





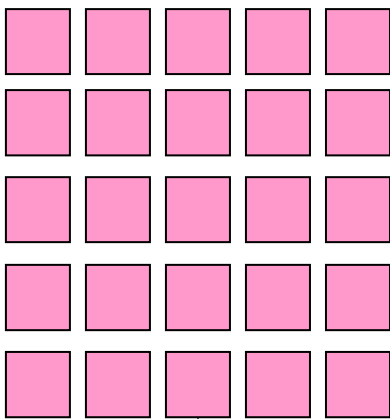
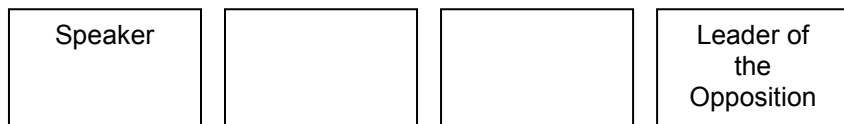
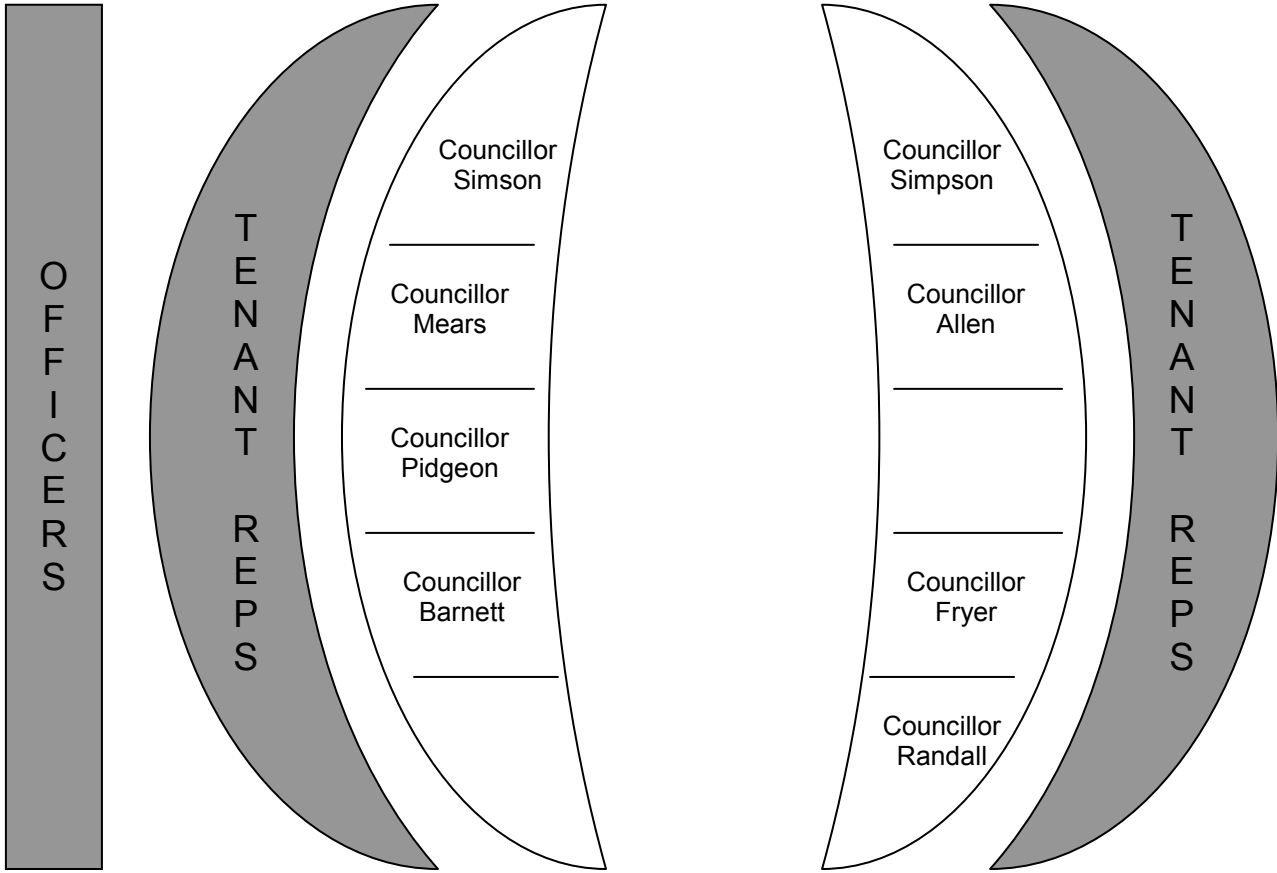
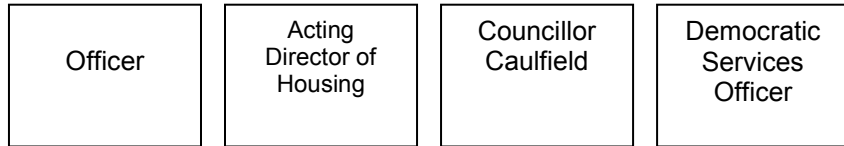
**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Title:	Housing Management Consultative Committee
Date:	27 September 2010
Time:	3.00pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillors: Caulfield (Chairman), Allen, Barnett, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Randall, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson) and Simson
Contact:	Caroline De Marco Democratic Services Officer 01273 291063 caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

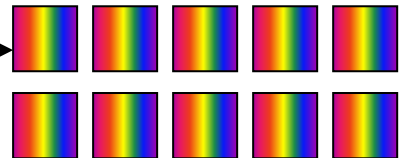
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Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



Public Seating

Members in Attendance



Press



Tenant Representatives:

Ted Harman, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

David Murtagh, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Jean Davis, Central Area Housing Management Panel

John Melson, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Stewart Gover, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Heather Hayes, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Tina Urquhart, West Hove & Portslade Area Area Housing Management Panel

Beverley Weaver, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

Vacancy, Hi Rise Action Group

Muriel Briault, Leaseholders Action Group

Colin Carden, Older People's Council

Tom Whiting, Sheltered Housing Action Group

Barry Kent, Tenant Disability Network

AGENDA

25. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declaration of Substitutes - Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) Declarations of Interest 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.
- (c) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: Any item appearing in Part 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.

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

26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 20

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June and 1 September 2010 (copies attached).

27. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

28. CALLOVER

29. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received by the date of publication.

30. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 20 September 2010)

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

31. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 20 September 2010).

No deputations have been received by the date of publication.

32. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

33. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No written questions have been received.

34. TENANCY VISITS

21 - 24

Report of Acting Director of Housing (copy attached).

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

35. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2009/10 FINAL OUTTURN AND FORECAST CUTTURN FOR 2010/11 AS AT MONTH 4

25 - 32

Report of Acting Director of Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Sue Chapman *Tel:* 29-3105
Ward Affected: All Wards;

36. CONSULTATION DRAFT OF RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

33 - 40

Report of Acting Director of Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: John Austin-Locke *Tel:* 29-1008
Ward Affected: All Wards;

37. CUSTOMER ACCESS PHASE 2

41 - 50

Report of Acting Director of Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Ododo Dafe *Tel:* 29-3201
Ward Affected: All Wards;

38. MOBILITY SCOOTER STORAGE

51 - 66

Director of Acting Director of Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Robert Keelan *Tel:* 29-3261
Ward Affected: All Wards;

39. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 1)

67 - 80

Report of Acting Director of Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: John Austin-Locke *Tel:* 29-1008
Ward Affected: All Wards;

40. CONTRACT FOR COMMUNAL DIGITAL TV SYSTEM FOR COUNCIL HOUSING 81 - 86

Report of Acting Director of Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Mark Dennison Tel: 01273 293190
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.

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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 - Friday, 17 September 2010

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 26a

Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 14 JUNE 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Caulfield (Chairman); Allen, Kennedy, Marsh, Mears, Pidgeon, Randall, Simson and Smart

Tenant Representatives: Stewart Gover (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), John Stevens (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Pat Miles (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Beverley Weaver (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), John Melson (Hi Rise Action Group), Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network) and Trish Barnard (Central Area Housing Management Panel). Chris El-Shabba was invited to attend to make a presentation on the Tenant Handbook Review. Chris Kift attended to provide assistance/cover for John Melson on some of the items.

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1A Declarations of Substitute Members

- 1.1 Councillor Marsh declared that she was attending as a substitute for Councillor Simpson. Councillor Kennedy declared that she was attending as a substitute for Councillor Fryer. Councillor Smart declared that he was attending as a substitute for Councillor Barnett. John Stevens attended as a deputy as there is currently a vacancy for a representative from the Central Area Housing Management Panel. Trish Barnard attended as a substitute for Beryl Snelling. Chris Kift attended to provide support/cover for John Melson on some of the items.

1B Declarations of Interests

- 1.2 Heather Hayes, Ted Harman and Trish Barnard declared a personal interest in any discussion on the LDV as they are Board Members of Brighton and Hove Seaside Community Homes (the Local Delivery Vehicle).

1C Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 John Melson made the following observations. Paragraph 94.2 – He made the point that he was referring to problems with windows in a nearby block. Paragraph 94.10 – He had asked for Members as well as tenants representatives to be given advance notice if there was to be a further presentation on the progress of the partnership. Paragraph 98.1 – He wished this to be changed to read “vote of thanks to Councillor Wells for his long and dedicated service to this Committee and the Council in general.”
- 2.2 Ted Harman made the following observations. Paragraph 87.5 - He reported that the meeting held on 24 May 2010 had been successful and that Baker Tilley had been appointed as financial consultants. Paragraph 87.5 – A second Choice Based Review Meeting had been held and had gone well.
- 2.3 Chris Kift referred to Paragraph 87.3 – He reported that he had attended the lunch on 24 May to meet with members of the Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes Ltd Board. He stated that he would like to see all Board members at the HMCC.
- 2.4 Stewart Gover referred to Paragraph 97.12. He stressed that the Committee had asked for inappropriate clamping to be reviewed and for Robert Keelan to ensure that he did not arrange the meetings of the Car Parks and Garages Working Group on the same day as the HMCC. John Austin-Locke confirmed that the Car Parks and Garages Working Group had originally been arranged for 14 June. The meeting had now been re-arranged to a date next week.
- 2.5 John Austin-Locke confirmed that a diary of tenants meetings was on the Council website. This would be kept up to date. He stressed that paper copies could become out of date very quickly as meeting dates changed frequently. However, paper copies could be made available to tenants without internet access.
- 2.6 Councillor Mears referred to Paragraph 87.1. She thanked the tenants for organising a very successful and professional City Assembly. With regard to paragraph 86.3, she

made the point that there would be no need to write any further letters to John Denham, following the General Election.

- 2.7 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Council House Building

- 3.1 The Chairman reported that the council was planning to build more council properties. Officers were in the process of mapping land. The Ainsworth House site was vacant and was being investigated. Martin Reid would work with tenants and would set up a Working Group to discuss the project.

Gas Meters

- 3.2 The Chairman reported that there has been a comment at an Area Panel that when gas meters were installed, there was no regard to people with disabilities or the elderly. They were installed at a low level and many people could not bend down to read the meters. The Chairman asked the Assistant Director, Housing Management to arrange for a letter to be sent to all relevant energy suppliers regarding this problem.

Cut Backs

- 3.3 Stewart Gover asked for tenant representatives to be kept informed on how tenants might be affected by future cut backs. The Chairman replied that it would be a few weeks before it would be known if there were to be any changes. She suggested that there could be a briefing for September 2010.

4. CALLOVER

- 4.1 The Chairman asked the Committee to consider which items listed on the agenda it wished to debate and determine in full.

- 4.2 **RESOLVED** - That all items be reserved for debate and determination.

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. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT FROM DCLG: COUNCIL HOUSING: A REAL FUTURE

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance & Resources & the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which provided a summary of the proposals to reform the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system as set out in the consultation document 'Council Housing: A Real Future' issued on 25 March 2010 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The report highlighted the likely financial implications, risks and benefits to the council from the proposal and provided the council's draft response to the consultation as attached in Appendix 1.
- 10.2 Councillor Allen welcomed the report and hoped there would be cross party agreement on this matter. However, he queried the current government's position and wondered how much of the current proposals would survive. The Assistant Director, Housing Management reported that the Housing Minister had written to all Local Authorities urging them to respond to the consultative process. The Government had indicated support for the end of the subsidy system and were in the process of reviewing the consultation responses.
- 10.3 Councillor Allen referred to paragraph 3.39. He asked how the LDV would fit in with the proposals. Would it become redundant? The Assistant Director, Housing Management explained that if the council moved to self financing, it would still have significant expenditure. If the council did not have the LDV, it would have to borrow money. The current position was that the LDV was very positive for the council.
- 10.4 Councillor Mears made the point that self financing would not produce enough money to improve homes. The LDV would serve its purpose and would bring in extra revenue for housing. Meanwhile, she encouraged members to embrace the proposals set out in the report. There was a need to invest in housing stock.
- 10.5 The Chairman welcomed the report and stressed that the council still needed the LDV. The money was needed for improvements to council housing. The proposals would give the council control over the money that it spent.
- 10.6 Councillor Randall welcomed the proposals. However he agreed that the LDV should be kept ongoing as there was no guarantee that the proposals would be implemented. He suggested that the LDV could be used for other purposes such as helping private owners as well as council tenants.
- 10.7 Councillor Kennedy considered that in principle the proposals were good news. She hoped that employment for building new council houses would remain local. The

Chairman concurred and stated that this issue could be discussed at the new working group.

- 10.8 Councillor Mears stressed that the new housing contract with Mears Ltd had secured local apprenticeships and local jobs.
- 10.9 Stewart Gover mentioned that Wokingham Borough Council was financially in a similar position to Brighton & Hove. Right to Buy had affected them badly. He supported the proposals.
- 10.10 Beverley Weaver asked how self financing would affect rents. The Chairman referred to paragraph 3.32. The assumption was that councils would keep to the national rent policy.
- 10.11 Chris Kift stated that he hoped that new council housing would be built to high standards.
- 10.12 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the proposals for self financing of the HRA as set out in the DCLG Consultation paper ‘Council Housing: A Real Future’ issued on 25 March 2010, be supported.
- (2) That Cabinet is recommended to approve the council’s formal response to the consultation, as attached at Appendix 1, supporting the proposal to move to self financing for the HRA.

11. HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

- 11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise concerning the progress made in the delivery of the Housing Management Service Improvement Plan 2009-12.
- 11.2 Councillor Marsh remarked that Turning the Tide was proving very positive and useful. Resident participation was important. She asked about the next steps involved in rolling out Turning the Tide to other areas of the city. Councillor Marsh stated that she hoped that the Super Centre would meet the timetable and be opened on 10 September.
- 11.3 The Chairman reported that some of the Turning the Tide work had already been rolled out to other areas. The plan was always to introduce the scheme across the city. The Assistant Director, Housing Management reported that certain elements of Turning the Tide were city wide, for example the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and the Tenancy Sustainment Team. The pilot would be coming to an end in July and would be evaluated. A report would be submitted to the HMCC in the autumn. However, what was appropriate to Moulsecomb and Whitehawk would not necessarily be appropriate to other areas. Meanwhile, a surgery approach with reception areas had been successful elsewhere.
- 11.4 Chris Kift stated that Turning the Tide was a brilliant idea. However, it was a diverse city and one size would not fit all. A number of problems needed to be addressed.
- 11.5 Heather Hayes expressed concern about how some of the council’s properties could be brought up to decent home standards when many families were in band C and the conditions were very cramped. The Chairman replied that there were not enough large

family houses. She was pleased to hear that housing targets would be scrapped. This would provide an opportunity to deliver family sized housing.

- 11.6 Heather Hayes asked about work in progress to help people downsize when their properties were too big for them. The Chairman mentioned that the Under Occupation Officer was working with people to help them downsize. However, the supply of suitable housing was not becoming available. The use of private sector housing had increased substantially.
- 11.7 Beverley Weaver mentioned that an 82 year old living in a three bedroom flat in Park Court was struggling to cope, but felt he was too old to move. There needed to be a system in place to help elderly people down size. The Chairman replied that people could not be forced to move and suggested that details of the case be given to the Assistant Director, Housing Management.
- 11.8 Councillor Randall thought that there were many positive aspects to the report. He liked the Turning the Tide approach. Councillor Randall mentioned that the Netherlands had a system of community safety assessment of estates. This was a way of helping the police distribute their resources. Councillor Randall stated that he thought the government should stop the sale of council houses.
- 11.9 John Melson supported the LDV. He agreed with Councillor Randall about the sale of council houses, and considered that more council housing needed to be built.
- 11.10 Stewart Gover raised a number of concerns and issues that had been discussed in Homing In. He mentioned that a number of tenants from other authorities were being sent to Brighton & Hove. He reported that the Asset Management Panel was not tenant led. He thought that there needed to be a meeting of the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group. He raised concerns about the frail occupants of Patching Lodge. The Chairman explained that Patching Lodge was a care issue rather than a council house issue. She suggested Mr Gover spoke to The Assistant Director of Housing Management about this matter.
- 11.11 Councillor Mears considered the report to be excellent. She stressed that people did receive help in downsizing and that the Empty Property Officer provided a good service.
- 11.12 Councillor Simson stressed the importance of treating each tenant as an individual when considering downsizing. Each tenant had different needs. She suggested that older people could be offered a personal service. Councillor Simson also made the point that people did not like moving out of area.
- 11.13 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the progress during year two of the improvement plan be noted.

12. TENANT HANDBOOK REVIEW

- 12.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which presented the results of the tenant led Chairman's Working Group review of the tenant handbook for tenants living in council housing. Members received a presentation from Chris El-Shabba and Adrian Channon, Housing Manager on the proposed draft of the new tenant handbook, which was attached to the report.

- 12.2 Chris Kift commended the draft but asked for trimming to be included under Grounds Maintenance on page 29 of the handbook (page 89 of the agenda). He stressed that there also needed to be an update of the Repairs Handbook.
- 12.3 Stewart Gover noted that a great deal of work had gone into the production of the draft handbook. He mentioned his concern about the current succession rules. The Chairman stressed that the council had to work within the law. Meanwhile, there was an incentive scheme available to help tenants downsize set out on page 41 of the handbook (page 101 of the agenda).
- 12.4 Councillor Marsh commended the people who had compiled the handbook. It was a good comprehensive guide. She asked how the handbook would be accessed by tenants who were blind or partially sighted. The Assistant Director, Housing Management reported that the handbook would be provided in different formats, including an audio guide. Tenants could also request a translation.
- 12.5 Councillor Smart referred to page 48 (108 of the agenda) and expressed concern at the number of 292929 phone numbers. The Chairman agreed that this was an issue that needed to be addressed.
- 12.6 John Stevens asked for clarification on the advice given in the section on Fire Safety. For example, under *Fires in the Home*, the advice was to 'get everyone out of your home and close the door after you'. In the section *If a fire breaks out elsewhere in your building* it advised "If there is a fire elsewhere in the building you are usually safest in your own flat". The Chairman asked the Housing Manager to check this section before printing the final version.
- 12.7 Stewart Gover expressed concern about the right of officers to enter tenants' homes. The Chairman stated that this could be checked by the council's lawyers.
- 12.8 The Housing Manager stated that the comments of members would be taken on board. The handbook would be reviewed on a regular basis. For example, changes in legislation would be needed to be taken into account.
- 12.9 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the conclusions of the working group outlined in the report and the tenant presentation be noted.
- (2) That the new version of the tenant handbook attached at appendix 1 be endorsed and forwarded to the Housing Cabinet Member for approval.

13. CONSULTATION DRAFT OF RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

- 13.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which provided a copy of the consultation draft of the Resident Involvement strategy for council housing residents, as agreed with the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG). Following approval, a wider process of consultation would begin throughout the City. The Policy & Performance Manager thanked the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group for their help in developing the consultation draft.

- 13.2 John Melson considered the report to be sequential and clear. However he stressed that although there was a strategy, there was a need for a policy and money to fund a policy. The present participation strategy did not work. He recommended that the report should be accepted on a conditional basis. He suggested it was revisited after the work had been completed on the Annual Report. Mr Melson considered that one strategy would not fit all areas, and the work should be done piece by piece and developed to fit all areas.
- 13.3 The Assistant Director, Housing Management stressed that this was the first draft of the strategy. It was the period for tenants to say what they wanted done differently. It was an important piece of work which would ensure that tenants were more involved in the running of their service. He wanted every member of staff to work with tenants in improving the service.
- 13.4 Councillor Simson mentioned that at the Area Panels it had been suggested that the strategy should be renamed Council Residents or Tenants and Leaseholders Involvement Strategy, in order to avoid confusion. Pat Miles stated that she thought it should be Tenants and Leaseholders Involvement Strategy. She stressed the need for more leaseholders to get involved.
- 13.5 Pat Miles asked for more information about the Focus Group and stated that the West area representatives had not been informed about this group. The Chairman explained that John Austin-Locke co-ordinated the Focus Group. She stated that there needed to be a proper system in place to ensure all residents were involved. The Chairman agreed that West representatives should have been kept informed. The Policy and Performance Manager agreed to talk to all groups and to investigate this matter.
- 13.6 Councillor Pidgeon asked for the strategy to be available in Braille and audio. The Assistant Director stated that the strategy would be available in Braille and other formats.
- 13.7 Councillor Allen referred to the second bullet point of page 131 – *Also you would like to be involved in.* (Page 8 of the document). He considered that more needed to be done in relation to involvement. The Assistant Director of Housing Management reported that as a result of the resident survey, the council now held a data base of 2000 residents. The Chairman referred to the report on the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey brought to the last meeting of the HMCC. She asked for this to be forwarded to Councillor Allen.
- 13.8 Councillor Allen referred to page 140 (page 17 of the strategy). He asked how grants allocated to Residents Associations and the Resource Centre compared to grants allocated in the last few years. The Assistant Director replied that he would obtain the historical figures for Councillor Allen.
- 13.9 Councillor Mears stressed that the council valued the work of the Resource Centre and their grant had been increased.
- 13.10 Stewart Gover stated that he would like to see more involvement from residents as long as their views were funnelled through the tenants' elected representatives.

- 13.11 John Melson asked for a restoration of the members' vote on the HMCC. The Chairman stated that this had not changed. There was a members' vote which had been used on a number of occasions. Tenants Representatives could have an indicative vote. The Senior Lawyer confirmed that the constitution allowed elected members to vote as individuals on the HMCC.
- 13.12 The Chairman asked for any further comments to be forwarded to the Policy and Performance Manager.
- 13.13 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the process of consultation on the draft of the Resident Involvement Strategy be endorsed to commence, as outlined in the timetable in appendix 1.
- (2) That following the period of consultation, a revised document is presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

14. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2010 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS

- 14.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which explained that the Council was to produce an annual report to all tenants and leaseholders on its performance as landlord and setting out its plans and service offer to tenants for 2010/11. The report set out the plan and timetable for involving residents in producing and scrutinising this annual report for the year ending 31 March 2010. It also outlined the proposed approach and timetable for involving tenants and leaseholders in developing local service offers.
- 14.2 The Housing Stock Review Manager reported that she had given presentations on the outline plan and timetable for the annual report and developing local service offers to tenant and leaseholder representatives at the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, the City Assembly and all four Area Panels. A Special HMCC had been arranged for 1 September 2010 to scrutinise and sign off the final draft before the Annual Report was submitted to the Cabinet Member for approval on 8 September.
- 14.3 John Melson stated that he would agree the report in principle, subject to further discussion and agreement in September.
- 14.4 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the plan and timetable set out in Appendix 1 to this report for involving residents in producing and scrutinising the annual report to tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2010, be noted.
- (2) That the outline plan and timetable set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6 to the report for involving residents in developing and agreeing local offers for service delivery, be noted.

15. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

- 15.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which provided a progress report on the review of the grounds maintenance service on housing management owned land. The Committee was informed that the scope of the review was large and complex so the aim was to have the revised service in place by April 2011. A revised service specification for the grounds maintenance would be

developed with City Parks using pilot locations to test and cost out the service improvements. The revised service would be benchmarked with other authorities in order to demonstrate that the new service delivered value for money.

- 15.2 Heather Hayes complained that in Hollingdean, banks were full of weeds and that edges were left when the grass was cut. Fences were covered in weeds and weeds were growing across paths which was dangerous for disabled people who could trip over them. She had asked for work to be carried out on banks and had been told it was a health and safety issue as specialist equipment was required.
- 15.3 The Chairman agreed that there was general dissatisfaction with grass cutting. She referred to paragraph 1.3 of the report. It was proposed to have a revised service specification for the grounds maintenance service, and to ensure value for money.
- 15.4 Councillor Randall welcomed the proposals and suggested that it would be an opportunity to work in new areas such as vegetable plots. It would also be an opportunity to look at security on estates.
- 15.5 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report be noted.

16. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT - END OF YEAR (AND QUARTER 4)

- 16.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which set out the fourth and final quarter for Housing Management performance for the financial year 2009/10. End of year figures were presented either as a collective figure for the year or as final end of year figures against a previously set target. The requirements of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) would entail a change in the presentation of the report in the coming year. Therefore officers would be reviewing performance reports during 2010 to ensure that they provided tenants and leaseholders a full picture of the council's performance.
- 16.2 The Chairman asked for her thanks to be passed on to officers for the performance result for rent collection. 98.29% represented a large amount of money.
- 16.3 Councillor Allen was pleased to note that all areas were performing well. However, he took issue with the bullet point RIEN: Rental Income Excellence Network. He considered this to be jargon. The Assistant Director, Housing Management agreed that this could be taken out of the next report as it served no purpose.
- 16.4 Councillor Allen questioned why there was not more information from comparative authorities, particularly in relation to those indicators on page 167. The Assistant Director, Housing Management replied that benchmarking data was not available for those indicators at the moment.
- 16.5 With regard to empty home turnaround time, John Melson hoped that officers would not be concentrating on quantity at the expense of quality. With regard to anti-social behaviour, Mr Melson remarked that the figures only related to Turning the Tide. The Assistant Director explained that the figures were relevant to anti-social behaviour across the city.

16.6 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 5.47pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 26b

Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 1 SEPTEMBER 2010

GREAT HALL, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Caulfield (Chairman); Allen, Barnett, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Randall and Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson)

Tenant Representatives: Stewart Gover (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), David Murtagh (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Beverley Weaver (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Muriel Briault (Leaseholder Action Group) and John Melson (Hi Rise Action Group)

Apologies: Councillor Simson, Beryl Snelling (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group), and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network).

In attendance: Faith Matyszak MBE, Laundry Facilities Group, Valerie Paynter, Clarendon & Ellen Residents' Association.

PART ONE

17. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

17A Declarations of Substitute Members

17A There were none.

17B Declarations of Interests

17.2 Councillor Randall, Heather Hayes and Ted Harman declared a personal interest in any discussion on the LDV as they are Board Members of Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes (the Local Delivery Vehicle).

17C Exclusion of the Press and Public

- 17.3 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.
- 17.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

18. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**Welcome to the meeting**

- 18.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the additional meeting of the HMCC, which had been convened to specifically look at the draft annual report to council tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2010. The meeting was being held now in order to meet the timetable to send a copy of the summary report to all council tenants and leaseholders at the end of September.
- 18.2 The Chairman was pleased to see so many of the tenant and leaseholder representatives who had contributed to the annual report. Their photos and quotes could be seen on the display boards in the meeting room.
- 18.3 The Chairman stressed that it was a real strength of the report that tenants and leaseholders had played such a big part in producing the report. The full report had been circulated in black and white and colour versions of the summary report had been circulated at the meeting. A gap had been left in the draft report for a photograph of the meeting, to illustrate how HMCC had scrutinised the final drafts before they are signed off. A photographer was in attendance at the meeting and would be taking photos.

Energy Company Investment Opportunities

- 18.4 The Chairman reported that one of the key strategic priorities outlined in the City-wide Housing Strategy 2009-2014 was to improve housing quality, and to ensure that residents were able to live in decent homes suitable to their needs.
- 18.5 The council's strategic goals under this priority included, reducing fuel poverty, minimising CO2 emissions and improving tenants' homes ensuring they are of high quality and well maintained. Increasing investment opportunities were opening up with energy companies to: (i) help deliver efficiency work on the city's housing stock, (ii) open up potential funding routes for future investment in the council's housing, and (iii) reduce energy costs to tenants and residents.
- 18.6 These potential opportunities arose from: (i) the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP), established to target home energy efficiency and renewable energy measures at areas that have been identified as having significant levels of low income households: (ii) feed in tariffs – where energy companies pay for supply generated by installation of solar PV measures on council owned/tenanted properties and residents benefit from

reduced fuel bills; (iii) ESCO (Energy Services Company) options to capture benefits of energy generation for the city and its residents.

- 18.7 The Chairman reported that an existing working group would be used to consider these energy company investment opportunities; in particular, to assess and maximise potential investment opportunities arising from this emerging work with energy companies and to ensure the council meet its goals of improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty for the benefit of tenants and residents. Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy and Development would be leading this piece of work.

19. PETITIONS

- 19.1 There were none.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 20.1 There were none.

21. DEPUTATIONS

- 21.1 There were none.

22. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 22.1 There were none.

23. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 23.1 There were none.

24. ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS 2010

- 24.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise which explained that the regulatory framework for social housing which came into effect on 1 April 2010 required "Registered providers" (including council landlords) to publish an annual report for their tenants containing a self assessment of their performance against the standards set by the Tenants Services Authority (TSA).
- 24.2 A full and a summary report had been produced with the involvement and scrutiny of tenants and leaseholders, in line with the plan and timetable agreed with the Housing Management Consultative Committee on 14 June 2010. This followed discussions with the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group in April and presentations to tenants and leaseholders at the City Assembly and the Area Housing Management Panels in May and June.
- 24.3 The Housing Stock Review Manager introduced the report and explained that over 100 comments had been received back on the consultation draft report which had been sent to all tenant and resident associations and groups and made widely available for comment in July. Tenants and leaseholders had also been involved in assessing how the council meets the TSA's standards through questions at the City Assembly and Area

Panels, questionnaires circulated to associations and on the consultation web portal and one-off focus groups of tenants on the tenant and leaseholder involvement database, particularly those not active in the formal tenant participation structure, younger tenants and tenants from black and minority ethnic groups. Their feedback and comments were included in the report and reflected in the assessment and commitments to improve performance. In addition, 34 tenants' representatives were quoted in the report on what the resident groups they are involved with had achieved in 2010. The "Homing In" Tenant Editorial Board had also commented on the draft report. This input from tenants and leaseholders demonstrated that residents were fully involved in all aspects of the housing service.

- 24.4 Due to the length of the report, in order to meet all the TSA's requirements, a summary report had been produced to send to all tenant and leaseholders with "Homing In" at the end of September. The full report would, once approved be sent to all tenant and resident associations, the TSA and any tenant or leaseholder who wants a copy. The Housing Stock Review Manager expressed her thanks to all tenants and leaseholders who took the time and trouble to give their views and contribute to the report.
- 24.5 The Assistant Director, Housing Management informed the Committee that he welcomed the opportunity to promote the Annual Report and hoped that members agreed that it had been a good year with much solid progress. It had been a year in which the council had listened to residents, and in which a new repairs partnership had commenced. The council had worked with residents to have a three year programme to provide improvements to homes.
- 24.6 The Assistant Director informed members that Mystery Shopping was making a difference and he was pleased to report that there had been increased value for money in 2010, with the cost of managing tenants' homes reduced from £18.58 per property per week in 2005/6 to £17.03 in 2009/10. It had been a record year in terms of income collection. Overall, the report showed that the council was performing well and that this was recognised by residents.
- 24.7 The Assistant Director stated that the report also recognised that there were areas that needed to be improved. There had been feed back from residents that showed that procedures could take a long time; the council was now looking at ways in which to simplify procedures. Some residents had questioned whether the council was meeting expectations in customer services, and had also questioned the quality of the services. The Assistant Director was pleased to say that the council knew where it needed to improve, and was now better at listening to tenants. The council was determined to provide the best service possible and would work with residents to produce local service specifications. These would come into effect on 1 April 2011.
- 24.8 The Assistant Director extended his thanks to Carol Jenkins, Housing Stock Review Manager, for leading on the production of the Annual Report. He also thanked staff within the Housing Management Service for their hard work. Finally, the Assistant Director thanked all the tenants' representatives and members of the Housing Management Consultative Committee and hoped that they agreed that it was a good and honest Annual Report. He welcomed their feedback.

- 24.9 The Chairman added her thanks, in particular to Carol Jenkins who had made an enormous effort to ensure that as many tenant representatives and leaseholders had been included in the report as possible. Both positive and negative comments had been included in the report.
- 24.10 Stewart Gover commented that it was a very good report, which asked as many questions as provided answers. He referred to Section 2 of the Summary Report (Quality of Accommodation) stating that insulated cladding had been put on two high rise blocks and questioned the quality of the work.
- 24.11 John Melson reported that, although he had some concerns about the contract, he had no fears that the render would fall off as it was all one thin panel of wire mesh and was firmly anchored. In the long term, the cladding would provide savings. It cured the damp problem and the building was much warmer.
- 24.12 Councillor Randall considered the Annual Report to be a good piece of work and the best of similar reports he had seen. It had been well produced and reflected the improvements in the service. He stressed the importance of customer involvement and noted that 54% of Brighton & Hove City Council tenants surveyed in 2008 were satisfied that their landlord took tenants' views into account. Councillor Randall stated that he would like to see some targets that could be revisited next year. He asked officers how far work had progressed on works to be carried out in 2010/11 to improve the quality of accommodation.
- 24.13 Councillor Randall referred to the section of the report that dealt with adaptations. He stressed that things could still go terribly wrong with this service, with people waiting unacceptably long periods for adaptations. The Annual Report did not reflect these problems.
- 24.14 Councillor Randall referred to the section in the report on Tenure, and specifically the reference to financial health checks with new tenants. He asked for details of the training given to staff in the Housing Income Management Team, to carry out this work. He suggested that there needed to be stronger links with the Credit Unions.
- 24.15 Finally, Councillor Randall suggested that the Annual Report and other publications should in future have the stamp of approval from tenants as was the practice in some other local authorities.
- 24.16 The Chairman agreed that adaptations was an issue and reported that a number of team members had moved from Adult Social Care to Housing. She hoped people would soon see a big improvement, now that the service was being streamlined. Meanwhile, the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group had asked for representatives from the Credit Union to attend the City Assembly in November 2010.
- 24.17 The Assistant Director, Housing Management commented on staff training with regard to financial health checks. He explained that the council did provide specific training for staff carrying out financial health checks. He agreed that there was scope for closer working with the Credit Unions. With reference to the STATUS Survey of tenants 2008, the Assistant Director referred to the government's announcement that the STATUS Survey would not continue. It might therefore be more difficult to compare satisfaction

of tenants of different landlords in this way; however the council would continue to monitor satisfaction and have targets.

- 24.18 Councillor Fryer considered the Annual Report to be excellent. She asked if there was going to be an Annual Report each year and whether the Audit Commission had said anything negative about the council's performance in its reports, as well as the positive comments quoted in the annual report. Councillor Fryer commented that the number of sheltered tenants who had completed a survey in February-March 2010 seemed low (39). She noted that the table in the report on Repairs and Maintenance Performance showed that the council was under performing on urgent repairs and over performing on routine repairs. She suggested that the balance needed to be addressed. Councillor Fryer asked for an update on the recycling of furniture and more information about the new electricity contract.
- 24.19 The Assistant Director replied that it was a requirement of the current regulatory framework to produce an Annual Report to tenants by 1 October each year. Although the future of the Tenant Services Authority was under review the Government had indicated it wanted the regulatory framework to continue. The Audit Commission's recent review of the repairs contract had been positive and there would be a full report to a future HMCC once the Audit Commission's report had been finalised.
- 24.20 The Assistant Director acknowledged that it was not a large number of responses from sheltered housing tenants. Tom Whiting had been unable to attend the meeting but had sent a message that he supported the Annual Report and specifically supported the aspects of the report that dealt with sheltered housing.
- 24.21 The Assistant Director reported that the council was now performing well in urgent repairs in 2010/11. The council was looking to recycle furniture with a local social enterprise in the autumn. Savings on the electricity contract had been reported to Cabinet earlier this year, in a report on the HRA.
- 24.22 John Melson informed the Committee that he thought the report was much better than he expected. He was surprised that there was no mention of how hands on John Barradell was in the community. There was also no mention of scale of allowances for tenant and resident associations in the report.
- 24.23 John Melson referred to the fire safety comments in the report. He mentioned that a candidate in the elections had sent out an email challenging the safety of high rise flats with regard to fire safety. Mr Melson mentioned that every flat had a smoke detector and a fire alarm. He had circulated a draft fire safety and evacuation plan for Essex Place as an example of the effective way the council, together with the Fire Service, was addressing fire safety. He asked for the comments of the candidate to be disowned.
- 24.24 The Chairman replied that the issue of fire safety could be clarified at the Central Area Housing Management Panel on 9 September. Councillor Mears agreed it would be appropriate to have a debate at the Central Area Housing Management Panel and for that debate to be reported back to the HMCC.
- 24.25 Ted Harman mentioned that the Asset Management Panel had decided that work should not be carried out if contractors did not have the right equipment. David Murtagh

informed the meeting that he considered the Annual Report to be a good report, and asked if tenants were aware of Ted's comment. He considered that workers were getting away with a lot. The Chairman agreed that the Asset Management Panel had spent a long time specifying what should be expected in the contract. It would be helpful if future area panels could be made aware of standards set out in the contract.

- 24.26 David Murtagh asked if resident assessors were looking at building work. The Chairman confirmed that this was the case. The Assistant Director reported that there would be a further meeting on Turning the Tide on 17 September.
- 24.27 Councillor Simpson complemented all those who had produced the report. It was very clear that tenants had been deeply involved in the report and the comments had been balanced. With regard to setting targets, Councillor Simpson considered that tenants, residents and councillors would have to be rigorous because there would be a lack of comparable data from other local authorities if the Tenant Services Authority was discontinued. The Audit Commission was also to be disbanded. The council would need to be clear what was required of the service and meet the targets that were set.
- 24.28 With regard to fire safety in high rise blocks, Councillor Simpson had read the email concerned and did not interpret it in the same way as John Melson. The candidate had raised concerns with fire officers. Councillor Simpson was happy with the fire safety policy that had served the council well so far.
- 24.29 In relation to the comments about the TSA and Audit Commission, the Chairman stated that she thought the council had enough internal checks in place.
- 24.30 John Melson raised concerns about the way post inspections of work were carried out. He had had an inspection half way through work being carried out. The Asset Management Panel needed to investigate this matter and streamline the work.
- 24.31 Stewart Gover reported that there had been a useful meeting with Mears the on 31 August. He expressed concern about a member of staff in Highways taking money from the HRA through issuing parking tickets to contractors' vehicles delivering parts. The Chairman said this matter would be investigated.
- 24.32 John Stevens asked for clarification about the number of adaptations for disabled or elderly tenants each year. He also asked whether there were mystery shoppers out of hours. Martin Reid commented that there were 525 adaptations in 2009/10 and 487 the year before. There were slightly more minor adaptations than major. Major adaptations took longer and were more complex. There were 60 cases waiting at any one time. The council was now making sure it carried out more preventative work and was working more effectively. The Assistant Director reported that with regard to out of hours work, there had been two reports on mystery shoppers. The second showed an improvement in response time. Officers were working on the out of hours service.
- 24.33 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2010, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, for distribution to the Tenant Services Authority and council tenant and resident associations and to all council tenants and leaseholders who request a copy.

- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the summary annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2010 attached as Appendix 2 to the report, for distribution to all council tenants and leaseholders.

The meeting concluded at 5.13pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Agenda Item 34

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Tenancy Visits
Date of Meeting:	27 September 2010
Report of:	Acting Director of Housing
Contact Officer:	Name: Helen Clarkmead, Business Improvement Manager
	Tel: 293271
	E-mail: Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision:	No
Wards Affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Regular visits to all tenants are an expectation of the Tenant Services Authority, and nationally accepted good practice in tenancy management. The Coroner has highlighted tenancy visits as a means of ensuring any welfare issues are picked up, especially for older and vulnerable people living alone. The need to do so was highlighted by the last Audit Commission inspection in 2005. Visits commenced in January 2009 with the aim of visiting every property within a 2 year period on an ongoing basis. Although most visits are by appointment, there are a significant number of people who have not been at home when officers call, and we have subsequently adjusted this target to one visit a minimum of every 3 years. Some local social landlords have a 5 year target, so ours is more challenging.
- 1.2 It is a tenancy condition that officers are permitted access with reasonable notice. Most tenancy checks are undertaken on a planned basis by appointment. Occasionally, and where there is reason to suspect tenancy fraud, visits will be made on an unnotified basis.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) HMCC is asked to note, and invited to comment upon the rationale and process for undertaking tenancy checks.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The purposes of tenancy checks are:
 - To ensure tenants are complying with tenancy conditions and identify and support or welfare needs

- To ensure the property is occupied by the legitimate tenant(s)
 - To inspect the condition of the property and identify any work that tenants or the council needs to do.
- 3.2 Tenancy visits identify where expected standards around keeping the property and any outside area in a reasonable condition are not being met. Tenancy checks often identify unmet support needs - officers are then able to refer to the appropriate agency, for example Adult Social Care to arrange domestic or personal care. As part of the council's financial inclusion strategy, tenancy checks are used to help ensure people are receiving any financial assistance to which they are entitled. Officers also discuss transfers, employment and training opportunities and encourage people to become involved in community participation.
- 3.3 It is an expectation of the Tenant Services Authority, Audit Commission and the council's internal auditors that the council has adequate processes in place to prevent, detect, and resolve tenancy fraud. The demand for affordable housing in Brighton and Hove by far exceeds the supply, and it is vital that council properties are occupied by the legitimate tenants. Asking for identification at tenancy visits is an important part of the council's tenancy fraud procedure.
- 3.4 In response to a complaint from a tenant relating to the procedures being adopted for tenancy visits, Audit & Business Risk investigated the complaint. They have concluded that they are satisfied in the way in which tenants are identified and prioritised for tenancy checks is fair and does not unjustly discriminate against any specific group or individual.
- 3.5 Tenants are required to seek written permission and allow post completion inspection of work they undertake to their homes. Unfortunately, a small number of tenants do not do this, and undertake potentially dangerous work – for example removing a wall to create an open plan reception/kitchen space. Inspecting the interior of a property identifies where this is the case, and enables appropriate remedial action to be agreed at minimal cost to the council.
- 3.6 Tenants are required to keep the interior and any exterior part of their home in good condition. Tenancy visits identify where homes and gardens are not being adequately maintained to an acceptable standard, and agreements can be made to rectify the situation.
- 3.7 Tenancy visits are undertaken by trained tenancy management staff. Community Wardens, Housing Management Advisors and Housing Officers all do tenancy visits as part of their job. In order to meet the challenging target of visiting each tenant every two years, all tenancy management staff are involved in the process. Where complex or sensitive issues exist, a more senior member of staff or a clerk of works will visit.
- 3.8 Planned visits take place after the tenant receives written notification. Please see attached standard letter. The council officer uses the attached checklist at the visit. Tenants are invited to contact the officer and arrange an alternative appointment if the time suggested is unsuitable.

- 3.9 Allowing officers access is a tenancy condition, and where this is persistently refused, enforcement action may be necessary.
- 3.10 Officers are aware that they are asking for personal information, and are expected to be sensitive when doing so. All information tenants provide is dealt with under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. We ask for information about health, mobility, disability, other equalities issues, and income in order to assess any support needs and help check if people are receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled. We also ask this to make sure that we are providing services in a fair and customer focussed way.
- 3.11 Tenants should have no reason to feel the tenancy visit was carried out insensitively. However if they have any concerns, they should please contact the relevant Housing Manager.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 HMCC comments are invited.
- 4.2 The Tenancy Management Focus Group broadly welcomed this initiative and made some suggestions about the list of documents acceptable as proof of identity and asked that documents providing financial details be removed. This will be done.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations within this report. The cost of tenancy visits are met within the existing Housing Revenue Account Budget.

Finance Officer consulted: Susie Allen, Principal Accountant 21 July 2010

5.2 Legal Implications:

It is a condition of the Council's secure tenancy agreement that tenants will allow officers admission to their homes upon reasonable notice. The Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 require that tenancy agreements should not contain unfair terms. The Office of Fair Trading advises that a condition allowing the landlord to enter premises without giving reasonable notice is likely to be unfair. Against that background it is considered that the council's condition is fair. In exercising the right of entry, the Council must act reasonably and in a manner that is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Article 8 of the Convention provides that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. There can be no interference with that right by a public authority with the exercise of that right, except such as in accordance with the law and is necessary in the interest of public safety, and for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Paragraph 3.1 of the report provides sufficient justification for the exercise of the power of entry. If entry is persistently refused, enforcement action may follow. That could take the form of an application for an injunction or even possession proceedings following service of a notice of seeking possession. Again, regard must be

had to the ECHR. The policy set out represents an appropriate balance between the requirements set down by statutory authorities; the needs of the Council as a landlord and the rights of the tenant. It is proportionate and reasonable.

Lawyer Consulted: Simon Court

Date: 13th September 2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Tenancy visits promote financial inclusion and identify vulnerable tenants who may benefit from support. Where it is known that the tenants have difficulty reading English, appointments are made by telephone. Where tenants do not speak English, the council provides an interpreter. Advance notice of most tenancy checks enables tenants to be accompanied by a support worker, relative or friend.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Officers are able to provide energy efficiency advice at tenancy visits.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Tenancy visits are an important tool in the identification of tenancy fraud.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Tenancy visits help ensure council homes are occupied by the legitimate tenants and ensure the council makes best use of its housing stock.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Robust corporate governance arrangements are essential to the sound management of the City Council and the achievement of its objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Agenda Item 35

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing Revenue Account 2009/10 Final Outturn and Forecast Outturn for 2010/11 as at Month 4		
Date of Meeting:	27 September 2010		
Report of:	Acting Director of Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Sue Chapman	Tel: 293105
	E-mail:	Sue.chapman@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report informs the meeting of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2009/10 final outturn and the forecast outturn for 2010/11 as at Month 4.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Housing Management Consultative Committee note:

- (1) the final outturn for the HRA for 2009/10 was an overspend of £0.280 million. This represents a variance of 0.58% of the gross revenue budget of £47.949 million. General HRA revenue reserves have reduced by £0.280 million to £3.622 million as at 31 March 2010.
- (2) the forecast outturn position for 2010/11 as at Month 4, which is an overspend of £0.038 million.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 FINAL OUTTURN 2009/10

The 2009/10 outturn is a net overspend of £0.280 million, compared to budget as shown in Appendix 1. The main variances are described below:

- 3.1.1 Employees underspent by £0.299 million due to the pay award being lower than anticipated and vacancy management pending reviews to be implemented as part of the Housing Management Improvement Programme.
- 3.1.2 There was a net overspend of the Repairs budget £0.165 million, which represents 1.3% of the budget of £12.565 million. The overspend includes the following variances:-

- Responsive Repairs overspent by £0.630 million mainly due to high levels of expenditure during the early part of the year relating to additional works not in the base contract, such as damp proofing, being undertaken. During the winter months there was an increased level of works made necessary by the extreme weather.
 - This overspend was partly mitigated by the delay in implementing new service contracts (£0.203 million), now programmed to be implemented during 2010 and 2011, and underspendings on the decorations contract budget (£0.102 million), the programmed works budget (£0.095 million) and the empty properties revenue budget (£0.068 million).
- 3.1.3 The underspend reported within Supplies & Services is due mainly to a reduction in the contribution to the bad debt provision of £0.132 million following an improvement in rent collection and arrears. Other Supplies and Services underspendings of £0.102 million include £0.050 million on payments relating to Bed and Breakfast accommodation due to improved processes ensuring Housing Benefit is claimed and other efficiencies in office expenditure.
- 3.1.4 The Revenue Contribution to Capital was increased by £0.170 million to finance increased expenditure in the capital programme, this included £0.140 million relating to 6 major voids approved at TMT/Cabinet on 29 June 2009.
- 3.1.5 The economic situation led to a change in the corporate policy towards Treasury management. In order to substantially reduce the exposure to risk the council prematurely repaid some £57 million of debt. This early repayment also benefited the council by reducing capital financing costs of which the HRA has seen a reduction of £0.759 million, (i.e. £0.776 million capital financing costs underspend net of £0.017 million interest reduction shown under Income). However, for the HRA, due to the complexities of the subsidy system, there was also an increase of £1.155 million Housing Subsidy payable to central government resulting in a net overspend of £0.396 million.
- 3.1.6 There was an underachievement of income from service charges to leaseholders of £0.185 million relating to council charges to its leaseholders of sold council flats for major works and services. The underachievement of income was due the actual costs of providing the services and major works being less than anticipated when setting the 2009/10 leaseholder service charge budgets.

3.2 FORECAST OUTTURN 2010/11 AS AT MONTH 4

The forecast outturn for 2010/11 as at Month 4 is an underspend of £0.038 million as shown in Appendix 2. The main variances are explained below:

- 3.2.1 The forecast underspend on employees of £0.068 million is mainly due to vacancy management savings across the Housing Service.
- 3.2.2 There is a forecast underspend of £0.066 million in the Repairs cyclical maintenance and service contract area where various contracts are being retendered during this financial year.
- 3.2.3 Capital Financing costs are forecast to underspend by £0.116 million due to forecast interest rates for the year being lower than the assumptions used for budget setting.
- 3.2.4 Leaseholder service charges income is projected to underachieve by £0.121 million. This projection has been forecast following analysis of last year's outturn which has shown that the charges are likely to be less than budgeted for.
- 3.2.5 The Temporary Accommodation budget is forecast to overspend by £0.124 million in relation to unrealised savings in the Temporary Accommodation budget due to the delay of the commencement of the LDV. The budget for 2010/11 had been set assuming that the temporary accommodation properties would be leased in batches during 2010/11 to the LDV. The forecast overspend for Temporary Accommodation is included in the various relevant subjective headings in Appendix 2. The Housing Management Team have developed a cost reduction plan to identify cost efficiencies to reduce the impact of this overspend.

3.3 FORECAST RESERVES AS AT 31 MARCH 2011

The HRA revenue reserves as at 31 March 2010 reduced by £0.280 million to £3.622 million. The contribution to the capital programme for the re-commissioning of temporary accommodation where 46 empty properties are being brought back into use (as reported to Cabinet on 23 September 2010) and the forecast overspend of £0.038 million for 2010/11 will reduce the projected reserves as at 31 March 2011 to £3.284 million. The recommended minimum level of working balance is £2.4 million so there is £0.884 million available to cover any future single status claims and any other unforeseen expenditure.

The HRA revenue reserves are shown below:

REVENUE RESERVES	General Reserves £'000
Balance at 1 April 2009	3,902
Contribution from reserves 2009/10	280
Balance at 31 March 2010	3,622
Transfer from reserves to fund:	
2010/11 Capital Programme: Re-Commissioning of HRA Temporary Accommodation	(300)
Forecast Overspend 2010/11	(38)
Projected Reserves at 31 March 2011	3,284

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to advise of the final outturn for 2009/10 and forecast outturn for 2010/11 and therefore there has been no external consultation.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Financial implications are in the main body of the report

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen *Date:* 9 September 2010

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council is obliged to keep a separate Housing Revenue Account by virtue of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley *Date:* 13 September 2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no environmental implications arising from this report

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct implications for crime and disorder.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Risk assessments have allowed the council to allocate its resources appropriately

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 There are no corporate or citywide implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Final Outturn 2009/10
2. Forecast Outturn 2010/11

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

None

APPENDIX 1 - Final Outturn 2009/10			
Housing Revenue Account	Budget 2009/10 £'000	Outturn 2009/10 £'000	Variance 2009/10 £'000
Expenditure			
Employees	9,320	9,021	(299)
Premises			
Repairs - response repairs & empty properties	8,489	9,051	562
- cyclical Maintenance & servicing	4,076	3,679	(397)
Other premises	3,055	3,048	(7)
	15,620	15,778	158
Transport	187	154	(33)
Supplies & Services			
Contribution to Bad Debt Provision	308	176	(132)
Other supplies & services	1,604	1,502	(102)
	1,912	1,678	(234)
Support Services	2,251	2,185	(66)
Revenue contribution to capital	3,220	3,390	170
Capital financing costs	4,356	3,580	(776)
Government Subsidy Payable	11,083	12,238	1,155
Total Expenditure	47,949	48,024	75
Income			
Dwellings rents (net of empty properties)	(41,168)	(41,172)	(4)
Car parking/garages rents (net)	(728)	(727)	1
Commercial Rents	(495)	(477)	18
Service Charges – tenants & leaseholders	(3,861)	(3,676)	185
Other Recharges & Interest	(1,697)	(1,692)	5
Total Income	(47,949)	(47,744)	205
Total Deficit / (Surplus)	0	280	280

Note that figures in brackets (-) are underspends

APPENDIX 2 - Forecast Outturn 2010/11			
Housing Revenue Account	Budget 2010/11 £'000	Forecast at Month 4 2010/11 £'000	Variance at Month 4 2010/11 £'000
Expenditure			
Employees	9,187	9,119	(68)
Premises			
Repairs - response repairs & empty properties	7,915	7,915	0
- cyclical Maintenance & servicing	3,041	2,975	(66)
Other premises	3,622	3,643	21
	14,578	14,533	(45)
Transport	179	179	0
Supplies & Services			
Contribution to Bad Debt Provision	263	263	0
Other supplies & services	1,591	1,610	19
	1,854	1,873	19
Third Party Payments	54	54	0
Support Services	2,153	2,133	(20)
Revenue contribution to capital	3,543	3,543	0
Capital financing costs	3,729	3,613	(116)
Government Subsidy Payable	12,925	12,941	16
Total Expenditure	48,202	47,988	(214)
Income			
Dwellings rents (net of empty properties)	(41,613)	(41,626)	(13)
Car parking/garages rents (net)	(823)	(768)	55
Commercial Rents	(495)	(495)	0
Service Charges – tenants & leaseholders	(4,034)	(3,882)	152
Other Recharges & Interest	(1,237)	(1,179)	58
Total Income	(48,202)	(47,950)	252
Total Deficit / (Surplus)	0	38	38

Note that figures in brackets (-) are underspends

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 36

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Consultation Draft of Resident Involvement Strategy
Date of Meeting: 27 September 2010
Report of: Acting Director of Housing
Contact Officer: Name: **John Austin Locke** Tel: **29-1008**
E-mail: john.austin-locke@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report represents an update on the progress to adopt a revised Resident Involvement Strategy first reported in June 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That committee notes the endorsement of the broad framework of the Resident Involvement Strategy, as proposed by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, subject to the continuing work set out below.
- 2.2 That the committee notes that the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group is recommending that the groups, while organised by officers, should be "Tenant/Leaseholders Only" with officers attending only by invitation."
- 2.3 Committee endorses the proposal, from the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, that four smaller working groups be established to examine, in detail, the consultation responses to the four objectives within the Resident Involvement Strategy, namely:
- **Objective 1** Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing.
 - **Objective 2** Develop, a framework for agreeing local offers and priorities with our residents.
 - **Objective 3** Involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services.
 - **Objective 4** Involve residents in monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services.
- Each working group will examine the comments and suggestions received in the consultation process and will determine what further consultation with all customers might be required.

2.4 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group is recommending that the groups, while organised by officers, should be “Tenant/Leaseholder Only” with officers attending only by invitation.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1.1 At the June Housing Management Consultative Committee a report was proposed outlining the consultation process for the development of the Resident Involvement Strategy. The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, who were responsible for the strategy, were suggesting a period of consultation prior to reporting back to HMCC at this committee meeting. The timetable for consultation is, again, attached as appendix 1 for your reference.

3.2 The consultation on the new Resident Involvement Strategy was based on the considerable success of the current levels of involvement of residents throughout the City. This success was welcomed by the Audit Commission who, in March 2009, found much to praise in their assessment of customer activity. A summary of the key findings of the Audit Commission were included in the June report. However, the Audit Commission also suggested areas for development that included:

- Developing an overarching resident involvement 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 community.

3.3 The points made by the Audit Commission were accepted by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, on behalf of the tenant movement. As a consequence a Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey was issued to all tenants and leaseholders. The results of the survey were considered by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group at two workshop meetings held on 24 February and 27 April this year. These workshops were the basis of the Resident Involvement Strategy circulated at June HMCC.

3.4 Since June the consultation process has included:

- Contact being made with all sixty nine Resident and Leaseholder Associations throughout the city.
- The use of the council’s consultation portal on the Brighton & Hove City Council web-site
- The use of the Communities team to contact and consult relevant groups throughout the City
- The use of the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey to contact those who had expressed an interest in direct Email contact.
- The use of the same survey to contact those who had expressed a willingness to take part in an informal resident group.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Tenant Compact Monitoring Group met on 13 August 2010 to consider the large variety of responses received. Having looked at a number of options the TCMG concluded that, while the Resident Involvement Strategy was approved as a broad, strategic framework, further development was needed to ensure that the document remained live and accessible to all who might wish to read it and use it.
- 4.2 It was through this process that the TCMG decided on an approach that would see the creation of four working groups, within the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, one for each of the objectives. These groups would be able to consider all comments and open itself up to exploring some of the points raised, in more detail, if this seemed appropriate.
- 4.3 The TCMG expressed its desire to be free from officer or councillor influence and are therefore recommending that the working groups should be "Tenant/Leaseholder Only" with officers attending by invitation.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Any costs arising from the consultation process will be met from existing resources within the 2010/11 Housing Revenue Account budget and reported as part of the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) process if necessary. Any financial implications arising from the revised Resident Involvement Strategy will be included as part of a separate report.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks: Principal Accountant
Date: 1st September 2010*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 imposes a duty on the Council to maintain appropriate arrangements for informing and involving residents in housing policy. A new Resident Involvement Strategy devised as a result of the consultation process outlined in the report will assist the Council in meeting that duty. It will also help in meeting the TSA's new "Tenant Involvement and Empowerment" standard. Failure to meet a standard is a ground for the TSA to exercise its extensive range of regulatory powers. It is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights will be adversely affected by the report's recommendations.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 14 September 2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The foundation of the Resident Involvement Strategy is expressed in Objective 1; “Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing”. Within this is a guarantee that the new strategy must be all inclusive and open in order to meet its legal obligations. An equalities impact assessment of the final strategy will be produced to underline this point.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 To assist with the Council’s sustainability objectives resource neutral or reduced carbon methods of consultation will be used wherever possible. These will include web-based, internet and Email surveys as well as social media and networking sites

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 It is recognised that anti-social behaviour remains a level of concern for residents and their representatives. It is anticipated that the final Resident Involvement Strategy will confirm and develop the role of the recently established Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 In any arrangement of engagement it is acknowledged that there will, at times, be conflicting views and the potential for individual rivalries, within or between groups of residents. Within the new strategy it will be important to maintain, as far as possible, that it is for residents themselves to resolve difficulties through their own, local, democratic arrangements. Where difficulties become particularly destructive that they risk the good working of the strategy, individuals will be encouraged to use the facilities of independent mediation services to resolve matters. The final Resident Involvement Strategy will take account of such issues.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The final Resident Involvement Strategy will be in line with the principles of the Corporate Engagement Framework and those preparing the final draft will consider the emerging views.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Timetable for consultation

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

Timetable for Resident Involvement Strategy Consultation

Consultation taking place	Date commenced	Date completed
Draft Strategy to HMCC	14 June	
Draft strategy sent to the chairs of all Residents' Associations	W/C 14 June	Request for comments deadline 19 July
Consultation through the Corporate Centre and the Stronger Communities Partnership	W/C 14 June	Request for comments Deadline 26 July
Consultation using the "ways I would like to be involved in decisions that affect me" section of the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Survey	W/C 14 June	Completion 26 July
Information placed on council web-site with feedback form	W/C 14 June	Request for comments Deadline 26 July
Collated comments to Tenant Compact Monitoring Group Working Group	W/C 9 August	13 August
Area Panel meetings		24 August 2 September 9 September 13 September
Final sign off by Tenant Compact Monitoring Group working Group	W/C 13 September	
Arrangements for presentation of report by TCMG working group members.	W/C 20 September	
Final Resident Involvement Strategy to HMCC		27 September

Subject:	Customer Access Phase 2		
Date of Meeting:	27 September 2010		
Report of:	Acting Director of Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ododo Dafé	Tel: 29-3201
	E-mail:	ododo.dafe@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No. (HSG 17571)	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report updates Housing Management Consultative Committee on the review of customer access arrangements for the Housing Management Service and presents a number of proposals for consideration by committee members.
- 1.2 A report detailing the customer access review and proposals for taking the review forward was considered by HMCC on 12 October 2009. A second report was agreed on 8 February 2010 which included 10 Broad Principles on which improvements to customer access should be based.
- 1.3 The Housing Management division provides a range of services to the residents of council managed properties in Brighton & Hove. Our customers currently access services through a number of different channels (e.g. face to face, telephone, email, website etc) and through a range of teams (eg teams at housing offices, income management and repairs desk), see Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee comment upon the proposals that are being considered by phase 2 of the Customer Access Review.

(1) A single point of contact is established for all Tenancy Management telephone calls, emails and written enquiries.

(2) That one free phone and one local number is introduced for Repairs and Tenancy management and telecoms technology is utilised to route calls to the correct destinations.

(3) That some Children & Young People's Trust services are provided from the Lavender Street Housing Office as part of a co-location arrangement with local housing area staff continuing to be based at that housing office.

(4) That work continues on looking at providing access to housing management services through 'Community Contact Points' in libraries.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Customer Access Review Group

- 3.1 Since the agreement of the broad principles the service has been undertaking further work with staff and residents to look at what can be done to improve the current service, fulfil these principles and provide better value for money to residents.
- 3.2 A staff Customer Access Review Group has been set up which is made up of staff from various service areas including those who's work includes dealing directly with residents. They have been looking at exactly what customers are asking us for when they contact us and focusing on how we achieve their requests with minimum waste. This involves observing our services from the customer perspective, and importantly, discussing that specific service with some individual customers at the point of transaction. It enables the group to better understand the nature of their enquiry, whether they have contacted us previously on the matter, the use they make of housing offices, what else they might like to see at offices and their access to the internet for example. The work has also involved talking with staff providing the service, and tracking the work as it progresses.
- 3.3 Towards the end of the group's work looking at how customers access our services they will involve the relevant managers and teams in developing improvements and planning for changes that will enhance the experience of customer using our services. The group will also be using tenants feedback from mystery shopping work to inform the customer access review recommendations. This work is one way that we are looking to improve our ability to satisfactorily complete customer transactions at the first point of contact.

Why look to improve customer service?

- 3.4. Poor customer service seems to stay in the mind a lot longer and is spoken about more amongst customers than good customer service.
- 3.5 Our aim has always been to provide our customers with an excellent level of service, but we know we need to give this a much higher focus if we're going to make the step change that we want. Our customers value receiving services from friendly, knowledgeable, courteous and considerate staff, and they also want to receive services in the ways that suits their individual needs at a time that suits them. Coupled with this is the imperative upon all organisations, but especially those using public funds, to provide services quickly, efficiently and effectively.

Customer Access - Broad Principles

- 3.6 The findings from the 2009 review of customer access to tenancy management services were formed into 10 broad principles which provide a basis for the service to change and develop. The aims are to improve the experience of customers contacting the service and ensure that enquiries are resolved 'right first time' or 'once and done'. These principles are:
- 1) Housing management should provide an effective and efficient service that meets residents' needs
 - 2) Current ways of working need to change as they are resource intensive and do not always deliver what residents want
 - 3) All residents should be able to easily access the service
 - 4) There should be a range of ways for residents to contact the service
 - 5) Administrative functions should be organised to reduce waste and avoid duplication
 - 6) Housing Officers should have a proactive role focused on providing support and tackling problems as early as possible
 - 7) Housing Officers should spend less time on administration and more time with residents and taking care of their neighbourhood
 - 8) Support should be targeted at those who need it most
 - 9) It is possible to improve service delivery whilst reducing costs
 - 10) Residents and staff should be involved in developing and delivering change and improvement
- 3.7 Within this area of work we are looking at all the ways in which customers access our services. Our aim to achieve a variety of choice for residents that enable them to contact us using the method they prefer, and at a time of their choosing. In doing this, we have to make sure that all channels provide an excellent customer service that meets our customers demands in a professional, complete and timely way.

The new Housing Centre

- 3.8 The council has signed the lease for a building in Moulsecoomb (Unit 1, Fairway Trading Estate, Eastergate Road, Brighton) which will enable us to improve accommodation for staff and service delivery for residents. Work can now start on developing the building so that it meets the needs of the service and the Repairs & Improvement Partnership.

- 3.9 The Housing Centre will bring a number of benefits which include:
- An area for residents where they can access resources and hold meetings
 - Modern office accommodation
 - Onsite training facilities and meeting rooms
 - Co-location of supply chain partner with on-site stores
 - The opportunity to locate back office functions together in a single office rather
- 3.10 The centre will be an important factor in how we can organise the Housing Management service to deliver customer focussed improvements. The building is large and therefore brings the potential to co-locate a number of housing teams along with Mears staff, and further develop communication, cross-team working and partnering relationships. The Repairs Desk will also move from their location in Bartholomew House to the Housing Centre enabling these staff to work more closely with the Property & Investment and Mears teams to resolve issues more quickly and effectively than current arrangements allow.

‘A Council the City Deserves’

- 3.11 As part of the overall transformation of the council taking place under the banner ‘A council the city deserves’, Housing Management staff are working with staff from other service areas in order to provide an improved and more consistent approach to customer service across the city. This involves creating consistent standards for customer service and reception areas across council services, looking at ways of improving the experience of customers contacting the organisation and improving access to services via the internet.
- 3.12 Part of this corporate approach involves looking at opportunities to link up services and share offices. This has the advantages of providing customers with access to a range of services at a single point, as well as achieving financial savings. The council is also looking at ways of using libraries as community contact points where people can access a range of information about local services, and be assisted by specially trained Libraries staff to access a range of services via the internet. This could have significant benefits for residents who do not have access to computers at home or need support to use the internet.

Co-location at the Lavender Street Housing Office

- 3.13 As part of these council-wide changes and improvements, Housing Management have been looking at an opportunity to share Lavender Street Housing Office with the Children’s and Young People’s Trust. Residents should notice little difference in the service they receive as local area housing staff will continue to be based in the office. It will however, be an opportunity to provide access to a wider range of services from this location and improve public phone and computer provision within the reception area.

Improving customer service

- 3.14 Most customers contact us by phone, so for many it might be the only experience they have of our service. It is therefore important that we get it right, as a poor service leaves a lasting impression. We currently run five mini call centres and five face-to-face customer service points from our housing offices, and this has proven to be resource intensive particularly during less busy times.
- 3.15 One way of improving the experience of customers that is being looked at by the service is to reduce the number of public telephone numbers used by the service. Currently there are many different numbers that customers use for contacting tenancy management services, for example enquiring about a rent account, reporting neighbour nuisance and enquiring about transfer request etc. This can cause confusion for residents who are not always clear who they should contact about a particular issue. It is also an expensive way to organise the service as each phone-line and reception needs to be staffed in working hours.
- 3.16 Housing Management would like to create a single phone number for accessing all tenancy management services which will be answered by a dedicated team. This team would be given the training and authority to deal with the majority of enquiries when they are first received. The council would use telecoms technology to ensure that calls are routed effectively and answered as quickly as possible. Trials at Selsfield Drive housing office have shown that over 80% of enquires can be resolved on first contact when staff are trained and empowered to do so.

Housing Offices

- 3.17 As part of the review, the way that housing offices respond to face to face and telephone enquiries will be examined. In the past a full range of services to residents were provided from housing offices and most enquires could therefore be resolved by calling or dropping into the local office. However, over the last 10 or so years this has changed significantly with services such as repairs, income management, garages and car parks, anti-social behaviour and lettings being provided by specialist teams who cover the whole city and are based at one location rather than across the local offices. This means that housing offices are not able to resolve many of the issues that they did in the past. Residents who call in to see or speak to their Housing Officer are often unable to as they are only on duty for certain periods and often out of the office visiting people in their homes, attending meetings or working on the estates. This can lead to frustration for residents calling or dropping into offices, but also means that a lot of staff and resident time is taken up dealing with enquiries that are not directed to the most appropriate place for a response.
- 3.18 In order to look at how we can better use housing offices the council is examining what happens when people contact a housing office either by phone or in person and looking at how effective our response is. Whilst we wish to continue to provide opportunities for residents to talk directly to their Housing Officers and other staff this may be better provided by appointment and ensuring that it is simple to contact an officer who can immediately

resolve a particular issue directly by telephone, internet or email. Any changes would need to consider the needs of vulnerable residents who require support to access services, and would also need to make provision for resolving emergency situations quickly and effectively.

- 3.19 There is an increasing national trend of encouraging payments for goods, services and utilities through cost effective methods and at times that best suit customers. The service would like to further promote the full range of methods that tenants can use to make rent and household insurance payments.

Next Steps

- 3.20 The work will continue with the review group reporting on their findings and suggestions for service improvements. The changes to Lavender Street should be in place for January 2011. The service will continue to work with Libraries and other services on the community contact point pilot. The service will look at how best to simplify telephone and internet access and how staff can be best organised in order to ensure that enquires are resolved as quickly as possible. There will be a particular focus on using the new Housing Centre to improve service provision and value for money.
- 3.21 Progress and further decisions will be reported to future meetings of Housing Management Consultative Committee.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Residents will be involved in the development of customer access improvements through working groups drawn from Mystery Shopping volunteers. The group of twenty mystery shoppers comprises some elected tenant representatives, including members of the Housing Management Consultative Committee, and other that have not been involved before. They have already reviewed the Repairs Helpdesk twice (before and after the new partnership with Mears). They have also tested the service provided by housing office receptions.
- 4.2 There has also been opportunities for residents to be involved when officers are observing enquires as part of their review. Wider residents will be informed of developments through communications such as 'Homing In'.
- 4.3 Staff and trade unions will be involved throughout the review process and consulted about any resulting changes that effect them.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The implementation of recommendations 1 and 2 will be met within existing Housing Revenue Account budgets and staff resources.

The co-location of staff from Children & Young People's Trust (CYPT) will bring efficiency savings of approximately £0.090 million per annum.

The continuing work of reviewing access to housing management services and the review of rent payment methods will be met within existing HRA resources and any financial implications resulting from these reviews will be reported back to this committee.

Finance Officer: Susie Allen, Principal Accountant Date: 9.09.10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are no significant legal or Human Rights Act implications arising from the report's recommendations.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley, Senior Lawyer Date: 14.09.10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 A draft Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will be agreed before any proposals are implemented. It is important that equalities implications are considered in any changes to customer access. Changing and improving customer access has the potential to affect those with disabilities and others who can find it difficult to access services. The needs of people for whom English is not a first language will also be considered.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Sustainability implications of any changes to customer access need to be considered. This should include the potential to reduce the service's carbon emissions and increase the use of access channels with the lowest environmental impact.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Freeing up Housing Officer's time by improving customer access processes and arrangements has the potential to enable them spend more time out on estates which may reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 A risk analysis will be undertaken to identify key risks and their mitigation.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Changes and improvements to customer access arrangements in Housing Management need to be considered in a corporate context. The close links between this project and the second phase of the council's 'A council the city deserves' work and will enable the outcomes of our projects to be coordinated with corporate developments.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The review of customer access will consider different options for the future customer access arrangements for Housing Management.
- 6.2 If the review was not undertaken arrangements would remain in their current state which is not always effective, efficient or meeting all customers needs.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To inform HMCC of progress and gain agreement on the broad principles and recommendations in this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

- 1. Table detailing current customer access arrangements for Housing Management.

Current Customer Access arrangements in Housing Management

Team	Services provided
Housing Offices (Five offices covering different geographical areas - taking telephone, face to face and email enquiries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Housing Management enquires • Transfer requests • Complaints about noise/anti-social behaviour etc. • Rent payments
Repairs Desk (Based in Bartholomew House - taking telephone and email enquiries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair requests • Repair progress request • Planned maintenance enquiries
Whitehawk Repairs Base (Local office staffed by Mears – Face to face and telephone enquiries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot scheme with local office where residents in Whitehawk can report and discuss repairs issues
Income Management Team (Based in Bartholomew House - taking telephone and email enquiries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent arrears enquires • Requests for support or advice about rent account and finances
Sheltered Housing (Wardens and central team based in schemes and Oxford Street Housing Office – telephone and face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wardens deal with day-today issues • Central team deal with transfer requests and other issues which can't resolved on local level
Lettings Team (Based at Manor Road Housing Office – taking telephone, face to face and email enquiries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request and enquiries about let viewing properties and moving
Car Park & Garages Team (Based at Lavender Street Housing Office – taking telephone, face to face and email enquiries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for car parking spaces and garages • Repairs • Accounts and arrears • Related issues e.g. enforcement
Estate Services Team (Based in Hollingdean Depot – take referrals from Housing Offices and repairs Desk; also direct referrals from the public, mostly by phone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning of common areas • Cleaning of graffiti • Clearance of fly tipping • Lock changes • Emergency break-ins • Minor repairs • Estate improvements

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 38

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Mobility scooter storage
Date of Meeting: 27 September 2010
Report of: Acting Director of Housing
Contact Officer: Name: Robert Keelan Tel: 29-3261
E-mail: Robert.Keelan@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 There has been a steady increase in the number of mobility scooters kept in common ways of flats. Brighton and Hove city council is working with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to keep communal landings as safe as possible.
- 1.2 The council is obliged under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to carry out risk assessments in our common ways. These assessments have highlighted mobility scooters to be a fire hazard. The fire service and the council are working together to ensure that anything that can catch fire or be a trip hazard in a smoke filled environment is removed. This includes mobility scooters. See appendix three.
- 1.3 Officers and tenant representatives have explored a number of storage options for residents to ensure residents have access to mobility aids whilst ensuring that neighbouring residents are safe in a fire.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) To consult and seek comments from members of the Housing Management Consultative Committee on the proposals to:
 - Build external stores where planning considerations allow and where there is known demand.
 - Convert, where appropriate, miscellaneous rooms for scooter storage in consultation with local residents.
- (2) To note that a policy on the use of mobility scooters for residents of Council housing is being developed. A draft policy will be presented to a future meeting of Housing Management Consultative Committee. See 3.10 below.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS.

3.1 The city of Brighton & Hove has a significant ageing population. 8.6% of residents are age 75 or over, with 2.6% age 85 or over.

3.2 In Brighton and Hove council stock, the age of our tenants indicates we are above the city average. The 2006 tenant census advised

18-24	5%
25-34	10%
35-44	16%
45-54	14%
55-64	16%
65-74	16%
75-84	15%
Over 85	5%

3.3 The aging population, increased independence and easy availability of scooter purchase has seen the number of scooters kept on communal landings increase in recent years. Mobility scooters are not age restricted but the above statistics give an indication of a future requirement.

3.4 Mobility scooters are becoming cheaper in real terms and more people are choosing to purchase them as a means to access their local communities. In turn the council has received increasing requests for provision of suitable charging and storage facilities.

3.5 Problems can occur where residents of existing properties become dependent on mobility scooters but have nowhere to store them. Residents may have differing reliance on mobility scooters varying from those who require them as their only means of getting out, and those who may choose to have one, at least initially, more so as a matter of convenience.

3.6 Fires such as the 2009 Lakanal House fire in Camberwell where six residents died have given an increased emphasis on fire safety. There have been further serious fires in the last year in high rise blocks of flats in Southampton where two fire fighters died and most recently in Kingston, London (no fatalities).

3.7 There have been arson attacks on mobility scooters in Rugby this year where two residents died. In this case, scooters parked outside a block of flats but adjacent to an individual flat door were set fire to.

3.8 There are two basic solutions for scooter storage – internal or external.

3.9 Internal storage can be in the form of

- Allocating small miscellaneous cupboards on estates for individual use
- Allocating larger miscellaneous rooms for communal scooter storage
- Sectioning off areas under stairs adding fire resistant doors (making a cupboard out of an empty space)
- Sectioning off areas of wide corridors

The location of any storage also needs to be looked at very carefully to ensure that it does not obstruct fire escape routes or introduce fire hazards. Where internal storage areas are being considered that form part of a potential escape route, it is not appropriate for scooters to be 'tucked away' or the corridor to be wide enough to pass. We need to remove all potential fire, arson or trip hazards that the scooter may cause.

- 3.10 External storage can be in the form of
- Individual scooter stores, purpose built or manufactured
 - Group scooter stores, purpose built or manufactured
- 3.11 Before building any stores for scooter users, scooter users would be visited by their Housing Officer to look at their needs, whether they would be able to or want to use the store and whether there are any internal spaces within the block of flats that could be adapted. Door widening to enable a scooter to be safely kept in a flat would also be considered. Housing Officers can also explore alternative housing options should the mobility of the tenant be such that there is a wish to consider alternative accommodation. As part of this process the Housing Officer would liaise with the Occupational Therapy team.
- 3.12 The council is developing a policy on the use of mobility scooters for residents of council housing. A draft policy will be presented to a future meeting of Housing Management Consultative Committee. The policy would include guidance for Officers on
- Legal requirements of fire safety
 - The role of the housing team and the occupational therapy and adaptations team
 - Internal and external storage options
 - What to discuss with residents on deciding the best storage options
 - How to progress a storage scheme
 - The management of stores and waiting lists
- 3.13 In the meantime, it is recommended that all tenants who are considering purchasing a mobility scooter should consider the issues of charging and storage prior to purchase and where issues may be present should discuss these with their Housing Officer and/or Occupational Therapist. This is to prevent difficulties arising once a purchase has been made.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A project working group is established with representatives from the Tenant Disability Network and the Sheltered Housing Action Group. These groups nominated two representatives each to this sub-group but they have not been formally elected through area panels.
- 4.2 Other registered social landlords were researched and have policies as follows

Lewes District Council

"In most circumstances users should ensure they have sufficient space inside their home to store a scooter. If you are unable to walk to your flat from the outside an exception may be made but only with the approval of where it will be stored and subject to any health and safety considerations"

Eastbourne Homes

“We will discourage the use of mobility scooters in communal corridors... Any fine on Eastbourne Homes will be recharged to the perpetrator. Failure to comply will be a breach of tenancy and you will be asked to remove the scooter from the scheme permanently.

A scooter can only be stored or charged in the internal communal area if a specifically designed area has been set aside for this purpose. Where designated internal areas have been provided, residents must comply with all Health and Safety regulations”

Worthing Homes

“We are having purpose built buggy stores built. The residents rent them for £5.00 a week, this covers the cost of electricity and some towards the building costs... If a resident does not want to pay for this we insist that if they want a buggy they must house it in their own flats. “

Leeds and Yorkshire Housing Association

“Mobility scooters within schemes or blocks must not be stored in corridors, staircases, or ideally in communal areas, where they may cause an obstruction or block a fire escape route – they should be stored in residents’ flats”

Centre for Sheltered Housing Studies

“Organisations should provide facilities as mobility scooters provide a means of enabling people with mobility problems remaining independent. One option would be to build a “garage” to provide a dedicated storage area with charging facilities. Options would be to only charge those residents who use the storage facilities or to provide them free of charge and effectively pool the cost by charging all residents”

5 CONSIDERATIONS

5.1.1 Electricity

All scooter stores need an electricity supply. Scooters are currently charged either

- a) Off the common ways without financial contribution
- b) From an extension lead from an individual tenant or leaseholder’s property.

To provide a new individual metered supply to a scooter store, EDF energy advise that this would cost would be between £1000.00 and £2500.00 per store.

Stores could however have a supply run off the common ways for a much smaller cost and could pay for electricity used back to the block of flat’s electricity budget.

A typical scooter would use an expected £5.00 per month in electricity charging. More research with scooter users and manufacturers is required before this figure is confirmed.

5.1.2 Planning

Any structures that are built externally need planning permission.

The planning office have advised that any stores should be discreet and in keeping with the building that they would be placed at; a square block of flats should consider square storage units etc.

All sites will require an individual planning application and when granted, will be valid for 5 years. It is thought that if a site needed one external scooter store, that planning should be obtained for more stores to prevent further planning applications expense within the five year period.

5.1.3 Insurance

Mobility scooters under the council's Royal and Sun Alliance policy are covered as an 'add-on' to a standard insurance policy for additional cost and are then covered for loss or damage if stored either individually or communally.

5.1.4 Quantity

In July 2010, the five area housing offices and the sheltered team were asked for their priority sites that require scooter stores. 84 stores were identified. See appendix one

In August 2010, the list was sent to all resident's association for their comments. Note that many of the sites identified are for one or two stores. There are economies of scale for building more than one store at a time, i.e. building them in a row of four (one concrete base / shared walls / doing electricity supply at once etc) and this would seem sensible to meet future demand.

To build in addition to the known demand would future proof schemes enabling provision to be on site before they were needed. If we only built stores in rows of four, the number required would rise to 128 stores.

5.1.5 Cost

In considering external stores, the working group preferred the style of store as per appendix two feeling that maintenance would be minimised with the product being durable and long lasting. The indicative cost of a scooter store similar to appendix two would be £1027 for a single store and £3460 for a row of four stores (equivalent of £865 each). The cost of a concrete base is approximately £65 per square meter. The cost of an electrical extension will depend on the siting of the store in relation to the building and the planning application would be £170.

Summary for a row of 4

• Build	3460.00
• Planning	170.00
• Electrician estimate	250.00
• Concrete base 12m2	780.00
Total	4660.00

5.1.6 Management

The council's car parks and garages team would rent the scooter stores out and manage the rent accounts.

If a row of scooter stores was built and not fully rented by scooter users, the units would be offered as secure storage to other residents pending a scooter user requiring it (bicycles / motorbikes etc). Any waiting lists would be managed by this team. Stores would be rented on a weekly licence agreement in the same way that council garages are.

As everyone who required a store would have self-identified mobility needs, allocations would be made in date order.

6 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 6.1 The current indicative cost per scooter store is £1165 or £4660 for four. Assuming a build of 128 stores (with future proofing), this would cost a total of £144,000 capital expenditure and £5,500 from revenue. The 2010/11 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme includes £100,000 for scooter storage solutions with a further £100,000 included for 2011/12. The revenue expenditure will need to be met from existing budgets within the HRA. Capital expenditure would need to be spread over the two year period in order to match the capital resources available.
- 6.2 In order to ensure that these stores are cost neutral to the HRA revenue budget, and to ensure that only users of such stores will pay for them, a service charge will need to be set up for users to ensure recovery of capital building costs, revenue maintenance and electricity. Any service pressures arising as a result of storage units being un-let in the short term, will need to be managed within the current budget constraints of the HRA and reported as part of the regular Targeted Budget Management (TBM) reporting process. If large numbers of these units were left empty, the lack of service charge income could lead to service pressures for the HRA.
- 6.3 Using estimated costs in this report, indications are that the service charge will be in the region of £4.60 per week for an external storage unit including electricity. Where internal spaces are used for storage, service charges would vary, but in general are likely to be much lower. Where a storage unit is used without the need for electricity, the service charge is estimated at £3.30. Advice to date states that this service charge will not be eligible for Housing Benefit.

- 6.4 A detailed costing of individual service charges will need to be undertaken once the design and number of stores is finalised, and the average cost of electricity per unit is confirmed. A further report to this Committee will then be necessary to agree the service charges.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks, Principal Accountant
Date: 31st August 2010*

Legal Implications:

- 6.5 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 imposes obligations on the Council as the responsible person for the common parts of flats to ensure that emergency routes and exits are clear at all times in order to safeguard the safety of residents. It is an offence for any responsible person to fail to comply with that obligation where that failure places one or more persons at risk of death or serious injury in case of fire. The offence may be tried in the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court. Upon conviction, the Crown Court can impose an unlimited fine or up to 2 years imprisonment, or both. The measures proposed in the report will assist the council in discharging its obligations under the Order. The acquisition of the stores will need to be in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley
Date: 12th August 2010*

Equalities Implications:

- 6.6 The report seeks to gain a balance between the safety of all residents and those who have age or physical mobility restrictions and their wish to keep a scooter outside of their property in the common ways.

Before building any stores for scooter users, scooter users would be visited by their Housing Officer to look at their needs, whether they would be able to use the store and whether there are any internal rooms in the flats that could be adapted. Door widening to enable a scooter to be kept in a flat would also be looked into. Housing Officers can also discuss Housing Options should the mobility of the tenant be such that they need to consider more supported accommodation.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.7 The choice of materials will be considered prior to building or tendering for any stores. The possibility of solar panels for the stores to charge the scooters will also be explored and relate to the rental charge.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 6.8 There have been attempted thefts of mobility scooters on our estates. The report follows from arson attacks in Rugby this year where mobility scooters were set on fire. See 3.4 above.

The choice of building materials will need to deter crime and stores will need to be secure.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 6.9 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 6.10 None

7. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 7.1 Residents can keep mobility scooters inside their properties where accessible.

- 7.2 Mobility scooters are not an adaptation recommended by the occupational health service who would recommend a powered wheelchair that can more readily fit inside resident's homes and access public transport.

- 7.3 Many residents need mobility aids close by. Providing suitable storage would allow residents to transfer from crutches or a wheelchair leaving this in the store when taking the mobility scooter out (see 6.6 above).

- 7.4 Some blocks of flats on the attached list are small low rise blocks where the scooter user is likely to live on the ground floor. There will therefore be a number of blocks of flats where a row of four stores wouldn't be appropriate and one or two stores would be considered in these locations.

- 7.5 The council has 2 sheltered schemes that have mobility scooters that are accessible by all residents. The working group did not explore this option further based on

- The physical size of the user varying and the size of the scooter this would require
- The scheme not being easily transferrable for general needs accommodation (demand for scooters is less)
- Promoting choice and independence for individuals
- The management of booking systems, insurance and maintenance

- 7.6 This said, there are no plans to discourage the schemes which operate in this manner.

- 7.7 Scooter storage space outside high rise flats is limited and the area available to place stores needs to be considered. Today the numbers are relatively small but they are likely to grow and it could be that in the longer term, these schemes

become economical and appropriate as the number of scooter users increases in our general needs stock.

8. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To consult and seek comments from members of the Housing Management Consultative Committee on the proposal to build external stores where planning considerations allow and where there is known demand. To convert miscellaneous rooms for scooter storage in consultation with local residents.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

- A) List of priority sites
- B) Preferred scooter storage style
- C) Fire service guidance

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

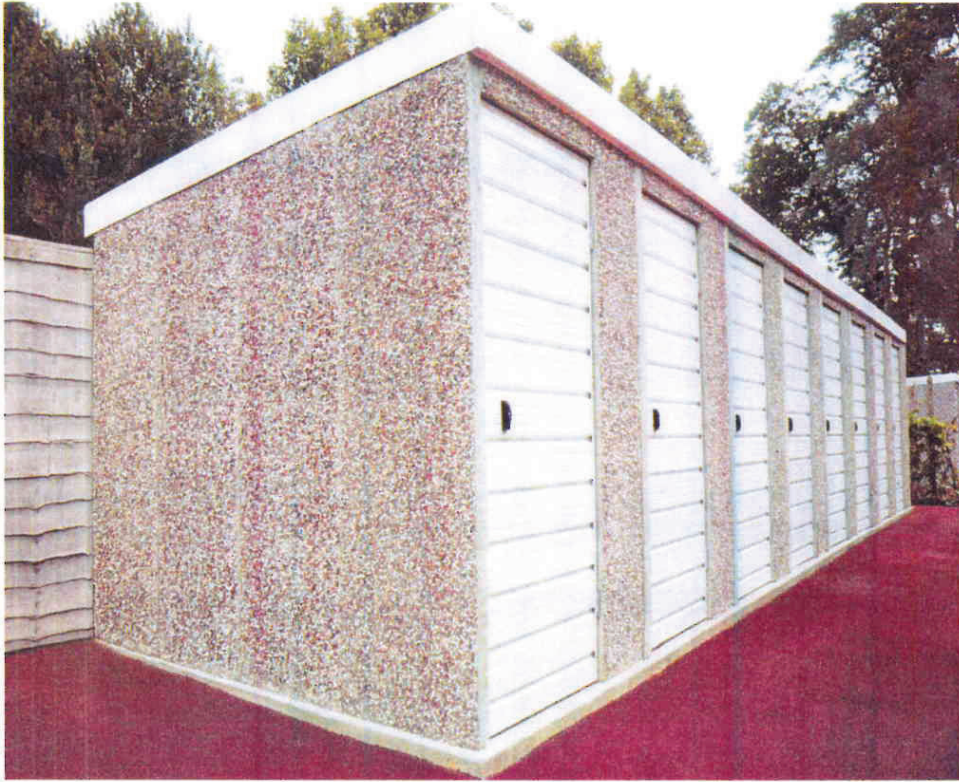
Appendix One

Required sites

	Area	Number	Indicative number if built in rows of 4
1	Leach Court	10	12
2	Muriel House	6	8
3	Southeast	4	4
4	Walter May house	4	4
5	31 – 36 Woburn Place	3	4
6	13 – 18 Selsfield Drive	1	4
7	Fitch Drive	1	4
8	15 Stapley Court	1	4
9	Hampshire Court	2	4
10	Clarke Court	2	4
11	Robert Lodge	2	4
12	Normanhurst	2	4
13	Richmond Heights	2	4
14	Saxonbury	2	4
15	Thornsedale	2	4
16	Ecclesdon	2	4
17	299 Selsfield Drive	1	4
18	Ardingly Court	8	8
19	Wiltshire House	4	4
20	Hereford Court	6	8
21	St James House	3	4
22	Malthouse Court	3	4
23	May Road flats	2	4
24	Ingram Crescent	8	8
25	385 Kingsway	2	4
26	Downland Court	1	4
27			
28			
29			
30			
	Total	84	128

Appendix 2

Example stores





Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
Brighton & Hove Fire Safety Office
English Close, Hove
East Sussex, BN3 7EE

Telephone: (01323) 462130
Switchboard: (0845) 130 8855
Fax: (01273) 746952

In the case of emergency please dial 999
Email: brightonandhove.firesafety@esfrs.org

Mr Daniel Gray
Oxford Street Housing Office
20-22 Oxford Street
Brighton
BN1 4LA

8 December 2009

please ask for
Yannick Dubois

our ref
YD/JMG 18689

your ref

Dear Sir,

**REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005
PREMISES: COMMON WAYS, JUBILEE COURT, THE CRESCENT, BRIGHTON**

Following our telephone conversation, I am writing to you to state the Fire Authority's position regarding mobility scooters.

The means of escape in sleeping accommodation must remain sterile. Mobility scooters present a significant fire hazard and they have already been responsible for a number of fires across the UK and should not be stored in the means of escape.

The storage of mobility scooters should be assessed in your fire safety risk assessment. The following points should be taken into consideration when doing your assessment:

Largely the type of battery that the scooter has and the style of the scooter govern the storage of mobility scooters.

- If the scooter is a "fold-up" type, it can be stored in the individual's property;
- Many scooters have sealed-cell batteries and potentially these can be stored in communal areas (but not means of escape). There are no fire regulations that relate directly to such batteries;
- Occasionally scooters have a chemical battery, in which case it cannot be stored in communal areas;
- An outdoor storage area would be ideal. If there is an area that may be suitable, then this should be considered for use in the future;
- A trained member of staff on the individual schemes should carry out a risk assessment. The assessment should consider the manufacturer's information, including the age, model and condition of the scooter;

Con'd

For home Fire Safety advice visit
www.firekills.gov.uk



- 2 -

- The scooter must be serviced regularly and this is the responsibility of the owner;
- If the scooters cannot be charged in an outdoor area, all charging must be carried out inside the flat by removing the battery and taking it inside the individual flat. In addition batteries must be removed from scooters when the residents are at home to prevent them catching fire. This essentially removes the ignition source;
- Charging of the batteries should be carried out in the day if possible on schemes. Scooters should not be left on charge overnight.

These are some of the conditions you should take into consideration. Could you please forward to this office the fire safety risk assessment regarding this issue for Jubilee Court and I trust you will also be looking at all your sheltered housing schemes where mobility scooters are stored.

Should you require further advice or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address.

Yours faithfully



**FIRE SAFETY OFFICER
FOR CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 39

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Management Performance Report (Quarter 1)
Date of Meeting: 27 September 2010
Report of: Acting Director of Housing
Contact Officer: Name: John Austin Locke Tel: 29-1008
E-mail: John.austin-locke@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This is the Quarter 1 report for Housing Management performance for the year 2010-2011.

1.2 As a result of a review of benchmarking by HouseMark and the introduction of a new single National Club comparative data is not available in the format used to date. How best this new data might inform future reports is being investigated and will be commented upon in the Quarter 2 report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee comment on the contents of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1.0 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

Indicator	Past performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV66a Rent Collection	98.16%	98.29%	98.37%	98.68%	98.86%
BV66a Rent Collection (Central housing area)	98.35%	98.32%	98.37%	99.03%	99.24%
BV66a Rent Collection (East housing area)	97.73%	98.00%	98.15%	98.13%	98.25%
BV66a Rent Collection (North housing area)	98.35%	98.47%	98.48%	98.82%	98.96%
BV66a Rent Collection (West housing area)	98.43%	98.47%	98.56%	99.12%	99.32%
BV66a Rent Collection (Temp. Acc.)	97.07%	98.65%	94.42%	96.95%	Not set
BV66b Those with arrears of more than 7 weeks	6.40%	4.91%	4.15%	4.13%	3.72%
BV66c The NOSP figure	30.35%	26.97%	7.42%	23.80%	22.39%
BV66d The eviction figure (% tenants evicted for rent arrears)	0.16%	0.12%	0.02%	less than 35 evictions per annum: 0.29%	
% rent lost due to voids	1.33%	2.05%	2.10%	To be set	
Total former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temporary Accommodation)	£784,753	£780,280	£674,487	£650,000	£625,000
% Collection rate for former tenant arrears	28.70%	22.88%	16.14%	20%	20%
% of Write-offs for former tenant arrears	18.66%	9.30%	2.36%	To be set	
Total recharge debt	£95,884	£190,138	£191,648	£272,110	
% Collection rate for recharges	31.26%	19.63%	13.13%	20%	
% Leaseholder recovery rate	80%	84%	67%	85%	85%
% Leaseholder recovery rate on recoverable arrears	90%	92%	Not collected quarterly	90%	90%

3.1.1 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

BVPI66a

The collection rate continues to improve and the forecast at the end of June 2010 was 98.37% compared to 98.16% at the end of Quarter 1 2009/10.

BVPI66b

At the end of Quarter 1 2010/11 the percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks arrears was 4.15%, a reduction of 1.49% since Quarter 1 2009/10.

BVPI66c

Between April and June 2010 the number of tenants served with a Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) was 199. The continuous improvement in the collection rate demonstrates the effectiveness of prompt action in the prevention of arrears.

BVPI66d

At the same time the eviction rate remained low with only three households being evicted for rent arrears in Quarter 1 2010/11, the same number of as were evicted in Quarter 1 of 2009/10.

3.1.2 Former Tenant Arrears

There has been a further reduction of £105,793 in former tenant arrears since the end of March 2010 resulting in a Quarter 1 collection rate of 16.14%.

3.1.3 Recharges

The amount of recharge debt raised between April 2010 and June 2010 was £38,134 which represents an additional 55 cases which were recharged for the cost of repairs due to deliberate damage or neglect and with an average recharge debt of £649.

Since the financial year 2009/2010 there has been a substantially increased focus on recharging where appropriate. This has been brought about by an improved understanding with the contractor on items that should be recharged. There has been an increase in the amount collected between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 from £30,000 to £37,000. However this improved figure is set against an increase in the overall debt owed in respect of recharges brought about by a more vigorous approach to recharging former tenants' for damage and expense incurred because of their actions. We will continue to work with contractors to ensure that such expenses are recharged appropriately and not accepted as a debt to the repairs budget. At the same time we will continue to develop our methods of collection to maximise recovery.

3.1.4 Percentage leaseholder recovery rate on gross debt

3.1.5 The gross collection rate includes all arrears including historic debt, amounts where payment arrangements have been agreed, disputed charges and cases where legal recovery is taking place. The 84% collection rate in 2009/10 was the best collection rate we have recorded. The 67% rate reported for Quarter 1 is the start of a process through the whole year – a quarter's figure in terms of leaseholders service charge arrears cannot be compared with the end-of-year recovery rate. The collection rate in general can be affected quite seriously by the level of major works charges levied during the course of the period.

3.1.6 Percentage leaseholder recoverable arrears

3.1.7 'Recoverable arrears' omits debts where payment arrangements or charging orders have been made, those that are formally in dispute, or where legal recovery action is being taken. This figure is only calculated annually.

3.2.0 Sheltered Housing

3.2.1 Annual Support Plans

3.2.2 Every resident should have a personalised support plan, reviewed each year by their scheme manager.

Total Data	Target	Current Quarter April – June 2010	Last Quarter Jan-March 2010
% people with an up to date support plan	100%	76.5%	76%
% people who decline a support plan	0%	4%	4%

3.2.3 There has been a period of recruitment of new Scheme Managers and in addition staffing levels have been increased at the four largest schemes; Elwyn Jones Court, Leach Court, Laburnham Grove and Somerset Point. Further recruitment of staff is also anticipated and this will allow us to improve further on the percentages above.

3.2.4 Every new resident should have a personalised support plan, completed within 21 days of moving into their home by their Scheme Manager. There has been an increase in performance in this area. Support planning remains a key priority for sheltered housing, particularly for new residents.

	Target	Current Quarter April – June 2010	Last Quarter Jan-March 2010
% new residents with a support plan completed within 21 days	100%	79%	53%

3.2.5 During this period customer satisfaction slips were returned as follows:

How satisfied are you with the following? (returns)	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Support Planning (30)	15 (50%)	10 (33%)	2 (7%)		3 (10%)
Helpfulness of Staff (36)	25 (69%)	7 (19%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Social Activities (31)	14 (45%)	8 (26%)	5 (16%)	3 (3%)	1 (3%)
Scheme Appearance (35)	16 (46%)	14 (40%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	
Garden Appearance (33)	14 (42%)	11 (33%)	4 (12%)	2 (6.5%)	2 (6.5%)
Cleanliness in scheme (37)	26 (70%)	8 (22%)	2 (5%)		1 (3%)
CareLink (35)	16 (46%)	12 (34%)	4 (11%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)

In response to a question on overall satisfaction with the service 81% declared themselves as either satisfied or very satisfied

3.3.0 Empty Property Turnaround Time

Indicator	Past performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV212 average re-let times in days (all properties)	28	25.5	16	24	22
General needs	25	23	15	24	22
Sheltered	38	38	22	24	

3.3.1 Performance for this quarter on empty property turnaround is 16 days. This is an excellent result for the team who have strived to ensure properties are let as soon as possible despite staff shortages.

3.3.2 To improve the re-let time for sheltered properties, some of which have shared facilities, we are setting up open days for applicants so that they can view various schemes prior to making a bid. There has also been an impact from the Sheltered Local Lettings Plan, whereby existing tenants have a priority to move either to a flat on a lower floor, one that is already suitably adapted or to a larger flat i.e. studio to one bedroom. There will be a separate report for HMCC analysing the impact of Local Lettings Plan setting out the benefits to our customers, the benefits to local communities and the impact on re-let times.

3.3.3 For information we are considering taking digital photographic identification during the sign up process to help us to more easily detect any incidents of sub letting or tenancy fraud. A separate report will be coming to this Committee for further discussion and agreement.

3.4.0 Repairs and Improvements – Performance Quarter 1

Repairs and Improvements - Performance 2010/11	Past Performance 08/09	End of Year Performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future Targets
				10/11
Emergency repairs completed in time	96.8 % 98.48 % (Mears) 94.49 % (Kier)	98.4%	98.3%	97%
No. of emergency repairs completed	7,755 4,414 (Mears) 3,341 (Kier)	5,418	1,539	N/A
Urgent repairs completed in time	92.53 % 95.35 % (Mears) 89.18 % (Kier)	97.6%	91.4%	97%
No. of urgent repairs completed	4,391 2,388 (Mears) 2,005 (Kier)	4,336	1,866	N/A
Routine repairs completed within target time	96.01 % 97.86 % (Mears) 93.53 % (Kier)	98.9%	99.9%	97%
No. of routine repairs completed	19,697 11,305 (Mears) 8,419 (Kier)	21,121	3,314	N/A
BV72 Right to Repair orders completed within target time	96.87 %	98.3%	98.46 %	97%
BV73	15 days	12 days	8 days	15 days

Repairs and Improvements - Performance 2010/11	Past Performance 08/09	End of Year Performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future Targets
				10/11
Av. time to complete routine repairs				
RR5 % of appointments kept	98.4%	99.8%	92.96%	95%
NI158 % of council homes that are non-decent	48.89%	39.48%	36.9%	26% (2011/12 - 12%)
BV63 Energy efficiency (SAP rating)	75.9*	75.9	76.3	76.7
LPI G3 Citywide % of stock with up to date gas safety certificates	99.61%	99.68%	99.64%	100%
Mears area	99.49 %	99.74%	99.6%	100%
PH Jones area	99.78 %	99.61%	99.7%	100%

3.5.1 Responsive repairs

The new 10 year partnership with Mears Group has delivered a good level of performance over Quarter 1. Over 1,500 emergency repairs were completed with 98% of these completed within the target of 24 hours.

Performance on urgent repairs was initially below target in the first month of the partnership but following good scrutiny and agreed actions by the partnership the performance has now improved with 97% of urgent repairs completed within 3 days in May and 98% in June. This means that over the whole quarter 91% of urgent repairs were completed within three days. This continued improvement means that overall performance for the year to date is expected to reach the 97% target by the end of Quarter 2.

Over 3,000 routine repairs were carried out in Quarter 1 of 2010/11 and 99.9% of these were completed within the target of 20 working days.

Mears are surveying residents by telephone following the completion of works to their homes. Over Quarter 1, 1,188 residents were contacted and 1,135 or 96% of residents rated the service as satisfactory or very satisfactory.

On average repairs are being completed within eight days of residents contacting the new Mears Repairs Desk. Residents have recently carried out a mystery shopping exercise with the repairs desk and the council and Mears will be working together to further improve the service with this useful feedback.

3.5.2 Decent Homes and SAP (energy efficiency rating)

The first year of our three year investment programme has been agreed with residents and is now underway. The programme includes replacing kitchens, bathrooms, doors and carrying out other works such as rewires. Mears have commenced surveys within the city and decent homes work to improve homes has started. The partnership is looking at improved ways of communicating the programmes and providing more detail of where and when works will be carried out. BHCC has its own tenant liaison team that are working with Mears team to get out on site and discuss the programme with residents.

Programmes for the next year are available on our website at:

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-investment-programme>

Over the first quarter the partnership has delivered a 2.6% improvement in decent homes which means that 63.1% or 7,760 of our 12,300 properties meet the standard. Progress in improving homes is a key objective for the partnership and Mears and BHCC are working together to ensure that we achieve our target of having 74% of our homes decent by the end of 2010/11.

3.5.3 Gas servicing

The council, Mears and PH Jones continue to deliver consistently good performance in this area with 99.64% of properties having a current gas safety certificate. There are a total of 34 properties with an overdue safety certificate; all of these have been referred to the council by the constructors and procedures are in place to ensure that all of these properties are accessed and certified. Currently there are no properties with safety checks more than one year overdue. All communal heating systems have a current safety certificate with the exception of two which have been decommissioned.

3.6.0 Estates Service

Indicator	Past performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future targets
				10/11
Completion of cleaning tasks	96%	92%	Not reporting	98.5%
Bulk refuse removal - targets met within timescale	Emergency 77% Routine 84%	Emergency 98.6% Routine 97.3%	Emergency 100% Routine 99%	Emergency 100% Routine 96%
Graffiti removal - Targets met within timescale	Emergency 100% Routine 88%	Emergency 84.3% Routine 75.6%	Emergency 92% Routine 93%	Emergency 100% Routine 96%

- 3.6.1 The cleaning service was restructured last year following consultation with residents with the aim of improving quality of work carried out. The role of Estates Service Business Manager was introduced to the structure to ensure that there is consistency in the work the service carries out; that it meets residents' expectations and also delivers value for money.
- 3.6.2 We no longer count cleaning task completed as a measure of our performance and we will be moving towards a customer satisfaction framework based on:
- Quality checking by managers and residents
 - Feedback from staff, residents and leaseholders
 - Informal complaints, compliments and comments
 - Surveys, telephone, paper based and on-line
 - Estate inspections

We will be using the Housemark Performance Framework and monitoring which has been successful in its pilot stage with the 'Turning the Tide' project.

- 3.6.3 Since April this year we have focused our cleaning service on performance based on resident satisfaction with the quality of our work. We have started consultation with a number of resident groups for our new cleaning standards, which will be displayed in all of the blocks we clean. The feedback from this consultation will shape the information and service that we provide to residents, which will include:
- The standards that can be expected in every block we clean
 - The name of the cleaner and the day we carry out the service
 - The sanctions for non-performance

- 3.6.4 The Neighbourhood Response Team carries out on average 800 jobs per month, including lock changes, communal door repairs, communal light bulb changes, bulk refuse and graffiti removal. These jobs are created from many sources, predominately housing offices, Community Wardens, our estate cleaners and resident groups.

- 3.6.5 Targets for bulk refuse are being achieved with better work planning and improved reporting by staff.

We have failed to meet our targets for graffiti removal but routine removal is improving. The performance in relation to emergency graffiti removal has been affected by the reliability of our specialist vehicle. We are currently exploring the options for replacing the vehicle. In addition training for all staff will be planned this year and a new reporting form for staff which will assist our team in being able to carry our graffiti removal at first visit. Frequently we attend to clean graffiti from already painted surfaces which require additional repainting instead of removal and may result in several trips and attempts to rectify.

- 3.6.6 The amount of bulk refuse continues to increase. Figures for Quarter 1 include the work carried out by the Neighbourhood Response Team in clearing all common ways in line with our fire prevention work.

A more targeted approach to the issue of fly tipping is to be introduced, working with each local housing office on prevention and enforcement measures.

3.6.7 The Neighbourhood Response Team will be keeping detailed information relating to:

- Location
- Type of bulk/fly tipping
- Gross weight and cost to remove

This will allow us to focus on the costs of this service, where we can recharge, take enforcement action and also target ‘hot spot’ areas.

3.7.0 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

3.7.1. Both the city-wide ASB and Tenancy Support teams have been brought together as part of the change in the delivery of housing management services that forms a key aspect of the pilot Social Exclusion Strategy – ‘Turning the Tide’. This was launched in October 2009 and lasts for a period of nine months. More specifically, it is a project targeting anti-social behaviour in Bevendean and Moulsecoomb and is based at the Selsfield Drive Housing Office.

3.7.2 Emphasis is placed on effective outcomes and in order to assess how successful it is, all victims and witnesses will be contacted when a case is closed to determine whether they are satisfied with the way in which the case has been managed.

3.7.3 The intention of the pilot is to ensure that all of the city’s tenants can benefit from the refocused approach to ASB and tenancy sustainment. This includes robust and assertive actions to actively challenge ASB and to ensure that there is consistency city-wide.

3.7.4 As a result of changes brought about through the “Turning the Tide” pilot, the data provided in this report varies from previous reports although the pilot will continue to develop appropriate performance indicators with an emphasis on outcomes.

3.7.5 During Quarter 1 the pilot can report that it has successfully closed five cases, with two cases resulting in eviction. A clear priority of the pilot is to ensure that incidents of anti-social behaviour cease as quickly as possible. Eviction is not an ideal outcome and the pilot aims to use targeted and firm interventions in order to change behaviour whilst maintaining the tenancy wherever possible. The pilot also seeks to ensure sufficient support is provided to victims and witnesses and it is currently in the process of assigning additional staff resources in order to provide an improved support service to residents.

Current high profile ASB cases	Number of new cases	Number of Notices of Seeking Possession served	Number of evictions	Number of closed cases
48	9	6	2	5

3.7.6 The success of the pilot has very much been a result of adopting a multi-agency approach and utilising the various enforcement powers available whilst ensuring that the necessary support is provided for victims, witnesses and perpetrators, who may be presenting with complex needs. The enforcement measures that have been adopted have included a premises closure order in accordance with the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. This ensured a swift cessation in the anti-social behaviour prior to obtaining outright possession of the property through the court.

3.7.7 Other examples of utilising the enforcement options through this approach have included working with the Environmental Health team to obtain a seizure of noise making equipment under the Noise Act 1996. This provided immediate cessation of ongoing noise nuisance. And another case incorporated obtaining an injunction with powers of arrest under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. This, upon breach of the order, resulted in a two month custodial sentence.

3.7.8 Following the closure of the cases from the previous quarter (see below) of all satisfaction questions asked, the percentage of victims of anti-social behaviour either very satisfied or dissatisfied ranged between 60% and 75%, with one response rate of 50%.

Satisfaction	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
How satisfied are you with the way your complaint / case was dealt with?	4	2	2	2	2
How satisfied are you with the outcome of your work with the service?	6	3	1	1	1
How satisfied are you that your case officer was always helpful?	7	1	2	-	2
How satisfied are you that you were kept informed about what was happening throughout your work with the service?	5	3	1	1	2
How satisfied were you with the support given to you by your case officer?	5	3	2	-	2

- 3.7.9 A report specifically focussing on anti-social behaviour and our response to it is due to go to the November HMCC, residents are involved in scrutinising performance in this area through a specific working group (the ASB Focus Group) which first met on 17 May.
- 3.7.10 In addition to the above, suggestions in relation to information on ASB performance etc are welcomed from members of HMCC.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Service specific groups will continue to monitor performance on a regular basis.
- 4.2 The continuing consultation on the new resident involvement strategy will also emphasise continued customer involvement in analysing and scrutinising performance.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications and these are included in the monthly financial monitoring reports. An example is the improvement in the rent collection and arrears management over the past two years, which has contributed to a saving in the HRA Budget for the bad debt provision requirement. Another example is any improvement in turnaround times or a reduction in empty property numbers increases the amount of rent collected. Improvements in performance will, in general, lead to more resources being available for tenants' services in the future.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen Date: 27 August

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are no significant legal or Human Rights Act implications arising from the report's recommendations

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 27 August

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 These are contained in the body of the report, where appropriate

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report or its publication. Relevant comments are made within the body, where appropriate

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct risk and opportunity management implications arising directly from this report. Relevant comments are made within the body, where appropriate.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.6 The performance report takes account of corporate priorities, in particular, reducing inequality by increasing opportunity and fair enforcement of the law.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Not applicable to this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 These are contained within the body of the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 40

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Contract for Communal digital TV system for Council Housing		
Date of Meeting:	27 September 2010		
Report of:	Acting Director of Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Dennison	Tel: 29-3190
	E-mail:	mark.dennison@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	Yes/No	No	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Presently most of the council's blocks of flats have analogue communal TV aerial systems. The analogue TV broadcast signal is due to be switched off and replaced with a digital signal. The South East (including Brighton & Hove) analogue signal will be switched off in January 2012. The majority of TV sets and aerials not converted to digital by the switchover date will no longer be able to view TV programmes. To meet this deadline the contract needs to be awarded as quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Approval was given for the procurement to *lease* digital TV aerials for relevant council housing properties in September 2008. Recent professional advice has indicated that outright *purchase* rather than lease is likely to be the most the most cost effective procurement route. In order to achieve best value for money, the tender process commenced in July 2010 on the basis of a citywide contract to lease *or* purchase outright and maintain an IRS 9 Wire Sky+ (integrated reception system) digital aerial system for all HRA blocks with existing communal aerials.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the report

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Presently most of the council's blocks of flats have analogue communal TV aerial systems which are considered to be in poor condition. There are also 165 medium rise blocks without an existing communal TV system. Some blocks have had their analogue system upgraded to a digital terrestrial television or MATV (Master Antenna TV). This allows residents access to free view channels only. There are currently no maintenance contracts in place for any of these systems.

- 3.2 The national digital strategy aims to use the digital switchover to deal with the following;
- Diversity - through the provision of foreign languages channels and maximising choice.
 - Equality – Through maximising resident choice by ensuring residents have access to all the channels they want
 - ‘Satellite rash’ – removal of unsightly satellite aerials from blocks.
- 3.3 The Council can either use an existing national framework to procure the aerials or run its own competition by issuing an OJEU notice and undertaking a full tender process. Procurement using a national framework is likely to reduce the procurement timetable. Frameworks provide benefits from economies of scale through housing providers combining their purchasing power to gain better prices. Bids obtained through a framework would be benchmarked against the wider market to ensure the council is getting best value for money. National frameworks are already in-place which enable housing providers to procure from leading national digital TV aerial suppliers
- 3.4 The Director Housing, Culture & Enterprise in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing agreed to commence the procurement process in July 2010 in accordance with the Council’s constitution. This decision was taken urgently because of the need to commence the tender process prior to the 08 September 2010 Housing Cabinet Member meeting to enable the contract to be delivered before the digital TV switchover in 2012.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The original report also went to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 10 September 2008. Workshops were also held for residents in 2008.
- 4.2 A stage 1 notice has been issued to leaseholders and they will be fully consulted on the procurement outcome following Section 20 legislation.
- 4.3 Once a contractor has been agreed there will be ongoing consultation with tenants.
- 4.4 Before agreeing to commence the tender process, the Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise consulted with the Cabinet Member for Housing in accordance with the Council’s constitution.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The original report in September 2008 requested authority to procure digital TV aerials through leasing. This report notes that the tender process has commenced to include pricing for both leasing and purchasing options in order to secure the solution which provides best value. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the HRA capital programme includes £1.422 million

over the next two years (2010 – 2012) to cover the costs of additional anticipated cabling works required for the installation of digital TV aerials. This is in addition to the costs of leasing or procuring the equipment.

- 5.3 The costs of leasing or purchasing, and maintaining a new communal digital system will be recharged to tenants and leaseholders through new service charges. Following the award of the contract, the proposed service charges will be reported to Housing Management Consultative Committee and Housing Cabinet.

Sue Chapman

Date: 13 July 2010

Legal Implications:

- 5.4 The report refers to a contract for supply and services (supply, installation and maintenance). The EU procurement threshold for contracts for supplies and services is £156,444. The estimated value of the supply and installation alone is £1.8m and so the contract value exceeds the EU procurement threshold. The contract must therefore be advertised and awarded in accordance with the relevant EU Directive and UK Regulations. Compliance with the EU Directive and UK Regulations is achieved by either the Council running a competition itself which satisfies the EU Directive and UK Regulations or using an existing framework arrangement which was procured in accordance with the EU Directive and UK Regulations. In addition, contracts in excess of £75,000 must be sent to Legal for sealing. The Council is obliged to take the rights of individuals under the Human Rights Act into account when considering any such issues, but the recommendations contained in this report are unlikely to breach any such rights.

Lawyer Consulted: Anna Thurston

Date: 09 July 2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.5 An equalities impact assessment will be completed by the winning contractor prior to commencement on site, as this is subject to their chosen method of access.
- 5.6 The inclusion of 'Hot bird' (secondary satellite system) allows access to foreign language channels and meets the councils equality and diversity policy.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.7 The specifications will require contractors to submit a sustainability impact statement on the contractor's proposals to reduce waste, recycling, and the reduction in CO2 emissions for this project.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.8 No Crime and disorder implications. In some cases it is possible to link CCTV to the digital systems.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.8 While the council has no legal responsibility to provide any communal aerial service, central government is looking to public landlords to set an example for other private landlords in the area of social responsibility to ensure no resident fails to know or miss the switchover to digital.
- 5.9 Failure to replace/upgrade the councils existing communal analogue aerial system will leave residents without access to a digital system from 2012 and will result in adverse publicity for the council.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.10 This proposal supports the aim of the council to provide maximum choice to the residents of its own housing stock and gives a lead to other landlords across the city regarding the opportunities afforded by digital switchover.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 There are a number of very different Switchover solutions currently available in the UK market:
- MATV (Master Antenna TV)
 - SMATV (Satellite MATV)
 - IRS (Integrated Reception System)
 - IPTV (Internet Protocol Television)
- 6.2 An evaluation of these options was included in the September 2008 report. The IRS solution was clearly identified as providing best overall value for money based on cost and quality of provision.
- 6.3 Consultants have recently advised that the outright purchase option would deliver significant savings compared to the leasing option. On the basis of this advice, this report provides the opportunity to evaluate both options and secure the solution providing best value for money.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The option of purchasing TV aerial systems from an existing framework will enable the council to comply with its obligations under the EU Directive and UK Regulations on public procurement and to more easily meet the digital switchover deadline because of the potential savings in the procurement timetable under a framework. The purchase option offers better value for money than the original leasing recommendation, with bids being benchmarked to ensure they are competitive to the wider market.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None.

Documents In Members' Rooms

None.

Background Documents

None.

