





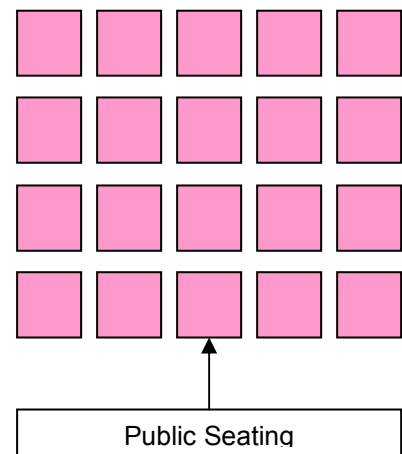
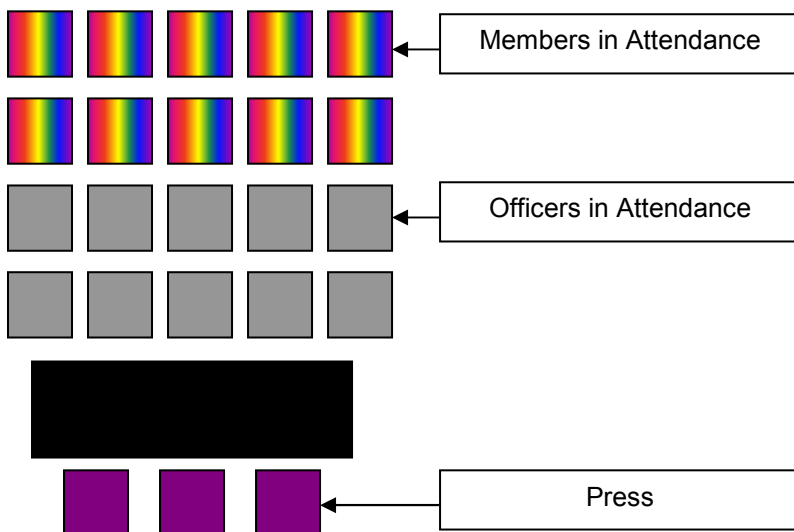
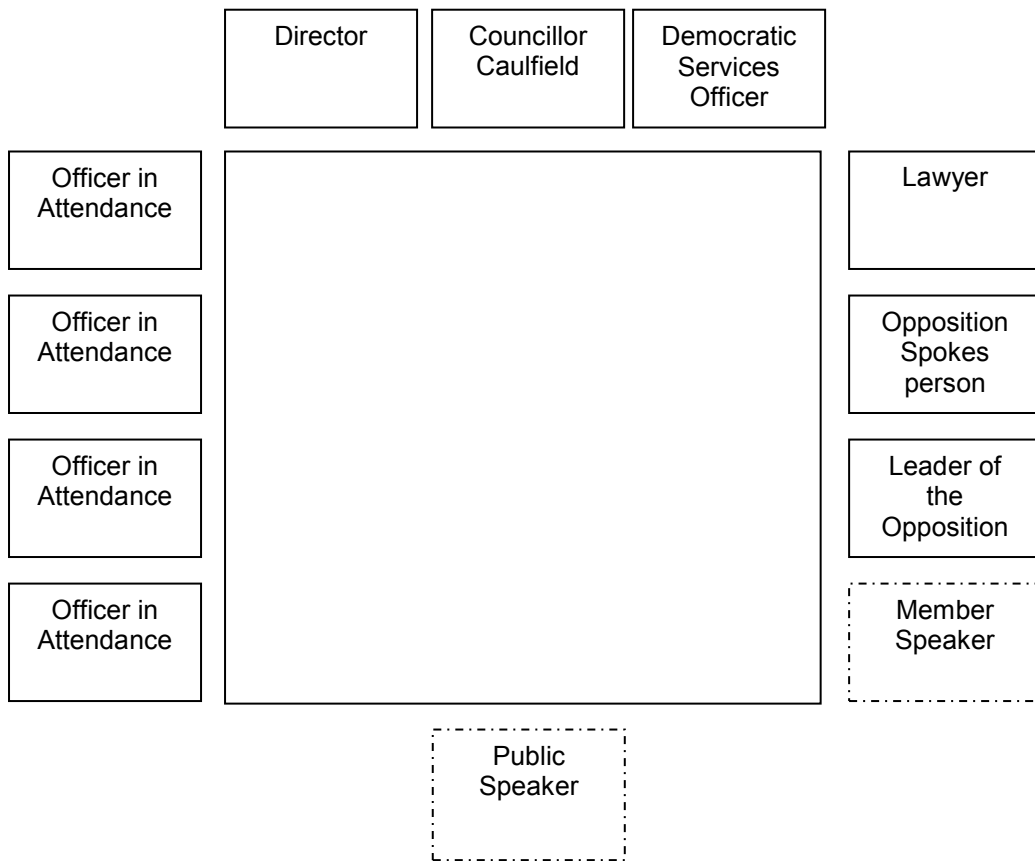
Brighton & Hove
City Council

Cabinet Member Meeting

Title:	Housing Cabinet Member Meeting
Date:	4 June 2008
Time:	4.00pm
Venue	Committee Room 1, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillor: Caulfield (Chairman)
Contact:	Martin Warren Senior Democratic Services Officer 01273 291058 martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



AGENDA

1. 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 the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.

A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 - 2

Report of the Director of Strategy & Governance (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Martin Warren

Tel: 01273 291058

Ward Affected: All Wards

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3 - 12

To note the minutes of the Housing Committee held on 27 March 2008 (copy attached).

4. CABINET MEMBERS COMMUNICATIONS

5. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- (a) Items reserved by the Cabinet Member
- (b) Items reserved by the Opposition Spokesperson
- (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.

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(the closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 27 May 2008)

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

7. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

13 - 14

a) Question from Councillor Morgan – Estate Services (copy attached)

8. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received.

9. DEPUTATIONS

15 - 22

(i) To receive the attached Deputation presented at Council on the 24 April 2008 by Mr Tim Pope.

(ii) To receive the attached Deputation presented at Council on the 24 April 2008 by Mr John Melson.

(the closing date for receipt of deputations is noon on Tuesday 27 May).

10. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

No Notices of Motion have been received.

12. MATTERS REFERRED FOR RECONSIDERATION

No matters have been referred.

13. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

No reports have been received.

14. REPORT OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE 11 MARCH 2008

23 - 26

Report of the Director of Strategy & Governance (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Martin Warren

Tel: 01273 291058

Ward Affected: All Wards

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

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 Martin Warren, (01273 291058, email martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Wednesday, 28 May 2008

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 2

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *Terms of Reference*
Date of Meeting: 4 June 2008
Report of: *Director of Strategy & Governance*
Contact Officer: Name: *Martin Warren* Tel: 29-1058
E-mail: martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Cabinet Member for Housing

Explanatory Note

The Cabinet Member for Housing has overall responsibility for the Council's housing functions, including Council housing, homelessness, allocations and standards of housing in the Council's area.

Delegated functions

1. To discharge the Council's functions as a local housing authority and, without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph, to discharge the specific functions set out in the following paragraphs.

2. Strategic and Private Sector Housing

The Council's functions in relation to:

- (a) The Council's housing strategy, including the housing investment programme (providing that the final adoption or approval of the housing improvement programme shall be referred to Full Council)
- (b) Homelessness and the allocation of housing;
- (c) Private sector housing, including taking action to remedy overcrowding, disrepair, unfitness and statutory nuisances; to promote fire safety in private sector housing and the Council's functions in relation to houses in multiple occupation;
- (d) Tenancy relations and the provision of housing advice;
- (e) Housing loans and grants.

3. Housing Landlord Functions

To discharge the Council's functions as a housing landlord including the management of property within the Housing Revenue Account and associated properties.

4. Supporting People

To discharge the Council's functions for supporting people under Section 93 Local Government Act 2000 (grants for welfare services).

5. Learning Disabilities

To discharge the Council's functions regarding Learning Disability.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

3.00PM – 27 MARCH 2008

COUNCIL CHAMBER HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mears (Chairman); Councillors; Wells (Deputy Chairman), Allen (OS), Meadows, Pidgeon, Randall, Simpson, Simson, Smith, Steedman and Taylor.

PART ONE

ACTION

42. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

42A Declarations of Substitutes

42.1 Councillors Meadows and Smith declared that they were attending the meeting as Substitute Members for Councillors Marsh and Lainchbury respectively.

42B Declarations of Interest

42.2 There were none.

42C Exclusion of Press and Public

42.3 The Committee 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 Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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

43. MINUTES

- 43.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

44. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 44.1 Chairman informed the meeting that the Audit Commission had published the results of the 2007 Comprehensive Performance Assessment for unitary authorities. Brighton & Hove City Council scored 3 out of 4 on this assessment. Housing Strategy achieved the highest score possible – 4 out of 4 – the highest rating across the Council. It was also the highest scoring strategic housing service amongst the 12 unitary authorities in the South East.

The Chairman and committee congratulated staff on their achievements.

45. CALLOVER

- 45.1 **RESOLVED:** - That with the exception of the items reserved (and marked with an asterisk), the recommendations and resolutions contained therein be approved and adopted without debate, excepting Notices of Motion, Deputations, Petitions and letters.

46. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

47. REPORT OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE 11 MARCH 2008

- 47.1 The Committee considered the report of the proceedings of the Housing Management Sub-Committee 11 March 2008 (for copy see minute book).

- 47.2 **RESOLVED:** - That the report be noted.

***48. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STOCK**

- 48.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to the Procurement Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account Stock (for copy see minute book).

- 48.2 Councillors Allen, Meadows Simpson and Randall expressed reservations about the ability of the strategy to deliver the projected savings and meet targets.

- 48.3 Chairman noted the concerns raised about the contracts and the challenges that current contracts had engendered. Chairman noted the desire of Tenants to move forward with this project and the need to

deliver on improving the stock and services.

48.4 **RESOLVED** – To recommend that Policy & Resources Committee approve:

- 1) the revised procurement strategy for comprehensive long term partnering agreements for the repair and maintenance of the council's housing stock;
- 2) commencement of the procurement process by issuing the invitation to tender for the comprehensive, 10 year, long term agreements once the preparatory work has been completed.

***49. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09 AND 2009/10**

49.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2008/09 and 2009/10 (for copy see minute book)

49.2 Members discussed the use of consultants and specialists and noted that they would only be engaged when strictly necessary.

49.3 **RESOLVED** – To recommend that Policy & Resources Committee:

- 1) approve the HRA capital programme of £16.271 million for 2008/09 and £12.173 million for 2009/10.
- 2) approve the commencement of the tender process for essential structural works to Somerset and Wiltshire high rise blocks.

***50. HOUSING GREEN PAPER**

50.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to the Housing Green Paper (for copy see minute book).

50.2 Members broadly welcomed the themes developed by the Green Paper, noting in particular Local Delivery Models and proposals regarding Community Land Trusts and sustainable new housing.

50.3 Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Taylor proposed that the new Executive Arrangements should allow for a separate and specific scrutiny panel as regards housing, rather than the joint arrangements currently proposed. This was unanimously supported by the committee and became (4) of the resolutions noted below.

50.4 **RESOLVED** – 1) That the range of options and opportunities offered in the Housing Green paper be noted; and that these are to be examined

in detail in order to ascertain whether a sustainable case can be made for further development in order to support strategic housing and other priorities in the City.

2) That it be noted that external financial and legal advice is being sought in order to support officers to undertake detailed analysis of the practicalities of taking forward any Housing Green Paper options or opportunity,

3) That it be noted that the Chairman of Housing is committed to ensuring that a detailed report on this analysis of options be brought forward through the Council decision making process and the case made to enable the further development of any appropriate model.

4) That a separate and specific Scrutiny Panel should be developed rather than the current proposed joint Scrutiny Panel for 'Adult Social Care & Housing'.

***51. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

51.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing Support in relation to the Homelessness Strategy (for copy see minute book).

51.2 Members welcomed the report and congratulated officers on its breadth and detail. Of particular interest to the committee were the proposals regarding ways of tackling 'under-occupation' and delayed discharge from care. The 'deposit guarantee scheme' was also welcomed as a positive policy.

51.3 Chairman requested that a report on the ways in which under-occupation was tackled be prepared for a future meeting of the Housing Management Consultative Committee (or appropriate body).

**Nick
Hibberd**

51.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Homelessness Strategy 2008–13 (as detailed in the appendix to the report) be approved.

***52. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY 2008-2013**

52.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2008-2013 (for copy see minute book).

52.2 Members welcomed the report but raised concerns about the limited focus upon 'temporary to settled accommodation' and the potential consequences of broadening the use and age-profile of Sheltered Housing.

52.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2008-2013 (as detailed in the appendix of the report) be approved.

***53. SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY REVIEW**

- 53.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to the Supporting People Strategy Review (for copy see minute book).
- 53.2 Members welcomed the report but were cautious about the impact that some Supporting People initiatives were having in Sheltered Housing. Members urged Officers to consult closely and innovatively with residents to ensure that any proposals were completely understood and appreciated by individuals rather than just representative groups.
- 53.3 Councillor Taylor raised concerns about the objective within the strategy that proposes to stop funding services which encourage dependency.
- 53.4 The Director noted that reductions in budget for Supporting People initiatives were challenging; the ways in which support was offered might change but there would not be a reduction in the levels of support offered.
- 53.5 Councillor Randall noted the success of a 'sympathetic landlords' scheme run in Basingstoke where children coming out of care were offered placements with settled families to experience a positive family life. He suggested that this approach might have benefits locally.
- 53.4 **RESOLVED** – 1) That the Supporting People Strategy and 3-year commissioning plan attached as Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved.
- 2) That the tendering of the services provided at Glenwood Lodge and the West Pier Hotel specific services, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report be agreed.

***54. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY – DCLG GRANTS BID 2008/09**

- 54.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to the Homelessness Strategy – DCLG Grants Bid 2008/09 (for copy see minute book).
- 54.2 **RESOLVED** – 1) To establish and extend contracts for 12 months from 1 April 2008 for the services set out in appendix A of the report.
- 2) To approve the re-letting of three contracts through a tendering process as set out in section 4 of the report; namely:
- a) Rough Sleepers Team
 - b) Rough Sleepers Relocation Service
 - c) Youth Advice

***55. EXTRACT FROM SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION**

- 55.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Strategy & Governance in relation to the Extract from Sustainability Commission as regards low carbon housing (for copy see minute book).
- 55.2 **RESOLVED** – That the extract be noted and that a report be prepared for a future meeting that considers a) the feasibility of installing low and zero carbon technologies in council-owned housing stock and b) applying to the Carbon Management Fund to cover the cost of such measures.

***56. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MOVE TO A NEW CONSTITUTION**

- 56.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Strategy & Governance in relation to the Arrangements for the move to a new Constitution (for copy see minute book).
- 56.2 **RESOLVED** – 1) That the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act) requiring Brighton & Hove City Council to move to new constitutional arrangements; be noted.
- 2) That it be noted how the work of the current Committee will be discharged under the proposed new arrangements;
- 3) That the proposal to prepare a book to commemorate the life of this Committee be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.05pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2008

SUMMARY OF PART TWO ITEMS

58. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY – DCLG GRANTS BID 2008/09 – [EXEMPT CATEGORY 3]

58.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to the Homelessness Strategy – DCLG Grants Bid 2008/09 (for copy see minute book).

58.2 **RESOLVED** – 1) To establish and extend contracts for 12 months from 1 April 2008 for the services set out in appendix A & B of the report.

2) To approve the re-letting of three contracts through a tendering process as set out in section 4 of the report; namely:

- d) Rough Sleepers Team
- e) Rough Sleepers Relocation Service
- f) Youth Advice

59. SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY REVIEW – [EXEMPT CATEGORY 3]

59.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing in relation to the Supporting People Strategy Review (for copy see minute book).

59.2 **RESOLVED** – 1) That the Supporting People Strategy and 3-year commissioning plan attached as Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved.

2) That the tendering of the services provided at Glenwood Lodge and the West Pier Hotel specific services, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 6.05pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this day of

2008

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 7

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *Written Questions From Councillors*
Date of Meeting: 4 June 2008
Report of: *Director of Strategy & Governance*
Contact Officer: Name: *Martin Warren* Tel: 29-1058
E-mail: Martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

A) Question from Councillor Morgan

Following the focus group review, can the Cabinet Member for Housing confirm that an estate warden is being appointed to cover the Craven Vale estate, and give a date for that warden taking up his/her post please?

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 9

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *Deputations*
Date of Meeting: **4 June 2008**
Report of: *Director of Strategy & Governance*
Contact Officer: Name: *Martin Warren* Tel: **29-1058**
E-mail: martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

9(i) To receive the following Deputation presented at Council on the 13 March 2008 by Mr Karl Lester.

Deputation concerning No's. 40 & 50 Brunswick Place, Hove.

Mr Tim Pope (Spokesperson)

"No's. 40 & 50 Brunswick Place, Hove, were established in August 2006 to accommodate 20 vulnerable people. Over £300,000 of public money was spent to equip these Grade 2 listed buildings to the highest possible specifications, even fitting the roofs with solar panels to ensure an eco-friendly future. No expense was spared to equip the rooms with washing machines, microwave ovens, beds, furniture, every mod con and facility possible.

Less than 18 months later...

A Nazi swastika on the walls; blood on the stairs; blood on the walls; foul-language graffiti; broken windows; broken glass everywhere; smashed front door locks, broken and kicked in, allowing access to anyone passing; people sleeping rough in the corridors; trash with rotting food piled high; human urine and worse; rooms completely trashed and exterior windows kicked through, glass covering the street outside.

The troubles began shortly after the buildings opened, when the temporary housing department of Brighton & Hove Council curiously opted that the residents in the buildings did not need supervision at night. These residents en masse were ex-offenders, people with mental issues, etc. The council opted to run instead an admin. office within the building from 9-5. This, despite the fact that Brunswick Place already has its fair share of temporary housing accommodation, with nearby St Patrick's and other facilities at 68 Brunswick Place, which accommodates more people.

This means that the ratio of unsupervised people with possible antisocial behavioural problems in what is primarily a geographically small residential area is grossly unfairly balanced.

The call on police time was disproportionate, too, with, for example, during one week alone in late 2006, the police being called out to the properties over 14 times during a three-day period of nights. Police serials of the period will back up this information, as will many supportive officers. So, after nearly a year of hell for local residents in 2006/2007, when Brunswick Place and an overspill into the wider local area at night suffered immensely from extreme antisocial behaviour coming from the two properties, the temporary housing department finally listened to the unified voice of residents, the police and Councillor Paul Elgood. Overnight management was installed in tandem with the day staff and the troubles stopped. Then in November 2007 the accommodations closed down, due to insufficient funds. Residents from Brunswick Place contacted Jugal Sharma, interim head of temporary accommodation, who replied to an email in October 2007, saying: "We are currently discussing plans for the future use of the properties, but as yet no decision has been made, however I can assure you that we aim to manage it equally as well."

By January 2008, it was clear again to residents that these words were as thin as the cyber space they inhabited. The same old patterns began again with no overnight staff - aggressive and threatening behaviour from certain residents, particularly at night; shouting; drunken and drug fuelled swearing; loud music; urinating on cars; threatening behaviour to passing people; gathering on the steps and being raucous and drunk.

Finally, one of the residents and his guests in an alcohol and drugs fuelled frenzy in March 2008 kicked out his windows and howled at the moon, claiming to be a wolf, threatening to slit all residents' throats. He threatened to kill residents. Despite further email and telephone assurances from council employees that this was a "one-off scenario", another resident's family guest was arrested the following night at the same property, after a party in a room. These same officers, incidentally, who will not, even by day, attend the residencies without police support. Nor would the so-called security staff who were paid for and required to enter the property twice a night go in for fear of physical violence, as was admitted in a phone call by the boss of the company, who was told by the council not to speak to local residents. "I don't let my people go in there, in case they get hurt."

In effect, the council through their gross mismanagement and chronic misunderstanding and negligence has created a ghetto in a community's midst. This incidentally in a Brighton of the year 2008, not something of the turn of the century, as the image might suggest or conjure. What does this image of Brighton suggest to the wider UK public?

Does it indeed confirm how most people perceive us, as a soft-touch option for people with antisocial tendencies to come and play the system by the seaside?

Do the council not realise that there are children, elderly people and others who have to go to work, after sleepless nights? That children and the elderly have to try and sleep in their beds at night, shaking with fear at the noise and aggression coming from these places?

During the Easter holidays of 2008, with the welcomed direct intervention of Alan McCarthy, CEO of Brighton & Hove Council, overnight security emergency staff has again been installed in the properties. Though Brighton & Hove Council's temporary accommodation department needs to understand that this problem will not go away until a more long-term and circumspect view is taken. A meeting was also convened by local residents with Jugal Sharma, interim head of temporary housing, and Sylvia Peckham, head of temporary housing, and was attended by the police, again concerned at the amount of people dialling 999 (including vulnerable people within the buildings). This meeting also was convened with the appreciated support of Councillors Paul Elgood and David Watkins. People in our street are fed up, as recent Residents Association meetings minutes will confirm. They are fed up with the sleepless nights and the swearing and the antisocial behaviour. This situation has to stop and the people responsible within the council held accountable.

Do the temporary housing people not understand that they have totally lost control of the situation? Will it take blood spilt, either of local residents, or people within the properties, to understand that we need supervision and proper management at the properties of 40 & 50 Brunswick Place, if they are to continue with their current use?

Everybody understands that care in the community is an important and difficult thing to manage effectively. But care in the community is a two-way matter, whereby the community needs to be cared for in equal measure. We as a community – our elderly, our children, working people – feel equally as vulnerable right now as the vulnerable people being housed.

We await to hear from Jugal Sharma, Sylvia Peckham, and Joy Hollister, Alan McCarthy's own new appointee as head of temporary housing, and we as residents of Brunswick Place urge all Councillors and Alan McCarthy to press urgently those responsible with us for these answers and solutions."

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MEARS

“I have looked at the situation apropos these properties and the area of Brunswick.

Prior to the elections in May it was agreed that 24 hour cover be provided to the people who lived there to address the antisocial behaviour that was occurring at 40 & 50 Brunswick Place. That project then had to be closed as there was not the funding available to continue. That did not address the antisocial behaviour in the area generally and was a short term solution.

I intend to deal with the problem in a rational and joined-up way, that is essential. I will therefore be setting up a group comprising cross-party representation and officers not only from Housing but also from Adult Social Care and the Antisocial Behaviour Team and probably the Private Sector Team. The group will consider all of the issues in the Brunswick area which contribute to antisocial behaviour, rather than focus on the publicity of these. The aim is to provide a joined-up solution for the area that is sustainable in the long term.”

9 (ii) *To receive the following Deputation presented at Council on the 24 April 2008 by Mr John Melson*

Deputation concerning Consultants & Targets 'Value for Money'

Mr John Melson (Spokesperson)

"HRAG says No

The High Rise Action Group requests that the use of costly and unnecessary consultants should cease and be replaced by an in-house 'Value for Money' solution; better contract negotiation, wider training opportunities for council staff and pro-active sharing of expertise between the council, Members, partners and residents.

The emphasis on achieving paper Targets should be shifted to achieving better overall results on the ground at end-user level.

The use of Consultants should cease and we should not be Target-driven.

Consultants

1. The Housing Green Paper of July 2007 allows Authorities to explore new options. These options are new to everyone so we must wonder how and where Consultants have gained their offered expertise and if it can offer us anything better than the wide range of experience and knowledge already possessed by Councillors and Housing staff.
2. Brighton & Hove City Council appoints consultants to manage key aspects and work for Housing (and other) departments. The High Rise Action Group recognises the need for specialists if an unusual problem is encountered; however most projects for which consultants are used are routine and could be managed better in-house.
3. The High Rise Action Group is aware of the financial pressure to minimise headcount but views the appointment of consultants as an expensive and ineffective solution.
4. It is difficult to establish and maintain the impartiality of consultants. Conflicts of interest are inevitable. Consultants are not accountable to tenants. Accountability of managers becomes diluted and the council can quickly lose control of key decisions and budgets.

5. Employing consultants requires using our administrators to service them. Preservation of clear accountability is crucial in the interests of 'Value for Money'. Far better to share expertise between council departments, better Partnering Contracts and shared services provide a sounder mechanism.
6. The Administration has identified a £20m saving by reducing the use of consultants. That's £666+k annually. Using our Managers and Directors would incur costs. Support staff would be needed to service the in-house paperwork. The saving of £666+k would provide a dozen new full-time jobs at Clerical Officer level and still leave half the identified saving.
7. The argument that consultants are necessary because Procurement has become a highly specialised and complicated process would only be valid if we had incompetent managers. They are not. They manage very complicated projects and are quite able to acquire the new skills required. What the argument highlights is the short-sightedness of a policy which neglects offering Management opportunities to enhance their skills.
8. Residents accept that good management is expensive but well worth the cost as it achieves efficient service provision and financial savings across the board.

Targets

1. Targets levels of 98% or less should be unacceptable. That level pre-supposes only an aspiration to mediocrity. We recognise that 100% achievement is rarely possible but it should be the goal.
2. Targets create time-wasting extra paperwork and distract council staff from the real service provision that residents expect and though results may look good on paper they do not reflect the realities on the ground.
3. In the last quarter's figures Brighton & Hove City Council achieved the target for the turn-around of Voids. Formerly all required works were completed before a Void was re-let. To achieve Voids turn-around targets properties are re-let now before all works are completed.
4. So, we met the Voids turn-around target – but increased the number of occupied properties needing repairs. Repairs are subject to more delay and disruption in occupied properties.
5. Surely, as has happened more often than before, letting properties with condemned components (particularly gas-related components), highlights that the pursuit of Targets can have dangerous and unintended outcomes

and this cannot be acceptable. Achieving one turn-around target to the detriment of other targets is ludicrous.”

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MEARS

“Mr Melson raises a number of important points that I am happy to respond to.

The High Rise Action Group and all the tenant groups throughout the city have worked with this Administration and with officers in a spirit of harmony that has not been seen in this authority for some time.

The Tenant Conference and its unanimous passing of two motions will bring into being a City Wide Assembly and gives the support to the tenant movement to work with me and the Government Office of the South East to realise tenant ambitions.

On the use of consultants: we will not use consultants that we do not need when we do not need them. We need to maximise the use of our officers and officers’ expertise and experience. With this in mind I am committed to reducing the costs of consultancy fees in housing revenue and accounts budgets by £20M over the life of our thirty year business plan.

On the Housing Green Paper officers from across the council in Housing Strategy, Finance and Legal Departments have looked closely at the potential options available to us in this paper. We are now seeking specific and targeted external legal and financial advice in order to support our detailed examination and appraisal of which option may meet our strategic objectives. The specialist advice we are seeking is the detail on tax, risk, partnership and investment.

On performance I am committed to ensuring Housing Management services improve and measure this improvement in a transparent way. By necessity this does include continuing to use targets. However, I agree that we must not overuse or become too reliant on targets as they only measure tenant satisfaction. This is why going forward into the new Constitution I have proposed retention of the Housing Management Committee with tenant involvement to ensure that performance and tenant satisfaction issues can be discussed transparently.

Finally, I will also ensure Mr Melson receives a comprehensive response on the more detailed points raised in his Deputation.”

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 14
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *Report of Housing Management Sub-Committee
11 March 2008*

Date of Meeting: *4 June 2008*

Report of: *Director of Strategy & Governance*

Contact Officer: Name: *Martin Warren* Tel: *29-1058*
E-mail:

Key Decision: No

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE
3PM – 11 MARCH 2008
COUNCIL CHAMBER
HOVE TOWN HALL
DECISION LIST**

Part One

Action

- 43. Housing Green Paper** - report of the Interim Director, Housing and City Support (copy attached)

Contact Officer: *Martin Reid* *Tel: 29-3321*

Ward Affected: *ALL*

RESOLVED – (1) that the range of options and opportunities offered in the Housing Green paper be noted and that these are to be examined in detail in order to ascertain whether a sustainable case can be made for further development in order to support strategic housing and other priorities in the City.

(2) That it be noted that external financial and legal advice is being sought in order to support officers to undertake detailed analysis of the practicalities of taking forward any Housing Green Paper options or opportunities

(3) That it be noted that the Chairman of Housing is committed to ensuring that a detailed report on this analysis of options be brought forward through the Council decision making process and the case made to enable the further development of any appropriate model.

44. Procurement Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account Stock -
report of the Interim Director, Housing and City Support

Contact Officer: Simon Throp *Tel:* 29-6806
Ward Affected: ALL

RESOLVED – To recommend to Housing Committee that Policy & Resources Committee:

(1) approve the revised procurement strategy for comprehensive long term partnering agreements for the repair and maintenance of the council's housing stock;

(2) approve commencement of the procurement process by issuing the invitation to tender for the comprehensive, 10 year, long term agreements once the preparatory work has been completed.

45. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2008/09 and 2009/10 -
report of the Interim Director, Housing and City Support

Contact Officer: Simon Throp *Tel:* 29 -6806
Ward Affected: ALL

RESOLVED – To recommend to Housing Committee that Policy & Resources Committee:

(1) approve the HRA capital programme of £16.271 million for 2008/09 and £12.173 million for 2009/10.

(2) approve the commencement of the tender process for essential structural works to Somerset and Wiltshire high rise blocks.

46. Arrangements for the move to a new Constitution - report of
Director of Strategy & Governance

Contact Officer: *Alex Bailey* *Tel: 29-1295*
 Abraham Ghebre- *Tel: 29-1500*
 Ghiorghis,
 Anthony Zacharzewski *Tel: 29-6855*

Ward Affected:

RESOLVED - That (1) the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act) requiring Brighton & Hove City Council to move to new constitutional arrangements be noted;

(2) how work of the current Sub-Committee will be discharged under the proposed new arrangements be noted;

(3) the proposal to prepare a book to commemorate the life of this Sub-Committee, for which Members are asked to participate in a photograph at this meeting be noted.

NB The above decisions will be implemented after close of business on 18 March 2008 unless they are called in.

