



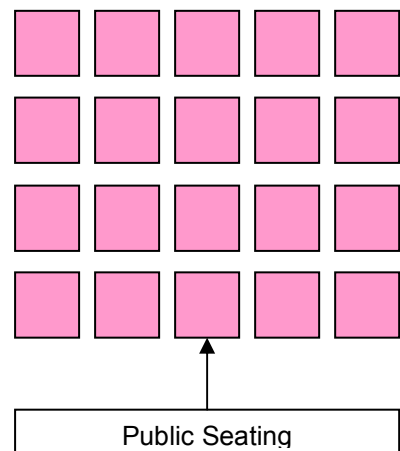
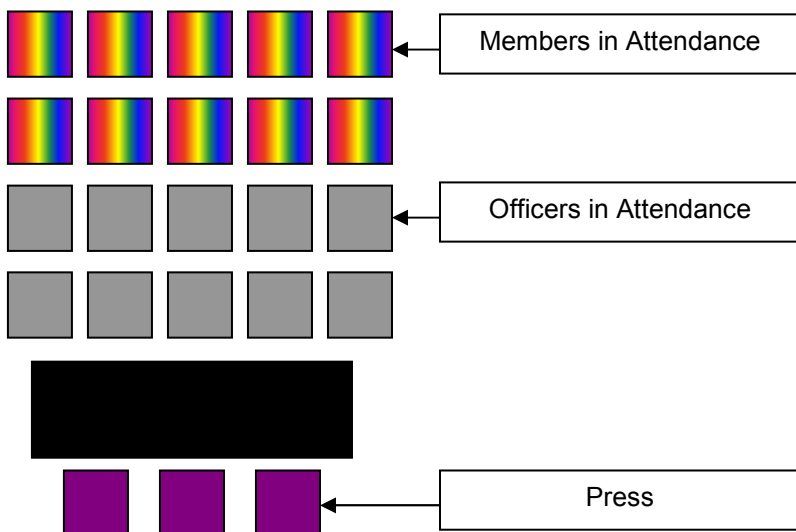
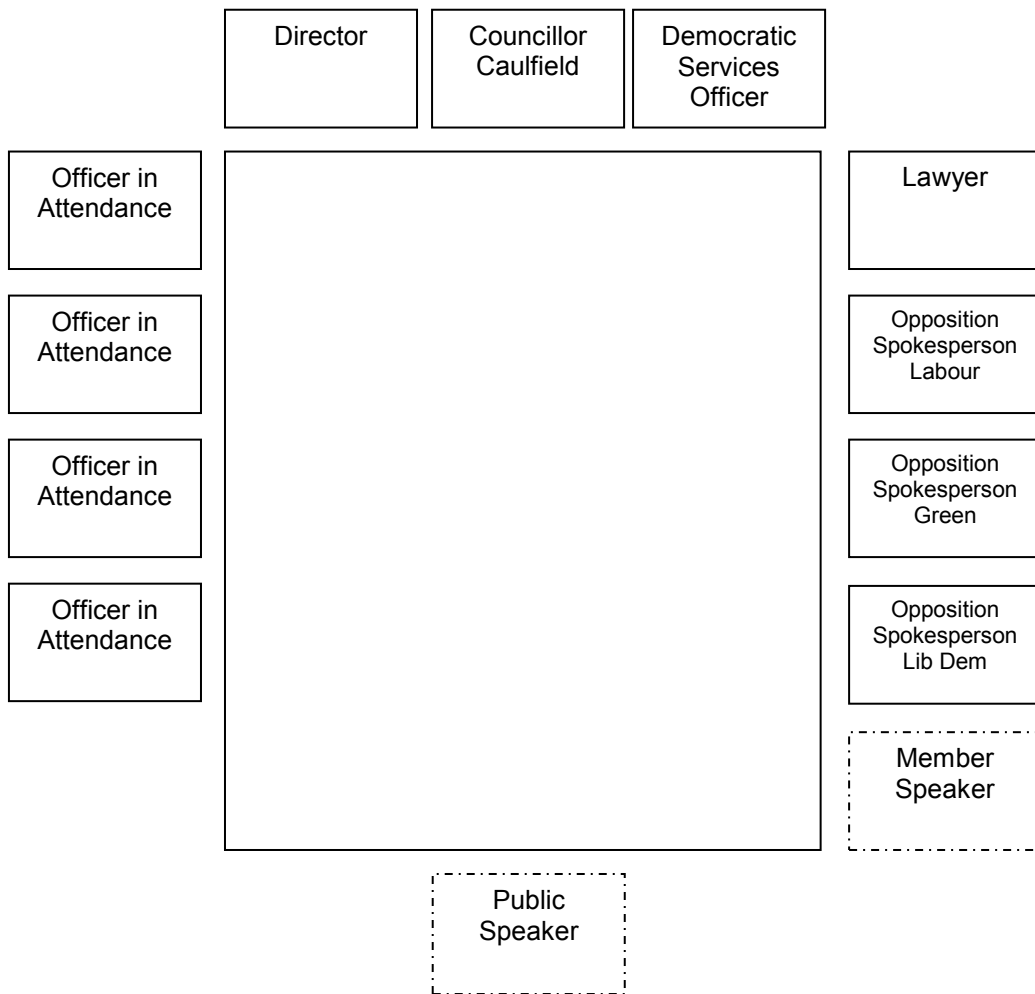
Brighton & Hove
City Council

Cabinet Member Meeting

Title:	Housing Cabinet Member Meeting
Date:	17 July 2009
Time:	4.00pm
Venue	Committee Room 3, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillor: Caulfield (Cabinet Member)
Contact:	Caroline De Marco Democratic Services Officer 01273 291063 caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



AGENDA

14. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declarations of Interest by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (b) 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 2 of the Agenda states in its heading either that it is confidential or the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 6

Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 June 2009 (copy attached).

16. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

17. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- (a) Items reserved by the Cabinet Member
- (b) Items reserved by the Opposition Spokespersons
- (c) Items reserved by Members, with the agreement of the Cabinet Member.

NOTE: Public Questions, Written Questions from Councillors, Petitions, Deputations, Letters from Councillors and Notices of Motion will be reserved automatically.

18. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received by the date of publication.

19. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 10 July 2009)

No public questions have been received by the date of publication.

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

20. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 10 July 2009)

No deputations have been received by the date of publication.

21. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

22. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No written questions have been received.

23. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

No Notices of Motion have been referred.

24. MINUTES OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 7 - 14

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2009 (copy attached).

25. LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN - GENERAL NEEDS HOUSING 15 - 24

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Helen Clarkmead *Tel:* 293350
Ward Affected: All Wards;

26. LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN FOR SHELTERED HOUSING 25 - 32

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Helen Clarkmead *Tel:* 293350
Ward Affected: All Wards;

27. AUDIT COMMISSION - ADVICE & ASSISTANCE VISIT 33 - 68

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Diane Freeland *Tel:* (01273) 293202
Ward Affected: All Wards;

28. 25 YEAR MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS - TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION 69 - 74

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Sylvia Peckham *Tel:* 293318
Ward Affected: All Wards;

29. EXPENDITURE OF THE 2009/10 PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL GRANT ALLOCATION AND DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT ALLOCATION 75 - 80

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Report of Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Martin Reid

Tel: 29-3321

Ward Affected: All Wards;

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

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

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

Meeting papers can be provided, on request, in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on disc, or translated into any other language as requested.

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Caroline De Marco, (01273 291063, email caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Thursday, 9 July 2009

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00pm 3 JUNE 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Caulfield (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson)

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1 (a) Declarations of Interests

1.1 There were none.

1 (b) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.2 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), the Cabinet Member considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

1.3 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting held on 29 April 2009 be agreed and signed by the Cabinet Member.

3. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 There were none.

4. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 **RESOLVED** – All items were reserved for discussion.

5. PETITIONS

5.1 There were none.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

6.1 There were none.

7. DEPUTATIONS

7.1 There were none.

8. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

8.1 There were none.

9. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

9.1 There were none.

10. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

10.1 There were none.

11. SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY - ANNUAL UPDATE 2008/09

11.1 The Cabinet Member considered the annual update of the 3-year Supporting People Strategy, 2008-11 (for copy see minute book). Appendix One gave an overview of key achievements and Appendix Two detailed progress made against all objectives and Strategic actions in year 1 (2008-09) of the Strategy.

11.2 The Team Manager – Supporting People explained that the Supporting People grant allocation had been reduced by 11.5% over the three year period 2008-2011. Contracts with external providers delivered support to 5171 vulnerable services users in Brighton and Hove. The preventative nature of the support made savings by preventing people going into crisis.

11.3 The Cabinet Member commented that it would be necessary to ensure that the reduction in grant allocation did not affect the excellent service being provided.

11.4 Councillor Simpson mentioned an issue of concern to some residents in sheltered housing. They believed funding for the strategy would be used not only for them but also for people in the wider community. They felt they would not receive the full value of the money paid to them.

11.5 The Cabinet Member replied that Supporting People included the wider community as well as sheltered housing tenants.

11.6 The Team Manager – Supporting People explained that there had been some pilots with Older Peoples Services so that more people in the community could access these

services. This would prevent isolation for older people in the wider community. She considered it essential that access was improved for older peoples' services.

- 11.7 The Head of Supporting People & Lead Commissioner for Learning Disabilities explained that the initiative was in response to older people who needed low level support who did not live in sheltered housing. Over 80% of older people live in the community and it was important for low level services to be available to them. The pilots could also improve the service provided for sheltered housing tenants through links with the wider community. Staff were consulting with residents and obtaining feedback. Staff would ensure that it worked for people in sheltered schemes by trying different approaches.
- 11.8 Councillor Simpson stressed that the issue for tenants in sheltered housing was how the service was being paid for and that they perceived that the money belonged to them.
- 11.9 The Head of Supporting People & Lead Commissioner for Learning Disabilities clarified that the funding was linked to the service being provided. It was a preventative service which was there to meet the needs of the local community.
- 11.10 The Cabinet Member acknowledged the concerns of tenants but agreed that the funding was not ring fenced for certain categories like sheltered housing. She reassured tenants that the service would not suffer as a result of making it available to the wider community.
- 11.11 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That the report and progress made on delivering strategic actions of the Supporting People Strategy to date be noted.

12. SINGLE HOMELESS STRATEGY

- 12.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which set out the Single Homeless Strategy as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report (for copy see minute book). The Single Homelessness Strategy had been developed to address the citywide issues in tackling single homelessness, rough sleeping, and street based anti-social behaviour.
- 12.2 The Housing Options Manager, Vulnerable Adults Team explained the key themes and strategic objectives of the Single Homelessness Strategy as set out in Section 4 of the report.
- 12.3 The Cabinet Member remarked that this strategy would continue the good work that had already been carried out in tackling homelessness. There was an issue regarding funding after the third year and she hoped that this matter would soon be resolved. She passed on her thanks to all the staff involved.
- 12.4 Councillor Simpson congratulated officers. The success of the earlier phase of the strategy had been significant.

12.5 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation.

(1) That the Single Homeless Strategy 2009–14 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

13. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2009/10 REDUCTION IN RENT INCREASES

13.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing and the Director of Finance & Resources which explained that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2009/10 was approved at Cabinet on 12 February 2009. The report included increases to rents in line with the Government's Subsidy Determination in January 2009. To support tenants, in light of the current economic climate, the Government had now issued a revised Subsidy Determination allowing Councils to reduce rent increases. The current report sought approval to revise the approved rent increases for 2009/10 in line with the Government's proposals (for copy see minute book).

13.2 The Head of Financial Services explained that the £1.98 per week average reduction for tenants would be backdated to 6 April 2009. The loss of rental income for the Council would be reimbursed through Housing Subsidy.

13.3 Councillor Simpson considered the reduction in rent increases to be good news. She also considered the delay in the rent convergence target date from 2012 to 2024 to be good news.

13.4 The Head of Financial Services explained that the government had set a floating convergence date. It was currently 2023/24 but would probably be brought forward.

13.5 The Cabinet Member asked if the council would have more money in the Housing Revenue Account if the proposals were rejected and the rent remained at the current rate. The Head of Financial Services replied that that would not be the case in this financial year.

13.6 The Cabinet Member considered the proposal to be beneficial to all concerned as it would result in tenants paying less and it making no difference financially to the council. She asked how the payment would be backdated. The Head of Financial Services replied that a letter was being sent out to tenants stating that a credit would be shown on their accounts.

13.7 Councillor Simpson considered the proposals would be beneficial to tenants who were not in receipt of housing benefit. This would be welcome in the current circumstances.

13.8 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation.

- (1) That Cabinet be recommended to approve the amendments to individual rent increases and decreases in line with rent restructuring principles as determined by the latest Government Subsidy Determination issued in May 2009.

The meeting concluded at 4.32pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

4.00PM 7 MAY 2009

BANQUETING SUITE, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Hawkes, Janio, Pidgeon, Smart and Wells

PART ONE

77. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

77A. Declarations of Substitutes

77.1 Councillor David Smart was substitute for Councillor Dawn Barnett.

77B. Declarations of Interest

77.2 There were none.

77C. Declarations of Party Whip

77.3 There were none.

77D. Exclusion of Press and Public

77.4 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

77.5 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

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78. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

78.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

79. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

79.1 The Chairman said that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission had approved the setting up of the proposed Select Committee into dementia services. The Select Committee would be a piece of joint working between the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The membership of the Committee would be Councillors Dawn Barnett, Pat Hawkes, Averil Older and Georgia Wrighton, with a co-optee from the Local Involvement Network (LINK).

79.2 The Chairman explained the format of today's Committee, focussing on Learning Disabilities and the 'Valuing People Now' agenda. There would be a DVD explaining 'Valuing People Now' followed by the opportunity for Committee members to attend five themed stalls, each of which would explain a strand of work from 'Valuing People Now'.

79.3 The Chairman said that the catering for today's Committee had been provided by Feast, a service staffed by Buckingham Road Day Centre service users; refreshments included a wide array of homemade biscuits. Please contact Liz Evans at Buckingham Road Day Centre for further information. The Chairman thanked everyone for their work in providing the refreshments to the Committee.

79.4 At the end of the Committee meeting, the Chairman explained how the information that Members had gained in the Committee would be used. The Learning Disability Partnership Board's Action Plan would be ready for consultation in autumn. It would be added to the agenda for the September Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that Members could feed their comments into the action plan.

80. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

80.1 There were no public questions.

81. LETTERS & NOTICES OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLORS

81.1 There were no letters or Notices of Motion from Councillors.

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82. OVERVIEW OF LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES & 'VALUING PEOPLE NOW' DVD

82.1 The Committee members viewed a DVD explaining 'Valuing People Now', central government's strategy for improving the lives of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers.

83. THEMED STALLS

83.1 The Committee attended five themed stalls:

83.2 Healthy Lives Sub-Group

- (a) Members heard that priorities for the group included:
- Implementing annual health checks and health action plans for people with a learning disability in the city
 - Improve the experience of using hospital services for people with a learning disability
 - Improve the collection of information about the health of people with a learning disability in the city
 - Making sure people with a learning disability have good access to health promotion information and services
 - Use the Green Light Toolkit to make sure people with a learning disability can use mental health services when they need them
 - Make sure that other primary care and community health services are accessible to people with a learning disability
 - Make sure people with a learning disability get good access to cancer screening services
 - Implement the health priorities from Valuing People Now
- (b) In terms of implementing Health Checks and Health Action Plans, members heard that
- 37 out of 47 GP practices can do health checks and health action plans for people with learning disabilities
 - 250 people that work in GP practices have had training about learning disabilities from the Health Facilitator
 - GP practices have been able to identify more people who are eligible for a health check: 697 in January 2008, 873 in January 2009
 - 93% of people with a learning disability known to a GP practice can access a health check and health action plan
 - The health checks have helped to identify new health needs in individuals with a learning disability e.g. continence problems, poor oral health, high blood pressure, poor foot health, weight problems, diabetes
 - Workshops are available for staff and family carers on 'Being a Health Supporter'
 - Local service users made a DVD that is used in the training for GP practices

- Staff and service users have said they think their GP practice is getting better at meeting their needs e.g. more flexible with appointments, take more time with people

(c) With regard to 'Green Light for Mental Health', members heard that:

- Funding has been agreed for a part time learning disability and mental health nurse to work in recovery services
- A care pathway will be developed for people with a learning disability to access mainstream mental health services
- There will be shared learning and training for nurses in mental health and learning disability teams
- Information will be available for staff in mental health in-patient services to help them provide a good service.

(d) With regard to Improving People's Experiences of Hospital Services, members heard that:

- A working group is in place, consisting of staff from the Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals Trust and staff from the Community Learning Disability Team.
- A policy has been written that sets out what should happen when someone with a learning disability uses any of the Hospital Trust services.
- A team of two Learning Disability Liaison Nurses has been in place since January 2009 to work in Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust services (including Royal Sussex County, Eye Hospital, Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital, Princess Royal Hospital, Hurstwood Park, Brighton General and Hove Polyclinic)
- Their role includes education & training, providing specialist guidance and advice, supporting discharge planning & multi-disciplinary working, capacity to consent and holding a small community caseload of people with complex health needs.
- A network of Learning Disability Link Nurses is being set up. They will receive training from the liaison nurses and will share education with colleagues.
- The Hospital Communication Book - each ward in the hospital will be given one of these to use with people who have a learning disability.
- The Traffic Light Assessment - the booklet will be kept by people with a learning disability and brought into hospital at each visit, for staff at the hospital to see and use.
- The Brighton Food Book - a new book that local hospital dieticians and the Liaison Team are making together. It will have photos of all the different food and drinks people can have at the hospital to make choices easier.

83.3 Housing for People with Learning Disabilities

(a) Members heard that the National Strategy – 'Valuing People Now' included a number of priorities:

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- People should know about their housing rights
 - People should know the full range of housing options
 - We should promote home ownership and tenancies
 - We should collect better information about housing need
 - We should offer support to people to access housing
 - We should consider people's cultural needs in relation to housing

- (b) Members heard about the Brighton & Hove Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy, which includes:
- Increase the options people have, with more extra care, supported living, adult placements and floating support
 - All new services to have some accessible units
 - Improve information on housing options for people with learning disabilities, making key information available in accessible versions
 - Work with services to improve how they meet peoples needs and improve value for money
 - Develop the opportunities for people with learning disabilities to learn the skills they need to live more independently
 - Make sure that carers are involved in making plans and can access support and information
- (c) With regards to Brighton & Hove's local achievements in housing, members were told:
- There is a new Housing Options Officer to work solely with people with learning disabilities, providing better information, advice and support
 - New supported living services (6 units in 2008, 10 units in 2009)
 - Individual Budgets being used to increase people's housing choices
 - New services being commissioned for young people and complex needs, plus an Extra Care service in 2009-2010
- (d) Members heard about the work of the 'A Place to Live' sub-group. The sub-group were working to produce:
- Better Information – a local guide to housing for people with learning disabilities LD and accessible information, leaflets and tenancies
 - Fair access to housing – reviewing the equality of access for people with learning disabilities and ensuring peoples diverse needs are met
 - Working with others – with care managers and providers to help people move and learning from other authorities and organisations

83.4 Making It Happen & Personalisation

- (a) Members heard about the Learning Disability Partnership Board:
- Valuing People Now makes it clear that Learning Disability Partnership Boards have a vital role to play in the delivery of the strategy.
 - Brighton & Hove has an active Partnership Board in place for many years. The Partnership Board is supported by the council through the Integrated Learning Disability Services

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- The Partnership Board has a varied membership including people with learning disabilities, family carers and voluntary organisations.
 - Partnership Boards will have to report every year on how Valuing People Now is working locally.
 - Our Partnership Board has already been producing annual reports for Joint Commissioning Board and Housing Cabinet Members Meeting. Copies of the 2008 report were given to the councillors
 - Our Partnership Board is putting together an action plan to ensure all citizens of Brighton & Hove will benefit from the objectives of Valuing People Now.
 - More information can be found on the Partnership Board's website www.brightpart.org.

- (b) Members heard about personalisation of services. There was information available about self-directed support and the Learning Disability self-directed support project

Involving family Carers:

- The Carers Centre has recruited two new Carers representatives who are being supported and trained by the Carers' Centre to be involved in Partnership Board meetings and Subgroups over the coming financial year. They will join the two existing Carers Reps from Amaze.
- Councillors had the opportunity to talk to one of the representatives and to workers from the Carers Centre
- There were discussions about housing, eligibility criteria and other issues of concern to carers and members received information about the Centre's work.
- Carers and Carers Centre workers are members of the Partnership Board
- The Centre is hosting 'Listening Lunches' for carers of people with learning disabilities

83.5 Notes from Taking Part In The City Group & Work & Skills stall

- (a) Members heard about the Taking Part In The City Group, which has five major priorities:

- Leisure & Sports
- Travel
- Adult Learning
- Community Support
- Community Safety
- The main campaign for this coming year is around Hate Crime and Community Safety. This is being led by the City Council's Partnership Community Safety Team (PCST) and aims to achieve the following:
 - A strategy and action plan will be developed, agreed by the Learning Disability Partnership Board.
 - Increased awareness amongst citizens of Brighton & Hove about learning disability and hate crime and harassment and

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how to report incidents. This will include working with the Racial Harassment Forum and Refugee Forum.

- Increased number of reports from people with learning disabilities (from current 0 reports) by setting up 6 reporting centres, increase awareness amongst people with learning disabilities and their carers and producing accessible information.
 - Increased number of people with learning disabilities receiving successful support services from PCST.
 - Successful case work through working with police, courts and produce regular reports on numbers, trends and outcomes.
- Leisure and Sports are focussing on ensuring that public facilities use 'reasonable adjustments' to support individuals with learning disabilities to access the facilities. The sports club (Special Olympics) is mainly working towards the national games in Leicester in July 2009 where 23 athletes from Brighton & Hove are going. The club is also working towards increasing the number of people taking part in sports and leisure activities to 300 people (in line with general population). Current known participants are around 50 people taking part in any activities. A campaign for re-admittance of athletes with learning disabilities into Paralympics is underway and we are hoping to organise something for the International Day of Disabled in December on this theme. This area of work relies heavily on volunteers for their development.
 - Travel Buddy Project has received additional funding and is expanding the numbers of people who can be supported. The project works closely with the City Council's transport department and the Bus Company and has received awards for the 'accessible service' they provide. This is seen as a good practice example nationally and the project has been visited by other areas. The project also employs people with learning disabilities as co-ordinators. This area of work relies heavily on volunteers for their development.
 - Linking up community safety and safeguarding adults is highlighted in Valuing People Now. This will be explored through the Community Safety Board and the Safeguarding Board.
- (b) Members heard about the Work & Skills Group:
- This sub group particularly looks at increasing opportunities for people to gain both paid and voluntary employment. A 'Together Network' has been set up representing all organisations involved in delivering and supporting employment to take this work forward. Representation and leadership by people with learning disabilities is important to achieve the outcomes and will encourage joint working
 - A campaign to encourage major employers within Brighton & Hove to employ people with learning disabilities will be happening. The City Council, NHS organisations and larger employers such as Amex and Legal & General will be approached. Best practice around 'reasonable adjustments' will be showcased.

- Working with adult learning organisations will be important in achieving skills that will help people get jobs. Particularly working with City College and Open College for accreditation of skills courses so that people can achieve qualifications.

83.6 Brighton and Hove Speak Out

- (a) Two Speak Out service users attended the committee, with support from a Speak Out worker. Members heard about the work of Speak Out, an advocacy charity for people with learning disabilities.
- (b) The service users explained that Speak Out work includes:
- Supporting a number of self advocacy groups where people with learning disabilities meet regularly in a friendly and supportive environment. They talk about issues that are important to them and try to find ways to improve their lives.
 - Supporting the Big Meeting which happens every 2 months. This meeting is open to all people with learning disabilities in Brighton and Hove. Particular issues are explored and the findings taken to the Partnership Board.
 - Making sure that the views of people with learning disabilities are included in how services are planned. The Link group attends the Learning Disability Partnership Board and represents the voices of people with learning disabilities. The Link group and all the advocacy groups also get involved in a range of consultations when the voices and experiences of people with learning disabilities are sought.
 - Supporting people through 1:1 advocacy. People with learning disabilities can get an advocate to help them with particular issues that need resolving or some people have a long term advocate called a citizen advocate.

84. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET OR THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

84.1 There were none.

85. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

85.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 25

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Local Lettings Plan – General Needs Housing		
Date of Meeting:	July 17 2009		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care and Housing [
Contact Officer:	Name:	Helen Clarkmead	Tel: 293350
	E-mail:	Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No. HSG 10110	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The council has to regularly review and adopt Local Lettings Plans in order to be legally compliant and ensure that the plans meet the council's stated objectives. A requirement of Allocations and Adaptations Policy as approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing on 11 March 2009 was that all Local Lettings Arrangements currently practised by Brighton and Hove City Council in respect of its permanent council housing stock are reviewed to assure legal compliance and alignment with the council's policy objectives. Current arrangements were reviewed, and new proposals considered. There has been extensive stakeholder consultation, the outcome of which is included in the report.
- 1.2 A local authority may implement a Local Lettings Plan [LLP] to make better use of housing stock or to meet other local need. Authorities must demonstrate a need for the LLP that cannot reasonably be met through alternative measures and regularly review both need for and effectiveness of the LLP. However, authorities must ensure that allocations demonstrate 'reasonable preference' to those groups defined as having priority in section 167 (2) of the 1996 Housing Act (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Moreover, authorities must not discriminate either directly or indirectly on any equality grounds. Each LLP should be monitored to ensure it meets the original aims and objectives.
- 1.3 The council operates a variety of local lettings practices, some of which have been formally adopted and others not. The council's current practice is not conversant with legislative requirements in terms of justifying need or review. Some practices are not compliant with current equalities requirements.

Current Brighton and Hove City Council Local lettings practice and policy includes:

- Giving preference for some properties to child free households or those with children over 10, in a number of blocks.
- Restricting the granting of tenancies in some blocks to persons over 50 years.
- Preventing granting of tenancies to single people in small number of properties formerly managed by Hove Borough Council – this remains council policy but is no longer implemented.

- 1.4 A review considered the fitness for purpose of existing practice in respect of meeting council objectives, lawfulness and against current equalities standards. Essentially, are the plans actually needed, do they deliver what is expected, are they fair and lawful.
- 1.5 The review also considered designating a proportion of lets in some areas of the more deprived neighbourhoods for households where at least one adult works a minimum of 16 hours, in order to create greater community balance in areas of multiple deprivation where there is a high level of often multi generational benefit dependency. This policy would operate within existing priority bands, but working households would take priority within those bands. For example, if 10 people from band A bid, five of whom work, then the property would go to the working bidder with earliest priority date, even if that is later than a priority date of someone who is not working.
- 1.6 The review considered the views of tenant representatives who have requested that tenants who need to move to a lower floor within blocks of flats are afforded some priority to remain within the same block in order to retain social and support networks. People need to move to a lower floor as a result of decreasing mobility and less ability to manage stairs. Where this is assessed as placing them at risk as they would not be able to evacuate the building, then they need to move. People have often lived in the same block for many years, and increased frailty leads to more dependency on support networks and a desire to remain within the same block.
- 1.7 Where it is thought more information as to the potential impact of proposed LLPs is required, the pilot schemes, with flexibility to vary the terms, are proposed for a limited period for review by HMCC in 12 months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees the following:
 - (1) That the restrictions favouring households without young children are removed. Where problems associated with child density exist in a specific block or estate, then temporary Local Lettings Plans of up to 12 months may be agreed by the Cabinet member for Housing. The impact of this will be reviewed after 12 months operation.
 - (2) That all restrictions preventing letting of one bedroom property to single people are removed. This policy, no longer implemented, still formally applies to a few blocks and therefore should be formally revoked.
 - (3) That a pilot Local Lettings Plan of 12 months duration be agreed whereby up to 25% of property with two bedrooms or more in nine key deprived areas are designated for households where at least one adult has been in paid employment for a minimum of 16 hours a week for at least three months. Mobility standard flats are excluded. The eight areas are: South Whitehawk, Central Whitehawk, North Whitehawk, Central Moulsecoomb, East Moulsecoomb, Knoll, Hangleton, Hollingdean and Tarner. This will help

increase economic balance within the most deprived communities where few people work and benefit dependency is viewed as the norm.

- (4) That a pilot Local Lettings Plan over a 12 month period be agreed whereby up to 20 ground and first floor flats are identified as lets where preference will be given to tenants in the same block who need to move to a lower floor to meet needs associated with lessening mobility and/or for personal safety as part of a Personal Evacuation Plan. Mobility standard flats are excluded unless the transferring tenant has a specific need for that type of property. This will be reviewed after 12 months.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Restrictions on letting high-rise property to households with children under ten years of age

3.1.1 The objectives of the review in regard to properties with current restrictions are as follows:

- a) to comply with the legal requirement to review restrictions
- b) to review the practices against meeting the council's objectives
- c) to review the restrictive practice within the context of choice based lettings
- d) to review the current practice against current equalities standards

3.1.2 It likely that the current policy developed due to noise transmission, child density concerns, and fears over child safety. Because practice has evolved without formal adoption, interpretation and implementation has varied over time and by location. In March 1998 the Housing Committee did authorise a pilot to allow allocations to children under 10 in high rise buildings but the scheme was not implemented. The current restriction on children under ten applies to the 29 blocks within the authority (see 3.3). There were 114 lets, 52 of which were to two bed properties with such restrictions from April 2008 to April 2009.

3.1.3 High rise blocks which currently have restrictions to children under ten.

Barclay House	Heron Court	Saxonbury
Clarendon House	Highcroft	St James House
Conway Court	Highleigh	St Johns Mount
Courtlands	Johnson Bank	Swallow Court
Ecclesden	Kestral Court	Theobold House
Ellen House	Kingfisher Court	Thornsedale
Essex Place	Napier House	Tyson Place
Falcon	Normanhurst	Warwick Mount
Goldstone House	Park Royal	Wiltshire House
Hereford Court	Richmond Heights	

3.1.4 It is recommended that the age restriction is lifted for the following reasons:

- (a) The practice restricts the council's ability to make best use of existing housing stock in order to meet housing need. This may result in longer periods of temporary accommodation for families with associated financial and social cost.

- (b) The practice undermines the principles and spirit of Choice. A choice based letting scheme should try and offer the maximum choice.
- (c) This practice cannot be justified from an equalities perspective
- (d) This restriction cannot be applied to resident or absentee leaseholders, or to mutual exchange. It does not contain organic growth within households, so is therefore not effective to prevent occupation by young children generally, but potentially discriminatory towards council tenants.
- (e) There is inconsistency in that people placed by the council in temporary accommodation with children under 10 are often housed within high rise buildings. This is potentially confusing for applicants, tenants and advocates.
- (f) This restriction may actually disadvantage applicants with young children, who are more likely to be housed in low rise blocks without lifts.

3.1.5 Consultation with residents and stakeholders resulted in the following feedback:

- (a) Objections were raised by some members of the North Whitehawk Residents Association about child safety. If a parent chooses high rise, then they are responsible for taking steps to ensure the safety of their child[ren]
- (b) Several residents associations and Guinness Trust noted that child density may need to be monitored. The review accepts the need to monitor this issue. Where child density becomes an issue, then it is recommended that there is provision for the Cabinet member for Housing to agree a temporary 12 month Local Lettings Plan for a specific block as part of a management package.

3.2 Restrictions on children in low-rise properties.

3.2.1 These policies were formulated by Hove Borough Council to prevent issues of child density in certain areas. At the time the borough had a policy of placing families with babies or young children in one bedroom flats – this policy no longer applies within BHCC.

3.2.2 The properties to which the policy applies are:

- The Ingram Crescent Estate which has a policy of no children under 10.
- 385 Kingsway which has a policy of no children under 11.
- Tozier Court which has a policy of no children under 11.
- Vale Court which has a policy of no children under 11
- Vale Road has a historic practice policy of no children at all - however this has never been formally adopted as policy and is not currently implemented.

3.2.3 Consultation with residents resulted in the following feedback:

- Ingram Estate. Tenant representatives said they did not know the policy existed, as there are many families with young children on the estate. There are a relatively high proportion of resident leaseholders, many of whom have children, and leaseholders as private sector landlords who let to families.
- 385 Kingsway. The Chair of the Tenants Association raised concern about young children living there as all flats have one bedroom.
- Tozier Court, Vale Court and Vale Road: do not have a residents association – however, the area representative agreed the restrictions should be lifted.

3.2.4 It is recommended that the restrictions on these blocks are lifted for the following reasons:

- (a) The policy cannot be applied to leaseholders. In some blocks, Benson Court, for example – leaseholders represent over 50 percent of the residents. For this reason the policy is not effective.
It discriminates against council tenants as only that tenure faces restriction, and is potentially confusing.
- (b) The council no longer has a policy of housing families with one child in one bedroom flats.
- (c) The exclusion of all children in Vale Road is a form of social exclusion and can not be justified against current equalities standards.
- (d) That a choice based lettings scheme should offer the maximum choice.
- (e) No objections were raised to the lifting of restrictions by tenant representatives.
- (f) The increased flexibility would enable BHCC to better use of its housing stock to meet citywide need.

3.3 Practice of not letting designated one bedroom property to single people.

3.3.1 These policies were implemented by Hove Borough Council in three blocks – 385 Kingsway, Vale Court, and Tozier Court. The reasoning relates to a long superseded allocation policy which gave preference to couples. This policy is no longer implemented, but needs to be formally revoked.

3.4 Working Household Local Lettings Plan

3.4.1 The review examined the possibility of creating a working household LLP. The objectives of this policy are:

- To economically strengthen communities with high levels of unemployment and benefit dependency.
- To create a more balanced and sustainable mix of households.
- To ease pressure on public services in the most deprived neighbourhoods

3.4.2 Key strategic housing challenges faced by the Council include provision of more family homes, in particular for low income working households, and reducing inequality through delivery of more mixed communities on our housing estates.

3.4.3 Our most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (July 2008) identified that average house prices in the City tripled between 1997 and 2007 and that first time buyers required a household income of £45,000 to enter owner occupation. However, two thirds of households in the City earn less than £35,000 per annum. While the average house price in the City has fallen since the study it is still 25% higher than nationally. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment also identified that future delivery of new housing in the City is limited by the availability of sites and while there is a high demand for all types and size of accommodation in Brighton and Hove the most acute need is for family homes. Our Council Housing Register also reflects this. In terms of population projections the SHMA identified a net out-migration of families from the City, in particular, economically active families.

3.4.4 In response to this, in addition to promoting future planning policies which deliver a greater proportion of new affordable family homes on available sites, we have also

concentrated on making best use of our existing council stock. In parallel with our successful under occupancy initiative, which has released over 80 family homes in each of the last two years by supporting households to downsize, a review of LLPs to allow for more family homes to become available for those on the Housing Register will allow us to meet the housing needs of more families in the City.

3.4.5 The availability of these and other homes through LLPs targeted working households will not only enable us to provide homes with subsidised rents to those in low income employment but will also enable the Council to tackle some of the challenges presented by the findings of the Reducing Inequalities Review (2007). The Reducing Inequalities Review identified that residents of some of our council estates were not sharing in the prosperity of the City as a whole and that some of the most disadvantaged households were being concentrated in the same areas of council housing. Allowing for targeted housing of low income working households in these areas will help us to deliver the strategic housing and Reducing Inequality Review priorities of creating more mixed and balanced communities.

3.4.6 Consultation with tenants resulted in the following feedback:

Tenants consulted were wholly in favour of the policy as they were keen to see the economic regeneration of their estates. Some members of associations in areas not considered for the LLP noted that blocks of flats are just as much communities as housing estates.

3.5 Priority for tenants who need to move to a lower floor to remain within the same block

3.5.1 The council is working with tenants to agree emergency Personal Evacuation Plans for people in flats with sensory and/or mobility needs. This has further highlighted problems where tenants can access and leave their homes easily when using a lift, but cannot when a lift is not available, for example in the event of fire. Therefore, some tenants need to move to a flat on a lower floor where they are able to leave more easily if there is an emergency. Many tenants have strong support networks within the block and are reluctant to move. Therefore, it is proposed that a limited number of flats are designated to be let with preference being afforded to people in the same block with a need to move to a lower floor.

3.5.2 This local lettings policy has been requested by tenants, during the consultation period, including those represented by the High Rise Action Group.

3.6 Blocks designated for the occupation of people over 50 years of age

3.6.1 The council has a number of blocks designated for people over 50 years of age. A separate review about the future of these blocks is underway, including extensive consultation with residents and other stakeholders. The current arrangements have equalities implications and may prevent the council from making best use of its stock. It is envisaged this work will be completed and a report presented to HMCC in October 2009

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A wide of range of consultation was undertaken about all the recommendations. Tenants, Homeseekers and community interest groups were consulted. In addition, many community groups were asked to submit opinions. Our Registered Social Landlord partners were consulted. There was extensive dialogue with other departments within the authority. Consultation outcome, and responses to concerns raised, is contained within the body of the report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in this report. The changes to the LLP will be made within the existing 2009/10 Housing Revenue Account Budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen

Date: 02/06/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By virtue of section 169 Housing Act 1996, the Communities Secretary is entitled to issue guidance to local housing authorities in connection with the exercise of their powers under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 - allocation of housing accommodation. Local Authorities are required to have regard to this guidance when exercising their allocation functions. In pursuance of this section, in August 2008 CLG issued a guide entitled, "Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings - Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities." The guidance includes a section on local lettings policies. The recommendations in the report are compatible with that section."

Lawyer Consulted:

Liz Woodley

Date: 29/05/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed in respect of these recommendations. To summarise the findings;
Current age restrictive practices discriminate against people under 50 years old, people with children and people with children under 10 years old as they are either prevented from bidding, or afforded lower priority, for certain property. Removing age restrictive lettings practices would effectively remove barriers to equality as all transferring tenants and Homeseekers would be able to bid for any general needs property that meets their needs.
Although economically inactive groups will not be eligible to bid for property designated for working households, the number of lets would be very few and therefore render potential impact insignificant.
The number of properties removed from general use under the working household and same block move LLPs would be counterbalanced by the number added to the general use pool by the removal of child age restrictions.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The Working Household and same block moves LLPs aim to increase sustainability and stability in creating balanced neighbourhoods.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are none

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Adopting these recommendations would remove the risk of equalities based challenges related to age restrictive lettings practice. Removing age restriction from general needs letting would better enable the council to make best use of existing housing stock in order to help meet housing need

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The working households LLP would, albeit on relatively small scale, ease local pressure on services working with multiply deprived benefit dependent households within the areas of the city where these households live in greatest concentration.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 In order to ensure Local Lettings Plans operate lawfully, this report had to be brought. Not doing so would risk the Council's Local Lettings Plans being successfully challenged.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To ensure the council's Local Lettings Plans are lawful and meet the council's stated policy objectives.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix:

- 1. A table of areas with high deprivation within the authority

Documents In Members' Rooms

- 1. There are none

Background Documents

- 1. The council's Housing Allocations Policy as adopted by the Council at Cabinet Member for Housing Meeting 11 March 2009.

Appendix 1. The levels of benefit dependency and unemployment in the nine areas selected for the Working Household LLP

Housing Area	Ward	Housing office	Percent claiming Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax benefit	Percent of working age population, unemployed
South Whitehawk	East Brighton	Manor Place	62%	33%
Central Whitehawk	East Brighton	Manor Place	56%	35%
North Whitehawk – excludes high rises	East Brighton	Manor Place	62%	36%
Central Moulsecoomb	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Selsfield Drive	50%	32%
East Moulsecoomb	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Selsfield Drive	52%	36%
Knoll Estate	Hangleton and Knoll	Victoria Road	48%	31%
Hangleton	Hangleton and Knoll	Victoria Road	48%	24%
Hollingdean	Hollingbury and Stanmer	Oxford St	46%	24%
Bevendean	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Selsfield Drive	40%	28%

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 26

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Proposed Local Lettings Plan – council sheltered housing		
Date of Meeting:	15 July 2009		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Helen Clarkmead	Tel: 293350
	E-mail:	Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No	Forward Plan No: HSG 11247	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The proposed Local Lettings Plan is at the request of tenants through the Chairman's Focus Group [2008] and Sheltered Housing Action Group.
- 1.2 It is envisaged this local lettings plan will help make more efficient use of the council's sheltered housing stock, and improve support for vulnerable older people who need to move within sheltered housing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees the following:

- (1) That when allocating vacant Brighton and Hove City Council sheltered housing units, priority is firstly given to BHCC sheltered housing tenants who need to move within the same scheme and secondly to existing BHCC sheltered housing tenants who need to move to another scheme. Where a flat has significant disabled adaptations, the incoming tenant must be in need of these.
- (2) That where there are no bids for two bedroom sheltered housing from eligible households assessed as needing two bedrooms then the unit can be offered to qualifying two person households with an assessed need for one bedroom. Where no such households bid, then the unit may be offered to a single person eligible for sheltered housing.
- (3) That the restriction preventing letting of sheltered flats to people with a partner or carer aged under 60 is removed. A sole tenancy would be offered to the person who is over 60.
- (4) That a new process of assessment to better ensure risk is appropriately managed, that support needs of new residents can be met fully and promote

greater balance of support need within and between schemes, is introduced in September 2009.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Brighton and Hove City Council manage more than 800 units of sheltered housing for people aged over 60 who are in need of housing related support. These proposals relate only to sheltered housing, not general stock.

Priority for existing BHCC sheltered tenants

- 3.2 Some sheltered housing tenants need to move within the Scheme they already live in to a different flat. Reasons may include reduced mobility, the need for level access, or needing another bedroom for a carer. Sheltered housing schemes are sociable, supportive environments. Many tenants who need to move would prefer to stay with their friends, Scheme Manager, support network, GP and in an area with which they are familiar. Consultation with tenants has clearly evidenced a need for this. Whilst numbers are expected to be fewer than 20 each year, the impact and potential benefit for these people is very high. Where the appropriate type of accommodation is not available at the same scheme, it is proposed that existing tenants are afforded priority to move between schemes. This will help tenants move to neighbouring schemes where they can maintain social, medical and support networks and remain in a familiar area.

The impact for other people seeking to move into sheltered housing

- 3.3 The impact for other people seeking to move into sheltered housing would be minimal, as fewer than 20 lets are anticipated under this policy each year, and there would not be a net reduction in the number of sheltered flats offered to Homemove users. Instead of the original vacant property being available to all eligible Homemove users, that vacated by the tenant who transfers would be offered instead. The scheme would be constantly monitored and reviewed quarterly to identify and evaluate any disadvantage to non-tenants.

Removal of age restriction for carers and partners

- 3.4 Many people who would benefit from the support and social aspects of sheltered housing are being prevented from applying because they have a partner or residential carer who is not yet 60. It is proposed that this restriction is removed. The tenant would of course be responsible for ensuring the carer behaves appropriately within the scheme. Where the tenant dies, leaving the younger person in occupation, if there are succession rights, then the survivor would be expected to move to a general needs property.

Letting two bedroom sheltered property

- 3.5 Some 2 bedroom property does not attract bids from households assessed as needing two bedrooms. This can mean the property remaining empty for long periods and loss of income. It is therefore proposed that, if no

households assessed as needing 2 bedroom property bid, then households assessed as needing one bedroom can be considered – two person households would take priority over single people within this category.

Prevention of anti social behaviour, risk management and meeting support needs

- 3.6 Residents have asked that measures to minimise the risk of anti social behaviour, especially that related to drug and alcohol use, are put in place. The new assessment process will involve through risk assessment of potential residents and ensure support needs can be met within sheltered housing. People whose behaviour is thought likely to pose a risk to the health, safety and welfare of other residents, or who have support needs that cannot be met, will not be able to bid for sheltered housing. The new assessment process will also help build a sustainable, more balanced, community in each scheme in terms of individual support need and avoid concentration of people with high support needs in particular schemes.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 These proposals emerged from consultation with representatives of sheltered Housing tenants and were formally endorsed by tenant representatives at the Sheltered Housing Action Group on April 8 2009.
- 4.2 Partner Registered Social Landlords and Community groups representing the interests of older people have been consulted, and are generally supportive of the scheme.
Concern has been raised that in giving priority to exiting tenants the council may be placing Homeseekers and those wishing to transfer from other landlords at a disadvantage. Any disadvantage is likely to be insignificant given the expected low volume of internal transfer activity, and that the net supply of units available generally will not be reduced.
Concern has been raised that disabled people needing a ground floor unit may be disadvantaged if existing tenants have priority for all units. Designated Mobility standard units would still only be let to those assessed as needing this type of unit, and priority would only be afforded to tenants who fall within this category.
- 4.3 The council's Supporting People team have been consulted and some changes made to recommendations around equality of access to the service.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Any proposals which make more efficient use of the council's stock and reduce the amount of time that properties lie empty, increase the amount of annual rent collected for the Housing Revenue Account. If implemented, careful monitoring will then be needed to quantify the effects

of these changes and to ensure that income from rents does indeed increase or at least stay the same.

Monica Brooks, Principal Accountant, 8th April 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 A local housing authority is only entitled to allocate accommodation in accordance with its Allocation Policy. The Council's Allocation Policy is the recently revised Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL). The proposals in this report constitute a departure from the existing lettings scheme. CBL does include provision for the adoption of local lettings plans by the Housing Management Consultative Committee and Cabinet Member for Housing. Once adopted, the Plan will override the existing letting criteria. It is not considered that any individual's human rights will be adversely affected by the report's recommendations.

Liz Woodley, Senior Lawyer, 18 March 2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There is potential for some negative impact for people who are not existing BHCC sheltered housing tenants, but need low level flats. This impact is anticipated to be minimal as the number of flats lets under this scheme is expected to be relatively low. Where a flat meets defined mobility standards, this will not be let to a tenant not in need of an adapted property – this reduces the potential for negative impact upon disabled people. Although it is proposed that existing BHCC tenants would have priority bidding for vacant flats, the net number of flats available for general bids would remain unchanged as units vacated by tenants who transfer will be advertised in place of those originally vacant. The removal of barriers to letting two bed properties is a positive move as it extends access to a wider range of people. This scheme will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated against equality impact regularly and amended to counter any significance bias that emerges.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Enabling older people to stay within the same block or neighbourhood will help sustain communities and reduce population change.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The arrangements for assessment of new tenants will reassure residents and it is envisaged reduce anti social behaviour in sheltered schemes.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 These proposals reduce the risk of 2 bed flats remaining vacant. These proposals reduce the risk of alcohol and drug related anti social behaviour in sheltered housing schemes. These proposals increase opportunity for older people to remain within settled communities whilst meeting changing needs.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 There are none

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 The main alternative is not to set up a local lettings plan for sheltered housing. This has not been recommended as it would not help meet the objective of best use of council housing stock and would not meet the expressed aspirations of tenants.

6.2 The compromise alternative would be to designate 25% or 30% of vacant flats as being for priority allocation to existing tenants. This would significantly reduce tenant choice and unpopular with the tenants consulted.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To make most efficient use of the council's sheltered housing stock.

7.2 To meet the aspirations of tenants in making it easier and less stressful for existing BHCC sheltered housing tenants to transfer when their current flat no longer meets their needs.

7.3 To ensure people entering sheltered housing are risk assessed and any risks managed to reduce the likelihood of anti social behaviour.

7.4 To ensure incoming sheltered housing tenants' support needs are assessed, that these can be met by the sheltered service and to create balanced communities of people with high, medium and low support needs in each scheme.

7.5 To allow people who are over 60 with support needs but a resident carer or partner who is not yet 60 to apply for sheltered housing.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. Equalities Impact Assessment for proposed Local Lettings Plan, Sheltered Housing, April 2009

An introduction to the proposed Local Lettings Plans

What is a Local Lettings Plan?

A Local Lettings Plan [LLP] is a formal agreement allowing the council to vary the criteria by which some of its housing is let in order to meet local need. Local Lettings Plans can apply to a block of flats, estate, neighbourhood or to certain types of property.

What must the council do in order to have LLPs?

The council must show there is a need for the plan. This includes a clear statement as to what we hope the plan will achieve and why we think this is the best way to achieve that objective.

We need to consult with partner Residential Social Landlords [RSLs] and people the LLP is likely to affect.

We need to undertake an equalities impact assessment to ensure the plan does not unjustly discriminate against any particular group[s].

We must review all our LLPs regularly.

Does the council have any LLPs now?

The council has various arrangements in place allowing variation in lettings arrangements for certain property types and locations. Some of these arrangements were formally adopted; others have developed through custom and practice. However, as we have not until now followed a formal process, these cannot be classified as LLPs. That is why we are reviewing these arrangements and proposing formal LLPs.

What arrangements are in place now?

There are age restrictions on letting property in some blocks. Some flats cannot be let to people under 50, others not to people with children under 10 or 11.

Are any new LLPs proposed?

Yes.

General Needs Housing

Priority for working households for up to 25% of lets in the more deprived neighbourhoods. Some areas of the city have a high proportion of unemployed or otherwise benefit dependent residents. In order to create greater community balance and increase local economic prosperity, it is proposed to let some vacant property to households where at least one adult is in paid employment for a minimum of 16 hours a week. This will not mean working households are prioritised outside bands, as allocation will still be within the existing priority bands.

For example, if 50 people bid for a property, 10 of whom are in band A, then the property will go to the person in band A with the earliest priority date who is working. This is proposed on a pilot basis in order that the impact can be carefully analysed and assessed.

People who need to move within the same block

Where someone needs to transfer because they would not be able to use stairs in an emergency, then it is proposed that they are given priority to move to a lower floor within the same block in order to retain support networks. It is anticipated fewer than 20 such lets will be necessary each year. This is proposed on a pilot basis in order that the impact can be carefully analysed and assessed.

Sheltered Housing

The proposals for sheltered housing include giving people who need to move within the same block priority, and easing restrictions on the letting of two bedroom sheltered flats which are sometimes difficult to let using standard eligibility criteria. It also allows people over 60 who would benefit from sheltered housing with a carer who is under 60 to move into sheltered housing. These proposals are based on requests from tenants, and have the full support of the Sheltered Housing Action Group and other community groups we consulted.

Did we consult?

Yes. We consulted our Registered Social Landlord [RSL] partners, community groups, people on the Housing Register and current council tenants.

What about blocks for people aged over 50?

There are many blocks in Brighton and Hove where property is only let to people who are 50 or older. We are speaking to residents and other stakeholders, and hope that a report about these blocks will be presented to HMCC in October 2009. In the mean time, these will continue to operate as blocks for people over 50 years of age.

Any Questions?

Please contact Helen Clarkmead, Head of Housing Management.

Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk 01273 293350.

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 27

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Audit Commission – Advice & Assistance Visit

Date of Meeting: 17 July 2009

Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing

Contact Officer: Name: Diane Freeland Tel: 29-4650

E-mail: Diane.Freeland@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Key Decision: No

Wards Affected: All

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To provide the housing cabinet member with the results of the advice and support work provided by the Audit Commission during March 2009.
- 1.2 To provide the housing cabinet member with an action plan to take forward the recommendations made by the Audit Commission following their visit in March 2009.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) That housing cabinet member notes the contents of this report and agrees the action plan to meet the recommendations from the visit.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 The Council recognises the need to demonstrate strong housing management performance in order to ensure an effective service for both new and existing tenants, increase confidence among stakeholders, and maximise potential investment opportunities. In an environment of wider resource constraint, maximising housing income collection and reducing levels of arrears is also recognised to be of importance.
- 3.2 Within this context, the audit commission agreed to provide Brighton & Hove City Council with advice and support work during March 2009. The purpose of this work was to provide advice and support in three distinct areas:
 - To ensure that current policies, procedures and performance management arrangements for housing income management and related debt and welfare benefits advice reflects current good practice.
 - To review tenant and resident participation activities to determine how well they contribute to wider work to improve housing services, inform strategic decision making and promote engagement of the wider tenant base.

- To review the council's housing revenue account business plan to highlight any headline issues and/or omissions.

The auditor also considered the overarching issues of value for money, access and customer care and diversity within these three areas.

3.3 Housing income management support work

3.3.1. Local councils who retain their housing stock rely heavily on their rental income to fund the management and maintenance of their homes and other housing services. The Council's performance has previously identified housing income collection as a comparatively weak area, with performance outturns in 2006/07 placing the Council in the worst quartile nationally. The Council has substantially improved performance over the past two years, but overall outcomes are yet to place the Council among the best performers.

3.3.2 Against this background, the Audit Commission's role was to carry out an independent assessment of the Council's approach to housing income collection, with recommendations for improvement based upon good practice. This included:

- Assessing whether current policies and procedures for housing income management reflect good practice and are implemented effectively; and
- Looking at how easily tenants and residents can access welfare and benefits advice and any broader work to promote financial inclusion.

3.4 Tenant and resident participation support work

3.4.1 The Council's Housing Service has developed a wide range of informal and formal mechanisms to promote tenant and resident involvement. There has been considerable success in promoting different levels and styles of involvement, with recent initiatives including the development of the City Assembly, the Chairman's focus groups and the Asset Management Panel. The Council now aims to build upon this success and focus upon the effectiveness and outcomes of involvement.

3.4.2 Against this background, the Audit Commission's role was to carry out an independent assessment of tenant and resident participation activities, acting as a 'critical friend', with recommendations for improvement based upon good practice. This included:

- Assessing how well formal tenant participation activities work, with a focus on role clarity and their overall contribution to service improvement, strategy development and decision-making (outcomes);
- Looking at how effectively tenants and residents can get their views across.
- Some analysis of how current arrangements promote the engagement of, and reflect the views of, the wider tenant base, including more marginalised groups; and an assessment of the performance management arrangements for monitoring impact of tenant and resident involvement.

3.5 Review of Housing Revenue Account Service Improvement Plan

- 3.5.1 The Housing Revenue Account Service Improvement Plan provides the main improvement plan for the Housing Management Service, focusing on both proposals to improve the quality of the housing stock and its overall delivery of housing management services. As such, it is important that the plan reflects the principles of effective service planning and the full range of housing management challenges faced by the Council.
- 3.5.2 Against this background, the Audit Commission's role was to review the content of the Improvement Plan to highlight any headline issues/ and or omissions.

4. **OUTCOME OF ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE VISIT**

- 4.1 In advance of the visit we prepared a self assessment on these aspects of our service and submitted a series of documents in support of our work. During the on site visit the auditor met with a variety of members, staff and residents and attended two resident meetings, the 'Our Neighbourhood' repairs pilot in Whitehawk and the Asset Management Panel.
- 4.2 The feedback from the auditor was very encouraging and included the following strengths:
- we've made solid progress and improvement and have strong self-awareness of the areas that need to improve.
 - our Service Improvement Plan sets out a clear three year programme for management of the housing stock and is built on strong links to residents priorities.
 - relationships between tenants and councillors are mature and productive.
 - we have committed staff who demonstrate a professional and caring approach towards customers.
 - diversity awareness among staff and customers is generally good.
 - resident involvement is well resourced and supported with residents consulted on a wide range of issues.
 - rent arrears are reducing and former tenant arrears are being actively managed.
 - staff are aware of the importance of preventative work to reduce evictions. There is a focus on financial inclusion.

The auditor also suggested areas where we could improve, which included:

- developing an overarching resident involvement strategy.
- developing a financial inclusion strategy.
- exploring ways of increasing the diversity of resident involvement as the profile of some tenant representative bodies does not reflect the profile of the local community.
- putting in place clear and measureable service standards on all aspects of our service.
- utilising our website to its full potential.

- looking at our ICT arrangements, which at the moment can be a barrier to improvement.

Overall the auditor recognised that we have built strong foundations to improve the service and that good progress is being made in these areas. In considering our prospects for improvement the auditor identified:

- we have a high level of self awareness about where our service is and what needs to be done.
- the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan reflects principles of effective service planning and the full range of housing management challenges faced by the council.
- trends in performance indicators are generally positive.
- significant progress has been made in rebuilding/strengthening trust with tenants since the stock transfer ballot.
- it will be easy for residents to hold the council to account over its Service Improvement Plan 2009-12. There is a clear list of success factors.

4.3 Attached at appendix 1 is a copy of the presentation given by the Audit Commission at the end of the on site visit. To help the service improve the auditor also made a number of recommendations. These recommendations are outlined in the action plan at appendix 2. We will report back to Housing Cabinet and Housing Management Consultative Committee on our progress in meeting these recommendations.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Audit Commission feedback presentation – City Assembly, 6 May 2009
Housing Management Consultative Committee 22 June 2009.
The draft resident involvement recommendations have been approved by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 Financial Implications:

It is anticipated that the action plan can be progressed within the existing HRA Revenue Budgets for 2009/10. Some of the key actions, as they are progressed, may result in efficiency savings being identified.

Any financial implications arising from the implementation of the action plan will be monitored and reported through the HRA Target Budget Monitoring during the financial year, as well as being included in the update report back to Housing cabinet and housing Management consultative Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen *Date:* 30 April 2009

6.2 Legal Implications:

By virtue of the Local Government Act 1999, the council is under a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The action plan, based upon recommendations from the Audit Commission will assist the Council in complying with that duty. No individual's human rights are thought to be adversely affected by the report's recommendations.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 30 April 2009

6.3 Equalities Implications:

The recommendations will be implemented with due regard to equalities and diversity issues. Both the income management and resident involvement services are subject to an Equalities Impact Assessments which will be completed during Summer 2009.

6.4 Sustainability Implications:

Not applicable to this report

6.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Not applicable to this report

6.6 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

Not applicable to this report

6.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Not applicable to this report

7. **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8. **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 The report provides information on the advice and support work visit completed by the audit commission during March 2009. The report also contains a copy of the Audit Commission's presentation and an action plan for meeting the recommendations made by the Audit Commission.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Presentation by the Audit Commission

Appendix 2: Action Plan for meeting the Audit Commission recommendations

Appendix 3: Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

Brighton Housing A&A

6th March 2009

Martin Symonds – Housing Inspector



Key messages

- Positive relationships built with residents since 2006
- Strong self-awareness of current service delivery and areas that need to improve
- Solid progress in improvement
- Effective improvement planning
- Understanding of costs and use of benchmarking is an area for development

Access and Customer Focus

Strengths

- Committed staff who demonstrate a professional and caring approach towards customers
- Sign up / settling in visit encourages involvement
- Late opening of HIMT (6.30 p.m. M-Th)
- Informative website - rents payable on line
- Effective use made of newsletters
- Information about rents is comprehensive - easy to understand
- Helpful advice leaflets
- Home visits and office interviews provided with 5 days of request

Access and Customer Focus

Areas for improvement

- **Some staff not fully engaged in RI – could be clearer part of induction e.g. for income management staff**
- **Clear and measurable service standards not in place**
- **Tenant handbook does not explain RI well**
- **Website not being used to full potential**
- **Interview room facilities at Bartholomew House do not support the Income Management service**
- **Innovative methods of communication e.g. texting not being used to full potential**
- **Residents not fully involved in complaints monitoring**
- **Satisfaction surveys not coordinated**
- **Telephone systems do not enable analysis of answering performance in the HI team**

Diversity

Strengths

- **Diversity awareness among staff and customers seen is generally good**
- **Some good examples of wider engagement outside of traditional structures (AMP)**
- **Clear progress being made on EIAs for both HIM and RI**
- **Information available in a range of languages and formats**
- **Some good (and emerging) work with component communities - youth, BME**
- **Meeting venues are generally accessible (but not all offices meet DDA)**
- **Wide range of payment methods enables people with diverse needs to pay in a convenient way**

Diversity

Areas for improvement

- **The profile of some tenant representative bodies does not reflect the profile of the local community**
- **Participation by different methods is not monitored by diversity**
- **Not monitoring all diversity strands in rent recovery activity. (the IT system has a facility to record this)**
- **Gaps in information about tenant vulnerability on the IT database is a barrier to arrears prevention and income generation**

Value for Money

Strengths

- **Good understanding of various payment transaction costs and promotion of cost effective method**
- **Making some good use of additional resources – contractor input**

Areas for improvement

- Understanding of costs of different elements of RI is not as strong as it could be – making benchmarking difficult
- There is little commentary and analysis on those benchmarking reports seen
- Management costs are higher than those for your peers
- Cost and quality is not clearly linked - e.g. levels of satisfaction v cost of service

Resident Involvement

Strengths

- Resident involvement is well resourced and supported
- Relationships between tenants and councillors are mature and productive
- Residents consulted on wide range of issues - various WGs etc
- Short term tenants focus groups are a useful way of engaging on policy issues
- There are many examples of the council, residents and partners working to build community capital and cohesion – e.g. Our Neighbourhood
- RI integrates well with other partners
- Devolved budgets for residents associations play an important role in encouraging and maintaining interest in resident associations
- Tenants are an integral part of planning processes - they inform the SIP
- Residents play an active role in performance monitoring
- Effective use is made of the independent resource centre - builds capacity
- Annual feedback provided on RI impact

Resident Involvement

Areas for Improvement

- **There is no over-arching resident involvement strategy**
- **The TP compact does not spell out clearly what to expect from the council. It does not list the resources available nor service standards**
- **There is not a clear menu of options for engagement – including informal ways**
- **The formal structures work but may now be too heavy**
- **There is no database of preferred method of consultation on the computer system**
- **More steps could be taken to tap into existing representative bodies in the city to encourage a wider representation**

Housing Income Management

Strengths

- The establishment of a dedicated HI team has had a positive impact
- Rent arrears have reduced to around the median for unitaries
- Staff are aware of the importance of preventative work to reduce evictions – focus on financial inclusion
- Evictions have reduced significantly
- Good, quick access to money advice
- Liaison between the Income Team and HB is strong
- The introduction of E-benefits has enabled faster HB processing
- Effective use is being made of DHPs to reduce any HB shortfall for vulnerable tenants
- Staff are provided with clear procedures and policies in relation to rent collection and recovery
- A broad range of initiatives are used to promote a rent payment culture (eg signs on vans)
- Service charges are disaggregated and are shown clearly on rent increase letters
- FTAs are being actively managed - use made of prompt tracing

Housing Income Management

Areas for improvement

- There is a lack of a financial inclusion strategy
- Training arrangement for Income Management staff are not robust - Staff need more guidance on which agency to sign post people
- Rent reports do not allow sufficient analysis of performance (e.g. how many agreements have been broken)
- Interview rooms do not include appropriate IT facilities
- Mobile technology is not available to assist Income Managers when carrying out home visits
- Integration and communication between area offices and HIMT may not be as effective as it should be
- There is no weekend or late evening working for the HIMT
- Payment by DD could be further promoted
- It can still take too long to set up rent accounts
- Targets have not been set for reduction in FT arrears

Future prospects

- Significant progress has been made in strengthening / rebuilding trust with tenants since the ballot
- Trends in PIs are generally positive
- High level of self awareness
- The HRABP reflects the principles of effective service planning and the full range of housing management challenges faced by the Council
- The SIP sets out a clear 3 year programme for management of the housing stock and is built on strong links to residents priorities
- Staff have been widely consulted over the development of the SIP 2009-12
- It will be easy for residents to hold the council to account over its SIP 2009-12. There is a clear list of success factors
- But some aspects of draft service BPs could be clearer – eg milestones
- Budget provision allows for IT capacity to be built
- High staff turnover and sickness is a barrier but is being addressed

Recommendations

Recommendations will follow

Business Plan 2009/10 - Audit Commission Recommendations			
Directorate Name		Adult Social Care & Housing	
Responsible Manager		Diane Freeland	
Date		20/05/09	Version Draft
Corporate Priorities		Directorate Objectives	
1	Protect the environment while growing the economy		Please insert the Directorate Objectives, as stated in the Directorate Plan 1. Providing Homes to meet the needs of the city. 2. Improve Housing Quality in the City to ensure all have access to decent homes. 3. Deliver high quality and personalised services. 4. Deliver Value for Money services. 5. Work in partnership to improve the commissioning and provision of services 6. Reduce Inequality. 7. Deliver excellent customer services. 8. Develop our workforce in line with the corporate objectives.
2	Better use of public money		
3	Reduced inequality by increasing opportunity		
4	Fair enforcement of the law		
5	Open and effective city leadership		

Service Objectives:

1. Improve services to an excellent standard, working with (and responding to) the diversity of our customers
2. Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes and neighbourhoods
3. Deliver value for money services and a sustainable business plan
4. Make best use of our housing stock to address housing need
5. Promote social housing as a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity
6. Develop our workforce in line with our service objectives

Work Plan

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 1 – Improve services to an excellent standard, working with (and responding to) the diversity of our customers								
3	3,7	Develop SMART service standards with residents for income management, resident involvement and other service areas where not in place.	Reviewing existing charters with residents – Summer 2009. Agree charters with area panels - Autumn 09. HMCC paper Dec 09. To be launched April 2010.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke, David Rook, Heads of Service as required
2	3,4,7	Develop facilities on website – rent statements on line.	First project group meeting due Spring 2009. Project plan to be produced thereafter. Implementation date end of January 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income generation	Service: ICT risk due to security issues	David Rook/ Vicky Williams/ Philippa Toogood

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
3	3,4,7	Develop facilities on website – on line surveys.	Scoping exercise on immediate changes to the website to be completed Spring 2009. Identified changes to be put in place Autumn 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings	Resource & Capacity	John Austin Locke
5	3,7	Develop facilities on website – place minutes from key meetings.	Add link to HMCC minutes – April 2009	Complete		Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland
3	3,7	Develop facilities on website – provide feedback on mystery shopping.	Scoping exercise on immediate changes to the website to be completed Spring 2009. Identified changes to be put in place Autumn 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency	Resource & Capacity	John Austin Locke
4	3,7	Involve residents in monitoring of the formal complaints system.	Develop a series of focus groups on citywide panel – Spring/Summer 09. Link into customer satisfaction survey in October 2009.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		Brian Foley/John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
3	4,7	Streamline current resident satisfaction surveys and co-ordinate reporting on all surveys.	Review existing mechanisms – Summer 09. Develop and introduce new process 1 February 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Annette Kochnari/ John Austin Locke
2	3,4,6,7	Expand use of telephone surveys as a way of gauging resident satisfaction with the service.	Review existing mechanisms – Summer 09. Develop and introduce new process 1 February 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency	Service: Financial and ICT risks	Annette Kochnari/ John Austin Locke
2	3,7	Ensure interview rooms have adequate IT facilities.	Review provision at Barts House - Spring 2009. Ensure all offices have public access computers by June 2009.	Completed		Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings	Directorate restriction on use of rooms	David Rook/ David Hoy
2	3,7	Undertake routine analysis of telephone answering performance and use the information to improve service delivery.	Work with corporate centre – (customer services) to develop a robust system.			Improve quality Improve efficiency	Financial risk Corporate risk	John Austin Locke
2	3,6,7	Develop IT systems to produce detailed reports on all	PID's to be produced by end of			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Steve Corbett/

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		stages of rent recovery procedures.	July 09. Implementation date January 2010.					David Rook/Lynn Yule
2	4	Set targets for reducing former tenant arrears.	June 09		Local	Income Generation		David Rook/Lynn Yule/Irene Van Breda
5	3,7	Ensure 'successful outcome descriptions' within improvement plan are SMART.	To be completed June 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland
3	3,4,5,6,7	Produce a Resident Involvement Strategy (which sets out what the council and its residents want to achieve in terms of service delivery and wider community development matters).	Strategy to be drafted with TCMG April-September 09 Cabinet sign off – Dec 09. Implement Feb 2010			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke
3	3,4,6,7	Develop a menu of options for engagement which includes informal methods.	To be completed in conjunction with Resident Involvement Strategy.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		John Austin Locke
5	3,7	Ensure there is a clear understanding of our resident involvement structure (clear	Section to be included in new tenant			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		definition and understanding of the roles).	representatives handbook (launch date Summer 09), tenant handbook (launch date January 2010) Section to be included in resident involvement strategy and tenant compact.					
2,3	3,4,5,6,7	Produce a new tenant participation compact (explain the various options for consultation and engagement, the resources available to support this, the service standards we are committed to and arrangements for monitoring the delivery of the compact).	New Tenant Compact in place and approved 1 October 2009 with target for taking to Cabinet 1 December 2009 Milestone: Launched at Tenant Compact Monitoring Group.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke
3	3,6,7	Include a clear section on resident involvement in the new tenant handbook/leaseholder handbook.	Focus group established April 08. Due to be launched January 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland
3	3,4,5,6,7	Develop a record of all residents preferred method of consultation and engagement	Develop a facility on OHMS to record information.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings	Service: ICT capacity	John Austin Locke/ Heads of

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		and use this to ensure service delivery reflects residents' needs.	Tenant Census form in place to gather information. Spreadsheet set up March 2009 to record tenant representatives preferences.					Service/ Steve Corbett
2,3	3,5,6	Work with partners to engage a broader range of resident's i.e. Children and Young Peoples Trust to develop links with groups representing young people.	Project to address under representation by young people. Consultation with younger people and organisations to be completed by September 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Jane White
2,3	3,4,6,7	Expand use of innovative methods of communication in Housing Income Management Team i.e. texting.	Texting currently in use – analysis of effectiveness to take place Summer 09.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Sue Baker
2	4,5	Improve analysis of benchmarking reports and add sufficient commentary.	Housemark workshops planned 15 May 09 and principles to be rolled out to all teams.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Income Generation		John Austin Locke/ All Heads of Service

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
			Higher profile at GMT through new performance report. New reporting tool to be produced for HMCC (June 09).					
2,3	5,7,8	Strengthen integration and communication between Housing Income Management Team and local housing offices.	Introduce pilot surgery at local housing office – Summer 2009 New income management staff to spend time at local housing office and vice versa as part of induction – May 2009. Relaunch of Rechargeable Repairs procedures – staff conference June 09.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Income Generation		David Rook/ Housing Managers
2	3,7	Introduce ebenefit mobile technology for on site visits	To be introduced July 2009			Improve quality Improve efficiency		David Rook/Sue

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestone		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		(Housing Income Management Team).				Financial savings Income Generation		Baker
2	7	Reduce the length of time it takes to set up a rent account from 10 days to 5 days	To take effect from May 2009. Monitored monthly.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		David Rook/Helen Batchelor/ Julie Renvoize

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 2 – Deliver value for money services and a sustainable business plan								
2	4	Take steps to further promote payment by direct debit.	Seeking good practice from Audit Commission – April 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook
3	3,6,7	Evaluate whether evening/weekend working for Housing Income Management Team would be cost effective and improve collection rates.	Survey to be sent to 3000 tenants April 2009 – Question on extended opening times. Analyse findings Summer 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Lynn Yule
2	4	Develop a detailed understanding of the	Scope VFM benchmarking			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Diane Freeland

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
		component costs of service delivery.	project & produce project plan June 09.			Financial savings		
2	4	Undertake robust benchmarking with peers using our understanding of our costs.	Housemark relaunch May 09. Launch of Performance Management Framework April 09.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		All Heads of Service
2	3,4	Make clear links between cost and quality of/satisfaction with service delivery.	Housemark relaunch, May 09 Teams to benchmark their service thereafter. Ongoing review of satisfaction to justify costs through STATUS surveys.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		John Austin Locke/All Heads of Service

Please insert additional rows as required

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk References Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 3 – Promote social housing as a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity								
3	6,7	Monitor and analyse performance in rent recovery activity by diversity.	Six reports written – February 2009. Further improvements needed to reporting tools. Change request May 09. Anticipated implementation date January 2010.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		Steve Corbett/ David Rook/Lynn Yule
3	6,7	Monitor effectiveness of different forms of participation by diversity.	Survey sent to TRA's - March 2009. Analysis to take place.			Improve quality Improve efficiency		Steve Corbett/ John Austin Locke
3	3,6,7	Ensure the new Tenant Compact addresses the needs of minority communities.	New Tenant Compact in place and approved 1 October 2009 with target for taking to Cabinet 1 December 2009 Milestone: Launched at Tenant Compact			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk References Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
			Monitoring Group.					
3	6,7	Develop a comprehensive understanding of vulnerable tenants and ensure this is accessible to staff.	Information to be gathered via service wide exercise Summer 2009. Further information to be gathered by Tenancy Checks – 25% of properties to be visited by July 2009. Ongoing financial inclusion interviews to generate information on new tenants.		Local	Improve quality Improve efficiency		Heads of Service
3	3,6,7	Develop a financial inclusion strategy which addresses how we aim to reduce inequality and maximise income for tenants.	Current financial inclusion trial ongoing. Draft strategy to be produced July 09. Review financial inclusion strategy with IMWG – Summer 2009. Cabinet/HMCC Autumn 2009. Launch Dec 2009.			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		David Rook/Lynn Yule/Vicky Williams

Council Priority	Directorate Objective	Key Actions	Target Completion Date and Key Milestones		PI(s) LAA NIS BVPI Local	VFM Impact Improve Quality Improve Efficiency Financial Savings Income Generation	Risk Reference: Service Directorate Corporate	Lead Officer(s)
				Progress				
Service Objective 4 – Develop our workforce in line with our service objectives								
4	3,7,8	Develop a clear induction training programme for staff on rent recovery procedures.	End of July 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker
3	3,6,7,8	Train HIMT staff to provide advice on energy efficiency.	End of September 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker
3	3,6,7,8	Provide HIMT staff with clear guidance on the most appropriate route for referring residents to money advice.	End of June 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency Financial savings Income Generation		Vicky Williams/ Sue Baker
3	7,8	Ensure resident involvement is part of induction training for all new staff.	End of June 09			Improve quality Improve efficiency		John Austin Locke/ Community Participation Officer's

Please insert additional rows and tables as required

Appendix 3 – Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

AMP	Asset Management Panel
BME	Black & Minority Ethnic
BP's	Business Plans
DD	Direct Debit
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DHP's	Discretionary Housing Payments
EIA's	Equality Impact Assessments
FTA's	Former Tenant Arrears
FT Arrears	Former Tenant Arrears
GMT	Group Management Team
HB	Housing Benefit
HI team	Housing Income Team
HIM	Housing Income Management
HIMT	Housing Income Management Team
HMCC	Housing Management Consultative Committee
HRABP	Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IMWG	Income Management Working Group
IT	Information Technology
OHMS	Open Housing Management System (computer software system)
PI's	Performance Indicators
RI	Resident Involvement
SIP	Service Improvement Plan
SMART	S pecific, M easurable, A chievable, R ealistic, T ime
TCMG	Tenant Compact Monitoring Group
TP Compact	Tenant Participation Compact
TRA's	Tenant & Resident Associations
VfM	Value for Money
WG's	Working Groups

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 28
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: 25 year Management Agreements – Temporary Accommodation

Date of Meeting: 17th July 2009

Report of: Director of Adult Social care & Housing

Contact Officer: Name: **Sylvia Peckham** Tel: **293318**
E-mail: Sylvia.peckham@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Key Decision: Yes Forward Plan No. HSG 0583

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE/ EXEMPTIONS.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To seek a general authority for the Director of ASC & Housing to enter into Management Agreements of up to 25 years for the purposes of providing accommodation for households who would otherwise be homeless or overcrowded. The Council continues to need accommodation for vulnerable homeless households, social care and health clients e.g. those identified by the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) or intentionally homeless families. In addition we have recognised that there are tenants who are living in over-crowded conditions in the city who are unable to access alternative private rented accommodation themselves.
- 1.2 The scheme will provide an alternative to the existing medium-term arrangements the Council uses for leasing property thereby providing more settled and secure accommodation. This will be a more attractive option for households who are currently over-crowded who are looking for settled accommodation to move to. This will alleviate over-crowding in council accommodation, making better use of the stock and will also alleviate the pressure on council accommodation as being seen as the only form of secure housing. It will also enable better opportunities for planning expenditure and value for money in relation to accommodation costs.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet member for Housing resolve that the Council be authorised to enter into Management Agreements for up to 25 years in accordance with the terms of this report and

2.2 Delegate authority to the Director ASC & Housing to negotiate the final Heads of Terms with each landlord in consultation with the council's Valuer, the Head of Law and Finance and Property.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The council has decided that it is best practice for all procurement of temporary accommodation to come from Housing Strategy Division. This helps achieve best value, reduces costs of procurement, administration and assists in maximizing housing benefit. This is in line with the commissioning strategies for CYPT, mental health and learning disabilities.

3.2 The detail of any direct leasing/Management Agreement scheme would be agreed with reference to colleagues outlined in paragraph 2.2. The Management Agreements themselves would include adequate break clauses to protect the Council's interest and that the Council would not take on any responsibility for major repairs to property structure, exterior or installations. The Council's Head of Law would be closely consulted on the lease and contract in order to ensure the Council's position is properly protected particularly in relation to potential liabilities such as claims for dilapidations or disrepair arising during the lease or at Agreement end.

Demand

3.3 Officers are looking at new schemes to provide the necessary level of properties to keep pace with demand and achieve value for money. The demand for temporary accommodation is expected to be in the region of 700 units each year in the foreseeable future.

3.4 The need for Temporary Accommodation in the first place is due to the general lack of permanent accommodation or other accommodation that is available for homeless households.

3.5 It is anticipated that initiatives to prevent homelessness will help manage growth in demand that are expected due to the current uncertainty in the economic climate. However, factors such as the still relatively high cost housing market, restrictions on mortgage lending and uncertainty in the employment market, as well as the continuing need to meet statutory obligations under the Housing Act, Children Act, and NHS and Community Care Act will lead to a continuing of demand for temporary accommodation

3.6 We are also aware that there is a significant proportion of households in council and RSL housing stock who are overcrowded, whilst at the same

time there is currently an over supply of large family housing available in the private housing market. Overcrowded families in council and housing association accommodation are reluctant to relinquish their secure tenancy to move to the private market even though this will alleviate their overcrowded situation, as they are concerned over the lack of security.

- 3.7 Our Under Occupation Officer within Choice Based Lettings, has achieved excellent results in enabling many households who were in accommodation that was too large for their needs to move into smaller accommodation and thereby free up larger family housing. However, there are still a significant number of households who are overcrowded despite these larger properties being freed up and so by taking on properties for 25 years, we will be able to offer an alternative to meeting their needs

Supply

- 3.8 Officers have been investigating a number of schemes that can provide different types of Temporary Accommodation (TA) to that used now. Some can provide TA in the short and longer term i.e. up to 10 years. In addition there is the potential LDV which will provide up to 499 units over 5 years.
- 3.9 By taking properties on under Management Agreements for 25 years we would be able to be able to offer families a degree of security for 25 years which would make a more attractive option and so alleviate overcrowding in social housing. This would also make better use of the total housing stock in the City.
- 3.10 There are existing suppliers that can be used on this basis but in order to keep pace with the demand for accommodation and to ensure better use of all the accommodation in the city, we need to be able to offer longer term security for both landlords, potential tenants and to ensure the longevity of the supply of accommodation
- 3.11 There is a need for a mix of solutions. Some short, medium and long term leasing and Management Agreements allows flexibility for changes in demand and client groups. This helps develop sustainable communities as we have a more long term measured approach rather than a quick fix. This also joins up with other council initiatives e.g.. Private sector Empty Property Grants/Assistance, Landlords' Major Work Assistance.
- 3.10 Leasing and taking properties under Management Agreements has helped reduce the proportion of permanent lets to homeless households over the last year, thereby enabling more households who are not homeless but are in housing need, to successfully bid on secure tenancies. In the light of sustainability issues, this has helped to significantly reduce the proportion of vulnerable residents moving directly into social housing, which contributes to reducing the concentration of vulnerable people in social housing and enables a mix of communities to develop across the city. We would therefore like to expand on this option so that in addition to housing various homeless households, we can also offer a 25 year security to existing council and

Housing association tenants who are in housing need and who are not being successful in their bidding on the properties they would like under Choice Based lettings.

3.11 Taking on properties for 25 years will enable the Council to maximize the supply and the flexibility of temporary accommodation, improve the quality of temporary accommodation and minimise the costs to the Council associated with private sector provision. In particular it will enable us to gradually move away from using more expensive and unsuitable temporary accommodation especially bed & breakfast accommodation and housing association leasing schemes. A key aim is to increase the range of provision available in order to gain cost benefits and ensure continuity of supply should any existing partner not deliver adequate units at appropriate costs that will meet the needs of a range of clients.

3.12 The projected yearly demand is detailed in the table below:

Yearly Demand for Temporary Accommodation

Client group	1 bed/studio	2 bed	3 beds	4 beds	TOTAL
Statutory Homeless*	270	190	40	4	504
Mental Health	50				50
CYPT		35	15	1	51
Learning Disability	25				25
Older People	20				20
Asylum Seekers	3	2			5
Physical Disabilities	20	5			25
Sub Total	388	232	55	5	680

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 None

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 This was a new scheme implemented during 2008/09 and was cost neutral with rent costs being covered by housing benefit. The projected spend for 2009/10 is £0.356m based on approximately 36 properties at an average cost of £813 per month, which will be covered by the local housing allowance (LHA) rate of benefit.

The intention to replace the ‘thresholds and cap’ with a new funding scheme from April 2010 is unlikely to have any major impact on management agreements.

By being able to offer 25 year management agreements to individual landlords, we will be able to secure properties for good rates, offering good value for money

Finance Officer Consulted: Neil Smith Date: 05.06.2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Under section 206 Housing Act 1996 local housing authorities such as the council may discharge their housing obligations to homeless persons by securing suitable accommodation from the private sector for subletting. Local housing authorities are positively encouraged by the Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities to maximise leasing from this source. As mentioned in paragraph 2.2, the Head of Law will be closely involved in drawing up the agreements to ensure that the Council's interests are protected.

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 27th May 2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The proposal to enter into 25 year leases will enable us to provide more settled and accessible accommodation which will reduce inequality for vulnerable people, including those with disabilities in the city.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 This proposal will support the commissioning of accommodation locally and working in partnership with the private sector to provide good quality accommodation to meet the corporate needs of the Council. This will enable people to become settled and for accommodation to be scattered around the city thereby contributing to mixed and sustainable communities.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The proposal will contribute to the council's strategic priorities of obtaining better use of public money and contribute towards reducing inequality by providing good quality accommodation suitable for meeting households' needs.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 This proposal will expand the accommodation available to households as we will be working in partnership with the private sector, which is the largest sector of accommodation in the city to provide long term housing solutions for the most vulnerable households.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Currently we can offer up to 10 year leases/Management Agreements which has contributed substantially to providing alternative good quality accommodation to bed & breakfast. However, this has limitations in being able to offer longer term solutions to people who have particular housing needs e.g. adapted accommodation.
- 6.2 We are seeking to make better use of the housing stock in the City, and overcrowding is an issue within the Council owned stock. Tackling overcrowding is a priority for both the Audit Commission and the CLG. We need to offer tenants a longer term solution to alleviate their housing need or they will not be inclined to move from a secure tenancy despite being overcrowded. The alternative is for them to remain overcrowded and continue bidding on a very limited supply of larger council accommodation.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendations have been made so as to offer a long term contract with a number of landlords. This will ensure we obtain value for money as we will be able to negotiate with a number of landlords, and it will also offer security to landlords and potential tenants, thereby enabling more flexible use of the accommodation. Overall, it will make better use of all the housing stock in the city as a whole.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None.

Documents In Members' Rooms:

None.

Background Documents:

None.

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 29

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Expenditure of the 2009/10 Private Sector Renewal Grant Allocation and Disabled Facilities Grant Allocation.		
Date of Meeting:	17 July 2009		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Reid	Tel: 293060
	E-mail:	Martin.reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is the lead authority for the delivery of the 2008-2011 Private Housing Renewal Programme for Brighton and Hove and East Sussex (The BEST consortium). The consortium receives funding from the Regional Housing Board (RHB) and received the largest allocation of funding across the South East for 2009/10 (£8m).
- 1.2 The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is individual government grants towards capital spending on providing disabled adaptations to housing. The DFG grant covers 60% of the DFG expenditure with and Local authorities must meet 40% from its own resources. Brighton & Hove City Council uses monies from RHB grant to 'top up' this 40% contribution.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That it is noted that the council received £4,209,600 Private Housing Renewal Grant from the Regional Housing Board for 2009/10, through the BEST consortium. This will be spent in accordance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 following Cabinet approval.
- 2.2 That it is noted that the remaining grant money, £3,790,400 will be allocated to the council's BEST partner authorities in East Sussex according to an agreed split of funds following Cabinet approval.
- 2.3 That the development of the use of affordable home improvement loans for some owner-occupiers with our partners South Coast Money Line be noted.
- 2.4 That it is noted that the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation for 2009-10 is £660K.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Background

- 3.1 In 2007, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Hastings, Wealden, Lewes and Rother formed the BEST consortium specifically to bid for Regional Housing Board (RHB) 2008/11 private sector renewal funding. The Government Office for the South East (GOSE) reported that the bid was successful. Money is released each financial year in March based on previous performance in spend and delivery.
- 3.2 The renewal programme for BEST covers energy efficiency/fuel poverty, decent homes, empty homes and other interventions such as landlord accreditation.
- 3.3 In November 2008, GOSE reported to the RHB on progress in the first six months made by all the bids throughout the South East.
- 3.4 There was a very positive report on the BEST partnership. In summary *“a high-performing partnership. Has demonstrated its ability to generate up-take and to deliver measures in volume. At the half year point 95% of the half year funding had been delivered and in total 84% of the whole year’s funding had been allocated. Tightly managed with dedicated staff assigned to delivering the programme. Robust plans for year two across a broad range of condition issues and looking to expand its activity. Tackling a coastal concentration of some of the region’s poorest stock. Recommendation is for increased funding”*.
- 3.5 As a result of the performance to date the RHB recommended the BEST received an additional £1.245 million for 2009/10 and this received ministerial approval in March 2009. The additional money has been taken from under-performing partnerships (Thames Valley, East Kent, PUSH (Southampton)). The RHB are also holding £2m in reserve across the region, pending a performance review in October 2009.
- 3.6 Brighton & Hove are the lead authority in the BEST consortium and host the programme management team. BHCC as the largest local authority with the greatest need receive over 50% of the funding.

Progress in Brighton & Hove

- 3.7 Progress in Brighton & Hove 2008/9 was good, and the Private Sector Housing Team delivered £2.77m of measures, improving the living conditions of 1000 households living in poor quality private housing in the City. 800 energy efficiency measures were installed, saving 436 tonnes of CO₂.

Future Plans

- 3.8 The additional £1.2m BHCC have received for 2009/10 will be used to assist even more households in need.

South Coast Money Line

- 3.9 The use of low cost loans in partnership with South Coast Money Line (SCML) will also be expanded. SCML is a not for profit organisation, with Community Finance Institution status. The core objective for SCML is to deliver fair finance for vulnerable groups via a loan product, the Home Trust Loan, to help people improve and carry out repairs to their homes. The Private Sector Housing Team in partnership with South Coast Money Line hope to deliver 25 loans to home-owners in 2009/10.
- 3.10 A marketing campaign to residents promoting the scheme will begin in July 2009, with leaflets, posters, press releases and a website launch, www.hometrustedloan.org.uk. Two loans officers are employed by South Coast Money Line to deliver loans in this area.
- 3.11 This is a value for money scheme, allowing grant money to help more households, and the loan money to be recycled back into the scheme.

Disabled Facilities Grant

- 3.12 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a mandatory entitlement administered by local housing authorities to help fund the provision of adaptations to enable disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their homes.
- 3.13 Eligible work is wide-ranging, providing for access to the home and basic facilities within it, for example: providing ramps, door widening, stair lifts and level access showers. The grant is subject to an assessment of need and a financial means test. Over the last 3 years the Housing Adaptations Team has doubled Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure on private sector housing adaptations, as can be seen in Table 1

Table 1: Disabled Facilities Grants Awarded 2005-8

Year	Number of Disabled Facilities Grants awarded	Disabled Facilities Grant Expenditure
2005/6	48	£559K
2006/7	123	£989K
2007/8	124	£930K

- 3.14 The Council makes a 40% contribution of £440K to match fund the government's 60% (£660K) contribution toward Disabled Facilities Grants. This 40% match funding and considerable additional funding by way of additional Disabled Facilities Assistance is provided by the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Grant allocation via the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy. This increased investment has been achieved through the Council securing higher private sector renewal grant settlements as a result of successful bids for regional funding through BEST.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy was established following a comprehensive consultation exercise conducted both within the Council and with external stakeholders.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The council received an allocation in the form of a capital grant in April 2009 that will enable expenditure of £4,209,600 on Private Sector Housing Renewal during 2009/10 as part of a three year programme (2008-2011). A further £660,000 has been received by the council in May 2009 for expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants and other relevant works. The contract with South Coast Money Line (SCML) forms part of the spend against the on Private Sector Housing Renewal Grant.

In the event that there is a substantial shortfall in the amount spent under the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy there is a risk that allocations for future years could be reduced.

Staff resources have been committed by the council to ensure that the BEST consortium can closely monitor expenditure under this programme and to fully meet the obligations for reporting to the Government Office for the South East.

Finance Officer Consulted: Neil Smith

Date: 25/06/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Grants are delivered under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The Councils Housing Renewal Policy was approved by Cabinet on 1st October 2008 in order that it can continue to provide grants and other forms of assistance under this order.

Solicitor Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 25/06/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The availability of grant as part of the Council's Housing Renewal Policy provides help and assistance to disadvantaged householders.
- 5.4 Disabled Facilities Grants provide resources to help disabled people with restricted mobility to live independently.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 Housing is one of the key objectives in the Council's sustainability strategy which aims 'to ensure that everyone has access to decent affordable housing that meets their needs'.
- 5.6 The Council's housing renewal activities identified in this report help to prevent ill-health, provide for basic needs by ensuring that dwellings are fit for habitation, are suitable for the needs of disabled occupiers, are energy efficient and help to reduce the level of fuel poverty in the City.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.7 Continuing to tackle empty properties, which can attract vandalism as well as making grants available for home security, will complement works to reduce crime and disorder in Brighton & Hove.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.8 Policy development in this area is undertaken with due regard to appropriate risk assessment requirements.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.9 The Private Sector Housing RHB Grant funding will enable proactive approach to dealing with standards in the private sector housing of the City and ensure all homes meet the Decent Homes standards and provide a better use of energy into the future. The funding will also enable the Council to meet statutory duties.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Private Housing Renewal Grant and Disabled Facilities Grant enable the Council to discharge statutory duties and fund a comprehensive private sector housing renewal programme which includes options such as home improvement and other loans in addition to the offer of grants.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The report seeks to update Housing CMM on expenditure of Private Housing Renewal and Disabled Facilities Grant funding.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices: none

Documents In Members' Rooms: none

Background Documents

1. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
2. Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy