of the city/heritage assets

There are a lot of residents who are passionate and care about their local heritage, and many of them have put their own time and money into this, such as Nick Tyson of the Regency Town House and the members of the Saltdean Lido Trust. Derek Wright talked about other Councils, such as Rother, who run a lottery where residents choose what the money goes towards; this could be introduced in Brighton & Hove with proceeds going towards Heritage assets in need of repair. There was also a suggestion of setting up a fund for those who have a bit more money in their pockets who may choose to invest in the city. Lewis Church, BHCC Acting Strategic Manager for Culture & Creative Industries, talked about tapping into philanthropic networks in the city as part of a project for cultural organisations¹². The Better Brighton & Hove Fund could also present an opportunity to support heritage assets, particularly smaller and lesser-known sites, with their heritage value informing the prioritisation of resident-led proposals in decision-making. Any of these avenues would be worth exploring to generate funding for the city’s heritage.

7. The council to enable and support community-led maintenance of heritage assets.

Allan Grainger of the Brighton Society raised the issue of the seafront shelters that are in disrepair, and he questioned why quotes for these projects end up so large and then doesn’t happen when “all it needed was a lick of paint that could be done straight away”¹³ The ‘cucumber benches’ were re-painted as a community effort and it is clear that residents want to do more. A pragmatic community response could include providing clear guidance, reducing administrative barriers, and offering access to technical advice or resources that empower local residents and community groups to undertake timely and practical repair work on heritage assets within their areas. The council could support this by giving groups agency to act within defined parameters, following a model similar to initiatives such as the “Tidy Up” team¹⁴. Under this model, volunteers are upskilled through training, made aware of associated risks, provided with appropriate equipment and guidance, and supported to carry out the work effectively.

Managing expectations

8. To introduce a “code of conduct” or “service agreement” between the council and community groups when working in partnership.

In the same way as the council has a service agreement with the University of Sussex as a custodian of heritage assets, a similar agreement could be made with community groups looking after heritage assets. The group learned that community

¹¹ Ian Harrabin, TFG Meeting 1

¹² Lewis Church, TFG Meeting 4

¹³ Allan Grainger, TFG Meeting 5

¹⁴ [Volunteer with the Tidy Up Team](#)

organisations have a lot to give, such as time, expertise, and resources but often felt that they did not have the support of the council. Helmut Lusser of Hove Civic Society said that they want to work with the council but there seems to be an “us and them” situation where they feel like they are “stepping on Council Officer’s toes”. This is something that needs to be resolved if the council wants more involvement from the local community but it needs to be a real partnership. “They need to see the potential in what the community can offer”¹⁵. Other guests echoed this feeling including the Saltdean Lido Trust who “had a solid case that it would benefit the city and attract visitors but it took a long time to be heard”¹⁶. Mark Strong reported that Oxford Council has a code of conduct between them and community groups that sets expectations for both parties to sign up to, helping to build trust and a positive ongoing relationship. This is something that could be replicated at Brighton & Hove City Council and could be managed by an organisation such as Community Works.

Pooling resources and knowledge

9. Create a network of community groups who can provide advice and mentorship to other community groups wanting to look after a heritage asset.

The group heard about the passion and care that residents have towards heritage in the city and that many people in community groups have a lot to give in terms of knowledge, experience, skills and expertise that could benefit others if they were to pool resources. Rebecca Crook, of the Saltdean Lido Trust, said they would be happy to talk to other community groups if they want advice and that it would have been really helpful to have a facilitator role to connect people. “There are lots of things they would have done differently and they could share lessons learned.”¹⁷. Mark Strong mentioned that there is a Confederation of Community Groups in Oxford where they collaborate on big projects going on in the city. A network could meet in person at set times during the year to discuss heritage issues and work collaboratively to resolve them. The group are not suggesting that this network would be offering formal advice on the planning process or commenting on particular planning applications but a collaborative space to share best practise, ideas and potential plans for individual heritage assets, to discuss challenges community groups may be facing, and to provide support to each other.

Creating a network could be the solution to other issues raised at the Task & Finish Group as follows:

- a. Providing advice or guidance around how to navigate council systems as a resident/community group (e.g. what an FOI is, the purpose of a deputation etc).

Rebecca Crook from the Saltdean Lido Trust said it probably wouldn’t have taken so long to restore the Lido if they had understood how to properly navigate and use council systems to progress the cause.¹⁸. A mentorship programme could be beneficial to those groups struggling to be heard.

- b. Coordinating all funding avenues both available to the council and community groups so there is oversight of all funding bids, ensuring they don’t end up in competition with each other.

¹⁵ Helmut Lusser, TFG Meeting 6

¹⁶ Rebecca Crook, TFG Meeting 3

¹⁷ Rebecca Crook, TFG Meeting 3

¹⁸ Rebecca Crook, TFG Meeting 3

This issue was raised by several guests at the Task & Finish Group meetings where it became very clear that having a Grade 1 listed building like the Royal Pavilion has meant that smaller heritage assets have missed out on funding. Competition for funding is high and there were several examples where the smaller assets couldn't compete against more 'valuable' sites, including the Regency Town House, the Pepper Pot and the Saltdean Lido. Having a collaborative body sharing funding plans could help with funding strategies and reduce competition.

c. Legacy/ succession planning

In some cases, there are often one or two key people running these groups with no succession plan, such as Nick Tyson of the Regency Town House, who expressed concern about what happens to it when he is no longer able to put his own time and money into it. Working within a wider network might help identify others who want to take this on.

d. Sharing knowledge on smaller funders and foundations

Alfie Stroud of Historic England said "The best way is to work in partnerships to reach small grants and foundations"¹⁹. There are funding streams available, but groups do not always know about them so through having a network, this kind of information could be shared easily.

Lobbying government

10. Depending on the outcome of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, the council should lobby central government to review and streamline planning requirements for routine building maintenance of listed buildings to reduce barriers for custodians

The group heard about the huge costs involved in the upkeep of heritage assets that had to be done in a particular way to protect the heritage nature. One example was at the University of Sussex where they wanted to clean up the facade of some of the buildings, estimating a cost of £20 - 30k, but it ended up costing over £500k due to the building being listed and having to be cleaned in a certain way to preserve the brickwork²⁰ and the seafront shelters and Madeira Terraces that had to be treated in a specific way to avoid rust re-surfacing and to use the same material as the original even if it's not fit for purpose. Relaxing the rules associated with these low-impact works could make essential upkeep more affordable for custodians and would support better long-term maintenance of the city's heritage assets, reduce unnecessary delays, and help avoid escalating repair costs caused by delayed works. However, this is not within the control of the council as these requirements are decided by central government.

11. Alongside Historic England, lobby central government to introduce more preventative funding for historic structures

As reported by the Saltdean Lido Trust, if it takes a long time to gain permission to restore a heritage building, it can deteriorate even further and will inevitably cost more. Cllr Miller felt that national funding should focus on the regular inspection of assets and need to provide more preventative funding. "We shouldn't be letting buildings get to such poor states of decay and then spend vast amounts of money to

¹⁹ Alfie Stroud, TFG Meeting 2

²⁰ Matt Kitson, TFG Meeting 2

rescue them. It is cheaper to be preventative.”²¹ Historic England provides a certain amount of clout so partnering with them to lobby central government might be more successful.

Changing attitudes

- 12. To add a paragraph to the Heritage Strategy committing to open and honest conversations about commemorating difficult periods in the city’s past and sensitively explaining and contextualising their impact for local communities.**

Brighton & Hove and Bristol have a rich history, which includes the transatlantic slave trade that both cities profited from. Discussions with Peter Insole from Bristol City Council highlighted the decision to place the Colston statue in a museum and that the council “...have been raising awareness of this legacy across the whole city, telling the story and talking about how this causes equality, diversity and inclusion issues”²² Part of their new Heritage Strategy is a commemoration memorialisation section that talks about who should be remembered and how.

Davinder Dhillon spoke about Indian soldiers treated at the Royal Pavilion during the First World War, a largely unacknowledged part of its history. Some members felt that they were doing the memory a disservice by not representing the true history. The city’s history continues to shape its identity, and the group believes that those interpreting and presenting it must do so honestly and transparently. There is a need for clearer expectations around how difficult histories are commemorated, while recognising that this does not detract from the valuable work already being undertaken by heritage groups across the city.

- 13. To ensure the Heritage Strategy protects and restores heritage assets, reflects the full range of the city’s history, and supports good quality new development, so that heritage is not frozen in time but can continue to change and be used in ways that benefit the city and its communities.**

The group noted tensions around preserving heritage sites “in aspic”, with some projects focusing on a single historical period, resistance to change from some community groups, and strict policies requiring buildings to remain as originally built. They felt these approaches should be challenged to avoid the city becoming a pastiche and to better reflect its full history. Examples of other buildings internationally show how views change over generations, such as the Eiffel Tower, which was loathed by the locals when it was first built but today it is a much loved and respected tourist attraction that revitalised the area and brings in considerable income. The Heritage Strategy should protect and maintain heritage assets while recognising the city as a living environment. It should support sensitive, high-quality development that meets modern needs, including climate resilience, sustainability, and the long-term health of the building, while celebrating the different periods in a building’s history. The City Plan is currently being developed, which is a policy document unlike the Heritage Strategy; therefore, it may be better placed to support the objectives included in this recommendation. Consideration to be given to include this in the City Plan.

²¹ Cllr Miller, TFG Meeting 6

²² Peter Insole, TFG Meeting 4

Specific actions

14. Consider adding Brunswick Square pavements on the local list

The entirety of Brunswick Square is listed except for some buildings to the rear and the pavements. Nick Tyson of the Regency Town House said “The pavement is of very high quality, shipped in from the South Devonian Ranges off Dublin’s coastline and laid with great care, which was also unprotected. Utility companies have since brutalised the pavement during digs and smashed the paving stones.”²³ The council needs to protect its heritage pavements and Steve Tremlett, BHCC Planning Policy and Heritage Manager, explained that some protection would be achieved through the planning process by adding it to the local list. In addition, the Council should consider using its engagement channels with utility companies to emphasise the importance of heritage paving to the city’s Regency assets. This would help ensure that utilities take appropriate care when lifting and reinstating paving, reducing the risk of inadvertent damage to these historic features. The group acknowledges that it was unable to speak to all groups in the city during this time-limited process and that there might be other areas that would also benefit from being put on the local list. They would encourage others to approach the council if they are in a similar situation.

15. To support the installation of a sculpture in the Pavilion Gardens commemorating the Indian Soldiers in the First World War

The group heard about the suggestion from Davinder Dhillon OBE DL (Chair of The Chattri Memorial Group) to commemorate the injured Indian soldiers in the First World War who were treated at the Royal Pavilion when it was used as a hospital, by installing a sculpture in the Pavilion Gardens. However, the funding for the Pavilion Gardens project aimed at taking it off the “at risk” register was to restore the natural boundary from the Regency period, and so far, the decision has been to only focus the designs on this period of time. The proposal for the sculpture wasn’t taken forward. There was a lot of support from members for this sculpture, who firmly believe that both the early and the more recent history could happily co-exist and admired the work Davinder Dhillon has done so far. The group believes strongly that the statue should go ahead, and that recommendations 12 and 13 in this report would support this outcome. There is no expectation that the council provide funding for this but to demonstrate support for Davinder’s ambition to raise funds and champion local backing for this project. The group are keen for the city not to be preserved “in aspic” and for its entire history to be represented at its relevant historical sites and museums.

Introduction

Purpose

The Heritage Task & Finish Group was established to examine the issues faced in preserving the city’s heritage assets and to investigate what other initiatives or measures could be put in place to help the council support owners, residents and community groups to look after their buildings at a time where there are limited resources available.

The group’s aim was to develop a report with recommendations that will support the development of the council’s new Heritage Strategy. The report will be presented to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee for agreement, and, subject to the committee’s endorsement, the report recommendations will be referred to Cabinet and/or partners for consideration.

²³ Nick Tyson, TFG Meeting 1

Members of the group: Cllr Evans (Chair), Cllr Cattell, Cllr Grimshaw, Cllr Theobald, Cllr Sykes, Cllr Earthey, and Mark Strong (Community Voluntary Sector). Steve Tremlett, BHCC Planning Policy and Heritage Manager, was invited as the relevant officer to provide any additional information and stay updated on the group's progress.

The Task & Finish Group held 7 meetings with a total of 20 guests who spoke to the group about their experiences and work with heritage assets. All evidence gained during these meetings has been used to form the recommendations.

Definition

*"Our heritage is what we have inherited from the past to value and enjoy in the present, and to preserve and pass on to future generations."*²⁴

The Task & Finish Group recognised that the definition of heritage can encompass a wide range of elements, including cultural, historical, and social aspects. However, for the purposes of this work, the focus was on historic buildings, structures and artefacts in the city, and including lesser known, but still 'at risk' assets. The group explored how to preserve heritage assets during times of limited funding by developing new ways of supporting community groups, generating income, and applying best practice drawn from other local authorities and organisations. The group has produced recommendations to support the preservation of heritage assets in the city.

Heritage Strategy

The council is currently working on its new Heritage Strategy. The recommendations from the Task & Finish Group will feed into the development of this strategy. The timeline for the strategy has been altered to facilitate this. The Heritage Strategy will be agreed by Cabinet following a period of public consultation.

The council wants to reimagine its role as facilitator in helping people to look after their buildings, of which some may be in disrepair, at a time when funding and resources are scarce. "There remains a need to raise awareness of what makes the city's heritage so important, to develop a positive city-wide appreciation of these special qualities and to create a pride in the historic environment and confidence in its future conservation." - BHCC Conservation Strategy, 2015

The Issue

The look and feel of the city are a key priority for Brighton & Hove City Council where conserving and developing the unique culture and heritage of the city contributes to Outcome 1 of achieving the Council Plan: "A city to be proud of".

The deteriorating state of heritage assets across the city has been raised by residents and councillors. This includes iconic sites such as the railings and shelters on the seafront and Madeira Terraces as well as lesser-known assets such as the Pepper Pot in Queen's Park and the Dovecote in Patcham. A Notice of Motion was agreed by Full Council in July 2025 calling for better protection of local heritage and noting the significant reputational damage the council suffers when heritage is left to deteriorate²⁵. The council faces ongoing challenges in maintaining the heritage assets in its ownership, and many private and community owners of assets are experiencing similar difficulties. This reflects the wider, fragile financial position of local authorities in England, which are contending with rising demand for statutory services, long-term reductions in funding and limited scope to raise income locally. As statutory services for the most vulnerable are prioritised, resources are

²⁴ [What is Heritage? | The Heritage Council:](#)

²⁵ <https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s208848/CG%20NOM%20Looking%20after%20our%20heritage.html?CT=2>

inevitably redirected away from areas such as heritage. In an environment of sustained financial pressure, this has led to the continued deterioration of heritage assets.

To develop recommendations on how the council could work with residents to support the protection of heritage buildings, the group first needed a clear understanding of the barriers currently faced by those responsible for heritage assets. The group spoke to a wide range of witnesses including residents, council officers, other local authorities, custodians of heritage assets, and Historic England. Evidence was gathered across multiple meetings, and this report explores actions that could be introduced to better support the upkeep of heritage assets in the city.

Key Findings

High costs

The most frequently cited issue was the high cost of repairs, which is often exacerbated by strict requirements put in place to preserve the heritage nature of assets. These requirements often mean they must use like-for-like materials, even when they may no longer be fit for purpose. Cllr Birgit Miller expressed this concern about the seafront railings, “The cast-iron foundry is able to repair much but it seems counterproductive to recast missing sections with the same material when we know it doesn’t last”²⁶. Allan Grainger of the Brighton Society questioned why relatively minor repairs to the seafront shelters resulted in disproportionately high costs, which meant nothing was actioned²⁷. The estimated cost was £100k due to the specific materials needed and the amount of work it would take. For some repairs, custodians must follow rigid guidelines on the processes that must be used, which increases the cost considerably. For example, the University of Sussex originally estimated £20 - £30k to clean the facade of a listed building but it ended up costing £500k²⁸. These requirements are barriers to the ongoing upkeep of listed buildings and structures, discouraging owners from making necessary repairs.

If the building is listed or in a conservation area, it might need planning permission which can also take a long time to be granted, during which time the asset continues to degrade and its condition worsens, ultimately increasing costs. Catherine Jeater from Southwark Council spoke of an elderly lady who owned a Georgian property, which was only fully restored following her death and its subsequent sale²⁹. Cllr Miller argued that it is cheaper to be preventative and that national funding needs to be focused on the regular inspection of the state of buildings and that there needs to be more preventative funding available. “We shouldn’t be letting buildings get to such poor states of decay and then spend vast amounts of money to rescue them”³⁰.

Recommendations:

- **Alongside Historic England, lobby central government to introduce more preventative funding for historic structures**

Difficulty in achieving financial sustainability

Individuals, such as Nick Tyson from the Regency Town House, put a lot of their own money into the restoration of heritage buildings and are concerned that there is no legacy³¹; they don’t know what will happen to the asset when they are unable to continue to contribute to

²⁶ Cllr Miller, TFG Meeting 6

²⁷ Allan Grainger, TFG Meeting 5

²⁸ Matt Kitson, TFG Meeting 2

²⁹ Catherine Jeater, TFG Meeting 3

³⁰ Cllr Miller, TFG Meeting 6

³¹ Nick Tyson, TFG Meeting 1

these costs. Heritage buildings need to become financially sustainable and generate income in some way. Many of the witnesses reported that repurposing old buildings can save them and generate money, but they need to be fully restored or at least in a good enough state before they can be repurposed. The Regency Town House is still not fully restored and other assets, such as the Pepper Pot, need to be completely repaired before considering repurposing. This involves a large upfront cost, which the Saltdean Lido Trust managed to achieve through fundraising, but that required a lot of capacity and resources. The council could help with this by finding new ways to generate income specifically to put towards heritage assets. Ideas suggested to the group included: using tourist tax if introduced, match-funding with larger organisations such as the i360, the AMEX stadium or Pride, ring-fencing a proportion of ticket sales from other visitor attractions or outdoor events like the marathon, introducing a “Council Lottery”, creating Trusts for some sites which are responsible for its maintenance, partnering with the Business Improvement District and looking into Art Levy to pay for sculptures³².

Recommendation:

- **To explore alternative funding mechanisms where people can choose to invest in parts of the city/heritage assets**

Lack of available funding

The group recognises that the council does not have enough resources to fully restore and maintain all the heritage assets in the city and that its role needs to be more facilitative, supporting custodians to seek other funding opportunities. Some councils, such as Southwark, benefit from high levels of development and can charge high pre-application fees that are used to support regeneration³³. This enables them to fully restore buildings so they can be repurposed and make money, but most local authorities have to rely on funding grants, which are very competitive.

The main funding body is the National Lottery which provides different levels of funding for the preservation of heritage assets. Nick Tyson of the Regency Town House believes that the National Lottery Fund has been compromised as it was meant to be for the “small fry”³⁴ but government cuts have resulted in all applicants being referred to it, with larger attractions inevitably out-competing smaller ones. There are smaller funders and foundations out there but not everyone knows about them or how to find them. The Heritage Fund has developed a directory of alternative funders which is a valuable resource: [Directory | Heritage Funding Directory](#)

Historic England is often seen as a large provider of funds, but their regional budget is limited for the area they cover and the level of need. Alfie Stroud from Historic England said his team is responsible for the whole of the South East, including London, with a budget of £1.5 - £2 million per year³⁵. It would be difficult for them to fund ongoing large projects like the Madeira Terraces, which could go on for years. Instead, they focus on funding smaller seed projects and help them work through challenges so they can develop sustainable approaches to regeneration.

High competition for funding

Brighton & Hove has a large number of heritage assets, which creates competition for funding at a time of limited resources. Listed heritage assets carry a statutory requirement for protection and are often prioritised over others. For example, the Royal Pavilion, which is

³² Derek Wright, TFG Meeting 5

³³ Catherine Jeater, TFG Meeting 3

³⁴ Nick Tyson, TFG Meeting 1

³⁵ Alfie Stroud, TFG Meeting 2

Grade I listed, requires significant investment. Hedley Swain, CEO, noted that “the Royal Pavilion hasn’t had any meaningful capital work or improvement for 40 years ... in the next 10 years they will need to spend around £40–50 million”³⁶. Evidence gathered by the group suggests that the prioritisation of high-profile sites such as the Royal Pavilion can have a detrimental impact on smaller or lesser-known assets, including the Regency Town House and the Pepper Pot, which also require funding. Once a major project within a city has secured funding, it can be difficult to return to the same funder for further support for different projects. Nick Tyson suggested that more collaborative approaches could help address this through cross-promotion, by developing joint ticketing with the Royal Pavilion to encourage visitors to explore lesser-known sites³⁷.

Another way to improve access to funding is to create a clear and realistic development plan for each asset. Then, if funding opportunities do arise, custodians are able to demonstrate that well-developed plans are already in place and can be delivered promptly. As Helmut Lusser from the Hove Civic Society observed, “...if there is already a plan in place, it can be implemented as soon as the investment has been found. If there is no plan, then nothing happens.”³⁸ This highlights the importance of proactive planning and collaboration with community groups to strengthen funding applications and accelerate the restoration of heritage assets.

Recommendations:

- **To support community groups to develop plans or strategies for heritage assets, ensuring that well-prepared, fundable proposals are in place so projects can move forward quickly when funding opportunities arise.**
- **The council to support joint-ticketing and promotional partnerships between larger heritage assets (such as the Royal Pavilion) and smaller assets (such as the Regency Town House) to raise their profile, increase visitor numbers, and improve their long-term financial sustainability.**

Strict Planning policy, Conservation and Climate Change.

To make any changes to buildings and structures that are listed or fall within a Conservation area, the owner must apply for Planning Permission. Depending on the heritage asset, they must also follow other strict policies, such as replacing like-for-like materials and following specific processes. While these requirements aim to protect heritage assets, they can be difficult to comply with in practice. Sourcing appropriate materials or contractors with specialist skills can be challenging and costly. In some cases, this makes some measures financially unviable, resulting in buildings deteriorating further rather than being repaired. In certain locations, additional land protections create further complexity. In Chichester, for example, Owen Broadway explained that planning applications must take account of requirements set by both the South Downs National Park and Chichester Harbour National Landscape, adding further restrictions when trying to maintain or adapt heritage assets³⁹.

Some of these strict rules seem counterproductive, especially when considering energy efficiency, sustainability, the impact of climate change and the need for modern standards. Climate change has made the weather more extreme, which affects heritage buildings that were not built to withstand it, “There was not the kind of heavy rainfall when the Pavilion was built and this degrades the building and has a serious effect on mould” Hedley Swain, CEO,

³⁶ Hedley Swain, TFG Meeting 5

³⁷ Nick Tyson, TFG Meeting 1

³⁸ Helmut Lusser, TFG Meeting 6

³⁹ Owen Broadway, TFG Meeting 3

told the group⁴⁰. In the past, officers saw fit to restrict permitted development rights for things like solar panels in conservation areas, concerned they would change its look and feel. As technology has advanced, these additions have got smaller and smaller and the argument of public benefit is clear. Historic buildings need to be allowed to modernise, in a careful and respectful way, in order to be fit for purpose and contribute to a greener future. Historic England acknowledges this and has produced an Advice Note to support consistent decision making for Planners on applications to improve energy efficiency and support carbon reduction of historic buildings. The group felt this could be taken further by lobbying central government to review and streamline planning requirements for routine building maintenance on listed buildings to reduce barriers for custodians.

Recommendation:

- **Depending on the outcome of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, the council could lobby central government to review and streamline planning requirements for routine building maintenance of listed buildings to reduce barriers for custodians.**

Working with Community Groups

The group heard from representatives of a number of community organisations across the city that are actively involved in caring for and campaigning for heritage assets. There is a strong level of public interest in heritage, with many residents keen to participate, offering their skills, experience and time to make a meaningful contribution. At a time of limited public funding, there is clear value in the council harnessing this community enthusiasm and capacity, particularly as it can increase resources and build resilience. Many volunteers are retired professionals with a lot of expertise who are willing to give their time. Community groups are also well placed to build local support and mobilise residents to raise substantial funds. The Saltdean Lido Trust reported that there were around 14,000 residents who viewed the Lido as a community asset and having their support was key to driving progress and accessing grants⁴¹. The strength of this local backing enabled the group to fundraise millions of pounds towards the restoration of the Lido. Similarly, the “Save the Madeira Terraces” campaign demonstrated the fundraising potential of community action, raising £17,600 through a raffle, with the associated crowdfunder generating £500,000⁴².

Evidence also highlighted that when community groups become more formal bodies, such as Community Interest Companies (CICs) or Trusts, they are often able to access funding streams that are not available to local authorities. The Saltdean Lido Trust became a CIC, which enabled them to secure funding to cover professional fees. The Historic Coventry Trust took on assets from Coventry City Council to avoid them going into further disrepair as they recognised that the council had more pressing issues to focus on and prioritise resources for. The Royal Pavilion was placed into a different kind of Trust model, where the council remained the owner, and the Trust was responsible for the management of the building. This meant it could access funding more effectively and reduce its exposure to local government budget cuts. This is something that could be explored for smaller assets, such as the Pepper Pot, although there are high set up fees involved.

There are also limitations to relying on community-led approaches. Volunteer involvement is not always sustainable, as individuals have other commitments and availability can change over time. Community groups often operate with limited resources, and the ongoing costs associated with maintaining and managing heritage buildings can be significant and difficult to secure funding for. There is also a skills and knowledge gap in some cases, particularly

⁴⁰ Hedley Swain, TFG Meeting 5

⁴¹ Rebecca Crook, TFG Meeting 3

⁴² Derek Wright, TFG Meeting 5

around navigating council processes or applying for funding. Rebecca Crook from the Saltdean Lido Trust said that “they didn’t understand the council systems and didn’t use them effectively, which wasted a lot of time, during which the building continued to deteriorate”⁴³. Having strong support from a local councillor was particularly beneficial.

Discussions with residents also suggested that relationships between community groups and the council could be improved. There was a perception that some groups are resistant to change and oppose development proposals by default. This risks heritage being preserved in a way that prevents the city from evolving, potentially becoming a pastiche of what it used to be. Helmut Lusser from the Hove Civic Society explained that their society approaches planning applications with an attitude of “yes... but”, whereas other groups default to “no, no, no”⁴⁴. He also described a perceived “us and them” dynamic when working with the council, with community groups sometimes feeling they were encroaching on officers’ roles. Other residents expressed frustration when trying to work with the council, suggesting that it can often feel unapproachable, and that councils need to build community support and communicate more effectively with residents.

The group agreed that there is a strong need for a new way of working with community groups. Their role, expertise and motivation were recognised as valuable assets that should not be lost or allowed to dissipate. Concerns were raised about inconsistency in the council’s approach and a gap between the community’s willingness to help and the obstacles preventing them from doing so. Introducing a shared “code of conduct” could help build mutual trust and support more positive, ongoing relationships. It was also suggested that the council should encourage community groups to collaborate more closely, for example through a confederation or network. This would enable groups to work together on larger projects, mentor one another on legal processes and navigating council systems, pool resources, coordinate funding applications and share best practice.

Recommendations:

- **To review council owned heritage assets and consider the different Trust models that exist that could allow community groups to take on the responsibility for some assets, whether through direct ownership or management; and to support groups to do so.**
- **The council to enable and support community-led maintenance of heritage assets.**
- **To introduce a “code of conduct” or “service agreement” between the council and community groups when working in partnership.**
- **Create a network of community groups who can provide advice and mentorship to other community groups wanting to look after a heritage asset.**

Other councils

The group heard evidence from officers from Southwark, Chichester and Bristol Councils, alongside the Historic Coventry Trust, which works in close partnership with Coventry City Council. All speakers highlighted the significant costs and funding challenges associated with maintaining and managing heritage assets. It was noted that councils such as Southwark, where there are a lot of development opportunities, are able to charge higher pre-application planning fees. This generates additional resources that can be reinvested into heritage services, including maintaining a fully staffed enforcement team.

⁴³ Rebecca Crook, TFG Meeting 4

⁴⁴ Helmut Lusser, TFG Meeting 6

Each council officer provided examples of heritage buildings that had been removed from the “at risk” register through restoration and repurposing. These case studies reinforced how difficult it can be to secure the initial capital funding needed to bring a building in poor condition up to a standard where it can be repurposed and become financially sustainable. Examples of repurposed buildings included community facilities, housing, holiday accommodation, an indoor skatepark and football pitch, wedding venues, creative spaces for artists, and workspaces.

Ian Harrabin from the Historic Coventry Trust described what he referred to as the “National Trust Effect”, drawing on the Trust’s partnership with the National Trust at a building known as the Charterhouse. The Historic Coventry Trust had been losing £100,000 per year operating the Charterhouse but once the building was promoted through the National Trust’s channels, visitor numbers increased significantly. “They have 5 million members so all they do is put the building in the brochure on their website and people turn up! It instantly brings in people and it’s vital to sustain this”⁴⁵. This example highlighted the impact that high-profile partners can have on the visibility and financial sustainability of heritage assets.

Peter Insole from Bristol City Council outlined the council’s role in enabling and supporting community groups to take on greater responsibility for the stewardship of heritage assets, emphasising the importance of partnership working. Owen Broadway from Chichester Council described a more hands-on approach to engagement, explaining that officers regularly attend community group AGMs and invite groups into the office to discuss upcoming planning applications. Catherine Jeater from Southwark Council highlighted the use of established forums, including the Conservation Action Group and the Peckham Heritage Partnership Group, through which the council engages with community groups both formally and informally. In these relationships, community organisations often act as a “critical friend”, providing constructive challenge and local insight.

One of the main aims of the Task & Finish Group was to look at how the council could work with residents to facilitate and enable them to protect their heritage buildings. The council cannot do this through allocating funding because there is little available. However, they can support community groups through providing advice and information, supporting them to become Trusts and CICs, helping them access funding, to partner with bigger heritage assets and organisations to help with publicity, to create spaces where community groups can collaborate and support each other, and to review how the relationship between the council and community groups can be more productive.

Acknowledgement of difficult histories

During discussions with Peter Insole from Bristol Council, the group explored how the city has responded to the controversy over the Colston statue. They took a proactive approach to addressing this difficult history by openly acknowledging the city’s role in the slave trade. The statue is now displayed in a museum in its post-protest condition, and the council has developed resources to help residents better understand local heritage. These include a toolkit for community groups and an interactive map, “[Know Your Place](#),” which overlays historical data⁴⁶. An academic has recently created a map on the transatlantic slavery economy, which shows who got compensation payments in 1833. This helps people to understand the ways in which compensation payments underpinned the development of businesses and infrastructure such as the Great Western Railway, the SS Great Britain, the Suspension Bridge, the zoo etc. Part of their new Heritage Strategy is a commemoration memorialisation section that talks about who should be remembered and how. It would be beneficial to include a similar statement within the new Heritage Strategy for Brighton & Hove.

⁴⁵ Ian Harrabin, TFG Meeting 1

⁴⁶ Peter Insole, TFG Meeting 4

The group welcomed Bristol's approach and noted that in Brighton & Hove there has been comparatively limited reflection on histories linked to slavery, or to Britain's colonial past. Davinder Dhillon, Chair of the Chattri Memorial Group and Trustee of the Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, described proposals for a sculpture in the Pavilion Gardens to commemorate Indian soldiers who were treated there during the First World War. However, the funding for the Pavilion Gardens project aimed at taking it off the "at risk" register was to restore the natural boundary from the Regency period, and so far, the decision has been to only focus the designs on this period of time. This was seen to overlook its broader historical significance. The group took a view that Regency design and planting could happily co-exist with commemoration of more recent significant historical events, and were keen to support Davinder Dhillon in fundraising, demonstrate local support and find an appropriate location in the gardens to progress this project.

Similarly, in Cardiff, the National Museum worked with multiple communities to review the collections and develop meaningful responses to this history. Following the murder of George Floyd, it recognised a need to better examine histories of slavery and colonialism⁴⁷. It was noted that the involvement of artists with cultural connections to the history resulted in particularly moving, impactful outcomes.

Recommendations:

- **To add a paragraph to the Heritage Strategy committing to open and honest conversations about commemorating difficult periods in the city's past and sensitively explaining and contextualising their impact for local communities.**
- **To support the installation of a sculpture in the Pavilion Gardens commemorating the Indian Soldiers in the First World War**

Look and feel of the city

The look and feel of the city are important to both the council and residents. Allan Grainger of the Brighton Society noted that "heritage assets impact how we feel about the city", highlighting that the poor condition of the seafront shelters creates a negative impression and may influence tourists' perceptions of Brighton & Hove⁴⁸. The city's heritage forms an intrinsic part of its tourism offer, making it particularly important that assets in high-profile areas such as the seafront are well maintained. However, custodians face a range of barriers that can result in parts of the city appearing neglected.

The Brighton Society was concerned about heritage being disrespected and believed that those funding heritage projects normally want something in return that won't always fit in with the heritage site and can change the nature of the area. There are examples of this across the city, such as Circus Street, which some felt was built too high, affecting the city skyline, neighbouring buildings and being out of character with the area. Other developments have taken the area's history into account, such as the Rox building that was designed to include a nod to its former use as a cinema. Some areas in the city have been protected from this through being listed, such as Brunswick Square, which is subject to the Hove Borough Council Act 1976. This requires all properties to be painted every five years using a specific type and colour of paint⁴⁹. However, it was reported that some buildings to the rear were never listed and have now been converted and that the pavements need to be protected. "The pavement is of very high quality, shipped in from the South Devonian Ranges off Dublin's coastline and laid with great care Utility companies have since brutalised the

⁴⁷ David Anderson, TFG Meeting 7

⁴⁸ Allan Grainger, TFG Meeting 5

⁴⁹ [Brunswick Estate Repainting Specification 2026](#)

pavement during digs and smashed the paving stones”⁵⁰. There was a sense that owners, particularly in an area like Brunswick Square, are subjected to very strict rules when looking after their buildings but that utility companies can do what they like and have little respect for local heritage.

It is important not to forget the lesser-known heritage assets in parts of the city that tourists may not necessarily visit. Throughout the Task & Finish Groups, heritage trails were discussed as a fun and engaging way to encourage visitors and residents to see different parts of the city. Charlotte Barrow of Visit Brighton said visitors tend to come off the train and stay on the stretch of beach between the two piers which creates overtourism in the area. It would be a good idea to disperse visitors across the city and previous sculpture trails and Artists’ Open Houses are good ways of doing this. Incentivising these kinds of trails can be very engaging as people like to tick things off and feel like they have achieved something. Derek Wright spoke of creating lots of heritage trails linking all the wards in the city, encouraging people to walk and learn about heritage and wildlife from information boards along the way, which could include QR codes⁵¹. The Hove Civic Society is working on a project called ‘sculpture in the city’ and have started an arts trail in Hove. They introduced the Hove Plinth in 2018 and have invested £300k into it; it is the proposed starting point for an open-air sculpture gallery, which could initially stretch along the seafront from the Peace statue to the Lagoon⁵². Having everything listed as a heritage trail would bring people visiting the major attractions to also see the more obscure ones if they happened to be on the route. However, it wouldn’t necessarily result in money being raised and spent on the upkeep of those assets.

Wayfinding is a broader issue across the city, with information ‘monoliths’ that are outdated and, in some cases, covered in graffiti. Legacy signage dating from the period when Brighton and Hove were separate authorities remains in place, which can be confusing. This does not create a welcoming environment for visitors, who may struggle to navigate the city, and it contributes to a poorer overall look and feel. The Hove Civic Society are currently looking for funding to take over responsibility for the Hove Heritage Boards which were set up 30 years ago and are out of date.

Recommendations:

- **The council to undertake a review of signage and wayfinding in the city in partnership with community groups.**
- **To support community groups in creating art and heritage trails to encourage visitors to disperse more around the city and visit areas they wouldn't normally go. To consider using incentives to increase participation.**
- **Consider adding Brunswick Square pavements on the local list**

Changing attitudes

There was a feeling that tensions exist in the city around the idea of preserving heritage sites in aspic, with the Pavilion Gardens project choosing to represent only the Regency part of its history, some community groups always resisting change, and the strict policies and rules custodians have to follow to keep their buildings looking the same as when they were first built. The group felt that these attitudes need to be challenged as they don’t want the city to become a pastiche of what it was. Issues such as climate change, the continued use of materials that are not fit for purpose and unrealistically high maintenance costs demonstrate that things do need to change and not everything can be preserved as it is or was. New

⁵⁰ Nick Tyson, TFG Meeting 1

⁵¹ Derek Wright, TFG Meeting 5

⁵² Helmut Lusser TFG Meeting 6

initiatives and developments need to be introduced in a sensitive and respectful way to the surrounding area. Examples of other buildings internationally show how views change over generations, such as the Eiffel Tower, which was loathed by the locals when it was first built but is today a much loved and iconic tourist attraction bringing huge amounts of money to the city⁵³. The same can be said about the more recent Sydney Opera House or the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, where these buildings ended up completely revitalising their areas. Preserving heritage sites should not stop high quality architecture and the new Heritage Strategy should act as a driver for quality. Councillor Birgit Miller said her vision was for “a city where heritage assets and buildings are in good shape, preventative maintenance is undertaken regularly, but also an understanding that there is space for the new and imaginative. We don’t want to be a museum, but a living, breathing, vibrant city – protecting heritage assets should not be about keeping everything the same, but about ensuring that the new is of a sufficiently high artistic quality that it enhances not diminishes a heritage site”⁵⁴.

Recommendation:

- **To ensure the Heritage Strategy protects and restores heritage assets, reflects the full range of the city’s history, and supports good quality new development, so that heritage is not frozen in time but can continue to change and be used in ways that benefit the city and its communities.**

Conclusion

The Task & Finish Group recognises that Brighton & Hove’s heritage is important to the city’s identity, community pride and visitor economy. However, evidence gathered shows that many heritage assets are deteriorating, with current approaches to maintenance becoming increasingly difficult to sustain due to long-term funding pressures, rising repair costs, strict regulations and limited specialist skills. These challenges often lead to delayed maintenance and higher long-term costs.

The group found that while restoring heritage assets can save the building and potentially generate income, securing upfront investment is difficult, particularly for smaller or lesser-known sites. Community groups play a vital role in caring for and promoting heritage, but reliance on volunteers brings its own pressures. The council therefore has an important role as a facilitator, supporting communities through clearer communication and better partnership working.

The Task & Finish Group also concluded that heritage protection should allow for sensitive adaptation, enabling the city to respond to changing needs, sustainability goals and climate impacts without freezing Brighton & Hove in time. Inclusive interpretation and storytelling can strengthen heritage by better reflecting the city’s diverse past.

Overall, the group believes that a more preventative, flexible and collaborative approach is needed. The recommendations aim to support the new Heritage Strategy and help ensure Brighton & Hove’s heritage is cared for in a way that protects and enhances the city for current and future generations.

⁵³ Cllr Miller, TFG Meeting 6

⁵⁴ Cllr Miller, TFG Meeting 6

Appendices

[Appendices](#) - Minutes from Task & finish Groups

Appendix 1: Minutes from Task & Finish Groups

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Task & Finish Group Meeting 1 – 16/12/25

Members present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Sykes, Grimshaw; Mark Strong (CVS),

Apologies: Cllrs Theobald, Earthey, Fishleigh, Cattell

Witnesses/Officers supporting: Nick Tyson (Curator, Regency Town House), Ian Harrabin (Chairman, Historic Coventry Trust), Steve Tremlett (BHCC Planning Policy and Heritage Manager), Natalie Sacks-Hammond, Giles Rossington, Luke Proudfoot (BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Team).

Cllr Evans (AE) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking witnesses for finding the time to attend. She reminded everyone that the meeting was not in public, but that the Task & Finish Group (TFG) would be producing a report which would be published, with evidence from witnesses referenced or quoted. A note of the meeting will be circulated to all witnesses to check for accuracy.

Nick Tyson (NT) started by telling the story of the Regency Town House where a small, dedicated group of people rescued a building that was in disrepair. NT lived for a time in the US and was impressed with the great care they took to look after their heritage assets, taking a “can do” attitude. NT believed that harm was being done to the historic environment back in the UK and wanted to take an active stand. The rich historic architecture in Brighton & Hove has always been a top reason for people visiting the city. In 1992 the Brunswick Town Charitable Trust was established and took over the ownership of 13 Brunswick Square with the aim of restoring it. They received funding from the Lottery, the EU, international agencies, and gifts from local people. This enabled them to develop a wide range of activities such as heritage open days and digital projects.

The Trust took over responsibility for the basement annex at number 10 and managed to get the first Heritage Lottery Grant 0001. There continued to be input from both the private and charitable sectors, but NT said that they have never managed to get enough funding to meet the overheads and have not yet fully restored the building as planned. NT is thinking about

the legacy for the building as he puts in a lot of his own time and money towards the project but once he is unable to do so, he doesn't know what will happen to the Town House. It needs to be financially sustainable to survive. They could open the house full time with a viable business plan to generate more money or fully finish the restoration so there could be a full-time occupant, but that would be at great cost. Funding is a big issue.

NT believes that the National Lottery Fund has been compromised as it was meant to be for the 'small fry' but government cuts have been so bad that everyone is being referred to the National Lottery and smaller projects are competing for funding against much larger projects such as the Royal Pavilion.

Recently, the owner of the building behind the Town House offered them a chance to buy their property. This would mean they could run more than one event at a time, be more accessible and showcase the back streets of the area, which is an exciting prospect.

Cllr Sykes (OS) asked about their relationship with the Council and what the Council could do to help the Town House. He also asked about the curtilage of the area. NT said he was aware of the funding issues the Council faces. The Town House's biggest audience is passer bys and it's them they need to connect with. Signage displaying the web address and opening times on the promenade or Western Road would be really helpful. Poster slots would be also be helpful so they could advertise events to let people passing the area know what's going on. They currently use the display board in Brunswick Square and the local Letting Agents, Brices, allow them to put adverts on their railings. They have around 200 volunteers with around 50 core members. They have trustees who formalise policies and approve grant applications, and a security officer who responds if an alarm goes off. It would be beneficial to have some help with parking, such as having a private bay or a certain number of allocated permits. Also, having access to trade service people, if the Council still employ them, such as electricians, engineers, surveyors.

NT said that it would be good if the Council showed more support for the Regency Town House and to help raise its profile as it feels a bit forgotten, especially when it comes to grants. The Royal Pavilion gobbles up the money which prevents other organisations in the local area from claiming. The Council could help with this, particularly if the Town House became part of the offer. They could develop a business model with joint tickets with the Royal Pavilion as they get hundreds of visitors. The Town House can only deal with a small number of visitors but could sell up to a practical limit with a joint ticket, which would instantly mean they are more financially viable and could use this money to finish the restoration. They have spent millions over the years but only received around £3 - 10k in 40 years from the Council. Other Local Authorities do better to help their heritage assets.

Addressing curtilage issues, NT said that Brunswick Town used to be of the highest quality, probably the finest example of such a thing in Britain at the time. Busby attached a dedicated stable and coach house to every building in Brunswick Square which drew people in to live there as it was so fashionable and convenient. Unfortunately, the coach houses were never listed and were unprotected, which meant they went into private ownership and have been converted. The pavement is of very high quality, shipped in from the South Devonian Ranges off Dublin's coastline and laid with great care, which was also unprotected. Utility companies have since brutalised the pavement during digs and smashed the paving stones.

The best of the paving slabs were put outside the Regency Town House but they also ended up being damaged. The Council needs to protect the historic pavements.

Mark Strong (MS) gave the example of Stevenage where the Council is investing in heritage trails with interpretive boards. Brighton is not good at this, for example, the information monoliths on the streets are not up to date or maintained. There is also generational history that can be tapped into, for example, an academic from Brighton University has done a virtual trail of buildings in Brighton that were owned by slave owners. It is important to look into the effect of events such as the Triangular Trade and the impact of profits made in the East India Trade which were brought back to Brighton and used to develop what we see today.

NT said he has a whole series of research projects, for example, a PhD student developed walks around the city that geosense where the listener is and starts playing information through their earphones about the historic buildings and sites they are walking past. They have 3.5 million datapoints about the history of the city.

NT said the key point for projects such as the Regency Town House is to find really dedicated people to take care of them.

Ian Harrabin (IH) gave a summary of the Historic Coventry Trust, which was set up to run historic buildings; to take ownership of them, restore them and generate income or at least balance income and expenditure. Ian has experience as a Property Developer, Chartered Surveyor and Investor. He runs the Trust for the public benefit; for restoration, repair and continued use of the heritage building in the city and to involve local people. The Trust was formed in 2011 to save the Charterhouse, which was a former monastery founded in 1385 with the only intact Carthusian interiors in the country with wall art from 1410. It was gifted to the city in 1940 and the Council were the trustees. It was mistakenly transferred ownership to an education college and used as classrooms. They put it out for sale which prompted the Historic Coventry Trust to be set up with the aim of saving it. After a lot of lobbying, the college gifted it to the Trust for £1. The Council owned the land around it which is a 70 acre heritage park that is rich in wildlife; a forgotten land not far from the city centre. It needed revenue to raise funds for repairs. The Trust put together a list of 24 properties owned by the Council that they could take on, use capital grants for and those that generated income would act as a buffer for those that didn't and subsidise the costs.

The Trust have raised around £30m in total, £5.4m came from the Council via other means such as part of a highways project or public realm investment. At the time, Coventry had won the City of Culture status and there was a pot of money from the Arts Council which was available for them. The National Lottery has been the largest funder for the Trust, which funded 3 projects. They are pretty much the only major funder around at the moment. However, there are lots of smaller funders, such as the Garfield Weston Foundation which they received half a million pounds from for the Charterhouse. During Covid, Wolfson, another funder, sent them a cheque for £100,000 and said spend it on what you need to. They received funding from the Architectural Heritage Fund early on as they provide support to set up small organisations.

The Trust was losing £100k pa on running the Charterhouse before partnering with the National Trust; who are now responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and take the income from parking and the cafe. Volunteers deal with landscaping and looking after the gardens. The National Trust tendered the operation of the café securing a new high quality operator. The site had immediately received much higher numbers of visitors through their membership.

IH went through some of the properties the Trust looks after giving a quick summary, as follows:

Cemetery: Grade 1 Listed cemetery designed by Joseph Paxton and owned by the Council - partnership Heritage Fund project restored monuments and structures including the Anglican Chapel which is now owned by the Trust and used for various activities including the volunteers' choir who sing there regularly. The fabric of the Grade 2* Non-Conformist Chapel has been restored by the Trust but ownership will not transfer until the Trust has funding to bring it back into use. The Trust is planning to turn it into a creative studio space supported by a second Heritage Fund application.

Drapers Hall: Joint project with the King's Foundation to restore a Grade 2* Georgian guild hall. Now operated by a private company putting on events such as art events and weddings

Priory Row: row of cottages that research found were more than a century older than previously thought (1400s). Now four visitor accommodation units ranging from 3 to 1 beds.

City Gates: a partnership public realm project combined with visitor accommodation. Turned 2 gates into really nice visitor accommodation next to a little park called Lady's Herb Garden. However, there are major ASB issues with drug users etc. Looking at another funding application to improve the landscape space and recapture it from the 'undesirables'.

The Burges: gifted by the Council (all transfers from the council so far have been for £1), the Trust raised £2m to restore the buildings and neighbouring buildings in third party private ownership. The plan is to put artist studio spaces on the upper floor. The area around the back of the buildings was a bit dodgy so they have supported the Council to open it up and created a new public space by the river.

Cllr Grimshaw (AG) said it was inspiring to see all the work that had been achieved and asked about the "National Trust" effect. IH said that the National Trust has 5 million members so all they do is put the building in the brochure on their website and people turn up! It instantly brings in people and it's vital to sustain this. The National Trust is working in partnership with the Council and the Trust to build their local support rather than just pulling in existing members. Their new plan is to focus more on urban areas and move away from the image of country houses attracting the white middle-class. They want to reach new audiences and Charterhouse is being treated as their poster child for this. Recently the DCMS gave them £9m to take on the Iron Bridge Museums and Trust. They have picked projects in urban areas where they can improve the landscape access and provide education, particularly for those who live in deprived areas.

AG asked what kind of company Wolfson is. IH said it is a charity.

NT asked whether it was the Council who had wanted to establish the Historic Coventry Trust to take on its heritage assets or was it driven by Ian? IH said that they set up the charity and they proposed to the Council that they take over their assets. The Trust owns the freehold for the Charterhouse and for most others they have a 250 year long lease. They only take the properties once they have funding and agreement from the Council on what they're going to do with them. It makes sense for the Trust to take over responsibility for Council buildings that are just sitting there not being used, particularly as the Trust can access more funding sources than the Council can.

MS asked about the portfolio and cross subsidising and how they balance the temptation to focus on the flagship areas and not the lesser-known assets. IH said it's about positive partnership working with the Council and having the right people in the right place with the right expertise.

OS asked what prevents the Council from running the portfolio themselves and what other options would they have other than giving the properties away. IH said that Councils see assets as income generators but buildings cost a lot to repair and the Council would need to invest on a regular basis. Councils currently have budget problems which is leading to buildings going into disrepair. There is a lack of money, focus, time and too much else going on for Councils that it makes sense to transfer the ownership over to organisations like the Historic Coventry Trust.

AE asked about the cross-subsidies and how it works with the different partnerships involved. IH said that all of the properties are owned by the Trust and all of the income comes to the Trust. The Trust then leases out properties to partners such as the National Trust who then take on the operation and some of the repairing obligations, which reduces the financial risk. Note: the Trust retains responsibility for the major fabric repair costs of all of the properties currently, so needs to build a reserve fund for future major works.

IH mentioned that the Lottery's new programme recognises the importance of sustainability and gives out funding based on this. If a property generates income, it means the organisation is sustainable and can reinvest in other projects, in which case they would ask for less funding in the future. The Historic Coventry Trust is now sustainable which has been achieved by cutting overheads (now only one member of staff), increasing revenue through active management and partnerships, now generating a comfortable buffer for repair costs.

MS said that he is involved with a local heritage asset, the Pepper Pot, which missed out on funding because the funder was unsure about it being an urban property and were asking about parking and access. IH said having properties in the city centre is not always the best as they get a lot of smashed windows, petty vandalism etc. They want to create a cottage garden for a property that is quite isolated but they can't use it because there are so many drug users around. Other converted cottages have done really well as visitor accommodation.

OS asked about overrunning construction costs. IH said when dealing with a historic building, you can't get a fixed price so you have to rely on the design team to get a decent budget. Inflation and Covid have been a big problem. For Charterhouse they went £2m over budget. He realised that was going to happen and stopped construction before securing funds. If they had continued they might have ended up with massive debts which could

impact on future grants from the Lottery. Councils tend to build in huge contingencies for these kinds of projects.

NT asked whether the Trust has access to the kind of skillsets that are needed when looking after a large heritage asset. Are there people around who can deliver this or train others? IH said they tried to work with the local college but nothing came from it. The Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust run programmes for young people. The Historic Coventry Trust encourages contractors to take on trainees and it hasn't been too much of an issue finding skilled people. However, their focus is on restoration and not education.

AG asked if their model is transferable to Brighton & Hove which is a different kind of city. IH said it was all about having people who want to deliver, are confident and enthusiastic. Good collaborative partnership working is successful because they harness the best of each organisation – what the Council isn't good at doing, the Trust is; and vice versa.

AE asked about the Trust taking over the Charterhouse considering it had been wrongly transferred to a college. How did the Trust gain ownership? IH said that it took 2 years to persuade the college to hand it over as the right thing to do as it was meant to have been gifted to the city.

AE said that the Brighton General Hospital had been gifted to the city of Brighton when it was a workhouse, but it is under ownership of the NHS Trust now who want to sell it. IH said they brought Historic England to the table, which was effective as he got the regional director to write directly to the college's Board of Trustees and then they sold the property for £1.

Task & Finish Group Meeting 2 – 16/01/26

Members present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Sykes, Grimshaw, Earthey, Cattell; Mark Strong (CVS),

Apologies: Cllrs Theobald,

Witnesses/Officers supporting: Alfie Stroud, (Team Leader – Partnerships London and the South East; Historic England), Matt Kitson, (Director of Estates, Facilities & Commercial Services; University of Sussex Estates Team), Charlotte Barrow, (Senior Marketing Executive; Visit Brighton), Steve Tremlett (BHCC Planning Policy and Heritage Manager), Colin Bannon, (BHCC Planning Team Leader), Natalie Sacks-Hammond, Giles Rossington, Luke Proudfoot (BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Team).

Cllr Amanda Evans (AE) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking witnesses for finding the time to attend. She reminded everyone that the meeting was not in public, but that the Task & Finish Group (TFG) would be producing a report which would be published, with evidence from witnesses referenced or quoted. A note of the meeting will be circulated to all witnesses to check for accuracy.

Alfie Stroud (AS) talked about his experience in conservation, history and architecture and his previous work with the DCMS ALBs' Better Places Partnership and Historic England. He was an advisor on the Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) project "Kingsway to the sea",

which actually didn't need a lot of help because it was well conceived and ready to go when the funding became available. The project was based on early sound analysis of local need and opportunity, which helped with the funding application. There is real historic character on the seafront to the west of Hove with sunken gardens and a sports character, leading with the historic character can be a real asset to getting regeneration projects off the ground.

AS explained about the set-up of Historic England, his team is focussed on the south and southeast of England, and is made up of architects, surveyors, historians, researchers, advisors and conservation specialists. They make proactive partnerships with local authorities and manage grants. Their team has a regional grant, and the organisation has a national grant budget. They have a representative on the Seafront Development Board working on ambitious plans for the seafront and engaging with local people. The seafront is being considered as a whole historic asset in itself, looking at the Victorian cast iron railings etc. Historic England supported the Madeira Terraces project which had been considered "at risk" since 2020. They are taking a conservation-led approach retaining craftsmanship, quality, age and have avoided emitting lots of carbon. BHCC has adopted a similar approach with Historic England's help to retain cast-iron seafront lighting rather than replacing it and are using skills from the same conservation-specialist foundry.

Mark Strong (MS) talked about making the seafront more accessible can conflict with the heritage aspect such as putting in a lift at great expense. Some disability groups are not happy with the lift. AS said that there is a conflict with this where legislative frameworks support both preservation and accessibility. Historic England's approach is that there will be a solution and using the opportunity of regeneration to include a lift is positive, sometimes compromises need to be made. Investment creates opportunity and sometimes can result in better architecture.

AE talked about access requirements and other issues that people get het up about, such as a specific paint colour which was only available when they were originally painted but there are better materials available now.

MS asked about funding available for community voluntary groups. AS said that unfortunately, for the big funders there will always be some bureaucracy due to the need to protect public money and it's hard to fund groups without a legal structure. They try to support groups to achieve things and in ways that larger funders may not be able to. The best way is to work in partnerships to reach small grants and foundations. The Heritage Alliance has a database of funders, the Heritage Funding Directory. Historic England has an online grants process where groups can apply via a webform, they will receive a response within 6 weeks letting them know if they meet the criteria.

Cllr Ollie Sykes (OS) asked about custodians for Grade 1 listed buildings and what the threshold was for engagement. AS said that Historic England has a lot of statutory functions, the key one being in the planning process where planning officers are required to consult on certain kinds of applications. They would normally only be involved in the planning process for grade 1 and 2 listed buildings but also large developments affecting conservation areas. Our development advice team also advises on heritage in the Local Plan process. The Partnerships Team are trying to remove the engagement threshold further; whereas before, "heritage at risk" was considered a gateway to accessing funding, now it is still an important consideration, but they don't only fund "at risk" assets. They have grant objectives and priorities for what they want to achieve with and for the historic environment; if other criteria

are met, such as the indices of deprivation, then the building may not even need to be listed. The application can also be focussed on building local capacity to work with the historic environment or to benefit from the heritage asset in some way. They work with 3 grants strands: places, people and research, and have a regional grant budget of £1.5 - £2m per year for the whole of the South East including London.

MS asked whether this would include iron age hill forts. AS said that it would. For assets like monuments on agricultural land, his team will provide expertise to other government departments such as DEFRA on special funding schemes available to repair these. They also advise Arts Council England on their MEND investment scheme for museums

Cllr Mark Earthey (ME) asked about the ironwork on Madeira Drive; did they remove the corroded iron and paintwork and then put it all back together again without compromising the structural integrity? AS said that structural engineering colleagues, the foundry and other specialists devised a way of testing the structure to ensure it could bear the loads.

ME asked what their ideal way of working with BHCC would be and about what responsibilities BHCC has for funding repair of historic buildings. AS said that BHCC have no statutory obligation to fund and maintain heritage assets except those they own; but they have statutory powers to put on private owners where Historic England can provide support such as underwriting emergency notices on buildings that are not being maintained. AS said, they have a good working relationship with BHCC and they meet with Max Woodford 3 times a year to coordinate the Council's priority projects; for example, they will be helping with the Pavilion Gardens project. They also have a representative on the Seafront Development Board. They can grant some funding, support local plans and will be inputting into the new Conservation Strategy.

Colin Bannon (CB) said that it's a major challenge to regenerate something like the Madeira Terraces as it's so expensive and takes a really long time. They are going to the foundry for the cast iron but have had suggestions to just use stainless steel replicas instead, which they might have to consider as they can't keep going back to the Heritage Lottery Fund for grants. The project could go on for years before all the terraces are restored and there would be further degradation in the meantime which makes it more costly. Is this something that Historic England could fund? He also raised that there are other heritage assets in the city that need work urgently. AS said unfortunately, Historic England would not be able to fund the whole of this project as the regional budget is small for the area it covers. Instead, they try to fund seed projects and support them to work through challenges in order to establish sustainable models for regeneration, as with phase one at Madeira Terrace. They can advise on how to make the project economically viable, help build partnerships with other funders and talk about what adaptations might need to be made.

Cllr Amanda Grimshaw (AG) talked about Brighton Town Hall, which is a Grade 2 listed building and has the Old Police Cells in the basement. However, the basement is not lagged, and heating is very expensive, but she believes that it could be made people friendly and developed to be an educational offer to school groups. Would there be any grants available to help with the lagging? AS said sustainability is always considered when looking at grant applications as well as the benefit to the community and how it meets local needs. AG said there needs to be somewhere for children to sit and have lunch and it should be opened up as a visitor destination for the city, that there is so much possibility there to increase traffic

and make it more accessible. There is a local author who cites the police cells in her books. AS said this was something that potentially would meet funding criteria.

Matt Kitson (MK) has been employed at the University of Sussex since March 2025 and has had prior experience at Brighton University and Heathrow airport. On the University of Sussex's campus, there are around 200 buildings split between accommodation and teaching. There is a huge development going on at the moment. The academic estate dates back to the 60s, many of which were built by Sir Basil Spence and are grade 2 listed. Features such as single glazed windows, the electric and IT infrastructure, and heating require constant maintenance and upgrade work. There are numerous challenges to managing such an ageing estate, the main one being cost issues. University is a competitive market for students and it's a balance meeting the statutory requirements of the upkeep of heritage buildings with the changing demands of students. They wanted to clean up the facade of some of the buildings, estimating a cost of £20 - 30k but it ended up costing over £500k due to the building being listed and having to be cleaned in a certain way to preserve the brickwork. Many of the buildings are degrading and they are facing major constraints and challenges in keeping the estate up to the required standard.

MS said there has been a lot of deterioration since he was a student there but that Boiler House Hill was groundbreaking in its day – having one source of heating for a large area. There is the added challenge of having to keep the buildings within its environment as a national park. MK said that there will be 7000 residents on campus by 2028, they will have a supermarket and entertainment venues. The charm of Sussex is the quiet, peaceful, green setting. MK said he has one budget and needs to make decisions between fixing the heating and electricity or refurbishing a lecture theatre. They have to meet statutory obligations, which begins to dictate decisions. Since the campus is set in a national park, they have to take the environment into account through maintaining Basil Spence buildings and developing more modern buildings around them. Costs are increasing and contractors are hard to find.

ME asked whether the Basil Spence buildings were built to last and whether, despite undertaking key repairs, the buildings might fall down anyway. MK said the buildings are very solid and built to last. However, there is RAAC and asbestos to consider. For example, they looked at running a new IT cable from one location to another to then realise it needs to go through an area of asbestos and then it's not possible anymore. Most of the RAAC has now been fixed.

OS asked what caused the increase in cost for cleaning the facade and whether campus should be seen as a heritage asset to the city and should be included more widely. MK said it would be good if it were seen in that way; that Falmer House could be used as a visitors' centre and other buildings could have different uses. It is early on in their estates strategy and they need to meet sustainability goals, which may mean challenging planning processes around replacing windows with double glazing but keeping the original look and feel. When cleaning the building facade, planning permission stated that they had to use a specific process using scaffolding and treating each individual brick separately.

AG said there are competing needs between academic and heritage and the financial need to get more students in. She asked where the buck stops with these competing needs and whose decision it is. MK said there is a Council and Executive Board but the buck would stop with him to understand the costs, what needs to be done and to produce a set of

options. Statutory requirements come first and then it is looking at the risk profile and improvements needed. In an urgent situation, such as finding RAAC in an academic building, it is the Estates team who must take urgent action to close buildings and come up with a contingency plan. Sussex researchers are looking at new innovations and new technologies that might help.

CB said that there is a listed building heritage partnership agreement in place between the Council and the University of Sussex. All buildings are described in the agreement alongside any necessary works. The agreement was renewed in 2022. The background for this is to do away with some of the bureaucracy that planning permission can create and is supposed to make it easier. It could be worth re-looking at this agreement so that Matt can input into it before the next renewal stage. Historic England are also involved in this agreement.

MS asked if campus had public access as some grants depend on that, to allow and welcome anyone from Brighton to wander in. It could be made into an attraction for the city. MK said he considers it an open campus although there is confidential research going on but the public couldn't access those buildings. They worked with the Council to trial the Park & Ride scheme and there were no problems having the public on campus. They would like to be more linked with the city. They are creating new places that the public could use like a much bigger supermarket, and fans from the AMEX stadium use the bar and parking as it's much cheaper. AS said that public access can be a condition of grants. Charlotte Barrow (CHB) added that the University of Sussex also hosts conferences which attracts a lot of business visitors. The Attenborough Centre on campus is also a venue for the Brighton Festival which brings people onto campus.

CHB gave an overview of Visit Brighton; that they work in partnership with 375 different businesses who pay an annual fee which goes back into promoting the city. They are both publicly and privately funded. Visit Brighton is part of the Local Visitor Economy Partnership working alongside East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council. They also have links to Visit England. They are part of Brighton & Hove City Council although they have a different branded look. Tourism is one of the biggest industries for Brighton as a destination. In 2024, there were 12.1 million visitors but 85% of them only visited for the day. Their challenge is not to increase the number of visitors but to increase the number that stay overnight as they will spend more. Heritage is not treated as a separate pillar but is intrinsically a part of the offer for the city. There are only 10 attractions that label themselves as 'heritage' which includes the seafront, pier and the Pavilion, which is used a lot in marketing. For marketing, they have their website, social media, blogs and various campaigns; they support the heritage open days and were the lead channel with the crowdfunding campaign for the Madeira Terraces. When looking at barriers, such as accessibility, CHB recommended the toolkit put together by Visit England that goes beyond attractions that are not suitable for wheelchair users, but looks at quiet spaces for neurodivergent people and ensuring information is provided to visitors so they can make an informed choice as to whether to visit or not.

AG asked what the majority of the day-trippers are spending their time doing, what is the draw and how do we convert them to stay overnight. CHB said that most of them go to the seafront, mainly the part of the beach between the two piers. Many bring their own picnics and actually end up costing the Council money in terms of cleaning up their litter. For the longer stays, visitors will go to the Pavilion, pier, SeaLife Centre, i360 and go shopping in the

Lanes, which are also technically a heritage attraction. They are looking for different ways to encourage people to stay longer and are looking at Brighton as a base to explore the whole area. They're looking at wine tourism and other sites across Sussex, such as Charleston House.

AG asked if she could wave a magic wand, what would CHB introduce, is there anything that the city is really lacking? CHB said a really iconic gallery would be good and gave the example of the Tate opening in Margate which rebranded it as a tourist destination.

AE asked about the more obscure heritage assets and whether they could be turned into a tourist offer, such as the Pepper Pot, the oldest church in Brighton etc and turn them into visitor attractions or on the route to others. CHB said this would be a good idea and that visitors coming off the train and plonking themselves on that stretch of beach creates overtourism in that area. It would be good to disperse visitors more across the city. Initiatives such as art sculpture trails are a good example of this, encouraging visitors around the city and they get a different experience. Some more obscure heritage assets are quite isolated, such as those in Patcham, and if there is only one thing to see, people are realistically less likely to go to it. It's best to have a trail or a cluster of things to visit. The Artists' Open Houses is another good example with different trails around the city.

MS gave an example of Stevenage where they have city trails, people like to tick things off and this kind of incentivisation is very popular. There is a coastal cultural trail in parts of Sussex but it doesn't come over to Brighton. CHB said that there are some trails in the city. She also works with commemorative plaques and that there is an interactive blue plaque map online. There is the ability to create your own trail online where the public can filter by political figures, for example. There are also walking tours with different themes such as 'Brighton on screen'; filming locations, and guided walks. There was the unbarred brewery tour trail. CHB took note of the suggestion to add incentives to trails and said they will look into this.

Cllr Julie Cattell (JC) talked about brutalism and that Hove Town Hall is considered to be a gem in brutalist circles and they could get it listed. OS said that they had tried this in the past and it had been rejected. AS confirmed it had been rejected because significant alterations had been made from the original design. CB said that a number of buildings in the city, such as the synagogue had been put forward for listing and that Hove Town Hall is locally listed.

OS asked whether Visit Brighton received any comments from visitors in relation to heritage, about signage around the city and if there was any interest in bringing Tram 53 to Stanmer Park. CHB said due to cutbacks they don't have as much interaction with visitors anymore and it is limited to feedback; they are setting up a survey on their website. They get lots of positive comments on social media about how great Brighton is. She said that the wayfinding monoliths and miniliths are outdated and agreed that more signage would be better.

Task & Finish Group Meeting 3 – 27/01/26

Members present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Sykes, Grimshaw, Earthey, Cattell;

Apologies: Cllr Theobald, Mark Strong (CVS)

Witnesses/Officers supporting: Catherine Jeater (Southwark Council), Owen Broadway (Chichester Council), Rebecca Crook (Former Saltdean Lido Trust), Deryck Chester (Saltdean Lido Trust), Louise Peim (BHCC Museums and Heritage Business Manager), Natalie Sacks-Hammond, Giles Rossington (BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Team).

Cllr Amanda Evans (AE) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking witnesses for finding the time to attend. She reminded everyone that the meeting was not in public, but that the Task & Finish Group (TFG) would be producing a report which would be published, with evidence from witnesses referenced or quoted. A note of the meeting will be circulated to all witnesses to check for accuracy.

Catherine Jeater (CJ) has 20 years' experience as a Design and Conservation Officer, she has worked at Southwark for 10 years. Catherine was the dedicated Heritage at Risk Officer at Southwark, tasked with taking 25 buildings, parks and gardens off the "at risk" list. To do this, the team concentrated on larger schemes such as townscape heritage initiatives and heritage action zones. They have around 3000 listed buildings and 48 conservation areas. Southwark Council has a healthy budget with high pre-application fees that are used to fund regeneration projects. Southwark Council's 'Heritage at Risk' is unique in that it includes grade 2 listed buildings unlike the rest of the country. Many of the "at risk" buildings are owned by people who don't have the capacity to maintain their buildings which, consequently, fall into a state of disrepair.

CJ went through a few examples of individual buildings:

Manor Place: Grade 2 listed building that used to be a Bath House. It is owned by the Council who used it as a waste transfer station for many years. It was almost derelict and in a state of disrepair and they managed to completely restore it. It is such a massive space that they weren't sure what to do with it and they ended up leasing it to a popular skating company called Palace Skates. The interior of the building is now a skate park with flexible space such as a 5-a-side football pitch that comes out of the old swimming pool, and the back area was turned into offices.

Nunhead cemetery: The East Lodge in the cemetery was derelict for many years, it didn't have a roof or a front elevation and needed to be restored. Southwark Council had a poor relationship with the community group "Friends of Nunhead Cemetery" due to a communication breakdown but this has now improved. They got a £4.5million grant from the National Lottery and restored it into a community space with offices for the "Friends of" group to use.

Caroline Gardens: An old grade 2 listed chapel on the "at risk" register located in an estate in Peckham. All the houses on the estate are occupied by people aged over 55. It is currently leased by an artist group who use it for photoshoots and it once appeared on the tv show "Don't tell the bride". They managed to restore the windows but it continues to exist in a state of partial disrepair. They put a bid in for a lottery fund grant of £3.5million but it wasn't granted, mainly because the whole estate should be on the "at risk" register. It has been challenging as there are different teams working on the site in silo and it would be more beneficial if they worked together better.

8 Addington Square: A beautiful Georgian property owned by an elderly lady and was in such a state of disrepair it was raining indoors. The owner lived in the property and loved it but she didn't have the capacity to fully restore it, she ended up funding the roof repairs but then sadly she passed away, the building was sold and it has now been restored. They allowed a few things they wouldn't normally for other listed buildings, such as an extra storey on the side and a large extension to the rear to allow it to be liveable by a family.

Cllr Julie Cattell (JC) asked about the resources for enforcement at Southwark. CJ said they are lucky to have an enforcement officer who used to work in conservation and is like a dog with a bone, being instrumental in some cases such as restoring tiles on an old pub on Old Kent Road.

Cllr Amanda Grimshaw (AG) asked how they were allowed to add extra storeys to the Georgian house. CJ said they argued it was for the public benefit to bring the property back to life and that the extensions were to the rear of the property and the main core of the building, including the staircase, was preserved.

AG asked what the building in Nunhead Cemetery used to be. CJ said it was the Superintendent's lodge and office. The office was turned into a house, but the lodge became derelict. AG wanted to know what properties are vacant in the cemeteries in Brighton & Hove.

CJ talked about how their funding is for individual projects, normally lead by one Project Manager and how important it is to have a calm person for this type of work. CJ talked about Walworth Town Hall which was used as Council offices and as a ceremonial Town Hall. However, in 2013 there was a fire that gutted two-thirds of the building, and the Council wasn't properly insured. A company called General Projects won a competition to get the building and they converted it into a workspace with hot desking and collaborative spaces. It was completed a year and a half ago and has won a lot of awards.

Cllr Ollie Sykes (OS) asked whether the pre-app fees were earmarked as it normally just goes into the general fund. CJ said it is earmarked and covers some staff costs. They have huge areas of regeneration such as the Old Kent Road action plan and Canada Water that has very large development builds.

AE asked about Manor Place which was turned into a skate park and how that worked with planning policy. CJ said that it was a building in two parts – the offices at the front and bath houses at the back. The Council demolished part of it and used it as a waste transfer site where the pool used to be. It was in an eroded state when they put it up for lease. They didn't want to divide up the big hall into individual units and were happy with the new use as it also allowed the local community to use it. AE asked if there were any contamination issues. CJ said there was some contamination at the rear, which was sorted under the housing application.

AE asked about how they work with community groups and what support they offer. CJ said they have both formal and informal relationships with community groups, some of which sit on the Conservation Action Group (CAG). The Council also set up the Peckham Heritage Partnership Group which included community groups and members. Their priorities do not always align but it is something worth pursuing. They act as a critical friend.

AG asked about Southwark Cathedral and the mudlark's exhibition and whether this increased footfall to the area. CJ said it didn't have a huge impact but she didn't have the figures. Southwark includes huge tourist areas such as Tower Bridge, Tower of London, Tate Modern, Tate Bridge, The Globe, the OXO Tower, and the Dulwich Picture Gallery which all have a large footfall.

AE asked about enforcement in Southwark. CJ said they have 5 enforcement officers and they are frequently responding to reports, such as people replacing windows with UPVC in listed buildings, and trying to find solutions for "at risk" sites.

Owen Broadway (OB) said that his team at Chichester Council is made up from qualified architects, landscape officers and tree officers who act as specialist consultants to the development management team; they feed into planning policy, the Local Plan, and provide a lot of guidance. There are 85 conservation areas in Chichester and three and a half thousand listed buildings. They have to consider the South Downs National Park and Chichester Harbour National Landscape in planning applications. They have 12 buildings at risk that currently do not have any development opportunities.

AE asked for a breakdown in listed building categories. OB said they have 12 grade 1 listed buildings, 40 grade 2* and 2900 grade 2. Many of the grade 1 listed buildings are churches and cathedrals which are not subject to building applications. AE asked if they get involved if these are at risk. OB said they have their own system for giving themselves listed building consent but would still be subject to planning permission. They have to take into account the needs of the congregation rather than the public benefit. Church Commissioners act as developers so when buildings cease to have a congregation or used by the Commissioners, they will put them on the open market. In Chichester, two churches have been turned into residential housing.

OB said that the area contains stark inequalities, with wealth concentrated in places like Midhurst, Petworth, and Chichester, while other towns, especially coastal settlements, experience much higher levels of deprivation. Strict land protections, particularly in the South Downs, make housing development difficult, creating significant pressure over where and how new homes can be built. The team focuses on working closely with developers to improve the quality, design, and landscaping of housing schemes so they gain local support and can pass planning committees, offering reassurance that it will be done properly.

OS said that they get a lot of lobbying from "Friends of" groups in relation to heritage and that he finds they have a positive role to play although they ask for a lot. OB said that they have a lot of very well-informed, well-qualified, retired barristers, architects, and engineers all grouping together to hold them to account on the decisions made on applications. They have a big AGM where they invite people to come and speak with them, they meet regularly and invite them to the office to go through a weekly list of applications that they're concerned about. This helps form positive relationships.

Cllr Mark Earthey (ME) asked about striking a balance between heritage needs and modernisation such as solar panels, double glazing and other sustainable initiatives. OB said it is quite clear that there is a benefit to the public in allowing historic buildings to become sustainable. In the past, officers saw fit to restrict permitted development rights for things like solar panels in conservation areas, concerned they would change its look and feel. As

technology has advanced, these things have got smaller and smaller and you can clearly make the argument of public benefit. Historic England's guidance and documentation, including an advice note 18 that they issued last year includes pictures of good quality historic buildings with solar panels all over them, and actually goes into some detail about the sorts of things that should be routinely accepted and should be being approved by officers generally. Advice note 18 goes into a lot of detail about what can and can't be done.

AE asked about the more obscure heritage assets. OB said that they have dealt with a lot of commemorative plaques and statues; some have been removed as the person is no longer someone the public want to celebrate. This has been contentious at times when the building is owned by someone else; for example, who applies for the removal, particularly if it needs listed building consent. They have had a few applications for new statues but they need to be careful not to over-saturate certain areas.

Rebecca Crook (RC) told the story of the Saltdean Lido and how it was saved from demolition and turned into the popular visitor's site it is today. Brighton & Hove City Council owned the Saltdean Lido and had issued a 125 year lease to a private company in the 90s. Unfortunately, the building had fallen into a state of disrepair; although it was still open, it wasn't very attractive to visitors as it wasn't well maintained. The owner held a local meeting where it was announced that he intended to build over 100 flats on the site and concrete in the pool. Rebecca and some other locals, set up the "Save Saltdean Lido" campaign, and they spent 2 and a half years lobbying the Council to hand the site over to the community. They submitted an application and were successful in getting the lido listed as grade 2*. The campaign group met with others around the country for advice and wrote a business plan for what they could do with the building as swimming pools don't make money so other elements were needed to become financially sustainable. Their aim was to take the lease back from the current owner by lobbying the Council, so the group attended Full Council and presented deputations and petitions. They did lots of fundraising initiatives as there are no grants available to community groups when they are campaigning, which was one of the big challenges they faced. They were a well organised group with support from across the community and local businesses; they ran fun days in the park that attracted 10,000 people, held music events, produced merchandise, photography campaigns, and genuinely engaged with the local community. In 2013, the Council took back the lease from the owner who had unfortunately undertaken some unauthorised works in the interior. The Council opened up a competitive pitch process and they submitted a tender as the community interest company (CIC) Saltdean Lido Trust, which was successful. Following that, they fundraised for millions of pounds. The Heritage Lottery Fund ended up giving them over £7million and the pool opened in 2017. The restoration of the main building completed in 2024.

Deryck Chester said the whole project took 16 years and the crux was what the Lido meant to the local community. The site includes Saltdean Library which is really well used, a community centre, various rooms for hire, and the swimming pool. The Council bought the Lido in 1960 when it was a treasured asset for the tourist industry in Brighton. They have brochures from the 70s promoting the Lido alongside the Royal Pavilion and the Palace Pier.

Around 1994, a lot of Councils were letting go of their Lidos because swimming pools are expensive to operate, especially as this one is open air. A developer acquired the site and planned to build flats. Saltdean has around 14,000 residents who saw the Lido as a community asset, and their support was key to driving the campaign and accessing grants. They gathered community stories about the importance of the site, and these now form an oral history hub with stories from every decade. By the time the Trust were able to instruct structural surveys, the condition of the building had worsened. There were different issues to tackle such as the 1938 facade, cavity brick extensions from the 70s and so on. With the Heritage Lottery Fund, they managed to bring the design team together and work on what the new layout of the building would look like. The community was involved throughout the process who said they wanted a heated pool, a gym, rooms they could hire at community rates, and an entertainment space. The spiral staircase that connected the ground floor to the first floor was restored as was the special doors that open outwards onto the sun terrace. This space can now be used for weddings or corporate hire. They created the Heritage Hub, which was a condition of the funding, which allows people to learn about the history of the Lido, the community and the wider Saltdean holiday resort that it once was. Other original features had been salvaged such as parquet flooring in the ballroom, the original chlorine gas machine in the plant room, and they replaced a chimney in the ballroom that brings fresh air into the building.

AE said that the building was used as the national fire training centre during the war and its sister building, the Ocean Hotel, had been used to train officers.

OS asked if there was anything that the Council could have done better at the time. RC said that they didn't understand the Council systems and didn't use them effectively, which wasted a lot of time, during which the building continued to deteriorate. They had a solid case that it would benefit the city and attract visitors but it took a long time to be heard.

AE asked whether the developer had obtained the lease under false pretences. RC explained that the campaigners reported the developer to the Council for breaching the lease, which they confirmed after accessing it through an FOI request - something they hadn't previously realised they could do. They gathered photo and video evidence of the breaches, including a news film by the BBC, but the Council took no action. It later emerged the developer had behaved similarly with other properties nationwide. RC noted that a key lesson for the Council is to carry out proper due diligence when granting long-term leases.

AG asked how they took the lease from the developer in the end. RC said that it was a private settlement so they don't have access to the information. DC said it was key to get the building listed as grade 2* which gave it some protection and put off the developer who then had to jump through more hoops at the planning stage.

RC said once they had access to the building, they found out that there wasn't enough electricity to service the pool so they had to build a substation. It would have been good to have had all the information up front so they knew exactly what they were taking on. They

asked the Council to match-fund for this but they did not. In the end, they crowdfunded £70,000 with both national and international donations. It was a stressful time.

DC said that Historic England were a real asset during the process and that they were very flexible, for example, allowing double glazed windows, and they had a positive relationship because they understood what the Trust was trying to achieve.

AE asked how they promote the Lido and attract visitors into the area. DC said there are 23 paid members of staff including a marketing team and social media is their biggest tool; they partner with Visit Brighton and there is organic free marketing due to the project becoming nationally recognised and has legend status. They often feature on TV, such as This Morning and get a lot of press enquiries. RC said that “Dogtember” is really popular; that when the pool is closed, they open it up for people to bring their dogs for a swim. It now lasts for 6 weekends, sells out in minutes and attracts national press. Thousands of people come from across the UK.

DC said that the Ocean Hotel used to be one of the city’s biggest hotels, bringing in 800 guests a week with 200 staff, which brought tourism into local villages like Rottingdean but also to Brighton. When the hotel closed, the footfall was lost but events like “Dogtember” are now bringing people back with all the AirBnBs full and people coming from afar.

AE asked about catering in the restaurant and cafe. DC said they work with a catering partner who runs the catering and upscale events like weddings or corporate hire. RC said as it is mainly run by volunteers, it would be risky for them to take on the catering as well.

JC asked if it was a registered wedding venue. DC confirmed that it was. JC asked if the whole pool can be hired out. DC said that they have to adhere to the lease arrangements but out of season they could although there are season ticket holders that they would need to consider. They do receive requests from film companies and might close for this on the odd occasion. RC said diversification was key and one of the original suggestions was to have an ice rink over the pool during the winter which would attract a lot of visitors, particularly as the ice rink at the Pavilion will not be there next year due to building works.

OS asked if they had benefitted from looking at similar buildings across the UK, or networks to help develop. RC said that they have met with owners of other pools and lidos and did some informal networking. The Historic Pools of Britain are a go-to organisation for national press to approach if there’s an issue with swimming pools and they are a member. The 20th Century Society are very supportive and celebrate modernist buildings, they feature the Lido in a lot of their media.

AE asked if they were able to access more grants than the Council because they were a Community Interest Company. RC said it cost £25k to set up the CIC and at the time there were national government initiatives promoting ownership of assets. Becoming a CIC did allow them to access funding that helped with professional fees. DC added that there are

smaller funders and foundations that won't give to CICs which is why they also have the Trust. The Trust looks at what funding is available and the CIC operates the building.

RC said that they would be happy to talk to other Community Groups if they want advice. AE suggested the Council could facilitate a kind of mentoring scheme. RC said it would have been really helpful to have a facilitator role to connect people. There are lots of things they would have done differently and they could share lessons learned. Having the support of the local councillor was key as they would know how to navigate Council systems in the best way.

Task & Finish Group Meeting 4 – 10/02/26

Members present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Cattell, Earthy and Grimshaw, Mark Strong (CVS)

Apologies: Cllrs Theobald, Sykes

Witnesses/Officers supporting: Louise Peim (BHCC Museums and Heritage Business Manager), Lewis Church (BHCC Acting Strategic Manager for Culture & Creative Industries) Guy Smyth (Representative from Friends of the Pepper Pot), Peter Insole (Urban Design Team Manager, Bristol City Council) Natalie Sacks-Hammond, Giles Rossington, Luke Proudfoot (BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Team).

Cllr Amanda Evans (AE) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking witnesses for finding the time to attend. She reminded everyone that the meeting was not in public, but that the Task & Finish Group (TFG) would be producing a report which would be published, with evidence from witnesses referenced or quoted. A note of the meeting will be circulated to all witnesses to check for accuracy.

Louise Peim (LP) explained that her role is part of the Culture and Events Team and she is responsible for managing the contractual relationships the Council holds with relevant partners. This includes the Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust and the Brighton Dome and Festival, which are the two custodians for the city's most valuable heritage assets. There are service agreements in place they must adhere to and the Estates Team have oversight to ensure the buildings are protected and maintained properly. LP is also involved with the capital programmes that take place across the estate to preserve and enhance heritage assets and make them more accessible for residents. She was involved with the masterplan for the Corn Exchange and the Royal Pavilions Garden project, which are in the process of being delivered. One team objective is to investigate new uses for those heritage assets that are underused and falling into a state of disrepair. They need a strategic plan to look at how investment is sought for many of these heritage assets. The city has a wealth of heritage assets which creates a competing demand for funding as they need to be prioritised and the Grade 1 listed Pavilion, which is in disrepair, takes up most of the funding. This means they have to look at alternative models, such as community asset transfers and approaching independent trusts.

Lewis Church (LC) explained that his role is more focussed on managing relationships with cultural organisations and the creative economy in the city, often looking into fundraising opportunities. He has other workstreams such as looking at where cultural activity is happening that might be “at risk”, such as music venues and theatres. He looks at how this might map on to heritage assets and how there might be solutions embedded in repurposing some of them.

Mark Strong (MS) asked if they know what level of visitors come to the city because of its heritage assets. LP said they have data for visitor numbers but not data on the reasons for visiting, she suggested Visit Brighton might have this. MS said some attractions have a joint entry deal such as the Sealife Centre having a discounted entry ticket with the Royal Pavilion. Other cities, such as London, offer discounts with their railway ticket. Cllr Earthy (ME) asked whether we could look into this with Southern Rail or National Express coaches. LP said the Regeneration Team have these relationships but it would be worth looking into.

AE asked about fundraising and that Grade 1 listed buildings will always take priority; what about the other lesser known, smaller assets. The costs are so high to maintain the big Grade 1 listed buildings that it doesn't leave much for assets like the Pepper Pot, Portslade Police station, Patcham Dovecote etc. Are there pockets of funding out there that community groups could access? LC said the funding picture nationally and internationally is constrained. It is a double-edged sword being a city with so many assets, in that they must prioritise in such a limited funding environment. They need to look at what assets they might secure funding for but also how to strategically apply for that funding without the Council ending up competing against itself for different projects.

JC said that most heritage assets are privately owned and there are hidden gems like the Pepper Pot across all wards. MS said there is a list of local assets online but it would be great if they could be plotted on a map with a short description and photo. LP said that having a cultural infrastructure plan for the city is something that has been thought about but it is a question of capacity and prioritisation.

LP said the major funder is the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which is not infinite so when a city like Brighton has so many major projects such as Brighton Town Hall, Royal Pavilion, Madeira Terraces etc, there is a need to look at other models to get these assets funded. They are looking at smaller trusts and supporting community groups.

Cllr Grimshaw (AG) said that before the covid pandemic, the Royal Pavilion was visited by a lot of international school groups with thousands of school children running around. Once they were unable to visit the UK, they probably looked for alternatives closer to home and have not come back, which is a major blow to visitor numbers.

AE said that having everything listed as a heritage trail would bring people visiting the major attractions to also see the more obscure ones if they happened to be on the route. Although this would help with tourism, it wouldn't necessarily result in money being raised and spent on the upkeep of those assets.

ME said that the Royal Pavilion could be described as a national treasure, and that other national treasures are not owned by the relevant local authority. LP said most assets are owned by the local authority if they don't fall under the Crown. JC said that the Royal Pavilion was put into a Trust so they could access funding better and ensure it was not

susceptible to local government budget cuts. For the smaller assets, they will probably have to rely on small groups such as the Hove Civic Society, to raise funds. LC said that everyone is looking at different funding models to diversify their funding sources and ensure their businesses are sustainable. JC said that it might be an idea to set up a fund where people with a bit more money in their pockets could choose to invest in the city. LC said there is a project going on at the moment funded by Arts Council England, which was about encouraging philanthropy for cultural organisations. They held an event at the Theatre Royal which brought together the cultural organisations and philanthropic networks. A working group was set up as a result.

Guy Smyth (GS) said he read an article about the rise and fall of Britain's parks, which can also be considered as heritage assets. Local authorities are not legally required to do anything with parks so they are an easy target when cuts need to be made. The article looked at America where they have different governance structures and all the parks were owned by Trusts. People readily donated to these trusts, including in their wills. Everyone is chasing the same pots of money which makes it very difficult. The Friends of Queens Park group was looking for funding when Queens Park was on the "at risk" register but the funding went to Stanmer Park which is much bigger with a larger audience. AE said Queens Park is interesting because the park is surrounded by some of the most valuable housing in the city but the ward itself has high levels of deprivation.

MS said back in 1986 there was a proposal to sell off the Pavilion because it was seen as a symbol of imperialism and royalty, but the officers informed them about how much money the Pavilion was making and the plan was dropped. MS said it was a historical reason why the Pavilion was never taken on by national organisations like Historic England. He also said that parks have a major public health benefit but any income generated from them does not go towards their upkeep.

LC said that Brighton & Hove does attract a lot of investment but it doesn't feel like enough. Historic England's grant for Madeira Terraces is the largest it has ever given out so it's difficult to go back to them and ask for money for another project.

AE asked about the officer's recent trip to London where they looked at different funding models. LC said they were visiting creative workspace providers such as Someday Studios who develop underused heritage resources in Westminster; Proposition Studios, an old London Electricity Board building in Bethnal Green that is now a profit making artist's complex, and Lewisham Council's partnership with a vacant school in Deptford that is now occupied by artists.

Guy Smyth (GS) gave an overview of the Pepper Pot's recent history. He explained that the "Friends of" group originally grew out of the Local Action Team, back when the Council repainted the Pepper Pot each year. At the meeting, local residents raised concerns about the building's deteriorating condition. There was a high level of enthusiasm, but also some inexperience about what was achievable. Early discussions highlighted a divide within the group: some members were keen to propose potential uses for a fully restored building, while most were focused on understanding how to secure a sustainable future for it in the first place. As a result, the group became a bit fragmented.

The Pepper Pot used to be part of an estate that sat at the top of Queen's Park and the park used to be the gardens of the estate. The Pepper Pot was an ornate housing for the technology of the day for pumping water, which was a steam engine, explaining the purpose of the big chimney running straight through the middle of it. The building was designed by Sir Charles Barry, a great British Architect, who was also involved with the Houses of Parliament, Saint Peter's and the manor house that is in Downtown Abbey.

The Friends of the Pepper Pot soon realised that they could not save the building themselves. Instead, their role would be to help facilitate a solution, while ownership, and ultimate responsibility, remained with the Council. The group first approached the Landmark Trust, an organisation founded by John Smith, a philanthropist with a strong interest in buildings, architecture, and heritage. He established the Trust after observing that, for every stately home preserved by the National Trust, many smaller but historically significant buildings were being lost simply because they lacked a viable use. The Landmark Trust proposed converting the Pepper Pot into a holiday let. This suggestion divided opinion within the group: some objected because King Charles is the Trust's patron, while others saw the proposal as a sensible and sustainable way to secure the building's future. The Landmark Trust had a proven track record, dedicated staff to manage funding applications, and a longstanding model in which income from lettings is reinvested directly into the upkeep of each property. A surveyor assessed the Pepper Pot and was impressed. Unlike many of the Trust's rural properties, the Pepper Pot sits on a main road, surrounded by a mix of architectural styles, with pubs, restaurants, and Brighton station all within walking distance. GS drew comparisons with Clavell Tower in Dorset, similar in scale to the Pepper Pot, which the Landmark Trust successfully restored and now operates as a holiday let that is booked up two years in advance. With Council support, the group worked closely with the Landmark Trust through multiple stages, eventually reaching the final shortlist of three before ultimately losing out. They then approached the Vivat Trust, which expressed interest in taking on the Pepper Pot. However, around the same time, Vivat had also committed to restoring Hadlow Tower in Tunbridge. The Friends of the Pepper Pot later discovered that the Vivat Trust had entered administration, resulting in Hadlow Tower being put on the market.

The Friends of the Pepper Pot continues but the situation remains tricky. The Pepper Pot is a negative asset as far as the Council are concerned and it's hard to justify spending a lot of money on it when Council Housing needs investment and other demands outweigh it. The only option would be to find an outside funder and get the building restored to the point that it could be used for something.

ME asked about the Pepper Pot's current condition. GS explained that it continues to deteriorate, there is damp forming around the chimney, and a recent incident occurred where children were playing on the toilet block roof. Unfortunately, one fell through, damaging the roof and injuring themselves. GS said that the Landmark Trust had previously carried out a full feasibility study on the Pepper Pot, appointing Witherford Watson Mann as the architects, a firm that had won the Stirling Prize the year before. He gave the example of Astley Castle, which was in a terrible state of disrepair, that Witherford Watson Mann revitalised by inserting a modern building within the walls, which ended up looking really good. Unfortunately, the Pepper Pot was not granted any funding.

GS and Friends of The Pepperpot felt that a micro-area strategy is needed, taking into account the whole immediate footprint, including the bin area, bus stops, and other nearby infrastructure together with impact from ongoing street trading. GS added that several elected representatives have been involved in ongoing discussions, including Cllr Rowkins, Cllr Gauge, and MP Chris Ward as well as St Luke's Residents Association.

Peter Insole (PI) introduced his role at Bristol City Council; he is responsible for heritage and his team is made up of urban designers, landscape architects, archaeologists, conservation officers, ecologists and arboriculture officers. As with other local authorities, they face challenges in looking after heritage assets and getting the best future use for them. They are working on a Heritage Strategy and identifying how to be strategic about approaching funders to help with the upkeep of council-owned assets. They have been supporting community groups to manage their assets. They have developed a characterisation toolkit for community groups to understand the story behind their assets and start to look at what future aspirations there might be.

When providing funding advice, PI says not to go to the National Lottery because they are under incredible pressure to fund things across the country, and to look for alternative providers instead. It is important to get the use right for the asset, then define the funding strategy for it and get the business model right. PI talked about a grade 2 listed swimming pool that was built around 1890, which became a dance centre in the 1980s, much loved by the community. The building had to close in 2015 due to a lack of funds; it ended up going through a community asset process and was taken over by Trinity Community Arts who had experience of managing another heritage asset. They are in the process of going to a stage 2 lottery bid to conserve it and are looking to turn it into a multi-use community facility. Another challenging asset is Ashton Court, a large grade 1 listed Manor House on the edge of the city which is owned by the Council but the land is in the neighbouring authority. It is a big country house that was used for weddings, and other ideas put forward included a cafe or a hotel. The Council doesn't have the capacity to manage it effectively so they are considering establishing a Trust to do so but they are a long way off and don't know where the money will come from to fund it.

AE asked about the smaller heritage assets. PI said there are a lot of smaller heritage assets in Bristol and gave the example of Castle Park, which is in the city centre. Castle Park is a historic second World War site that has a ruined church in the middle of it, and they are considering the best use for it. On the northern edge of the city, there is an anti-aircraft battery which is on the "at risk" register. It is near a large council estate, and they are working with the local community about its future use, possibly as an education centre, and how local residents can become custodians for it.

MS asked how the Council's relationship was with the local community groups. PI said it was varied but generally good; there are a lot of amenity groups, but they also have limited capacity. There are a lot of retired, older people involved who have a lot of expertise and interest, but they also have other things going on.

MS asked about the Colston statue. PI said he had actually proposed a new plaque for the Colston statue before the BLM protest happened, but the Mayor at the time wasn't happy with the wording. The statue then ended up in the river following the BLM protest. PI argued that the statue shouldn't be put back and should go into the museum. Since this event, they have been raising awareness of this legacy across the whole city, telling the story and talking about how this causes equality, diversity and inclusion issues. Part of their new Heritage Strategy is a commemoration memorialisation section that talks about who should be remembered and how.

AE asked about their resources for enforcement. PI said that was an area that hadn't been so well resourced until fairly recently, so they are playing catch up. There are 4000 listed buildings in Bristol, which is the largest concentration outside of London. A quarter of them are in the Clifton Conservation Area but they are distributed all across the city which makes enforcement difficult.

AG said that Brighton & Hove is missing a trick as there are a lot of properties built with money that was given to owners who were coming out of the slave trade. The Royal Pavilion is an example of this and it is well known that William the Fourth and George the Fourth were connected with the slave trade, but it isn't acknowledged anywhere. AG talked about difficulties they have had with the Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust in asking for a monument in the Pavilion Gardens to commemorate the Indian soldiers who were burned on a pyre during World War 1. AG asked if, as a Local Authority, can they ask Trusts what to focus on. PI said he has included this as part of their Heritage Strategy, to ensure that they have open conversations and to make it clear how they will help manage the asset.

PI said that he would send over their Know Your Place web resource that overlays different data sets relating to heritage onto a map and is a great portal for enabling community work. People can also upload their own information and stories to the site. An academic has recently launched one on transatlantic slavery economy, which shows who got compensation payments in 1833 and mapped it onto the city. This allows people to make connections between the kinds of industries that was born out of the compensation payments, such as the Great Western Railway, the SS Great Britain, the Suspension Bridge, the zoo etc. MS said that an academic in Brighton has done something similar.

Task & Finish Group Meeting 5 – 27/02/26

Members present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Earthey, Sykes, Cattell, Grimshaw, Theobald; Mark Strong (CVS)

Witnesses/Officers supporting: Allan Grainger (Brighton Society), Derek Wright (involved in many community groups), Hedley Swain (CEO Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust), Steve Tremlett (BHCC Planning Policy and Heritage Manager), Natalie Sacks-Hammond, Giles Rossington, Luke Proudfoot (BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Team).

Cllr Amanda Evans (AE) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking witnesses for finding the time to attend. She reminded everyone that the meeting was not in public, but that the Task & Finish Group (TFG) would be producing a report which would be published, with

evidence from witnesses referenced or quoted. A note of the meeting will be circulated to all witnesses to check for accuracy.

Allan Grainger (AG) gave a summary on the work of the Brighton Society. He has been a part of the society for 12 years; he is involved with the design of the website, and he is on the society's committee that discusses issues in the city. The Brighton Society has been running for over 50 years and tries to connect people with heritage through the website. When issues come up, the society is brought in for support and to provide advice. The society started in 1973 by the director for the Royal Pavilion at the time and Selma Montford MBE; and it dealt with schemes affecting the city such as housing, new roads, public transport, new conservation areas and the character of the city. It all started in the 1960s with a proposal to demolish 700 houses to build an elevated motorway that would go over Preston Circus and into the North Laines area. Although it had RIBA support, government policies changed and the scheme didn't happen. It showed a disrespect for heritage, which is important as it defines our past, present and future. The society hopes to make people aware of what heritage actually is and means to the city. AG gave an example of another scheme the society had been involved in; Beetham Tower block next to Brighton station, a 42-storey building that would have dominated the area. The Brighton Society joined the North Laine Community Association and the Council to oppose this development, and it was finally dismissed. AG said that they collaborate well with the Council but at times they need to challenge them and they will step in if they feel that heritage is under attack. They are concerned about the skyline and quality of buildings and the current need to build upwards. They are not against modern buildings but as long as they are sympathetic to the city and don't endanger heritage. The society campaigned for 30 years for the restoration of the birdcage bandstand which is something they are particularly proud of. AG said the little things are important too such as the seaside shelter near Lower Rock Gardens which is in a really poor state. Tourists would see this and not think it looks good, especially with people using it as a place to sleep. All these heritage assets impact how we feel about the city.

AE said that there are more obscure heritage assets that are in need of upkeep, like the dovecote in Patcham that most of the public are not aware of. AG said if there is a significant issue, they would make the public aware by putting it on the website and they would email the relevant ward councillors. However, the response is slow and they had to wait a month to hear back regarding the seafront shelter. The quote to refurbish the shelter was £100k and it needs anti-graffiti paint and unbreakable windows. He questioned why quotes for these projects end up so large and then doesn't happen when all it needed was a lick of paint that could be done straight away.

AE said that there are legal constraints if the heritage asset is listed and they have to do things in a certain way that ends up costing a lot.

Cllr Carol Theobald (CT) said there was a Tudor house in Preston Park that was knocked down and replaced with flat, which was a shame. The shelters on the seafront all need some work with many vandalised. People are fighting for the Patcham Dovecote, which is almost falling down, and she raised the issue of the floral clock in Palmeira Square. Is there any funding for these?

AG said the Brighton Society will be discussing the floral clock and that he would bring up the dovecote with them. The society doesn't raise money and any money that is gifted to them is used to keep it running.

Cllr Julie Cattell (JC) said she was surprised no one had put in a bid to the CIL for the dovecote as it is meant to be used for projects like that.

Cllr Ollie Sykes (OS) said that there is inconsistency with the Council's approach and the community's desire to help out with easy solutions. There was a bench in Palmeira Square that the community weren't allowed to repair, instead it was removed. He suggested putting forward a recommendation around responding to community options on supporting the repair of heritage assets.

Derek Wright (DW) said that the post office development in Patcham means that there will be CIL funding for that area.

Mark Strong (MS) asked about liability and accountability; who is liable, who owns it, what happens if someone painted a heritage asset without permission. When volunteers help with a park clearance, they have to sign a form for insurance, have a briefing etc that means they're covered by the Council's liability; would it be an idea to do this for community groups and have certified volunteers who are able to do certain repairs without going through a whole process?

JC said that some "Friends of" groups have to meet a strict set of criteria to make the group a proper group, such as having a first aider. It can get a bit complicated and some things require planning permission. However, it is clear that lots of community groups would like to do more. The cucumber benches is a good example of the community coming together to restore a heritage asset. JC suggested a recommendation around facilitating community groups to do this, a pragmatic community response.

AE asked about the Brighton Society's questions on the Royal Pavilion gardens. AG said one of the issues was about the long bench that has been moved from New Road and he has contacted the company who provided the wood. That type of high quality wood should have lasted over 25 years but it only lasted for 18. The life expectancy of the wood is likely to be nearer 50 years. They thought this would be a heritage asset that would last for years as it originally looked really good, but it didn't last. JC said that the benches were rotten along the bottom and needed to be removed as part of the Royal Pavilion Gardens project. They were a cause of big anti-social behaviour issues and weren't able to be restored. If properly maintained, as the wood company suggested, the benches would have lasted longer. MS said it is important to remember why they were put there in the first place – to allow people to sit on and rest. They needed to be fit for purpose when first installed.

AG said there were further concerns about the Royal Pavilion Gardens project such as erecting a 7-foot fence around such a major asset to keep the public out at night. It was quoted there were 20,000 incidences recorded there in one year which would mean 55 serious anti-social incidences in 24 hours every day, which can't be right. Quoting unrealistic numbers reduces the credibility of the custodians. If the gardens will be open 24/7 and the fence is meant to stop anti-social behaviour, it doesn't make sense. He asked how the South Gate will end up looking aesthetically. MS said that the purpose is to restore the gardens to how they were in the regency period when they didn't want the public to walk through.

DW began by talking about the various projects he is involved with and ideas he has; he talked about creating lots of heritage trails that go from Kemptown, linking all the wards in the city and ending up on the Downs. It would encourage people to walk and learn about heritage and wildlife from information boards along the way, which could include QR codes.

Stanmer Park has benches that can be wound up and they talk to you about the area. DW is a member of the Martha Gunn Trust that raises funds and awareness of the fishing community and how it shaped what Brighton is today. He has been a part of the campaign to save Madeira Terraces which has been going on for 10 years with a lot of residents who realised it would be lost if they didn't do something. They increased public awareness and set up a crowdfunder and received a lot of support from the residents. They had a raffle going which raised £17,600 and the crowdfunder raised £500,000. There is a lot of work involved in gaining community support such as talking to people, visiting local businesses, setting up fundraising events, knocking on doors and putting leaflets through letterboxes. One of the biggest challenges is getting people to attend events. The vision is to maintain heritage assets by listening to communities and giving them what they want. DW is in favour of repurposing heritage buildings and believes that Madeira Terraces, the Shelter Hall lift, the Pepper Pot and the Queens Park water fountain should be prioritised. DW partners with many other community groups such as Friends of Valley Gardens, Kemptown Community Notice Board, Martha Gunn Trust, Madeira Drive Development, Valley Gardens Past and Present, among others. He would like to do more social media engagement to continue to build support from residents, also utilising WhatsApp groups, and in person meetings. DW said they would like to create a cultural heritage attraction with Martha Gunn and would like to name a square in East Street after her and installing a plaque. He would like to see a heritage trail on the seafront with information including the fishing community and Pool Valley. The fishing community helped transform the city into a tourist attraction as nobility didn't like the smell of the fish which allowed the introduction of bathing machines, and these attracted visitors to the seaside. DW said engaging with Council officers, councillors and leaders is often a waste of time and that they need to create projects that everyone supports. The Council needs to be bolder and to communicate better with residents.

DW listed some of his ideas of generating money for heritage assets;

- if a tourist tax is introduced, it could go towards heritage;
- The i360 gave £1 million to Madeira Terraces which the Council match-funded, could see if other businesses are willing to do the same;
- With some visitor attractions, they could impose a % of ticket sales to go towards protecting heritage
- Introduce a Council Lottery similar to Rother Council where residents suggest what the money goes towards;
- Crowdfunding;
- Create Trusts for some heritage sites who are responsible for its maintenance;
- Look into Art Levy to pay for sculptures;
- Partner with the Business Improvement District;
- Bid for maintenance of parks;
- Devolution might bring some money in for heritage;
- Partner with large companies who have community funds such as AMEX and Pride;
- Put a levy on outdoor events such as the marathon and put a % of ticket sales towards heritage;

DW said this would show investors that heritage is important to the city which makes it more likely they will step in

JC liked the idea of the Council lottery. MS said that 120 councils have this and make around £200,000 per year.

AG said it is important to bring in the big spenders like AMEX and make them feel like they have a stake in the city. JC said the Seafront Development Board exists to draw in investment and they need to sell the city. AG said as a heritage society, they have concerns that those funding heritage projects will want something in return and it won't always fit with the heritage site. AE gave the example of the Box Park Scheme which didn't happen but it would have changed the heritage nature of the area. Circus Street is an example of this whereas the Rox building has included a nod to its old use as a cinema. Big developers can be disrespectful of heritage which impacts on the look and feel of the city.

MS said that things do have to change and not everything can be preserved as it is. Things like climate change and demographic change has an effect; what one generation likes, another will not. Re-use needs to be done in a sensitive and sensible way and to be bold. The Preston Barracks site has taken 10 years to be built and the length of time is a planning problem as things change. Steve Tremlett (ST) said it will always take a long time to get from the initial concept work to completion, especially for the very big sites like Preston Barracks. ST agreed that things change over such a long period of time and the way the building will be used might be different from the initial concept. There are natural changes in circumstances and schemes get adapted to accommodate this. JC gave the example of Toad Hall Valley that was approved as a site for a new secondary school but now there are less children in the city so it isn't needed.

OS said that there are ways of doing this and gave the example of St John's Church in Hove that was repurposed into a community centre. However, it has been designed to be reversible so it can be put back again as a church if that was what was wanted.

Hedley Swain (HS) gave a summary of the Royal Pavilion and Museum Trust which became a trust 5 and a half years ago and looks after the Royal Pavilion and Gardens, Brighton Museum, Hove Museum, the Booth Museum and Preston Manor. They have a clear remit to look after the buildings and collections and to bring value to people. They have an important role in the visitor economy and in terms of a sense of place and pride in the city. They do a lot of partnership working with, for example, the local schools, the bus company, BHT, the crew club etc They want to welcome as many people as they can so they leave with a sense of how important these sites are. There is a crisis in the country with heritage buildings not being invested in for many years. For example, the Royal Pavilion hasn't had any meaningful capital work or improvement for 40 years, the wiring that probably goes back to the 1960s, and in the next 10 years they will need to spend around £40 - 50million on the building. This is at a time where there is little funding available so it will need to bring together money from the lottery, council, national pots and private sources. At the same time, they need to continue to provide value to their audience. The situation was made worst by covid where many organisations were wiped out or had their reserves wiped out at a time when the tourist economy was suffering. Then there is the issue of climate change and how it is affecting heritage buildings in particular as they were not built to withstand the extremes of the weather we have now. There was not the kind of heavy rainfall when the Pavilion was built and this degrades the building and has a serious effect on mould. They are trying to deal with some serious challenges and have to be entrepreneurial and find as many external funders as possible. They have a fundraising team and just in the last couple of weeks have

received £150,000 from the Garfield Western Trust to support the Pavilion Gardens project and the offer to apply for £50,000 from the Historic Houses Trust to support Preston Manor. HS said he spends a lot of his time maximising income for the Trust and reacting to societal changes such as visitors now getting their information digitally rather than using physical posters, for example. Using social media influencers is a popular way to promote things.

AE asked about influencers driving traffic to the sites. HS said that is the way of the world now especially with markets like China. They have identified key influencers and encouraged them to visit the Pavilion and film a TikTok or Instagram video which creates a large influence.

OS asked about the interaction between heritage and the climate and whether there was any government funding available for climate resilience that can help protect heritage assets. HS said they work with the Southeast Net Zero Carbon Zero Hub and there is hopefully some public money attached. They secured £1.5million to do the roof at Brighton Museum and part of the reasoning was for energy efficiency. The Rampion have provided some support to the Trust as well. However, the funding need is daunting, for example, the drainage for the Pavilion and Brighton Museum is interior and there's very little that can be done to improve this.

ST added that there is a new draft National Planning Policy Framework being worked on and that the government has said there are concerns that the current planning policy approach to heritage focuses too much on addressing harm and does not provide sufficient positive support for the sustainable redevelopment of heritage assets to support growth - for instance, in relation to vacant listed buildings being brought back into use. The proposed changes intend to strengthen the ability to bring forward heritage-related development.

CT said that the Pavilion is getting a lot of money spent on it and asked whether it is a good idea to close the gardens at night because of anti-social behaviour, and whether charging an entry fee for the museum had an effect on visitor numbers. HS said the gardens project is costing around £6million and it is a really important historic garden. They accepted that the Council do not want to close the gardens at night. HS said the fees for the museum were changed around the time of covid so it is difficult to judge the impact, if any, on visitor numbers. They haven't had anyone turn up and then leave because there was an entry charge and £7 is very reasonable. They are trying different models to provide catering at the Pavilion.

MS asked if the admission fee was a donation or a fixed fee and that they can get gift aid if it was by donation. HS said that it is a fee but they get gift aid because they're an independent trust and provide a yearly ticket. The money that has been brought in by gift aid has been really valuable.

MS said that the museum doesn't have a coherent identity and would benefit from a contemporary art offer. HS said that they use the temporary programme to drive outside visitors. He felt that having a really good arts curator is key to bringing in a valuable arts offer. DW said that Black Rock would be a good site for an arts building and would bring people in. HS mentioned the recent visual arts survey commissioned by the council that will shortly be published.

Mayor Amanda Grimshaw talked about repurposing and the Court House. HS said that the Court House used to be used for museum offices, so they decided to repurpose it. They had offers from nightclubs and restaurants who wanted to take over the building but they felt that was too much of a risk, so they turned it into small units for creatives. There is a lot of value in finding spaces where creatives can come together. They are currently looking at the kitchen garden at Preston Manor with different ideas including a garden centre, café, events space and possibly a sauna. They are also looking at other spaces such as the King William IV Gate House for holiday lets. They are constantly thinking imaginatively about spaces.

AG asked about the Pavilion Gardens project and the 7-foot fences. HS said that it's one of the most important historic gardens in the world, planned by Nash to go with the Pavilion. It's on the 'gardens at-risk' register. There is a sense of boundary to the gardens with Victorian railings the whole way around, funded by Historic England. HS said they were going to remove the area of astro turf and the locks attached to the tree.

MS asked about disabled access to the Royal Pavilion. HS said they provide ground floor access and have one lift. They show a film in a room downstairs about the upstairs. They recognise that this is a challenge for the next project, but they need to be realistic as they can only do so much in terms of access.

Task & Finish Group Meeting 6 – 06/03/26

Members present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Earthey, Sykes, Cattell, Theobald; Mark Strong (CVS)

Apologies: Mayor Amanda Grimshaw, Steve Tremlett, Luke Proudfoot

Witnesses/Officers supporting: Helmut Lusser (Hove Civic Society), Cllr Birgit Miller (Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism), Natalie Sacks-Hammond, Giles Rossington (BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Team).

Cllr Amanda Evans (AE) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking witnesses for finding the time to attend. She reminded everyone that the meeting was not in public, but that the Task & Finish Group (TFG) would be producing a report which would be published, with evidence from witnesses referenced or quoted. A note of the meeting will be circulated to all witnesses to check for accuracy.

Helmut Lusser (HL) gave a summary of the Hove Civic Society and its work; it is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) that was set up in 1961, it currently has around 300 members and has spent over £300k on the public realm. Heritage buildings are fairly well protected by law and there's a lot of work going into planning legislation. However, what isn't protected is the space between the buildings and the society's current focus is to get the Council to improve this space. Almost 20 years ago, the Council commissioned a study by an architect (Jan Gehl, *Public Life – Public Space*, 2007) that suggested ideas of what could be done to Hove, which was approved by all parties and then forgotten about. HL said it acted as a blueprint and is worth digging out to re-visit. Hove Civic Society aims to influence policy and new developments, including the City Plan. They believe that an investment plan for all the conservation areas in the city is needed because if there is already a plan in place,

it can be implemented as soon as the investment has been found. If there is no plan, then nothing happens.

The society has introduced the idea of a policy of planting one new street tree for every new flat built in the city, compensating more concrete for more greenery. 100+ extra trees per year would make a huge difference. The policy is already adopted in the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan, and they would like to see the City Plan adopt this policy. The society is working on a big project in Poets Corner at the moment with councillors, council officers and residents where 15 streets have got involved in a plan to plant up all the junctions in the area. They have bought a scanner to do ground preparatory work themselves and have already scanned 27 junctions. They have been advised to introduce a hedge planting scheme which has a lot of support from the residents.

The society is working on a project called 'sculpture in the city' and have started an arts trail in Hove. They introduced the Hove Plinth in 2018 and have invested £300k into it; it is meant to emulate the construction of the 4th plinth at Trafalgar Square and serves to take different sculpture over time. It is the proposed starting point for an open-air sculpture gallery, which could initially stretch along the seafront from the Peace statue to the Lagoon. Another project they are working on is bringing neglected corners back to life; they have identified areas in Hove for this and are starting on the St Aubyns/Kingsway junction looking at introducing pocket parks. They are setting up a "Friends of" group with a trustee of the society taking the lead; this will give it a strong link with the society which has the facilities already set up in terms of Gift Aid etc which smaller organisations can't use.

The society is also seeking to take over responsibility for the Hove Heritage Boards which were set up 30 years ago and are out of date. If they get funding of £40k, they will take this project on in partnership with local societies, historians and the museum. They run a "tree angel" scheme where members donate towards the planting of trees, which allows them to subsidise their projects. Other than a £2.5k start-up fund from the Council a few years ago, everything else has been funded through donations. They got a £10k Arts Council grant, money from the Sainsburys Trust, private contributions and CIL money.

The society would like to create synergies with the Council and are pleased to have two liaison councillors on their committee. With the example of the Hove Plinth, they were lucky that the assistant CEO at the time was in favour of it. Once she had left the organisation, they felt less supported and as if they were stepping on council officer's toes. This is something that needs to be resolved if the Council wants more involvement from the local community. The society has skilled professionals in their group and if the Council want to utilise this, it needs to be a real partnership and not a "friend's slave" level. They need to see the potential in what the community can offer. An example of this was when the society wanted to plant trees, they used to walk with the arboriculturist to the street, scan and mark the pavement, then dig and plant a tree 5 minutes later. Now there are 150 rules they have to follow such as catering for the width of the pavement for accessibility reasons, which means they can't really plant anymore. There's no willingness to depart from rigorous policy rules and a lack of understanding that this needs to be done in respect to heritage. The work of the society is making a difference although they can't replace the lack of resources around at the moment, and the Council needs to really think about how it responds and makes the best out of a very poor situation.

Mark Strong (MS) agreed that there does feel like a “them” and “us” situation between Council officers and members of community groups. It’s a historic issue with Council officers controlling the agenda that seems to be inherent in how the Council operates. AE said that members of these groups feel that they all deserve officer time and officers have lots of groups to deal with. They aren’t always aware of the expertise held within each particular group. MS said community groups would like to do more and gave the example of Madeira Drive where officers were forced to work with community groups and got a much better outcome. Trust needs to be built on all sides.

MS talked about wayfinding in the city not being up to date and that any art trail needs to link Brighton and Hove. HL said they are working with the Regency Society, Kemptown Society, Western Road Group and the West Hove Forum on the art trail, they need half a million pounds for the next 2 sculptures.

Cllr Julie Cattell (JC) said that the group should come up with a recommendation of a strategy for the Council when working in partnership with community groups to enhance the public realm. It would be a good idea to involve Cllr Allen as the relevant Cabinet member. He has started work on looking at street signs.

Cllr Ollie Sykes (OS) said the Hove Civic Society need to include the statue on Waterloo Street in their art trail. It was apparently found hiding behind trees in Stanmer Park and is about 200 years old. OS agreed about needing to find a new way of working with community groups; that their role, contribution and expertise is valuable, and they are motivated and resourced. He doesn’t want to see the motivation dissipating due to unnecessary barriers. AE said that there probably will be a recommendation based on this and that community groups need to see things as a city-wide as there are pockets of extreme deprivation in some areas where there aren’t engaged professionals with time to put towards this or pay a membership fee. We need to encourage groups that can, to share with other groups. HL said it depends on people wanting to make change and that things like watering trees doesn’t require resources, only a willingness from locals. They would need more resources before expanding projects into Brighton and they try to link up with other community groups to achieve this.

Cllr Carol Theobald (CT) asked what types of trees were being planted in the streets and whereabouts at the junctions. HL said they ask the arboriculturist about the best type of trees to plant and they would like to see large trees planted at the junctions. AE asked about investment plans for conservation areas. HL said they wanted to use neighbourhood CIL for street furniture, pavements, bollards, and curbs.

MS gave the example of Oxford where they have a code of conduct between the Council and community groups that sets expectations for both parties to sign up to. This helps to build trust and a positive ongoing relationship. In Craven Vale, which is a more deprived area, there is a very committed community group who are very willing but have no money. In some areas, there is often only one or two key people running these groups with no succession planning, which raises the question of what happens when they leave. HL added that most trustees or leaders of these groups are much older as those who are working are very busy and it takes a lot of time to dedicate to this.

Cllr Birgit Miller (BM) said that heritage is not just the built environment, but that it also includes the natural environment such as the UNESCO Living Coast Biosphere, historic

gardens, farms, parklands and the public realm. It also includes cultural heritage such as recognising the importance of LGBTQ+ identity in the city, grass roots music venues and forgotten histories; like the multiethnic history of Brighthelmstone where the first Jewish settler was recorded in 1766. These are the things that frame the historic buildings and make the city what it is. Preserving heritage sites should not stop high quality architecture or garden design, it should be seen as a benchmark or a baseline. The strategy should act as a driver for quality but not an end to itself; we don't want the city to be a museum but a thriving, changing city. BM gave the example of the Eiffel Tower which was loathed by the locals when it was first built, and how peoples' views change over time. We need to improve the environment of the city and be better for future generations; the Council and the community groups need to start thinking as one. BM agreed with the blockages that HL had expressed. BM said that the heritage societies might have a stronger voice if they were working as one, which would make it easier to speak to Council officers and not be ignored. It would be helpful to have subgroups to work on specific projects but not continue to reflect historical boundaries in the city. We don't want a "them" and "us" situation and need to consider the city as a whole. The seafront is a good example where people only see the central beach area; the lagoon to the marina, when it actually starts from Shoreham.

BM said that there should be some long-term work done with bodies like Historic England to feed into lobbying. Facadism is important; this is when the external appearance of a building is protected and a new structure is built behind it that is more fit for purpose. There are some examples where the interior is important and needs to be preserved but others need a more robust, sustainable structure that can withstand climate change and last for the next 400 years. Facadism allows the use of new materials that are more appropriate for the location, for example, cast-iron was mass produced in the 19th century but ended up being unsuitable for the sea air. It would make more sense if we weren't trying to restore everything and could replace the parts of the seafront that have to be recast with a more robust material that looks the same but will last longer. Those bits that can be restored, should be. BM said that national funding needs to be focused on the regular inspection of the state of buildings or structures and that there needs to be much more preventative funding available. We shouldn't be letting buildings get to such poor states of decay and then spend vast amounts of money to rescue them. It is cheaper to be preventative.

JC said that if the interior of a building has been ruined, there isn't much that can be done. They can be modernised with a careful demolition inside and can show where a wall might have been to preserve that part of it. They need to make sure alterations to buildings fit in with its surroundings. JC said she wasn't a fan of facadism and that we need to allow room for new modern buildings with high quality materials that can cope with the climate. It's a delicate balance to look at having affordable housing or a really attractive building. JC said that societies like the Brighton Society and Regency Society very rarely support anything new in planning. Historic England would be happy with a dramatic change of use for a listed building if it meant it kept it going. In some cases, they can keep historic features intact such as a staircase or the roof.

Cllr Mark Earthey (ME) said the city does need a tasteful balance of new and old but it does risk the heritage looking mismatched. ME asked what the group thought the definition was of "neighbourhood" when referring to the "neighbourhood plan", and asked why heritage assets that are recognised nationally, like the Royal Pavilion, isn't funded centrally. AE said she

liked the mismatch of new and old and agreed with BM about societies wanting to preserve everything and that the city doesn't want to become a pastiche of what it once was. At the point the Pavilion was built, it wasn't liked by locals and there are examples of this all over the world, not just the Eiffel Tower but the Sydney Opera House, the Guggenheim in Bilbao etc and these buildings completely revitalised the area. AE gave the example of the Frank Gehry design for the new King Alfred Leisure Centre that was opposed by local societies who didn't think it was in keeping with the Regency seafront. The design was watered down so much because of the objections that Frank Gehry asked to have his name taken off it, which was a shame as it could have been city changing.

BM said that when a building's interior is completely stripped out, it's an opportunity to create an exciting new space inside while still keeping the historic exterior intact. Facadism preserves the front of buildings in conservation areas where the appearance of the streetscape matters most. The parts of the building at the back or inside, are generally considered less important from a conservation perspective. The quality of architecture is very important and the city has suffered from modern buildings of very low standards. They need to set sufficiently high standards for developers. However, high quality architecture costs money.

CT gave the example of the Richmond Terrace conservation area that she had voted against at Planning Committee because change would have set a precedence for other owners to build dormers and change the windows etc, this would change the character of the whole area. The shelters on the seafront let the city down and they should be able to find paint that actually works on the railings and enable them to last longer.

BM said the Seafront Maintenance Plan had been delayed due to funding issues but was being brought back. They must strip all the paint back to the cast-iron to ensure all the rust is removed and not left under the paint because it re-emerges very quickly. There are stretches of railing on the seafront that have had to be removed entirely that were beyond repair and it is these which it should be possible to replace with a more sustainable material. The cast-iron foundry is able to repair much but it seems counterproductive to recast missing sections with the same material when we know it doesn't last.

JC said there is a lot going on in Conservation Areas and that there are old buildings at the rear of others that used to be used for light industry such as a milkman's yard and repair garages, which could be used as housing. It is important to consider the use of these buildings because they express the character and history of the area. In relation to Madeira Terraces, they thought that it was impossible to mend the cast-iron or get paint that would last for years. The company who resolved this also repaired the Victoria Fountain through stripping it right back to the iron and then fusing any parts that needed repairing together. All the pieces now have an undercoat of paint, a colour coat and a top coat that should last for a very long time. However, this process was very expensive and replacing them with cast aluminium or a similar material that won't rust would be much better.

OS said that he disagreed with BM when she said the community groups should work as one and that they need to allow the groups to operate as it best fits them. It would be wrong to impose a model on them as it would undermine how the groups work. HL said that in the 60s, the Hove Civic Society were a protest organisation and then morphed into something that actually has an attitude of “yes... but” whereas other groups in the city are very much “no, no no”. They are the only organisation that is making physical changes and the other groups have a different purpose and focus.

MS said that in Oxford, community groups have a confederation of groups who do their own thing but join together on larger projects at county level. There is a generational issue with community groups and it would be good to get more younger people involved. MS thinks that the Council needs to stand up to developers and be more brave. He raised the issue of green spaces and events that some community groups are unhappy about. BM said that green spaces are assets in the city that belong to everyone, not just those in the immediate area. Places like Valley Gardens provide a value to people who don't live near to any green space and have just as much right to enjoy that space. Events bring people to these spaces which is a benefit to the city as a whole.

Addition after the meeting: Cllr Miller's answers to specific questions

How well do you think the Council manages heritage in the city?

- o Previous history of heritage asset management not good – Home Farm, Stanmer Park restoration and management plan to be developed in 2016, but buildings have been empty for at least 15 years

Is there anything specific that you would like to see?

- o Seafront maintenance plan is being brought back – had to be suspended due to budgetary constraints caused by demand led council statutory duties
- o Will be looking at ways that empty, decaying sites such as Home Farm, Stanmer Park can be repurposed and restored

What are your ideas about how to better support heritage in private ownership?

- o Central government – more access to funding for restoration – heritage assets are part of country's history not just private owners. Eg, level of grant funding could be linked to level of public access
- o Duty of care for owners of heritage assets
- o Both for sustainability purposes and protection of heritage – restoration and preventative building maintenance could have lower rates of VAT
- o *What needs to be improved?*
 - ♣ Reduce burden on private owners and public owners, so that listing is viewed as a privilege not a burden

What is your vision for heritage in the city?

- o A city where heritage assets and buildings are in good shape, preventative maintenance is undertaken regularly, but also an understanding that there is space for the new and imaginative. We don't want to be a museum, but a living, breathing, vibrant city – protecting heritage assets should not be about keeping everything the same, but about ensuring that the new is of a sufficiently high artistic quality that it enhances not diminishes a heritage site

Are there any specific lesser-known heritage assets that you think should be prioritised?

Stanmer Home Farm

Middle Street synagogue

Marlborough House & Steine House

Whitehawk Camp

Not a heritage asset in itself, but frames heritage assets – Regency Square garden

How are you ensuring sustainable financial models for heritage buildings, especially those requiring significant maintenance?

We have been examining different models used across the country, including visits and engagement with specialist providers and other local authorities. E.g:

- Someday Studios – Commercial activation of heritage assets around Oxford Street with Westminster Council
- [Proposition Studios](#) (Bethnal Green) – Occupation of a former London Electricity Board HQ the building now features three galleries, a 450-capacity performance venue, a lecture hall and cinema room, and a dedicated Physical Arts block offering classes in dance, gymnastics, aerial, martial arts, and boxing - alongside a sauna and ice baths.
- [Peabody Trust](#) – Thamesmead Arts & Culture initiatives, including partnership with Bow Arts Trust on long lease community arts centre and artists embedded in property guardian type-roles in unlettable buildings.
- [Art Hub Studios](#) (Lewisham) – studio provider partnering with council to occupy a school as artist studios.
- Somerset House (London) – studio provision within a large heritage complex, building on successful community collaborations.

Officers are also in contact with counterparts at local authorities across East and West Sussex facing similar challenges, as well as comparable urban centres such as Bristol and Glasgow.

Can you outline any external funding streams or partnerships being pursued?

- Ongoing conversations with partners at Heritage England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England are taking place.
- The recent DCMS announcement of further funding through the 'Arts Everywhere' programme has a particular focus on heritage and capital. Officers are already

assessing where funding streams might align to heritage projects, and coordinating applications across services to avoid potential internal competition. This work requires strategic prioritisation as discussed.

How are you supporting community groups and volunteers who look after heritage-related spaces or archives?

- Officers are in contact with and open to approaches to a range of groups relating to heritage spaces and archives. Recent work has included the Culture & Creative Industries Manager arranging for images from the James Gray archive of the Regency Society to be displayed at the Seafront Gallery over December and January.
- Other conversations about responsibility transfers and maintenance agreements of smaller heritage assets have also been progressed. For example, the opportunity for Hove Civic Society to adopt and refresh the Hove History Boards was agreed in principle in 2024, subject to the group securing funding. Officers would welcome approaches on similar projects and are happy to support.

Task & Finish Group Meeting 7 – 31/03/26

Members present: Cllrs Evans (Chair), Earthey, Sykes, Cattell, Grimshaw, Theobald; Mark Strong (CVS)

Witnesses/Officers supporting: Davinder Dhillon, (Chair of the Chattri Memorial Group and a trustee of the Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust), David Anderson, (Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, Cardiff University), Steve Tremlett (BHCC Planning Policy and Heritage Manager), Natalie Sacks-Hammond, Giles Rossington, Luke Proudfoot (BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Team).

Cllr Amanda Evans (AE) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking witnesses for finding the time to attend. She reminded everyone that the meeting was not in public, but that the Task & Finish Group (TFG) would be producing a report which would be published, with evidence from witnesses referenced or quoted. A note of the meeting will be circulated to all witnesses to check for accuracy.

Davinder Dhillon (DD) talked about how he first took over responsibility for the Chattri service; it initially had around 30 people attending and it increased to around 500 including various dignitaries such as the mayor, councillors, representatives from the Indian army and the High Commissioner of India who has visited several times. In the first few years, they would offer tea and samosas after the service at the University, and it gradually built up and moved to Patcham School for refreshments with food that was donated. This year they will be hosted by the AMEX stadium with the Punjab Restaurant in London, Covent Garden supplying the refreshments. DD has raised awareness through giving talks to schools, historical groups, walking groups, on black history, and has organised various heritage conferences in Brighton and was invited to attend one in India. He was also involved in the Indian Gate at the Royal Pavilion which was donated by the people of India to the people of Brighton and has organised a few commemorations over the years with the Mayors taking a

leading role. It was originally the mayor who sold the idea to the British Army to use Brighton as a venue for hospitals during the First World War.

AE asked about the idea for a sculpture in the Royal Pavilion gardens to commemorate the Indian soldiers.

DD shared some photos and a drawing which were the inspiration for the sculpture with the idea of it being on a bench where people can sit next to it. In the picture, the soldiers have different turbans reflecting the three main religions of India during the war: Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. The Royal Pavilion was the main hospital and they would like to put the sculpture in the grounds. They would like the Council to help commemorate and recognise these things from the past as they are important to the city's heritage. At the start of the First World War, the British Army realised it didn't have enough soldiers, and the subsequent recruitment drive was from India. They were the first ones to encounter the Germans and if it wasn't for them, the Germans would have been able to reach the English Channel ready to invade Britain. In 1915, there were two other hospitals in Brighton, one at the General Hospital on Elm Grove and the other on what was called School Road which has been demolished now and is near the Brighton Metropolitan College.

Mark Strong (MS) asked about the status of the Chattri; whether it is a military monument or a religious centre as it is difficult to function as both and he asked about repairs and upkeep. DD said it is a military monument rather than a religious site although there is a religious element in that they hold services there and people pray; it is a spiritual place and more of a temple of homage than a proper consecrated temple.

Cllr Carol Theobald (CT) asked about the plans for the Chattri service this year. DD said they received grants from Changing Chalk and the South Downs National Park Authority which have contributed to a new information board, 6 new benches and a new gate. The event will be taking place on the 14th June, there will a service for around 45 minutes and everyone is invited to the AMEX stadium for refreshments which will be a vegetarian curry.

Mayor Amanda Grimshaw (AG) said that the Indian soldiers were at the Pavilion for one year and that their commitment needs to be acknowledged, but it is overlooked. There are displays up at the Royal Pavilion but they gloss over the real story and don't represent the true nature of what happened. There was a rotten underbelly with soldiers being accused of faking their injuries and so on. The idea of reflecting the contribution of the three religions on a replica bench in the grounds would be very fitting. When Davinder first came up with the idea, it coincided with the Mary Clarke's statue and the decision that the Royal Pavilion needed to restore the gardens to its original Georgian/Regency design. This didn't include the Mary Clarke statue because it didn't fit the concept, and neither did Davinder's suggestion so it wasn't taken forward. Davinder has done a lot of work but is unable to progress. AG felt it was doing the memory a disservice by not representing the true history of the Royal Pavilion and just focusing on one period.

AE explained that the group had previously spoken with an officer from Bristol City Council about the city's colonial history and involvement in slavery, and how Bristol is working to acknowledge this past. They referred to the difficulties that arose following the removal of the Colston statue, and the ongoing efforts there to recognise both the city's heritage and the harms associated with it. AE noted that similar tensions exist locally, particularly around the

idea of preserving heritage sites in aspic and that only allowing regency architecture doesn't acknowledge the city's part in the First World War, which is hugely important.

DD said it wouldn't be possible to replicate the whole gardens as they were because there are now 300 year old trees in place, which they are unlikely to be chopped down, and the gardens are now a place for people to congregate rather than be kept out by fences in the past. AG added that the weeping Wych tree is still there.

Cllr Mark Earthey (ME) asked who made the decision to focus solely on the regency period and to whom are they accountable. AG said that the gardens were deemed "at risk" and put on the register because of the incidents there; it was then granted funding to take it off the register and to restore the natural boundary from the regency period. However, the gardens have retained a lot of the regency features such as beautiful views, the winding paths and long grass, and it has state of the art CCTV covering the whole gardens. The main aim of the regency status was to fence the garden in; however, it was also fenced in at the time the soldiers were at the Pavilion. The funding application could easily have covered all periods when the gardens were fenced in, not just the regency. David Anderson (DA) added that it creates a false time structure as the Pavilion has a significant living history that shouldn't be forgotten. This part of history shouldn't be excluded because it doesn't fit in with the arbitrary definition of what should be within the boundaries.

MS said that in the mid 90s, a garden designer called Virginia Hinze recreated the original regency design of the Pavilion gardens. This included erecting fences to stop people being able to walk through as they were able to do previously. The walkway doesn't meet current accessibility standards which excludes some people such as those with buggies or wheelchairs. It was an active decision to make the gardens what they are, and it is technically a modernist attempt to redesign an area to how they think it looked, more "faux regency" than actual regency.

DD said they have been looking at different local artists for the sculpture, and they will have to raise around £300 - £350k. He hopes to gain support from local people, the Council, even people abroad; anyone who is interested and wants to help raise money. When they apply for funding, they can demonstrate that they have support from the council and the local community. AG said it would be pointless to raise lots of money when the sculpture isn't allowed to go in the garden, it would be insulting to insist it goes outside the gates. The Mary Clarke statue is being moved to New Road.

MS said that this subject links to the Council's Memorial Policy that was discussed at committee earlier that week. AE said that this way of thinking needs to stop and one of the recommendations might be based on this. The recommendations can be specific, but they need to remember that Place O&S Committee is not a decision-making committee and cannot enforce anything.

DD said that Brighton is a diverse city and it's about making the community aware of this. For example, the first soldier to have the Victoria Cross conferred to him at the Royal Pavilion and to demonstrate the diversity of Brighton, there are blue plaques across the city such as that of Sake Dean Mohammed at the Queen's hotel and Rabindranath Tagore's on Hotel du Vin.

David Anderson (DA) gave an overview of his work in the museums, culture and heritage sector. He was Director General at Amgueddfa Cymru Museum Wales from 2010 until he moved to Cardiff University in 2023. He is currently an Honorary Professor of Cultural Policy at Cardiff University, researching Governance and Corruption. He was also a member of the Welsh Government's working group on 'The Slave Trade and the British Empire: an audit of commemoration in Wales' (published in 2021) which led to an in-depth analysis of hundreds of statues, streets and other memorials named after slave owners from the 17th century onwards in Wales

As President of the UK Museums Association from 2013 to 2015, he led the development of radically different policies than before, including the key publication for the sector, 'Museums Change Lives'. This proposed that people, not collections, are the ethical purpose of museums. In 1997, DA also wrote a research-based report on museum learning for the UK Government called "A Common Wealth - Museums in the Learning Age" (1997, second edition 1999). This proposed that it is the responsibility of all cultural and heritage bodies to support informal as well as formal learning by people and communities, whatever their background or class.

There are many museums that have managed to radically change their relationship with their communities, schools and kids. One mechanism is by providing opportunities for community-based volunteers. For example, St Fagans Museum of History, one of the seven museums that are part of Amgueddfa Cymru, offered opportunities for around a thousand volunteers per year, coordinated by two members of staff, who worked with homeless and other street level charities in Wales to provide their clients with experience of getting back into work. The £37 million redevelopment of St Fagans was in part funded by £12 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. In 2018, after its completion, the St Fagans Museum redevelopment won the Art Fund 'UK Museum of the Year' award.

DA spoke about growing social fragmentation and the loss of shared values in communities, in part as a consequence of digital media. He emphasised the increased importance of free, inclusive public spaces where people can still come together - such as museums, libraries, gardens and other cultural venues. Museums have a responsibility not to simply curate and display collections in isolation, but to actively engage communities, including children and under-represented groups, in the process of interpretation and reinterpretation of immaterial as well as material culture.

DA talked about working from 2010 with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation on a research project with 20 other museums and galleries that they funded. They gradually built up a good, trusting relationship and, after 10 years, and, out of the blue, one day in 2020 the Foundation offered Amgueddfa Cymru an additional one-off £3 million of unrestricted funding as a gift.

There are foundations out there who have a lot of money, but they are smart. They are aware that museums that are not genuinely focused on community social research and

practice may try to mimic those who are, to get the money. They want to see that organisations they fund have also done their research over a sustained period, are willing to work hard and with genuine community agency, have the right kind of leadership and can demonstrate that they have built trust over years with their community partners.

He gave the example of Paisley Museum where Renfrewshire Council decided to rethink the historic centre of the town. The museum ended up getting tens of millions of pounds from various sources, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Birmingham Museum and Galleries are doing similar deep, community-based work, and have invited members of the public to form a Citizens Assembly to guide them on what they should be doing.

DA said that if a museum was simply deciding what people are going to see and not structurally listening to and being guided by their communities, it can block potential funding opportunities. However, the leaders and senior staff of many museums - most notably the national museums in London - are ideologically convinced of the exclusive importance of their own knowledge, and that of people like them, without community guidance, and decide to continue their traditional model on principle. Any democratically inspired projects they run are usually isolated and performative, for presentation purposes.

The key requirement to get funding is not to see heritage in isolation, and instead work with other communities in the area, including those with lived experience, with respect and over a sustained period; to involve schools and young people and see what they can contribute to the service; having the right leadership who really understand the civic role and responsibilities of culture in society; and backing from key funding organisations including local authorities, to work in ways that are deeply rooted in, and respectful of their communities.

MS said that the Brighton Museum seems a bit isolated and doesn't have one particular focus. It doesn't have the local history gallery anymore and the entrance is quite hidden away and not very visible.

DA said the location next to the Royal Pavilion at a transport hub at the centre of the city is beneficial, but it is also critically important that it is visibly welcoming to people.

AG said that much of the city's built environment dates from the Georgian period, with George IV funding the seafront, and that wealth derived from the slave trade went into the royal privy purse and was subsequently used to finance developments and buildings in Brighton. This is not acknowledged in any way.

DA said the Royal Pavilion was built by the UK's biggest beneficiary of slavery - George IV - and this should be fully and publicly acknowledged and addressed. The critical reinterpretation of the statues of slave traders and slave holders shows one way of addressing how the past is represented, which has been used successfully in Bristol. Rather than removing monuments, they aim to acknowledge their origins and meanings, going

beyond simply changing labels to provide proper context. In Brighton, there has been limited reflection on this issue, particularly in how histories linked to slavery remain largely unacknowledged.

In Cardiff, the National Museum worked with multiple communities to review the collections and develop meaningful responses to this history. DA said that following the murder of George Floyd, the Museum recognised a need to better examine histories of slavery and colonialism. Work was escalated with many organisations that the Museum had already worked with for a decade or more. One of these was the Sub-Saharan African Group, a community organisation, who were invited by the Museum to lead review of its collections relating to General Picton, the Welsh former Governor of Trinidad. The SSAG commissioned artists from Trinidad or of Trinidadian heritage to respond to a painting of General Picton, the first British Governor of Trinidad, in the Museum's collections.

This one historic portrait generated multiple artistic responses across three galleries in the Museum. One artist, Gesiye, created photos of symbolic tattoos on a dozen people's skins that, when played as a video in sequence, showed a Trinidadian bird rise and fly. Another installation by the women's artist collective Culture directly addressed the Governor's documented brutal torture over several days of a 14 year old girl, Luis Calderon. She was the abused 'mistress' from the age of 11 of one of the Governor's closest friends, who had accused her of theft and which she denied. It was noted that the involvement of artists with cultural connections to the history resulted in particularly moving, impactful outcomes, beyond anything the Museum had exhibited before.

DD asked what the next steps are in relation to the sculpture of the Indian soldiers. He is aware that he needs to raise funds, get planning permission, and create a committee of some sort. He noted that it took nearly a year to get permission for the benches at the Chattri. AE said that the group will work on its recommendations which will reflect a lot of this discussion. AE and AG said they were happy to take this forward outside of the group.

Further information supplied by witnesses

- The Heritage Fund has developed a directory of alternative funders which is a valuable resource: [Directory | Heritage Funding Directory](#)
- As described by Helmut Lusser: Jan Gehl, Public Life – Public Space, 2007: [4. pspl Local Scale analysis spaces p57-73.pdf](#)
- Extra information supplied by Alfie Stroud, Historic England:

Our [Community Advice Hub](#) contains resources aimed at helping communities look after their historic environment.

Our [Grants](#) pages describe our priorities and areas of focus. Our recent and current funding in Brighton & Hove has been under our [Places](#) grants strand, but we also fund engagement, community capacity building and skills projects under our [People](#) strand.

The competitive [Heritage At Risk Capital Fund](#), which we deliver for the UK Government, has recently been announced for a further four years following this year's first round.

Our [Heritage Counts](#) and research programme commissions and disseminates cutting-edge research on the social and economic impacts of heritage.

You may be particularly interested in our current work on the capacity of vacant historic buildings to provide more than [600,000 new homes](#) nationwide.

Our website contains huge amounts of free to access [expert advice and technical guidance](#) on the historic built environment for audiences from councils to private homeowners.

In 2024 we published a new advice note on [Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency](#).

We have a variety of resources on accessibility in heritage, including on [barriers to engagement for disabled people](#) and [accessibility adaptations](#) to buildings.

'[Stopping the Rot](#)' sets out local authorities' powers to enforce care and maintenance of the historic built environment.

You might enjoy dipping into the enormous amount of archival information available through our website about [Brighton & Hove](#) in our Local Heritage Hub.

- Extra information supplied by Peter Insole, Bristol Council:

Below are some of the links I mentioned;

Our art in the public realm resource that connects to our Story of Place approach and has a link to the Cultural Strategy [Art and the Public Realm Bristol](#)

The Know Your Place historic web mapping resource that includes the Transatlantic slavery economy layer I mentioned [Know Your Place - Bristol](#)

The Our Place toolkit is available as a pdf <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/9845-our-place-report>. We have developed this further recently by combining the approach with the National Trust's Spirit of Place where we work with communities to produce an Our Spirit of Place document for their historic park.

Information about the Bristol Legacy Foundation established by our previous Mayor is available on their web pages [Bristol Legacy Foundation](#).

- Extra information supplied by Mark Strong (CVS):

Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency

Historic England has revised Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency following its publication in 2024. A key aim of the HEAN is to provide local planning authorities with information to support greater consistency in decision-making for proposals seeking to improve the energy and carbon efficiency of historic buildings in relation to their significance, enabling positive climate action.

The 2026 update has focused on targeted improvements to provide greater clarity in areas such as applying relevant legislation and policy, the positive role of tools such as conservation area management plans in outlining and supporting energy efficiency policies, and technical considerations for works such as insulation. The landing page also provides links to six case climate change historic building adaptation case studies."

The full document can be found here <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/adapting-historic-buildings-energy-carbon-efficiency-advice-note-18/> . It looks like Section 4 "*Climate action through adapting historic buildings: common interventions*" is particularly relevant.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 9

Subject: Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group Scoping Report

Date of meeting: 22nd July 2026

Report of: Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Name: Natalie Sacks-Hammond

Email: Natalie.sacks-hammond@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report is to establish a Task & Finish Group to focus on aspects of the city visitor economy. The report provides information on the current offer to visitors in Brighton & Hove, with a particular focus on the nighttime and winter economies. The Task & Finish Group will explore what changes could be made to increase numbers staying overnight and all year round.
- 1.2 This report includes a scoping report for the Task & Finish Group (Appendix 1) and draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 2).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees to establish a Task & Finish Group to scrutinise the visitor economy of Brighton & Hove.
- 2.2 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees the Terms of Reference, membership and duration of the Task & Finish Group as set out in Appendix 2.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Two Notices of Motion were referred by Full Council to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December 2025 and January 2026, relating to the Visitor Economy and to Co-operative Housing. At its meeting on 24th March 2026, the committee considered both topics when determining the subject of its next Task & Finish Group. Following the meeting, members voted via email, with the Visitor Economy receiving the most support. Co-operative Housing will remain on the work programme.

- 3.2 The purpose of the Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group is to review Brighton & Hove's current visitor offer, with a particular focus on the nighttime and winter economies. It will examine the barriers that may deter visitors from coming to, or staying in, the city and identify opportunities for improvement. The group will develop and explore initiatives aimed at converting high levels of day visitors into overnight stays, while also strengthening the city's appeal as a year-round destination.

3.3 Nighttime economy

Brighton & Hove attracts high day visitor numbers, but it would benefit from converting these into more overnight stays to encourage spending in the hospitality sector. Areas to investigate include the current offer for those using the nighttime economy, safety at night, transport provision, licensing, changing habits of young people and the decline in alcohol-centred venues.

Areas of focus include:

- Investigate reasons why visitors don't stay overnight and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on nighttime?
- What is the current offer for visitors at nighttime? How do you make nighttime activities more attractive to visitors so they choose to stay overnight? What lessons have been learned from previous activities?
- To look into more non-alcohol led venues and activities, how might this look?
- To look at the availability and affordability of public transport late at night
- To look at licensing for nighttime venues; understand the changes that were made, how effective has this been for businesses, has it made a difference to the nighttime economy?
- To investigate the issues of anti-social behaviour, street drinking and safety. What can be introduced to make this better?
- To look at what other cities have done to increase spending in their nighttime economy, was it successful?

3.4 Winter economy

Brighton & Hove has a lot to offer during the summer months but it is less attractive as a tourist destination in the winter time. The Council's *Brighton & Hove Economic Plan* states that the council will "develop an ambitious major events calendar to include a diverse range of festivals and events throughout the year," with the aim of increasing visitor numbers during the winter months. Areas to investigate include the current offer for those wanting to visit Brighton & Hove in the winter, activities and events planned over the Christmas period, conference tourism, and what support the hospitality industry may need over the winter months.

The most consistent outdoor offering for the winter is the ice rink at the Royal Pavilion which will need to move location in 2026 due to the restoration of the Pavilion Gardens. This could have a negative impact on the city's winter economy.

Areas of focus include:

- Investigate reasons why visitors don't visit in the winter and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers
- Why have recent winter events faced issues in the past and what can be learned from this?
- What kind of indoor activities are popular and can be built upon?
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on winter time?
- How can the council support hospitality venues during off season months
- What is the offer for winter events? What's the plan moving forward?
- Can those activities that attract a lot of visitors be turned into an all year-round offer. What are they?
- What is the Christmas offer?
- Businesses in the Brilliant Brighton BID work hard to provide Christmas lights for the city centre, but could this be built on or changed? Could it be extended into Hove?
- What have other cities done to improve visitor numbers in the winter? Were they successful?

3.5 Task & Finish Group Scoping Report and Terms of Reference

More information on the Visitor Economy is included in the Task & Finish Group scoping report (Appendix 1), including suggested areas of enquiry and witnesses. The draft Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) include suggested membership and duration of the Group.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Members are free to amend the details of the Terms of Reference if they wish to pursue alternative options

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 This has not been considered at this stage but the Task & Finish Group will ensure that appropriate consultation and engagement with the local community will take place as part of future work in this area.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no expected financial implications associated with the establishment and operation of the member task and finish group as it is anticipated that any costs associated with their operation will be managed within the existing revenue budgets of each respective service area involved.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 07/07/2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 No direct legal implications have been identified as arising from this report.

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 The subject of the visitor economy is broad, and the proposed timeline is relatively short, creating a risk of difficulty in meeting agreed deadlines if there is scope creep. However, the Chair has stated that she would be happy to extend the timeline if needed.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

13. Crime & disorder implications:

- 13.1 None specifically for this scrutiny report and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is being asked to establish a Task & Finish Group to scrutinise the Visitor Economy in Brighton & Hove and to agree to Terms of Reference and membership of the group taking on this work.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group Scoping Report
2. Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference

Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group Scoping Report

Membership: To be confirmed by Place O&S Committee.

Terms of Reference: ToR to be agreed by Place O&S committee (see appendix).

Background context

Tourism is extremely valuable to the UK economy, creating thousands of jobs and bringing in billions of tax revenue that helps to fund public services. Tourism's GDP impact in the UK totalled £147 billion, or 5% of the national economy, in 2024.¹ The tourist industry includes both inbound tourism and domestic tourism. Inbound tourism is the spending of international visitors in the UK, and domestic tourism refers to UK residents visiting other parts of the UK including both overnight and day trips. According to VisitBritain, in 2024, domestic overnight visitors spent an estimated £33 billion and domestic day trip spending contributed £56 billion, bringing the total to £89 billion². However, domestic overnight spending has decreased by 9% since 2022 which could be attributed to the high cost-of-living, changing travel preferences and competition from international destinations. In comparison, spending from day trips have increased significantly. In general, overnight visitors will spend around 9 times more than day trippers due to paying for accommodation, more meals, local transport and activities in the area.

Brighton & Hove, although not seen as one of the large tourist cities like London, Edinburgh or Manchester, attracts over 11 million trips generating nearly £886 million of spending in the city³. Brighton & Hove benefits from its proximity to London and Gatwick Airport; it has good train and road connections that makes it easy to visit for the day; the beach, culture, shopping in the Laines, events, easy access to the South Downs and iconic attractions such as the pier and the Royal Pavilion make it a positive visitor destination.

Brighton & Hove is seeing a decline in the number of overnight visitors, both domestic and inbound. While there is some seasonality, with fewer day visitors during the winter months, this decline is less pronounced than in other seaside resorts, such as in Cornwall. Although the city is often viewed as a coastal destination, it continues to attract visitors year-round due to its strong offer of shopping, dining, and nightlife.

The Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Strategy 2018-2023 states that "Brighton & Hove should focus on attracting higher-spend, year-round overnight visitors – both business and leisure – who will visit on weekdays as well as at weekends."⁴

The Issue: Visitor Economy

In December 2025, Full Council approved a Notice of Motion⁵ that recognised Brighton & Hove's successful visitor economy but also noted areas of potential growth, particularly in encouraging more visitors to stay overnight and visit during the winter. These will be the areas of focus for this Task & Finish Group.

Nighttime economy

Brighton & Hove attracts high day visitor numbers, but it would benefit from converting these into more overnight stays to encourage spending in the hospitality sector. The council ran a

¹ [Economic Value of Tourism | VisitBritain.org](https://www.visitbritain.org/en/insights/economic-value-of-tourism)).

² [Economic Value of Tourism | VisitBritain.org](https://www.visitbritain.org/en/insights/economic-value-of-tourism)

³ [Microsoft Word - Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Strategy.docx](#)

⁴ [Microsoft Word - Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Strategy.docx](#)

⁵ [63 Winter Economy LG Amendment.pdf](#)

survey in early 2025 asking for people's views on the nighttime economy; the city was praised for its diverse range of venues, entertainment options, the LGBTQ+ scene and vibrant culture. Repeated concerns were raised around safety at night, including excessive alcohol consumption, anti-social behaviour, a lack of street lighting and inadequate late night transport services⁶. More visible policing, the provision of safe spaces, and improved training for venue staff were identified as positive measures. Night-time safety is a key consideration for the visitor economy, particularly during the winter when longer hours of darkness mean visitors must feel safe to stay overnight or visit during this time. The city has a reputation for being a "party town" which might put off the higher value overnight visitors who would tend to spend more for a city break than one night out. This creates a tension when promoting the city especially when considering changing drinking habits and demographics of the city.

Respondents to the survey felt that the current regulatory framework for licences was too restrictive for small businesses, particularly the Cumulative Impact Zone (CIZ) and that the policies did not reflect the changes in culture towards less alcohol consumption⁷. There was a call for more flexibility in licensing policies and stronger penalties for those who are in breach of their license. The council made subsequent changes to its licensing policy in late 2025.

Alcohol-led businesses are facing increasing challenges due to rising operating costs, declining attendance at nightclubs and pubs, and a broader cultural shift away from alcohol consumption among younger people. In a city with two universities, changing student attitudes are having a noticeable impact; as of 2025, more than a quarter of students report not drinking alcohol, a figure that has nearly doubled since 2017⁸. A significant contributing factor is the cost of living crisis, alongside alcohol taxation, both of which have driven up costs for pub landlords and, in turn, increased prices for customers. In response, venues need to adapt their business models and diversify their offer to remain relevant. There is currently limited provision in the city between the closure of daytime venues, such as cafés around 4pm, and the opening of evening entertainment, such as theatres, from around 7pm. As a result, people often spend this period in pubs. However, given changing drinking habits, introducing alternative activities during this gap could encourage visitors to remain in the city for longer. There have been attempts to diversify beyond a drinking-focused offer, such as the White Night arts festival, but this was discontinued due to issues with antisocial behaviour.

Visitors are more likely to stay overnight when there is engaging evening activity, something worthwhile to experience in the morning, and when they feel that their stay is both convenient and good value.

Winter economy

Brighton & Hove is a popular tourist destination but less successful as a winter and Christmas destination where it experiences a seasonal drop in tourist demand. The weather is often poor during the winter with strong winds and rain making a seaside trip unattractive and affecting outdoor activities such as Christmas markets. Brighton & Hove offers a wide range of events and activities during the summer which draws visitors into the city; such as the Brighton Festival, Brighton Pride, the London to Brighton Bike Ride, and "On the Beach" festival. In previous years, the city used to offer popular winter attractions, such as Christmas markets and "Burning of the Clocks" but these have not taken place over the last few years. The most consistent outdoor offering for the winter is the ice rink at the Royal

⁶ [Appendix 2 Your Voice Survey Responses.pdf](#)

⁷ [Appendix 1 Summit Survey Responses.pdf](#)

⁸ [University, alcohol and mental health | Mental Health Foundation](#)

Pavilion which will need to move location in 2026 due to the restoration of the Pavilion Gardens. This could have a negative impact on the city's winter economy.

While Brighton's city centre is decorated with Christmas lights to create a festive atmosphere, the display has remained largely unchanged for several years, and public opinion on its quality is mixed. In contrast, Hove receives little to no festive decoration⁹, which is likely due to Brighton's Christmas lights being funded by local Brighton businesses, but this could be expanded into Hove should the local businesses be willing to contribute.

The Administration's *Brighton & Hove Economic Plan* states that the council will "develop an ambitious major events calendar to include a diverse range of festivals and events throughout the year," with the aim of increasing visitor numbers during the winter months. However, the hospitality sector continues to face economic pressures during this period, with lower income coinciding with higher operating costs, such as energy bills. As a result, some venues reduce their operating capacity and staffing levels, an important consideration if the council seeks to attract more visitors during the winter season.

Day visitors and conference tourism account for the strong performance of tourism in Brighton & Hove¹⁰. This could be an area of considerable growth for the city since conference tourism is all year-round including weekdays and brings in a lot of money. Visit Britain states that "tourism experts... have identified bleisure (business + leisure) travel, improved tourism infrastructure, and leisure events as major opportunities for tourism growth in the UK over the next few years".

Other factors to consider that affect the visitor economy more generally are how the city is viewed by the public, the affordability and accessibility of local transport and parking, and the ongoing effects of Brexit on the food and drink industries. The hospitality industry is experiencing a 4.9% increase in costs for food and drink which inhibits employment. Brighton & Hove can sometimes appear unclear, with unclear wayfinding for visitors, as well as visible issues such as street drinking and homelessness. It is also perceived as more expensive than neighbouring areas, which may deter some visitors. The council has frozen parking charges and is keeping bus fares affordable, but these are also considered high in comparison to other cities in the South-East, making it unaffordable for some people to travel.

Potential areas of enquiry:

Nighttime economy

- To investigate reasons why visitors don't stay overnight and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on nighttime
- What is the current offer for visitors at nighttime? How do you make nighttime activities more attractive to visitors so they choose to stay overnight? What lessons have been learned from previous activities?
- To look into more non-alcohol lead venues and activities, how might this look?
- To look at the availability and affordability of public transport late at night

⁹ [More winter events needed to attract tourists, councillors told – Brighton and Hove News](#)

¹⁰ [Microsoft Word - Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Strategy.docx](#)

- To look at licensing for nighttime venues; understand the changes that were made, how effective has this been for businesses, has it made a difference to the nighttime economy?
- To investigate the issues of anti-social behaviour, street drinking and safety. What can be introduced to make this better?
- To look at what other cities have done to increase spending in their nighttime economy, was it successful?

Winter economy

- To investigate reasons why visitors don't visit in the winter and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers
- Why have recent winter events faced issues in the past and what can be learned from this?
- What kind of indoor activities are popular and can be built upon?
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on winter time?
- How can the council support hospitality venues during off season months
- What is the offer for winter events? What's the plan moving forward?
- Can those activities that attract a lot of visitors be turned into an all year-round offer. What are they?
- What is the Christmas offer?
- Businesses in the Brilliant Brighton BID work hard to provide Christmas lights for the city centre, but could this be built on or changed? Could it be extended into Hove?
- What have other cities done to improve visitor numbers in the winter? Were they successful?

General

- What are the most popular things to do in the city and can this be built on?
- How can crime and antisocial behaviour be tackled to be more welcoming for visitors?
- What kinds of offers or deals encourage visitors to travel? What deals currently exist for taking public transport into Brighton? How effective are they?
- How can conference tourism be promoted all year round?
- Who are we targeting? Is there something we can do with Gatwick airport to help promote Sussex/B&H?

Potential witnesses:

- Licensing team
- Community Safety

- Public Health
- Events Team
- Cabinet member
- Businesses – pubs, clubs, restaurants, hotels, Pier
- BID
- Visit Brighton
- Other Councils (Bristol, York, Hull, Winchester, Preston?)
- Bristol Nights Project
- Operator (Bournemouth/Cambridge)
- Seafront Development Board
- Universities/colleges/Students' Unions
- Academics
- Event organisers e.g. The Dome, Same Sky, Brighton Festival, Brighton Centre etc
- Sussex Police
- Tourism Alliance
- Local Visitor Economy Partnership (Chair is Hedley Swain)
- Public transport providers – B&H Buses?
- Brighton & Hove Growth Board

Terms of Reference: Visitor Economy Task & finish Group

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Visitor Economy Task & Finish Group is to review Brighton & Hove's current visitor offer, with a particular focus on the nighttime and winter economies. It will examine the barriers that may deter visitors from coming to, or staying in, the city and identify opportunities for improvement. The group will develop and explore initiatives aimed at converting high levels of day visitors into overnight stays, while also strengthening the city's appeal as a year-round destination.
- 1.2 The group will develop a report with recommendations that will be presented to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee for agreement. Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee can decide to further refer the Task & Finish Group report recommendations to Cabinet and/or partners for consideration.

2. Status

- 2.1 The Task & Finish Group is an informal group that will report to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. Areas of focus

- 3.1 The report will focus on the nighttime economy and winter economy of Brighton & Hove, as follows:

Nighttime economy

- To investigate reasons why visitors don't stay overnight and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on nighttime?
- What is the current offer for visitors at nighttime? How do you make nighttime activities more attractive to visitors so they choose to stay overnight? What lessons have been learned from previous activities?
- To look into more non-alcohol lead venues and activities, how might this look?
- To look at the availability and affordability of public transport late at night
- To look at licensing for nighttime venues; understand the changes that were made, how effective has this been for businesses, has it made a difference to the nighttime economy?
- To investigate the issues of anti-social behaviour, street drinking and safety. What can be introduced to make this better?
- To look at what other cities have done to increase spending in their nighttime economy, was it successful?

Winter economy

- To investigate reasons why visitors don't visit in the winter and what can be introduced to overcome these barriers

- Why have recent winter events faced issues in the past and what can be learned from this?
- What kind of indoor activities are popular and can be built upon?
- What new ways are there to promote the city with a focus on winter time?
- How can the council support hospitality venues during off season months
- What is the offer for winter events? What's the plan moving forward?
- Can those activities that attract a lot of visitors be turned into an all year-round offer. What are they?
- What is the Christmas offer?
- Businesses in the Brilliant Brighton BID work hard to provide Christmas lights for the city centre, but could this be built on or changed? Could it be extended into Hove?
- What have other cities done to improve visitor numbers in the winter? Were they successful?

General

- What are the most popular things to do in the city and can this be built on?
- How can crime and antisocial behaviour be tackled to be more welcoming for visitors?
- What kinds of offers or deals encourage visitors to travel? What deals currently exist for taking public transport into Brighton? How effective are they?
- How can conference tourism be promoted all year round?
- Who are we targeting? Is there something we can do with Gatwick airport to help promote Sussex/B&H?

4. Scope

4.1 To produce a report examining the key challenges and opportunities within Brighton & Hove's visitor economy, with a particular focus on increasing higher-value overnight stays and improving year-round tourism. The report will focus on the nighttime and winter economies and will explore factors that influence visitor behaviour. The report will also consider wider issues affecting the city's attractiveness, including cost, cleanliness, and accessibility, and seek to identify practical measures, informed by stakeholder evidence and best practice from other local authorities, to strengthen the visitor offer and support sustainable economic growth.

5. Membership

- 5.1. Voting Members: Groups will be offered membership as follows: 3 Labour, 1 Green, 1 Conservative, 1 BH Ind or Independent member.
- 5.2. Non-voting members: Anyone with an interest in this issue may be co-opted on to the TFG at the discretion of the Chair.

5.3. Any non-executive member may sit on a Task & Finish Group.

6. Meetings

6.1. Meetings will be chaired by the Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee who will be responsible for convening meetings of the Task & Finish Group.

6.2. The Group will meet on a basis to be determined by Group members.

7. Timeline

7.1 The Task & Finish Group report on the Visitor Economy will be presented to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in November 2026.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 10

Subject: Devolution Update

Date of meeting: 22nd July 2026

Report of: Chair of Place Overview & Scrutiny

Contact Officer: Name: Interim Head of Cabinet Office

Email: Tom Cottam Tom.cottam@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1** This report informs and updates members on the progress that has been made to establish the Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee to note the update to members on Devolution.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1** The Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA) was formally vested on the 26th March 2026. The Inaugural Board meeting took place on the 15th April 2026. Following local elections in East Sussex and West Sussex in May 2026, SBSA held its AGM on the 1st July 2026.

- 3.2** The SBSA Board took a range of decisions at the Inaugural Board meeting and AGM required to establish the Authority, agree pre-mayoral governance arrangements and establish a Strategic Framework. Decisions have been taken in the following areas:

- Appointment of Board Members
- Approach to the Pre-Mayoral Period and the Appointment of the Chair and the Vice-Chair(s)
- 2026/27 Budget

- Strategic Framework plan for Prosperity Strategy
- Functional transition arrangements
- Pay and Grading Framework
- The appointment of statutory officers
- A Constitution and Local Assurance Framework

3.3 The background to these decisions is set out in full in papers published by SBSA for the inaugural Board meeting on 15th April 2026 (appendix 1) and the AGM (appendix 2) on 1st July 2026.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is invited to note the update report.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The Government ran a public consultation in areas chosen for the Devolution Priority Programme which closed on 13 April 2025. The consultation sought views on the proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council.

5.2 The SBSA intend to run a non-statutory consultation and other engagement exercises in Autumn 2026 on a draft Prosperity Strategy.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, the creation of the mayoral strategic authority for Sussex and Brighton will have a range of financial implications for Brighton and Hove. These have been previously set out in reports to Full Council and Cabinet (Appendix 3).

6.2 SBSA has agreed a budget for 2026/27, which is set out in the published papers for the inaugural SBSA Board meeting on the 15th April. Revisions to the 2026/27 budget alongside an emerging medium term financial plan were set out in the papers for the SBSA AGM on the 1st July 2026.

Name of finance officer consulted:

Date consulted (dd/mm/yy):

7. Legal implications

7.1 The SBSA was established as a Combined County Authority by the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority Regulations 2026 which came into effect on 26 March 2026. These regulations included governance arrangements for the new authority and some specific functions to be exercised by it. Further functions given to Combined County Authorities were included in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 when the provisions came into force in April 2026. These include

transport, skills and employment, housing, economic regeneration, health and well-being and culture functions.

- 7.2 The initial Constitution of the SBSA was considered and agreed at the inaugural meeting of the Authority on 15 April 2026.

Name of lawyer consulted: Allan Wells Date consulted (30/06/2026)

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 While this report is for information only, it is important that members are kept informed on the ongoing process of devolution as the SBSA continues to evolve. Ensuring regular updates supports effective oversight and helps mitigate the risks associated with emerging governance, financial and service delivery arrangements. The last update was provided to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 31/07/2025.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, the council must seek to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.2 It is not anticipated that the recommendations in this report will result in disproportionate impacts for any specific group sharing any of the legally protected characteristics.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Environment and Climate Change is one of the areas of competence for the new Strategic Authorities and includes statutory functions relating to Heat Network Zoning coordination. A new regional Prosperity Strategy will set out the ambitions for SBSA in this space.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 Health and wellbeing is one of the areas of competence for the new Strategic Authority and it is subject to a new statutory health improvement and health inequalities duty when discharging any of its powers or functions, which requires SBSA to have regard to the need to improve the health of people in their area and the need to reduce health inequalities. A new regional Prosperity Strategy will set out the ambitions for SBSA in this space.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee is being asked to note the update to members on Devolution and to make any comment on progress.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. SBSA Inaugural Board meeting papers: [Agenda for Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority Board on Wednesday, 15th April, 2026, 11.00 am | East Sussex County Council](#)
2. SBSA AGM papers: [Agenda for Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority Board on Wednesday, 1st July, 2026, 10.30 am | East Sussex County Council](#)
3. Devolution Report to BHCC Cabinet, October 2025 [Devolution for Sussex Brighton.pdf](#)

Devolution Update Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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22nd July 2026



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Devolution Update

- **Milestones and Key Achievements**
- **Inaugural Board Meeting and AGM**
- **SBSA Governance**
- **SBSA Budget**
- **Prosperity Strategy**
- **Functional Transition**
- **Priorities for Brighton and Hove City Council**

Milestones



Key Achievements

Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA) established and vested.

Secured new investment for the region including:

A long-term investment fund totalling **£1.14 billion**

£30.4 million released over the next two years before mayoral elections, enabling early investment

£9.0 million in capacity funding over four years to support the establishment and operation of the new authority.

Agreement to pre-mayoral governance arrangements to provide leadership and stability.

Strategic Framework agreed to guide development of regional Prosperity Strategy and early investment.

SBSA Inaugural Board Meeting and AGM

The Inaugural SBSA Board meeting took place in Brighton Town Hall on 15th April 2026.

Following elections in East Sussex and West Sussex on 7th May 2026, the SBSA held it's AGM on the 1st July 2026. Decision have been taken in the following areas:

- Appointment of Board Members
- Approach to the Pre-Mayoral Period and the Appointment of the Chair and the Vice-Chair(s)
- 2026/27 Budget
- Strategic Framework plan for Prosperity Strategy
- Functional transition arrangements
- Pay and Grading Framework
- The appointment of statutory officers
- A Constitution and Local Assurance Framework

SBSA Governance Arrangements

Pre-mayoral governance

- Sets out collective leadership approach and principles for the period before the election of the Mayor and provides arrangements for the transition to full Mayoral governance.

Chairing

- Rotating Chair and Vice Chair. Cllr Sankey has been appointed as first Chair. The Leaders of East Sussex and West Sussex have been appointed as the first Vice Chairs.

Lead Members

- Lead Members will be appointed to provide leadership for key SBSA priorities.

Constitution

- Explains who can make decisions, how meetings will work, how transparency will be maintained, and the standards SBSA must follow.

Regulatory Committees

- Audit and Governance and Overview and Scrutiny committees establish to provide scrutiny and support accountability.

SBSA Budget

Guaranteed 30-year £1.14 billion Investment Fund – 50/50 revenue and capital.

2026/27 budget agreed including:

Total revenue budget of £32 million and a total capital budget of £87,917 million for 2026/27. Composed of Capacity Funding, Investment Funding and transport and Growth Hub grant funding.

- Transport grant funding passported to constituent authorities for 2026/27.
- Funding for small number of Shared Prosperity Fund projects and additional funding for Growth Hubs.

Development of Medium-Term Financial Plan will be considered alongside the budget setting process for 2027/28.

Prosperity Strategy

A new Prosperity Strategy will set out a vision for inclusive growth, identify challenges and opportunities, the priority outcomes across all the areas of competence, and the initial actions needed to deliver them.

Key milestones:

- **April 2026:** High level Strategic Framework agreed by Board.
- **May 2026:** Foundational evidence base commissioned.
- **July 2026:** Board agreed Prosperity Strategy framework
- **Summer 2026:** Engagement and drafting
- **October 2026:** Draft agreed by Board
- **Autumn/Winter 2026:** Consultation.
- **Early 2027:** Final draft agreed by Board.

Strategic framework for the Authority



Functional Transition

The creation of the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority represents a significant change in how strategic functions are exercised across Sussex and Brighton:

- **March 2027:** Fire & Rescue Services transition to Strategic Authority Governance
- **Spring 2027:** Growth Hubs transition to SBSA
- **September: 2027:** SBSA becomes responsible for Adult Skills Fund
- **May 2028:** SBSA becomes solely responsible as Local Transport Authority for the region
- **May 2028:** Anticipated date for transition of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner to SBSA following election of Mayor

Phased approach to ensure the safe and timely transition of key functions:

1. **Establishing the System** – establishing governance arrangements and gathering baseline data.
2. **Aligning and strengthening** – aligning existing programmes and partnerships, strengthening coordination and regional planning, and developing common governance and assurance processes.
3. **Operating as a Connected System** – embedding mature functions, fully implementing governance and funding arrangements and operating as a system leader.

Priorities for BHCC

Continue to work with partners to build and develop the new Authority to ensure it has the **capabilities, resources and governance arrangements** to deliver for the people of Sussex and Brighton.

Support the **development of the Prosperity Strategy** to ensure it reflects the strengths, challenges and opportunities for Brighton and Hove and the wider region.

Work with partners to make the case for **strategic investment** that drives growth and benefits residents and businesses within the city and across the region.

Ensure the **transition of key functions** and responsibilities happens in a safe and timely way.

Work with partners to **build awareness** of the role and purpose of the Strategic Authority amongst residents and communities.