



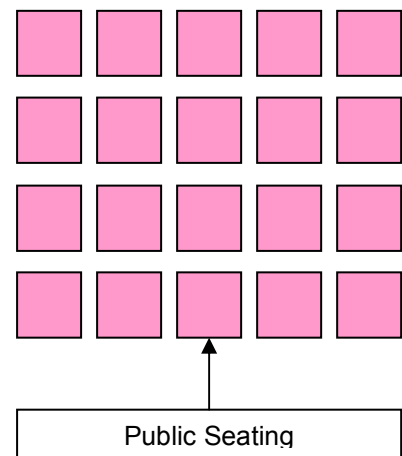
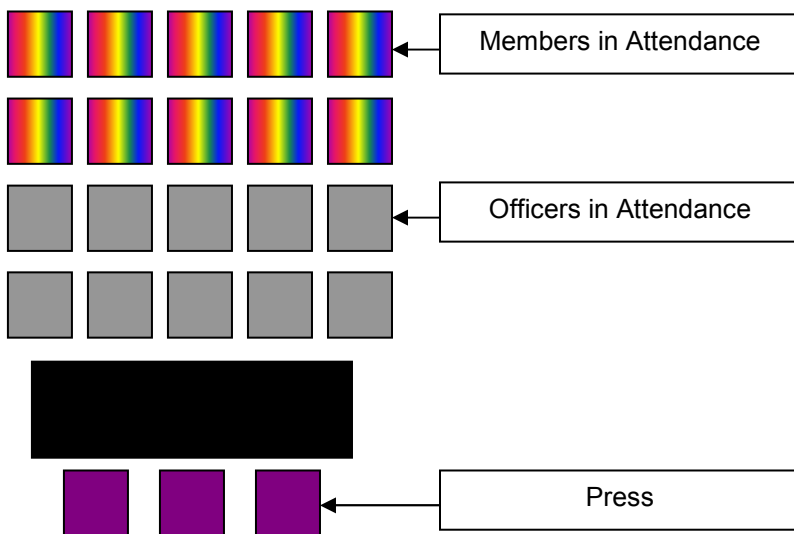
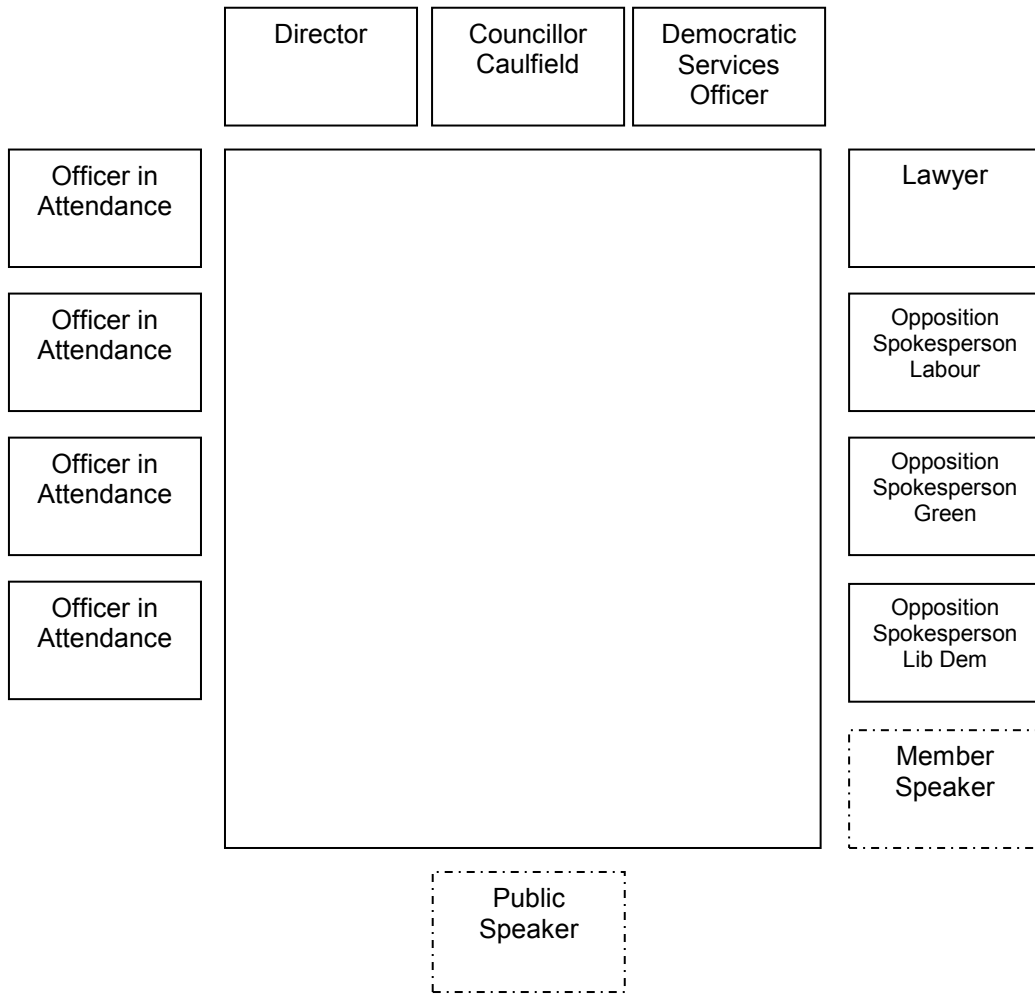
Brighton & Hove
City Council

Cabinet Member Meeting

Title:	Housing Cabinet Member Meeting
Date:	5 January 2011
Time:	4.00pm
Venue	Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillor: Caulfield (Cabinet Member)
Contact:	Caroline De Marco Democratic Services Officer 01273 291063 caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



AGENDA

76. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declarations of Interest by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (b) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: Any item appearing in Part 2 of the Agenda states in its heading either that it is confidential or the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.

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

77. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 4

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2010 (copy attached).

78. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

79. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

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

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

80. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received by the date of publication.

81. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 24 December 2010)

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

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

82. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 24 December 2010)

No deputations have been received by the date of publication.

83. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

84. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No written questions have been received.

85. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

No Notices of Motion have been referred.

86. MINUTES OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 - 18

Minutes of the meetings held 9 September & 4 November 2010 (copies attached).

87. MINUTES OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 19 - 50

Minutes of the meetings held on 1 September, 27 September and 8 November 2010 (copies attached).

88. SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING STRATEGY 2011-15 51 - 74

Report of Strategic Director, Place (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Daniel Parsonage Tel: 01273 293081

Ward Affected: All Wards;

89. TENANCY FRAUD POLICY 75 - 82

Report of Strategic Director Place (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Helen Clarkmead Tel: 293350

Ward Affected: All Wards;

90. HOUSING ACT 2004 - HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION LICENSING FEES AND ADDITIONAL LICENSING 83 - 92

Report of Lead Commissioner Housing (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Martin Reid Tel: 29-3321

Ward Affected: All Wards;

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

91. MOBILITY SCOOTER STORAGE

93 - 108

Report of Strategic Director Place (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Robert Keelan

Tel: 29-3261

Ward Affected: All Wards;

92. INTERIM AMENDMENT TO WORKING HOUSEHOLDS LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

109 - 112

Report of Strategic Director Place (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Helen Clarkmead

Tel: 293350

Ward Affected: All Wards;

PART TWO

93. SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN 2011-15 - EXEMPT CATEGORY 3

113 - 122

Report of Lead Commissioner Housing (copy circulated to members only).

Contact Officer: Narinder Sundar

Tel: (01273) 293887

Ward Affected: All Wards;

94. PART TWO ITEMS

To consider whether or not any of the above items and the decisions thereon should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

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

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

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

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

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

Date of Publication - Thursday, 23 December 2010

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00pm 20 OCTOBER 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Caulfield (Cabinet Member)

Apologies: Councillor Simpson

PART ONE

48. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

48(a) Declarations of Interests

48.1 There were none.

48(b) Exclusion of Press and Public

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

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

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

49.1 *Bevendean Community Garden Proposal* - The Cabinet Member reported that a site had been agreed and that council officers were working with residents to get the project up and running.

49.2 *Private Rented Sector Letting Agents* – The Cabinet Member reported that a scrutiny report was being produced on this issue.

49.3 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting held on 8 September 2010 be agreed and signed by the Cabinet Member.

50. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

Ainsworth House

- 50.1 The Cabinet Member reported that a site visit had been attended by officers and tenants' representatives a week ago. There would be an update on the development at the next Housing Management Consultative Committee.

Comprehensive Spending Review

- 50.2 The Cabinet Member reported that she was optimistic for housing in the light of the government's Comprehensive Spending Review. The reduction in the Supporting People grant was not as bad as expected. There had been no reduction in the Homelessness Grant. Eric Pickles had highlighted the good work being carried out in combating homelessness. There would be a further briefing at the next Cabinet Member Meeting.

51. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- 51.1 **RESOLVED** – All items were reserved for discussion.

52. PETITIONS

- 52.1 There were none.

53. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 53.1 There were none.

54. DEPUTATIONS

- 54.1 There were none.

55. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 55.1 There were none.

56. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 56.1 There were none.

57. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

- 57.1 There were none.

58. CUSTOMER ACCESS PHASE 2

- 58.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Acting Director of Housing which provided an update on the review of customer access arrangements for the Housing Management Service and presented a number of proposals for consideration. The

Housing Management Consultative Committee was consulted on the proposals at the meeting held on 27 September 2010.

58.2 The Cabinet Member explained that the report had been widely supported by tenants and Members at the Housing Management Consultative Committee. There would be an update report to a future meeting.

58.3 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member made the following decision:

(1) That the following proposals that are being considered by phase 2 of the Customer Access Review be agreed.

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

(ii) 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.

(iii) 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.

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

The meeting concluded at 4.05pm

Signed

Cabinet Member

Dated this

day of

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 9 SEPTEMBER 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Allen, Phillips and Pidgeon

Co-opted Members: Steve Lawless, LINK

PART ONE

14. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

14A Declaration of Substitutes

14.1 There were none.

14B Declarations of Interest

14.2 There were none

14C Declarations of Party Whip

14.3 There were none

14D Exclusion of Press and Public

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

14.5 RESOLVED – that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

15.1 RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2010 be approved as a correct record.

16. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

16 Chairman's Communications

16.1 The Chairman welcomed new members Councillor Alex Phillips and the Local Involvement Network representative, Steve Lawless, to the Committee.

16.2 The Chairman also told the Committee that the first panel meeting for the new scrutiny review panel looking at services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions had been held. The panel had been very lucky to have a presentation from Professor Jeremy Turk, from the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. The next meeting was scheduled for 24 September 2010.

17. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

17.1 There were none.

18. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS & NOTICES OF MOTION

18.1 There were none.

19. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SESSION ON ADULT SOCIAL CARE & THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

19.1 Denise D'Souza, Acting Director of Adult Social Care, presented a training session on adult social care and the voluntary sector and responded to members' questions.

19.2 In response to a query regarding the role of the Partnership Board in identifying service gaps, the committee heard that the Board provided a helpful challenge in terms of personalisation. Ms D'Souza said that she was keen on exploring the social capital model to support city initiatives; a paper was going to the next Partnership Board regarding the model.

19.3 In response to a query about the likely budget for next year's work, the committee heard that it was not possible at this stage to commit to a figure. The budget was made up of a number of budgets including Mental Health grants, carers; grants and AIDS support grants which were all being reviewed. However it was fully recognised that it was equally important to carry out low level, early stage prevention work in order to avoid problems escalating and becoming more resource intensive.

Ms D'Souza offered to come to the committee in six months to talk about the budget. This was welcomed.

19.4 In response to a query about local decision making on budgets, members heard that a number of commissioning plans went to the PCT; some were consulted on with third

sector organisations. There was a real opportunity for third sector groups to look at the options for future work and innovative ways of working. The Compact included a framework for third sector commissioning which was adhered to. Ms D'Souza offered to share a list of the third sector organisations with which Adult Social Care was currently involved with the Committee. This was welcomed.

19.5 There was a query about the involvement of social enterprises; what checks were made to ensure that they were not profit making. Members were assured that all social enterprises would be fully investigated before being used; this would include looking at references etc.

19.6 In response to a query about the difference between Intelligent Commissioning and the way in which Adult Social Care currently commissioned services, the committee heard that Intelligent Commissioning pilots involved a wide range of partners to look at the total pathway. It was a very different approach to commissioning.

The pilots had been designed to test the Intelligent Commissioning process; a report would be taken to the Partnership Service Board shortly to hear about their progress and lessons learnt.

Intelligent Commissioning involves working with partner organisations including third sector and other statutory partners. In Brighton and Hove, within Adult Social Care the 'back office' functions had already been minimised as far as possible so it was necessary to look at how to work in a smarter proportionate way..

19.7 Ms D'Souza was thanked for her presentation and the information that she had provided.

20. PERSONALISATION AND PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST - A CVSF PERSPECTIVE

20.1 Geraldine des Moulins gave feedback on behalf of the CVSF. Ms des Moulins said that although it was the case that disabled people had taken a lead on personalisation, this was the whole CVSF's perspective.

20.2 Comments included:

- it was felt that there was an over-focus on council processes, although the Resource Allocation System was necessary
- there had been plans to have a Big Conversation in the city, but this had not happened and it was not known why
- there was no sense of what was happening
- the third sector needed help with business planning & transformation funding so they could prepare for personalisation.
- it was felt that the third sector had not had the steer that they had needed
- the brokerage service had not been very successful
- what was the council's plan for personalisation?
- what was the role of the Personalisation Programme Board?
- the council's personalisation section had grown quite large
- the sector was glad to see the return of work planning/ mapping

- some myth-busting was needed
- good news stories were needed

20.3 Ms des Moulins said that there was a Future Funding Day including a personalisation workshop on 23 November 2010; members were welcome to attend.

20.4 Ms des Moulins responded to questions from the committee.

20.5 Members asked if there were any reasons that the CVSF felt the structure was wrong. Ms des Moulins said there had not been many clear steers coming from the council and that a lot of the problems seemed to concern communication and the cascading of information.

Ms D'Souza said that there had been a change of personnel within the council; this had impacted on the role of the Partnership Board. Ms D'Souza was going to look at this as well as the role of the workforce outside of the council.

20.6 Members asked about service users' perspectives and any problems that they might be experiencing. The Committee was told that a major problem locally was that it was proving hard to find Personal Assistants due to the cost of living in the city and the low wages that people were able to pay.

The CVSF has a supported bank accounting service and would carry out the payroll function for service users.

Steve Lawless gave some information about the LINK's role in consultation and advocacy. There was a difference between brokerage and advocacy.

20.7 Ms des Moulins said that, when personalisation works for the service user, it works very well. It does help to transform lives, although it needed to be remembered that it was not suitable for everyone. When evaluating Intelligent Commissioning pilots, it was important to note the added value that the third sector brought. If less money came to the sector, there would be fewer services.

20.8 The Committee thanked Ms des Moulins for her report, it was very important information. The Committee needed to keep up to date with personalisation so it would be useful to have an update report in six months. Could a referral be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission about working with the third sector?

20.9 **RESOLVED** – (a) that a report come back to Committee in six months and (b) that a referral be made to OSC about working with the third sector.

21. PROPOSALS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE REDESIGN & THE IMPACT ON CITY SERVICES

21.1 Ms D'Souza presented the report on behalf of the PCT as they had been unable to attend the meeting. The committee heard that HOSC was looking at this subject in detail; this presentation was mainly for the purposes of information.

- 21.2 Members asked about the timing of the plans; would the supported housing elements be in place in time. Ms D'Souza said that a number of the elements were already in place. It was key to have the list of subjects at 3.3 in the report in place.
- 21.3 Members asked whether there had been any problems in the joint funding arrangements. They heard that there was a pooled budget that did have a slight overspend.
- 21.4 **RESOLVED** - members noted the report

22. IN-YEAR GRANT REDUCTIONS - ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING

- 22.1 Jugal Sharma, Assistant Director of Housing, presented the report and answered questions from the Committee. Mr Sharma said that the £164.000 reduction represented 1-2% of the total supporting people grant for the city. Members heard that an equality impact assessment had been undertaken before making the reductions.
- 22.2 Members asked whether the council could add its voice to the calls asking for the Supporting People grant to remain ringfenced. Any loss of funding would impact on the most vulnerable residents in the city. The committee was told that Councillor Maria Caulfield was very keen to see the Supporting People programme stay intact; representations had been made to central Government.
- 22.3 Members asked where the underspend had come from? They heard that a service closure had taken place as a third sector hostel had had a serious fire and so the council funding was returned. Another third sector provider had returned funding as they had been unable to fill accommodation places that had been funded by the council.

Central Government expected the service to be mainstreamed in the long-term and the department was making provision for how to meet the underspend in future years.

- 22.4 There seemed to be a contradiction between points 3.2 and 3.3; were posts at risk? Mr Sharma said that 'consultation' was a formal process that had to be followed but it had found that there would be no impact on jobs or on front line services.
- 22.5 **RESOLVED** - to refer the report to the Scrutiny Review Panel, noting the Committee's concerns as to how the funding will be met next year. It was agreed that the relevant minutes from this committee would be forwarded to the Panel.

23. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2009/10

- 23.1 Karin Divall presented the report to the Committee and answered questions. Highlights from the Safeguarding report included a 50% increase in safeguarding alerts to Adult Social Care; 1288 were investigated by Adult Social Care. Most referrals were made from other public sector partners. The focus for the year ahead was about how to make the service more accessible for members of the public.
- 23.2 Members asked why there had been a 50% increase in alerts. They heard that the increases had been across the board, and not in one service area in particular. Adult

Social Care had been working with Health to increase awareness of the safeguarding procedure; this was likely to have resulted in the increase in alerts.

In addition, the introduction of Access Point was likely to have led to more alerts being made as there was a central point to contact, with known systems.

- 23.3 Members asked about the resource implications for the increased level of alerts. Ms Divall said that it was about looking at a proportionate response to an alert; in many cases it could be managed at Access Point, which would then free up social workers to deal with more involved cases. Similarly, many Level One alerts could be dealt with in-house where appropriate. In addition, the department had invested in a new role to work proactively to improve safeguarding in residential homes; one person would be employed to lead this service improvement.
- 23.4 Members suggested whether it would be possible to introduce a Circle of Support system for older people, as happened in Learning Disability Services already. Ms Divall said that this would be hugely resource intensive as there were 37 000 older people in the city, although not all of them would require intervention. The team was trying to raise public awareness of abuse and the roles of neighbours and communities.
- 23.5 Members asked whether the level of 25.8% of referrals being unsubstantiated was too high or too low. Ms Divall said that the CQC's recent inspection commented on the level. The council was doing some work to look at the data to try and understand why this was the case.
- 23.6 The CQC had recognised that Brighton and Hove was performing well, how did this compare with other authorities? Ms Divall said that the council currently sat comfortably in comparison to other authorities but they were not complacent. An action plan was being drawn up to take plans forward, including the work regarding the unsubstantiated allegations and trying to pre-empt level 4 investigations.
- 23.7 The Chair of the Committee asked for the Committee's thanks to be passed on to the staff for their hard work and recognition by CQC.
- 23.8 **RESOLVED** - to pass the relevant minutes of the committee to Ms Divall for the attention of the Safeguarding Board.
- 24. UPDATE ON THE DEMENTIA SCRUTINY PANEL**
- 24.1 Councillor Wrighton spoke as a member of the panel and introduced the report to the committee. She thanked Giles Rossington, Senior Scrutiny Officer, for his hard work. The report had been endorsed by the Commission and the majority of the recommendations were going to the Partnership Group and JCB in November. The panel could report back on implementation in the New Year (add to work plan)
- 24.2 Councillor Pidgeon commented that the report had been very well received at OSC.
- 24.3 **RESOLVED** - to note the report and the recommendations

25. SUGGESTED SCRUTINY REVIEW PANELS FOR 2010/11

- 25.1 Tom Hook, Head of Scrutiny, presented a report outlining the suggested scrutiny review panels for Adult Social Care & Housing for the forthcoming year. Mr Hook explained that it was recommended that the Private Sector Housing item be the first choice; it had come from a Notice of Motion at council and had cross party support. He said that other suggested topics had been the subject of recent work locally or changes in national legislation; it would be prudent for the committee to keep a watching brief on these items.
- 25.2 The committee members discussed the suggested items, focussing on the private sector housing suggestion.

Regarding the private sector housing suggestion, comments included:

there were some concerns over the suggestion; what would the benefits be to reviewing this item, the council had very little jurisdiction in private sector lettings. Mr Hook said that it was for the panel to decide its own remit but if it had been decided to look at the private sector housing issue, it might be useful to look at good practice etc.

Members commented that it might be useful to look at the affordability of living in the city before focussing on private sector agents. There were already a number of incentives in place for landlords to be reputable and provide a quality service. Could the scrutiny panel cover both topics together?

There had been media coverage about the levels of charges made by letting agents; in Brighton and Hove a high number of people used letting agents. Could this be an opportunity for the council to lobby on behalf of those affected?

Ms D'Souza commented that an issue that was just arising was vulnerable people living in private rented accommodation and waiting for repairs etc. There tended to be a very poor level of service. Members agreed to look at the quality of service for the most vulnerable people in the city.

Members agreed to take the private letting agent suggestion forward, encompassing the various issues raised.

- 25.3 **RESOLVED** - that the Adult Social Care & Housing Committee take forward the Private Sector Letting Agency scrutiny panel suggestion.

26. CURRENT ASCHOSC WORKPLAN

- 26.1 Slight changes were made to the agenda for November's committee as there was a duplicated item.

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

- 27.1 There were none.

28. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

28.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 4 NOVEMBER 2010

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Allen, Barnett, Older and Phillips

Apologies: Councillors Janio, Kemble and Pidgeon

Co-opted Members: Steve Lawless, LINK

PART ONE

29. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

29A Declaration of Substitutes

29.1 Councillor Dawn Barnett was substitute for Councillor Tony Janio.

Apologies had been received from Councillors Kemble and Pidgeon.

29B Declarations of Interest

29.2 There were none

29C Declarations of Party Whip

29.3 There were none

29D Exclusion of Press and Public

29.4 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be

disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

29.5 RESOLVED – that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

30.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

31. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

31.1 There were none.

32. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

32.1 There were none.

33. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

33.1 There were none.

34. NOTICES OF MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

34.1 There were none.

35. MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT SESSION ON LEASEHOLD ISSUES

35.1 Dave Arthur, Right to Buy and Leasehold Senior Officer gave a presentation on council leasehold issues to the members. Mr Arthur answered questions from the members afterwards.

35.2 Members asked whether the council would work with leaseholders to come to an agreement over the level of service charges. Mr Arthur said that one of the themes from the leaseholder satisfaction survey showed that some residents wanted works carried out at their building and perhaps a higher level of gardening work to be carried out than currently happened, and were willing to pay more towards this. There was a piece of work being done to agree local levels of grounds maintenance carried out. However, he said that the key items of service charging would always be for works that were absolutely required at the building. When this was the case, like lift replacement for example, the leaseholder was liable to pay their percentage share of the costs incurred by the council. The onus was therefore on the council to ensure costs were good value for money and to work with leaseholders on providing a range of payment options for leaseholders with financial difficulties with major works charges.

35.3 Members queried why the different leasehold terms for Brighton and for Hove properties. They heard that this was due to historic lease

agreements where varying them was extremely problematic after they had been entered into. With so many leases created prior to unification it was not helpful to create yet another lease to work with.

- 35.4 Members asked whether there was any benchmarking done against private rented sector providers in Brighton and Hove. They heard that this did not happen but that the council did benchmark against other city local authorities on home ownership, service charges and other leasehold matters.
- 35.5 Mr Arthur was thanked for his presentation.

36. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION INSPECTION

- 36.1 Philip Letchfield, Interim Head of Contracts & Performance, presented a report on the most recent Care Quality Commission's assessment of Brighton and Hove City Council and on the improvement plan that had been agreed. Mr Letchfield then answered members' questions.

Mr Letchfield informed the committee that the future role of the Care Quality Commission in assessing the Council's social care performance had been thrown into doubt by recent central government announcements; the current performance assessment framework was being discontinued with immediate effect. The Chair of ASCHOSC commented that this would leave more of a role for scrutiny, in assessing and challenging the department's performance.

- 36.2 Members queried how the items agreed in the improvement plan could be carried out in light of the proposed spending review. Mr Letchfield said that he was fairly confident that most of the planned improvements could be met within the current service redesign; there was no additional burden. There were some challenges, particularly on the commissioning side and the wider context was tough. Meeting the improvement plan would be reliant on a number of milestones being met at the right time, eg in personalisation and self-directed care.
- 36.3 Members asked about the role for advocacy services. They were advised that Adult Social Care was reviewing all of its advocacy services, as it was not evenly provided across different service areas at present.
- 36.4 Mr Letchfield was thanked for his report and asked to return to ASCHOSC in six months to update the committee on progress.

37. HOUSING REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS REPORT

- 37.1 Nick Hibberd, Assistant Director Housing Management and Glyn Huelin, Partnering and Performance Manager, presented a report on

the six month review of the Mears repairs and maintenance contract and addressed members' questions.

- 37.2 Members asked for more information about the nature of complaints that had been received about the service. They heard from Mr Huelin that about 50% of complaints were about planned works including their scheduling and the other half were about the repairs being carried out including the quality of work that had been done.

Following analysis of the complaints, the team had endeavoured to provide more information to the residents about how work had been scheduled over the three year period and the reason for this. This had led to improved customer satisfaction.

Members heard that 90 complaints had been received over a six month period. This should be seen in the context of over 14000 repairs jobs being carried out over the same period and indicated complaints had been received about approximately 0.006% of the works being carried out.

One of the unanticipated problems that had been encountered was with the Repairs service working hard to catch up with the backlog of repairs. When the operatives went to the property, they might find a number of other unanticipated repairs that needed to be carried out in order to bring the property up to decent homes standard. This had an impact on the scheduling of other works.

- 37.3 Members asked whether residents were involved in making decisions about how their kitchens would be designed. Mr Hibberd explained that tenants' representatives were involved at a strategic level although individual residents would not be involved at the strategic stage. However when it came to an individual property, the tenant was involved with the design. At the same time the design needs to take account of the layout of the room and the requirement to meet the Decent Homes standard.

- 37.4 Members said that they had received feedback from some residents that they had felt some pressure from Mears operatives to have an earlier than agreed appointment. Mears would always make an appointment but operatives were also encouraged to use their time as practically as possible and if they were near a property, they might call the resident unexpectedly to see if they could do the work. Some residents felt under pressure to admit operatives when they were not expecting them.

Mr Hibberd said that he would take this information back to Mears so that they could work with their staff to avoid inadvertently pressurising residents. Members also heard that Mears was training all of its operatives to reach NVQ level 2 in customer service.

- 37.5 In response to a query about the Apprentice scheme that was in operation, members heard that there were currently six apprentices with plans for nine more to come. The six currently employed were from Whitehawk, with plans to take people from other areas of Brighton and Hove, including Portslade, in the future. Apprenticeships were not restricted to young people, they would be open to all .Apprentices were given the opportunity to use empty council properties in their training.
- 37.6 Mr Hibberd and Mr Huelin were thanked for their report.

38. HOUSING AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES GROUP

- 38.1 Andy Staniford, Housing Strategy Manager, presented a follow up report about the Housing and Health Inequality group and answered members' questions.
- 38.2 Members suggested that care workers could be involved and trained in the Repairs on Prescription service. They heard that the council was looking at options to include a wide range of visiting staff such as District Nurses; Health Visitors; Community Paediatricians and the Rapid Community Response Team; that would all be trained of housing issues to recognise disrepair.
- 38.3 Members asked about how the group worked with landlords. They heard that the group was very good at liaising with landlords, giving them information about grants that were available. Landlords were represented on the Strategic Housing Partnership. The team tried to see things from both the landlord and tenants' perspective. The team also worked with universities and student unions to make students aware of their rights.
- 38.4 Members thanked Mr Staniford for his report and asked for an update to come back to the committee in six months.

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

- 39.1 There were no items to go forward to Cabinet.

40. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

- 40.1 There were no items to go forward to Council.

The meeting concluded at 5.45

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

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

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 27 SEPTEMBER 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

[**Note:** Councillor Mears chaired the meeting up to and including item 26. Councillor Caulfield chaired the meeting from item 27 onwards.]

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), Chris Kift (Hi Rise Action Group), Muriel Briault (Leaseholders Action Group), Colin Carden (Older People's Council), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group) and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network)

PART ONE

25. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

25A Declarations of Substitute Members

25.1 Councillor Fallon-Khan declared that he was attending as a substitute for Councillor Simson.

25B Declarations of Interests

25.2 Councillors Barnett, Simpson and Randall, Heather Hayes and Ted Harman 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).

25C Exclusion of the Press and Public

- 25.3 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.
- 25.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 26.1 Councillor Simpson asked for news about the Water Meters Working Group. She was informed that there had been a meeting with Southern Water to consider a pilot for bulk water metering. A further visit to blocks was needed to look at the feasibility of this project. The working group would then be reconvened.
- 26.2 John Melson informed the Committee that two representatives had been elected by the City Wide Assembly to negotiate with Southern Water. These negotiations would be independent of the council.
- 26.3 The Chairman reported that the next City Wide Assembly would be held on 20 November 2010 and the matter would be discussed at that meeting.
- 26.4 Councillor Fryer referred to paragraph 13.11 of the minutes held on 14 June 2010. She queried whether tenants representatives were able to vote on the Committee prior to 2008. The Chairman confirmed that tenants ' representatives had always had an indicative vote.
- 26.5 Stewart Gover referred to paragraph 12.3 of the minutes of 14 June 2010 in relation to the Tenants' Handbook. He stressed that it was important to ensure that tenants adhered to the rules set out in the handbook. Meanwhile, he was pleased to report, that following his petition to the Queen, he had now received a reply setting out clear rules relating to the succession policy for council properties. The rules were very fair. The Chairman thanked Stewart for his work on sending the petition to the Queen. She agreed that the Tenants' Handbook rules needed to be adhered to. Chris Kift concurred and stressed that it was a legal document.
- 26.6 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meetings held on 14 June and 1 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

27. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**Housing Local Delivery Vehicle**

- 27.1 The Chairman reported that she was pleased to report that "Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes" had formally responded to the council's offer in regard to setting up a housing local delivery vehicle.

27.2 Their proposals would give the council a capital receipt and additional investment to help refurbish the housing stock. The Chairman was very grateful for the hard work the Board had undertaken to reach this position. Housing staff were now carefully reviewing the offer and the council was now prepared to negotiate on all aspects of the proposed deal. This was a big step nearer to achieving the goal of securing additional investment in the housing stock. There would be a report to HMCC and Cabinet on the progress made in reaching a deal with funders.

28. CALLOVER

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

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

29. PETITIONS

29.1 There were none.

30. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

30.1 There were none.

31. DEPUTATIONS

31.1 There were none.

32. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

32.1 There were none.

33. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

33.1 There were none.

34. TENANCY VISITS

34.1 The Committee considered a report of the Acting Director of Housing which explained the rationale and process for undertaking tenancy checks. The report explained that regular visits to all tenants were an expectation of the Tenant Services Authority, and nationally accepted good practice in tenancy management. The purpose of tenancy checks was to ensure tenants were complying with tenancy conditions and to identify support or welfare needs; to ensure the property was occupied by the legitimate tenant(s) and to inspect the condition of the property and identify any work that tenants or the council needed to carry out. The standard letter sent to tenants with a questionnaire was circulated as Appendix 1 to the report.

34.2 The Housing Manager reported that feedback had been received regarding identification. The request for bank/building society statements as forms of identity had not gone down well and would be removed from the list.

- 34.3 Councillor Fryer said she completely supported tenancy visits but it could be recognised that it could be a very sensitive area. She suggested that ID might be asked for later in the visit in a more sensitive way. Councillor Fryer referred to paragraph 3.2 in the report and asked how many unmet support needs had been identified. The Chairman suggested that a report could be submitted to a future meeting setting out the value of visits with statistical information.
- 34.4 Councillor Pidgeon stressed that the letter should have stated that it was also available in Braille or audio as many tenants were blind or partially sighted. He thought that the person checklist should not ask people about life insurances and other personal matters.
- 34.5 The Chairman stressed that the only objective was to receive a form of identity. The Council would be looking at acceptable forms of identity in the future. In the meantime, checking ID was the only evidence the council had in preventing tenancy fraud.
- 34.6 The Assistant Director, Housing Management reported letters were available in Braille and large print. There were Braille and large print versions of the Tenants Handbook. Tenants' checks could update officers on information about people's needs.
- 34.7 John Melson mentioned that he had just had a Tenancy Visit. He had not found it intrusive. Officers had not been interested in the content of documents, and were only using them as a form of ID. This was not made clear in the letter. Mr Melson considered that the letter could be worded in a friendlier manner. Meanwhile, he stressed that there was also a problem with leaseholder fraud and that problem should be addressed.
- 34.8 Chris Kift noted that the circulated letter was different from the original letter that had been sent out. No complaints had been received after it was changed. He made the point that the letter should state which officer would be calling. He suggested that instead of making a list of possible ID, the letter should simply ask for printed formal ID. Many older people were frightened by such a long list. He thought the letter and questionnaire should be reconsidered.
- 34.9 The Chairman reported that there was an item on Tenancy Fraud on the next HMCC agenda in November. Suitable forms of ID could be discussed at that meeting. She made the point that officers should wear ID, and that the wording in the letter should be reconsidered. However, she considered tenancy visits were valuable.
- 34.10 Councillor Simpson suggested that it would be helpful if the letter was printed in size 14 font or above. She made the point that tenancy visits should be carried out in a sensitive way and if works had been carried out to a property, officers should acknowledge people's age and disabilities, and not charge tenants for unauthorised works carried out under a previous tenancy.
- 34.11 Councillor Randall felt that tenancy checks were a good way of collecting information about vulnerable tenants. He also recognised that fraud was a serious issue. Councillor Randall thought the tone of the letter needed some consideration, but it was important to carry out this work.

34.12 Councillor Mears stressed that tenants had signed up to have tenancy visits in their tenancy agreement.

34.13 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the rationale and process for undertaking tenancy visits be noted.

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

35.1 The Committee considered a report of Acting Director of Housing which presented the Housing Revenue Account 2009/10 Final Outturn and Forecast Outturn for 2010/11 as at Month 4.

35.2 Councillor Randall was pleased to note that money had been spent on long term empty properties. He referred to paragraph 3.2.4, which reported that leaseholder service charges income was projected to underachieve. He asked for more information. The Head of Financial Services reported that bills were sent to leaseholders in August each year. Officers had to make estimates for works and it was difficult to judge accurately.

35.3 The Chairman stressed the importance of maintaining reserves for emergencies. The Assistant Director, Housing Management agreed that it was prudent to keep a level of reserves as it was not known if there would be unforeseen expenditure.

35.4 Councillor Mears highlighted the need to invest in housing stock. It was important that the council had the resources to improve people's homes.

35.5 **RESOLVED** - (1) that it be noted that 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) That the forecast outturn position for 2010/11 as at Month 4, which is an overspend of £0.038 million, be noted.

36. CONSULTATION DRAFT OF RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

36.1 The Committee considered a report of Acting Director of Housing which provided an update on the progress to adopt a revised Resident Involvement Strategy first reported in June 2020.

36.2 The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement informed the meeting that the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group had met on 13 August 2010 to consider the responses received to the strategy. Their conclusions were set out in the report.

36.3 John Melson made the point that the strategy set out what officers would do for the tenants; but it did not set out what tenants had to do in return. He felt it was necessary to show how tenants should be accountable to the council. Mr Melson considered that the council should have a Residents' Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Many other local authorities had such panels.

- 36.4 Mr Melson considered that the consultation should be wider. Meanwhile, there was a need to look at the functions of the current residents' groups.
- 36.5 Tom Whiting agreed that there should be a Residents' Overview and Scrutiny Panel. He asked if there was an organisation chart and hoped someone would produce one, with formal communication lines. Chris Kift replied that there was a chart in the Tenants' Handbook.
- 36.6 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the endorsement of the broad framework of the Resident Involvement Strategy, as proposed by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group be noted, subject to the continuing work set out below.
- (2) That it is noted 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.
- (3) That 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, be endorsed, 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.
- (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.

37. CUSTOMER ACCESS PHASE 2

- 37.1 The Committee considered an update report of the Acting Director of Housing concerning the review of customer access arrangements for the Housing Management Service and presented a number of proposals for consideration by Committee Members.
- 37.2 Councillor Fryer asked whether sharing space with the Children and Young People's Trust was purely office sharing or if there would be a particular benefit in having the CYPT staff in the office. The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement reported that the CYPT staff needed accommodation. Space had become available in Lavender Street as housing teams were working more closely together at the Supercentre.

- 37.3 John Melson mentioned that there was already a free phone number for Mears. He asked why this number could not be used as the basis for the proposal in the report. The Assistant Director, Housing Management agreed that it would make sense to eventually have a single number. Initially, there would be a number for repairs and another number for the remainder of tenant management matters.
- 37.4 Chris Kift pointed out that many lines were still 292929. He stressed that there was no point in phoning this number as there was often no response. This needed to be sorted out. Councillor Mears felt that Mr Kift had made a good point. Freephones were useful as long as someone answered them.
- 37.5 Councillor Simpson agreed that it was a good idea to reduce the number of different telephone numbers. This was more efficient. However it could be a problem for older tenants. A sizable proportion of older tenants were not happy with new telephone systems. Councillor Simpson was worried that the option would be lost for face to face contact.
- 37.6 The Chairman stressed that it was not proposed to close services in local offices, or to reduce face to face contact.
- 37.7 The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement reported that the council now had specialist teams and wanted to highlight how residents could access services in a better way, if they chose to. The council wanted more staff out on the estates and for them to work more effectively.
- 37.8 Stewart Gover made the point that tenancy management was an entirely different matter to repairs and maintenance. He considered that one number would not be appropriate.
- 37.9 Beverley Weaver referred to 2.1 of the report regarding a single point of contact. She mentioned that tenants were not notified when officers were moved to another office. She also questioned how officers would be able to spend more time out of the office, and how older tenants would access their housing officer. The Chairman stressed that the housing officers would stay the same and the service would be accessible. The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement agreed that there were no plans to change that aspect of the service. The proposals would bring about more effective working and would enable officers to make visits to tenants such as the elderly.
- 37.10 Chris Kift considered the report to be good and supported the idea of a single point of contact. However, he pointed out that some people still had dial phones. He hoped that even with one point of contact, it would still be possible for people to contact individual officers.
- 37.11 Beverley Weaver questioned whether one point of contact would reach all tenants.
- 37.12 The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement informed the Committee that trials at Selsfield Drive had shown that 80% of queries could easily be dealt with by Housing Management Advisors. She hoped that residents would trust Housing Management Advisors to be effective. The idea was to deal with the majority of queries

at the first point of contact. Face to face contact in housing offices would not change and was likely to improve.

- 37.13 David Murtagh confirmed that tenants using Selfield Drive were receiving answers to questions and were happier as a result.
- 37.14 Tom Whiting informed the meeting that he had no problem with Selsfield Drive. He had not noticed any change, but confirmed he had always received a good service.
- 37.15 **RESOLVED** – That the following proposals that are being considered by Phase 2 of the Customer Access Review be noted, along with the above comments of Members.
- (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.

Note: Stewart Gover abstained from agreeing resolutions 1 & 2 above.

38. MOBILITY SCOOTER STORAGE

- 38.1 The Committee considered a report of the Acting Director of Housing concerning proposals to ensure the safe storage of mobility scooters. Officers and tenant representatives had explored a number of storage options for residents to ensure residents had access to mobility aids whilst ensuring that neighbouring residents were safe in the event of a fire.
- 38.2 The Chairman reported that there had been an increasing number of mobility scooters used by tenants in recent years. There was a need to be responsible in the way they were stored. The report was before members for comment and feedback. There would be further reports to the HMCC.
- 38.3 The Housing Manager reported that a project working group had been set up to look at this issue. There were many matters to consider such as the planning process for the building of mobility scooter stores, the electricity supply and how to pay for scooter storage.
- 38.4 The Chairman mentioned a suggestion that the Homemove website should have a symbol to show if a block was scooter friendly. She acknowledged that the cost of electricity in communal areas could be high due to people recharging scooters. The

Chairman mentioned a shared scooter scheme and suggested this model could be used across the city.

- 38.5 Councillor Simpson welcomed the report, which was addressing a problem and was looking at different solutions for different blocks. She hoped that the council could share the results of the research with housing associations.
- 38.6 The Chairman asked the Assistant Director to take the report to the Social Housing Landlords' Forum.
- 38.7 John Melson referred to the expense of charging mobility scooters. He suggested that people should be metered individually for this service rather than imposing a community charge. Scooter users could use their mobility allowance to pay for the charge. However, he did not agree with charging for scooter storage, as no-one had chosen to use a scooter. It was the equivalent of using a bus pass.
- 38.8 Councillor Simpson asked if the identification of blocks for scooter stores was phase 1 of the project, and suggested that there must be other areas where there was a demand for storage.
- 38.9 The Housing Manager replied that the first phase was to look at common ways in blocks, where there was a fire risk. These were the areas that needed to be tackled immediately.
- 38.10 Barry Kent referred to paragraph 5.1.1 in the report which stated that a typical scooter would use an expected £5.00 per month in electricity charging. He questioned the amount and said that he had an electrician friend who thought that £1 - £3 was a more likely figure. Meanwhile, the letter from the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service had stated that, if scooters could not be charged in an outside area, all charging should be carried out inside the flat by removing the battery. Mr Kent stressed that large scooters had bulky batteries. He also stressed that the storage sheds needed to have enough space for the scooter and for the user to exit the store.
- 38.11 Ted Harman also referred to the letter from East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The letter suggested that mobility scooters should be charged in the day and should not be charged at night. Mr Harman stressed that if mobility scooters were not charged at night, they would not be ready for use during the day. Barry Kent agreed and stated that it took a number of hours to charge a mobility scooter. The Chairman replied that she could not comment on the letter from the Fire Service, but agreed that some of their suggestions were not practical. There was a balancing act between having safe blocks and meeting the needs of tenants.
- 38.12 Councillor Randall suggested that new housing schemes should have provision of scooter storage designed into the scheme. He liked the idea of sheds for scooters.
- 38.13 Beverley Weaver agreed with John Melson that there should not be a charge for scooter storage. People with mobility scooters were often Blue Badge holders.
- 38.14 The Assistant Director, Housing Management stressed that every case would be assessed individually. The key to the report was that one size did not fit all.

38.15 The Chairman asked tenants in the public gallery for their views. Faith Matyszak reported that she would be discussing the report at the Tenants' Disability Group. Maggie King agreed that everyone needed to be treated as an individual. Valerie Paynter asked how the priority site list was compiled. The Housing Manager explained that high rise properties in the city were the priority. This was where there were problems with mobility scooter storage.

38.16 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the following proposals be noted, along with the above comments of members of the HMCC.

- 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) That it be noted 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.

39. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 1)

39.1 The Committee considered a report of the Acting Director of Housing which set out the Quarter 1 report for Housing Management performance for the financial year 2010/11. As a result of a review of benchmarking by HouseMark and the introduction of a new single National Club, comparative data was not available in the format used to date. How best this new data might inform future reports was being investigated and would be commented on in the Quarter 2 report.

39.2 The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement reported that the July figure for rent collection had improved and was 98.41%. This was the highest collection rate in the South East.

39.3 Councillor Allen congratulated officers on the rent collection figures. He asked why the % of rent lost due to voids was rising. He also asked why there was a reduction in the total former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temporary Accommodation).

39.4 The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement explained that the increase in rent lost due to voids was due to the number of empty properties. The current rate of empty properties was 1.4%. The Chairman reported that reserves were being used to bring empty property back into use.

39.5 Councillor Allen was informed that he would be given a written response with figures as to why there had been such a big reduction in tenant arrears.

39.6 Beverley Weaver referred to paragraph 3.1.3 and asked for an explanation about re-charges. The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement explained that the £37,000 referred to the amount charged to people. The amount collected had increased and the amount charged to people had also increased.

- 39.7 Stewart Gover referred to the average recharge debt being £649. He considered this figure to be low and stated that it could cost between £3,000 to £6,000 to put right a trashed property.
- 39.8 Heather Hayes supported the recharging of tenants who had vandalised properties but expressed concern that tenants who had improved properties by putting in good doors and kitchen units had been recharged after they had agreed to be downsized to smaller properties.
- 39.9 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report be noted.

40. CONTRACT FOR COMMUNAL DIGITAL TV SYSTEM FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

- 40.1 The Committee considered a report of the Acting Director of Housing which explained that presently most of the council's blocks of flats had analogue communal TV aerial systems. The South East (including Brighton & Hove) analogue signal would be switched off in January 2012. The majority of TV sets and aerials not converted to digital by the switchover date would no longer be able to view TV programmes. To meet this deadline a contract needed to be awarded as quickly as possible.
- 40.2 Stewart Gover made the point that most of the Lewes Road corridor was in the shadow of the Downs and might need repeaters for good reception. He was concerned that money should not be spent on a digital system until it became clear that people could receive the system.
- 40.3 The Chairman agreed that reception was an issue and she had been discussing this matter with the Assistant Director, Housing Management. Mark Dennison would be the point of contact for tenants.
- 40.4 The Head of Property & Investment informed members that the council had to invest in the digital switchover. By 2012, there would be no provision for communal aerials. The onus was on the providers to overcome problems of reception, and this was matter was being considered.
- 40.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 5.49pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 8 NOVEMBER 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

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), Muriel Briault (Leaseholders Action Group), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group) and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network)

Also present: Trish Barnard (Deputy, Central Area Housing Panel)

PART ONE

41. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

41A Declarations of Substitute Members

41.1 There were none.

41B Declarations of Interests

41.2 Councillors Barnett, Simpson and Randall, Trish Barnard, Heather Hayes and Ted Harman 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).

41C Exclusion of the Press and Public

41.3 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.

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

42. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

42.1 *Consultation Draft of Resident Involvement Strategy* - Tom Whiting referred to paragraph 36.5 and stressed that he was referring to an efficiency chart. He was pleased to report that he was now receiving information about improving efficiency and savings, but considered that tenants needed information on how to contribute and how to improve. The Chairman informed the meeting that more information would be provided at the Area Panels.

42.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

43. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Beryl Snelling

43.1 The Chairman reported that Beryl Snelling was unwell. She suggested sending a card to Beryl on behalf of the Housing Management Consultative Committee.

Sheltered Schemes – Quality of Information Mark

43.2 The Chairman was pleased to announce that all of the Council's sheltered schemes had been awarded the Quality of Information (QI) Mark for the first time. The Quality of Information Mark was a Kite Mark to help ensure that older people have access to accurate and detailed information about sheltered housing schemes. It was endorsed by the CLG and the Department of Health. This meant that the Quality of Information Mark would appear on the Council's promotional material.

43.3 The Chairman congratulated all the staff in sheltered housing who had worked hard to achieve the award. Tom Whiting concurred. John Melson agreed and stated that much credit should go to Tom Whiting and the Sheltered Housing Action Group.

Home Energy Efficiency Investment Opportunities

43.4 The Chairman reported that there would be a presentation on this subject later on the agenda. Energy efficiency work had been launched in Energy Efficiency Week. The council was carrying out a great deal of work such as loft insulation, installing high efficiency condensing boilers and a communal solar hot water system. The Council would be doing more to make people aware of this important work.

44. CALLOVER

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

44.2 **RESOLVED** - That item numbers 50, 51, 52, 54 and 55 be reserved for debate and determination. Items 53 and 56 are agreed without discussion.

45. PETITIONS

45.1 There were none.

46. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

46.1 There were none.

47. DEPUTATIONS

47.1 There were none.

48. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

48.1 There were none.

49. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

49.1 There were none.

50. BRIGHTON & HOVE SEASIDE COMMUNITY HOMES - RESPONSE TO FINANCIAL & COMMERCIAL OFFER FROM THE COUNCIL

50.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Place which informed members that on 11 November 2010 the Cabinet would consider recommendations to bring about the completion of the Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) project. The LDV would need to secure a funder and negotiate a loan in order to purchase, via lease, property from the council in exchange for a substantial capital receipt subject to a final decision for leasing which meets the "Best Consideration" test. The funds received by the council would be used to support the decent homes programme and meet tenants' aspirations for improvement to their homes.

50.2 Cabinet's approval of the recommendations would provide BHSCCH with the assurance it needed to conclude negotiations with their selected funder.

50.3 A copy of a deputation being submitted to Cabinet on 11 November was circulated to Members. The deputation from tenant representatives urged the Cabinet to give approval to the LDV and to ongoing consultation with tenant representatives.

50.4 The Chairman mentioned that a briefing on the latest developments in relation to the Local Delivery Vehicle had been held on 3 November 2010. The Chairman understood that a more up to date version of the report to Cabinet had been published. This could be made available to members if they wished to see a copy.

50.5 In response to Stewart Gover's concerns about the set up costs so far funded by the Council, the Chairman stressed that these would be fully repaid by the company. This would either be in the form of a lump sum or would be paid over time. John Melson

suggested interest should be payable if the company negotiated repayment in instalments.

- 50.6 Mr Melson considered that property values quoted in the report were below market values and that rents included in the current model were far behind private sector rents. Mr Melson urged colleagues to support the deputation to Cabinet from tenant representatives.
- 50.7 The Director of Finance explained that with regard to valuations, the price the LDV were able to pay for the lease of the properties was not necessarily the same as the open market valuation. Valuation was a mechanism to help ensure tenants gain a fair price for properties and the price would depend on a variety of factors at the time of leasing. It was set out in law that best consideration must be achieved for these properties and valuing leases of 40 to 50 years was a complex issue requiring professional valuers.
- 50.8 The Director of Finance reported that a lot of work had been carried out to keep operating costs of the LDV as low as possible. With regard to rent levels, the Council could consider whether it would be reasonable to pay the LDV more than Local Housing Allowance and a number of issues need to be negotiated in detail. The risks taken by the Council would affect the general fund, not the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The aim for the HRA was to get the highest price for the lease premiums.
- 50.9 Councillor Mears appreciated Stewart Gover's concerns but reminded the Committee that the purpose of the LDV was to raise funding to refurbish people's homes. If £30m could be achieved, it would be well worth the effort.
- 50.10 The Chairman agreed that the project would bring empty properties back into use and refurbish properties.
- 50.11 Councillor Fryer asked for clarification regarding charitable status, and whether the stock would return to the council. She asked if all empty properties would be brought back into use and referred to paragraph 5.11 and asked if there was less money for the LDV due to the capping of housing benefit.
- 50.12 The Chairman replied that there were benefits in having charitable status in terms of tax and VAT. Leases would ensure that the freehold of the properties would remain under council ownership and could be as short as 30 years. Local housing allowance changes would be offset by revised costs. The Chairman stressed that she wanted every empty property brought back into use as soon as funding was available from the LDV.
- 50.13 The Lead Commissioner Housing explained that the mix of unit sizes to be leased had been changed to mitigate the changes to Housing Benefit. He confirmed that the Council was already paying more for private sector leases than the rents modelled for the LDV. Costs would be reviewed during detailed negotiations with banks and the LDV.
- 50.14 The Chairman undertook to hold a joint briefing for the Committee and tenant representatives following the completion of negotiations and before anything was signed.

- 50.15 Councillor Allen welcomed the idea of a joint briefing. He referred to paragraph 6.4 and remarked that no detail was given to explain the recommendation to approve additional budget provision to allow development of the project to financial and commercial close.
- 50.16 The Chairman explained delays due to the attempts to obtain express consent from the previous Secretary of State had increased set up costs. As detailed in paragraph 6.5 costs were envisaged to be refunded.
- 50.17 John Melson remarked that he did not wish to see the LDV overcharged. Properties needed a large cash input. He stressed that it was important to get the project up and running.
- 50.18 Councillor Simpson welcomed the progress with the LDV. Although the originally estimated capital receipt of £45m was not achievable, £30m was still a good sum. She considered local housing allowance changes had reduced the potential capital receipt and increased the risk the council was being asked to take on. She was not aware of any approach to the current government to approve express consent.
- 50.19 Councillor Mears explained that she and the Chairman had spoken to the new Housing Minister. He had gone through all the paperwork for the applications for express consent and one or two instances of incomplete paperwork had now been addressed. She was confident that the minister had all the relevant facts in front of him.
- 50.20 The Chairman remarked that if best consideration could not be achieved, the Secretary of State could still give consent. In future the need for consent would be removed by the Localism Bill.
- 50.21 Stewart Gover stated he wanted the project to work and stressed the importance of accurate property valuations. Mr Gover considered that the elected Chair of the LDV should attend meetings of the HMCC.
- 50.22 The Chairman remarked that all LDV Board members were volunteers and that contact needed to be appropriate while negotiations were ongoing. However, she was happy to organise another meeting for tenant representatives to have discussions with the Board.
- 50.23 Ted Harman stressed that Board Members had worked hard and spent a long time on the project. There was a need to get the project started.
- 50.24 Councillor Randall agreed that a huge amount of work had gone into the project. He was pleased to see that the need for consent was to be removed. There was now a need to agree the project.
- 50.25 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report for the Cabinet Meeting on 11 November 2010 be noted.
- (2) That the comments of the Housing Management Consultative Committee be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 11th November 2010.

Note: Stewart Gover abstained from voting on the above recommendations.

51. BUILDING NEW COUNCIL HOMES & HOUSING ESTATE MASTER PLANNING

- 51.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place which provided details of the Building New Council Homes Tenant Working Group and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Estates Master Plan work being undertaken to identify sites and properties across the city that have potential for development, refurbishment or regeneration.
- 51.2 The Chairman considered the work to be exciting news. Few local authorities were leading on building new council homes. Work on Ainsworth House would be a priority. The Estate Master Plan would identify sites for Council housing.
- 51.3 Councillor Simpson considered the report to be good news. She asked how many sites were new. She also asked if the new homes would be council homes as they were known at the moment. She had been concerned at the pronouncement of the Housing Minister. She stressed that 800 homes in 10 years would not meet all the city's housing needs.
- 51.4 The Chairman responded by stating that it was her understanding that the new homes would be rented in the same way as existing council homes. Grants were drying up from central government and the council were having to think of different methods of funding. This including self financing and the LDV. The Localism Bill would mean that the council would have the freedom to build in future without having to depend on central government.
- 51.5 The Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing reported that not all of the potential sites for council housing would be new. For example, some were garage sites.
- 51.6 Heather Hayes was concerned that the new homes should not be mainly flats. There were many families on the waiting list.
- 51.7 The Chairman stated that no decision had been made on the type of homes to be built on the Ainsworth House site. She stressed that there was a shortage of flats for people who wanted to downsize. The aim was to have a mixture of housing with more family sized houses.
- 51.8 The Lead Commissioner Housing confirmed that there were plans to build more 3 or 4 bed homes.
- 51.9 Councillor Fryer stated that it was useful to have a report on housing need in the city and she considered the proposal to be good news. However, she was surprised that there was a need for 4 bedroom houses. Councillor Fryer asked if there would be no right to buy the new homes.
- 51.10 The Chairman replied that the right to buy was available to everyone. Meanwhile, there was a need for 4 bedroom houses. A significant number of people on the waiting list were looking for one extra bedroom. This information could be made available to Councillor Fryer.

- 51.11 The Lead Commissioner Housing reported that a detailed needs analysis could be made available. There were 100 families in one bedroom flats whose needs were 4 bedrooms.
- 51.12 Councillor Randall considered the proposal to build 800 homes to be good news. Wansworth had produced 200 properties by building on garage sites. He considered that building decent sheltered housing would encourage people to give up family homes.
- 51.13 Heather Hayes asked if there was money to build on existing properties. The Chairman replied that there were discussions taking place about this suggestion. Some homes were large enough for loft conversions and extensions.
- 51.14 The Lead Commissioner Housing replied that discussions were taking place to secure funding for extensions and loft conversions. One option would be to convert lofts for owner occupiers at no cost to them and rent them out to council tenants.
- 51.15 John Melson stated that he hoped that any future building project would move away from the concept of one bedroom units. People in one bedroom accommodation could not have a carer stay with them or have family to stay.
- 51.16 Councillor Barnett agreed with building more homes on estates for the elderly. This would enable them to have their families around them. She also agreed that there should be more family homes.
- 51.17 The Chairman considered that there should be regular updates to monitor progress on the proposals.
- 51.18 **RESOLVED** - That Cabinet be recommended to:
- (1) Approve the development of a comprehensive estates masterplan in partnership with tenant representatives to inform best use of HRA assets and identify opportunities to build new Council homes.
 - (2) Approve the development of procurement, design and delivery options for new Council housing on identified sites.
 - (3) Delegate authority to the Lead Commissioner for Housing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing to further develop options to enable delivery of estate masterplan objectives and building of new Council homes.

52. HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 52.1 The Committee considered a presentation from the Head of Housing Strategy and Development (slides attached).
- 52.2 The Chairman referred to Feed in Tariffs (FIT). The Council wanted see if this scheme could be used by council tenants. This would be another way of generating income and saving energy bills in the city.

- 52.3 David Murtagh mentioned that although high efficiency boilers had been installed, many houses in Bevendean and Moulsecoomb had undersize radiators. He asked how it could be efficient to only warm rooms to 60% of the capacity of the boiler.
- 52.4 James Cryer (Managing Partner Mears Ltd) replied to explain that the new boilers were more efficient and there was a 30% fuel saving. The size of radiators had no effect on the boilers' efficiency. Meanwhile, the temperature of bedrooms was designed to be lower than the living areas and the radiator in bedrooms were smaller as a result. Mr Cryer stressed that it was important to look at other methods of warming houses such as loft insulation.
- 52.5 Barry Kent expressed concern at losing his hot water tank if he had a high efficiency condensing boiler fitted.
- 52.6 Mr Cryer confirmed that the combination boilers were suitable for homes with up to three bedrooms, as they supplied all the hot water needed.
- 52.7 Councillor Randall considered the initiatives to be good news in relation to council housing but was less impressed with the situation with private rented sector. He considered that funding was needed from other sources, such as the EU. Councillor Randall stressed that 48% of Co2 emissions came from domestic premises in Brighton & Hove. There was a need to carry out more loft insulation. Carrying out this work would also make savings for the health service, as people would be living in healthier conditions.
- 52.8 The Chairman made the point that although many people had loft insulation, it was often not up to standard as it was fitted some years ago.
- 52.9 The Chairman thanked the Head of Housing Strategy and Development for his work on the home energy efficiency investment opportunities and stressed that he and his team had brought a huge amount of investment to the city. A report on the work being carried out would be submitted to the Committee in the near future.
- 52.10 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted.

53. HOUSING REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP UPDATE AND AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

- 53.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place which set out the progress of the Housing Repairs and Improvement Partnership with Mears Group Limited which commenced on 1 April 2010. The Audit Commission had carried out an inspection of the Housing Repairs and Improvement Partnership to assess its robustness and effectiveness, and consider how embedded the new arrangements were. During the inspection the Audit Commission reviewed contract and management documents and interviewed Mears managers, council officers and Members.
- 51.2 **RESOLVED** - (1) That progress made in delivering the new Repairs & Improvement Partnership be noted.

- (2) That the findings of the Audit Commission in their inspection of the Repairs & Improvement Strategic Partnership be noted.

54. ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW

- 54.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place which set out recommended changes to the Homemove Allocations policy. Following this a 12 week consultation with the city would be conducted. A further report would then be brought back to HMCC with final recommendations for implementation following the consultation. The recommended changes to the Allocations Policy were attached as Appendix 1.
- 54.2 Members received a presentation from members of the working group formed to consider the policy review. These were Councillor Dawn Barnett, Chairman of the Working Group, Christina Hadleigh and Stewart Gover.
- 54.3 Stewart Gover praised the Homemove Manager and her staff for their work on the review.
- 54.4 The Chairman remarked that all the tenants who had worked on the review had made some innovative suggestions. Tenants had carried out a great deal of in depth research and had seen what happened in other organisations. She also acknowledged the work of the Head of Temporary Accommodation and Allocations, the Homemove Manager and the Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement.
- 54.5 Tom Whiting agreed that a great deal of work had gone into the review, but was concerned that key workers were not mentioned in the report. The City needed to encourage key workers such as police officers, nurses and fire officers.
- 54.6 The Lead Commissioner Housing explained that the wording key worker had not been used as it appeared to constrain rather than create opportunities. However, he stressed that Section 5 of the policy set out priority for working households and those making a positive contribution to the city.
- 54.7 John Melson stated that he was not happy with the proposal that at least 50% of all permanent social council housing stock would be advertised with a priority being given to those who could show that the ingoing primary tenant(s) is/are working or making a positive contribution to the city. He considered that the whole point of social housing was to address the needs of people on the waiting list who desperately need housing.
- 54.8 The Chairman replied that there were a number of residents who came to her surgery who could not afford the private rented sector in the city. These people often had to leave the city or give up work and go on benefits to access housing. Neither option was wanted for low paid workers. There were a significant number of residents who were in need and were working.
- 54.9 Councillor Fryer referred to paragraph 4.1 of the policy, which related to move on from care. The policy recommended that care leavers' application for housing would be demoted to Band D until they were ready to move on. Councillor Fryer stressed that young people in that category should have supported housing. Councillor Fryer referred

to Section 8 in relation to part 7 main duty. She fully supported giving priority to those with a city connection but asked if it conformed to legislation.

- 54.10 The Head of Temporary Accommodation and Allocations explained that there was in place a Joint Protocol with CYPT to address the needs of those young people moving on from care. In most cases young people moving on from care aren't ready to manage a tenancy and instead move on to a young people's supporting housing project. When they have completed the pathway and have learned life skills and are ready to live independently they are assisted to move on generally into a private rented shared house with other young people, as a flat on a Council estate is not usually the best form of accommodation for a young person. Homeless part 7 duty is set out in homelessness legislation and under that legislation the Local connection is set out as 6 out of 12 months.
- 54.11 Councillor Fryer had serious concerns about Section 5 of the policy. She stressed that housing associations gave priority to key workers. She was unable to support this section of the policy. She suggested that the percentage of 50% should be reduced.
- 54.12 The Lead Commissioner Housing suggested that this section could be reworded. However, he stressed that the council were currently excluding people who could benefit from living in council accommodation. The proposed policy did not exclude anyone. He considered that the concentration of deprivation and need was reinforced by the current housing policy.
- 54.13 The Chairman made the point that council owned properties were not necessarily the best places to house people. There was a need to support all aspects of housing in the city.
- 54.14 The Chairman emphasised that this recommendation came from tenants and it was necessary to listen to tenants on the estates.
- 54.15 Councillor Simpson agreed that a great deal of work had been carried out on the policy, and said she would like to see a copy of the final report. However, she was concerned at moving to a target of 50% for people in work. She had concerns with the current Local Lettings Plan which had a figure of 25%. She had thought the current plan was due to be reviewed in the autumn, and was worried that the proposals in the report were being progressed too quickly.
- 54.16 Stewart Gover stated that the proposals would broaden the pathway for different people to make applications for housing. He stressed that affordable housing was not social housing. Provision must be made for people in need of housing. The proposals were suggestions, and pathways to make it easier. He invited councillors to look at the work that had been carried out, and see if there was a better way forward.
- 54.17 John Melson made the point that the council now had permission to build council properties. There was a priority for people in genuine housing need. If there was a policy of allocating 50% to working people, what would happen to people on the waiting list? If the council was to provide affordable housing this should be done in partnership with other people. He was firmly against 50% and agreed that the Committee had not been informed about the progress of the current pilot.

- 54.18 Councillor Randall remarked that there was an acute shortage of housing. He felt that the proposed policy was trying to deal with a large problem. He stressed that more needed to be done to help people find work. It was good news that more new homes were to be built. He agreed that the council did not want to build ghettos but he considered 50% too high a percentage. He also wished to hear the result of the pilot before agreeing the report.
- 54.19 The Chairman reported that the Working Group did look at the pilot and this could be brought to the next HMCC.
- 54.20 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the report go out to consultation with the City on the recommendations put forward to amend the Allocations Policy.
- 55. TENANCY FRAUD POLICY**
- 55.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place which set out how Housing Management prevents, detects and resolved tenancy fraud, and included the council's response to a recent internal Audit review of how the council dealt with tenancy fraud.
- 55.2 The council had received a government grant of £30k to use to improve the prevention and detection of tenancy fraud. The report proposed that part of this grant was used to introduce photographic tenant identification.
- 55.3 Councillor Fryer remarked that she was broadly supportive of the policy. She asked about the position of existing tenants with regard to photographic tenant identification. She also asked if it was necessary for people who had passports and other ID.
- 55.4 The Business Improvement Manager, Tenancy Services explained that officers would keep the photo ID's on the council's computer system. However, the ID's would also be useful for tenants who did not have other forms of identification. The new initiative would only apply to people with new tenancies. Existing tenants would still have tenancy checks.
- 55.5 Councillor Randall considered fraud a difficult and widespread problem. He asked if the government viewed the council's proposals as a type of pilot project.
- 55.6 The Business Improvement Manager, Tenancy Services explained that the Government was aware that tenancy fraud was a big problem and were encouraging councils to detect tenancy fraud. The main tools used were photo ID proof of identity and data matching.
- 55.7 The Chairman stated that it would be useful to have an update report in 12 months time.
- 55.8 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the report be noted.

- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing is recommended to agree that the government grant be used to fund equipment to introduce photographic records of tenant identity for new tenants.

56. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RESPONDING TO REPORTED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

56 .1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place which informed members that the Home Office had set out new guidance promoting a consistent, victim and witness focused approach around responding to reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Minimum Standards were attached to the report. These standards had been agreed on a multi-agency basis, including by Housing Management and Housing Strategy, Sussex Police and the Anti Social Behaviour Casework team. These were formally adopted in October 2010. The standards incorporated the views and feedback that had been gathered from tenants to date. The Council's response to tackling anti-social behaviour would be developed further with tenants through the Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group and Local Offer for Anti-Social Behaviour.

56.2 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the Home Office minimum standards be noted.

- (2) That the report be referred to the ASB tenant working group to further develop and enhance this area of service.

The meeting concluded at 6.05pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 88

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Supporting People Commissioning Strategy 2011-15		
Date of Meeting:	1st December 2010		
Report of:	Strategic Director Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Daniel Parsonage	Tel: 29-3081
		Commissioning Officer (Supporting People)	
	E-mail:	Daniel.Parsonage@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The local Supporting People Programme funds 37 providers and a total of 84 Supporting People contracts that deliver housing-related support to 4500 vulnerable service users that live in the city of Brighton and Hove. These services help people to live more independently by providing resettlement support, work, learning and life skills, money advice, crisis response and floating support services. Services are provided to a range of client groups such as people with mental health and substance misuse support needs, rough sleepers, single homeless people, young people and people with learning disabilities.
- 1.2 The Supporting People Programme has successfully and consistently delivered positive outcomes for service users since its launch in 2003. The established partnership with local providers, partners and stakeholders have enabled us to effectively deliver services of high quality, performance, excellent value for money and good outcomes. Providers have demonstrated a high level of innovation in achieving these high standards and maintained a strong level of commitment to work to deliver the programme despite year-on-year reductions to funding.
- 1.3 The key priorities of this new strategy have been developed in partnership with providers and commissioners:
 1. Improving Access to Services
 2. Flexible services with positive outcomes
 3. Working towards greater independence
 4. Sustaining Independence
 5. Value for Money

The strategy sets out the principles behind these and the objectives agreed to commission services to meet these priorities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve key priorities outlined in Supporting People Commissioning Strategy 2011-15.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

- 3.1 Communities and Local Government budget announcements on 20th October 2010 indicated a clear commitment to protect preventative services for vulnerable people delivered through the Supporting People and Homelessness grants. CLG stated that 'cuts to the Supporting People programme have been minimised, with £6.5 billion to be invested at a national level over the next 4 years' (Head of Homelessness, CLG). In line with the prevention agenda, CLG also stated that 'because of the excellent value for money secured from homelessness grant and the key role it plays in supporting the vulnerable, Ministers have decided to protect this grant, holding it at this year's level of investment this year. Ministers attach particular priority to work to prevent single homelessness and rough sleeping' (Head of Homelessness, CLG).
- 3.2 Communities and Local Government announced budget cuts and efficiency savings of £780m required from this current financial year, 2010-11, on 10th June 2010. These cuts from various grants to Local Authorities included a cut in the 'Supporting People Administration Grant', which for Brighton & Hove is £163,540. This grant covers the cost of administering the programme, which includes staffing and associated overhead costs. Through the financial strategy the in-year grant cut has been absorbed and work is currently underway to develop a financial plan to deliver this ongoing efficiency saving in future.
- 3.3 During 2009, the Supporting People Commissioning Team completed a cost benefit analysis of the Supporting People Programme locally in Brighton and Hove. This piece of work measured the impact of housing-related support services funded by Supporting People grant and presents a business case for investment of these services.
- 3.4 The CLG model shows that Supporting People Programme makes the city a £36.6million saving for a spend of £11.3million which equates to the fact that for **every £1 spent on SP the city saves £3.24**. This takes into account reductions in costs for housing departments, DWP, NHS, and other social costs such as crime and homelessness.
- 3.5 The methodology is based on examining the financial impact if SP funded services were replaced by the most appropriate positive alternatives.
- 3.6 Communities and Local Government Select Committee and the Audit Commission both conducted reviews of the Supporting People Programme at a national level in 2009. The key recommendations and findings from

these reviews indicated that the Supporting People Programme has successfully:

- Improved quality of services, meeting local needs, delivering better outcomes of service users and more effectively involved service users
- Achieved Value For Money through benchmarking and delivering efficiencies and within an improved commissioning and contracting monitoring framework
- Delivered more personalised, flexible and responsive services
- Established a robust governance structure involving commissioners, providers and service users and that this structure is a good blue print for partnership working

3.7 In Brighton & Hove we have shown significant improvement in line with the national changes outlined above:

- since 2005 positive move on in short term services has increased from 44% to 72%
- Quality against the QAF has increased year on year with 56% achieving 'best practice' on all objectives
- Diversity data collected to inform impact assessments and commissioning
- Outcomes Framework - Example - 1 in 10 service users have significant self harm issues – 80% resolve this with an SP service

This has meant better outcomes have been commissioned at a reduced spend as the SP budget has reduced in real terms every year of the last strategy.

Despite this we have continued locally to commission innovative services that maintain and improve independence these include:

- Translation and interpreting service
- Remodelling of Recovery Support Houses
- Outreach service for street drinkers
- Deposit guarantee scheme
- Tenancy Access Project
- LD Access service
- High Risk offenders floating support
- Three work and learning services for single homeless people
- Crisis response service
- A drop in service for the Integrated Support Pathway
- Peer support service

3.8 We have renewed our commitment to the model of Sheltered Housing and have recently commissioned a new support service for a sheltered scheme that was designed in partnership with residents and the community.

- 3.9 Also we have remodelled services to improve outcomes for service users in achieving greater independence.
- 3.10 The previous Supporting People Strategy was agreed in 2008 and has been implemented as part of a three year action plan with updates to Cabinet each year; the last in July 2010.
- 3.11 The original Supporting People programme began in 2003 with the first SP strategy which expired in 2007 after all services had been formally reviewed using the Quality Assessment Framework.
- 3.12 This strategy has been developed throughout 2010 with an open consultation event for providers, staff, and the community held in March 2010.
- 3.13 All Supporting People contracts are scheduled to end in March 2011 so the new commissioning recommendations need to have been agreed to ensure that sufficient timescales are in place in implement change.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 We have consulted with third sector providers and partners throughout 2010 including specially convened forums and events. Service users have been involved through existing networks with advocacy agencies involved in supporting this process.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 During the recent Comprehensive Spending Review, it was announced that the Supporting People Grant will be rolled in Formula Grant (from Area Based Grant) with effect from 2011/12. The grant funding received for this financial year is £11.2m, however, the sum to be included in the formula grant is yet to be confirmed and members will have discretion on the level of expenditure to be applied for the programme. Due to these funding uncertainties, actions to address the key priorities of the strategy will be subject to budget provisions agreed by Budget Council in March 2011

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington

Date: 08/11/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council's Contract Standing Orders require every contract let by the Council to comply with the EU Treaty, the EU Public Service Directives and all relevant EU and domestic legislation. The type of services which are to be commissioned as part of the strategy are "Part B" services for the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006, and as such are not subject to the full application of those Regulations. However, the 'spirit' of the procurement regime should apply to such services, and they should be monitored and tendered competitively where possible. Where such tendering is not immediately possible due to the limited marketplace and/or the circumstances of service users, the services

should be benchmarked against similar services to demonstrate the Council is getting value for money. The Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with a European Convention right. It is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights would be adversely affected by the recommendation in this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 12/11/10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed in developing the Supporting People Strategy in 2008

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The commissioning intentions of housing-related support services as part of the Supporting People Strategy are in accordance with sustainability objectives and housing objectives that aim to reduce the reliance on resource heavy residential services

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The commissioning intentions of housing-related support services as part of the Supporting People Strategy are in accordance with the local objectives to prevent crime and disorder. The fundamental aim of Supporting People services is to promote independent living, social inclusion and integration, all of which aim to prevent crime and disorder.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The key objectives and strategic actions within the Supporting People Strategy contribute to a number of Council priorities, outcomes and national Indicators as part of our Local Area Agreement.

Supporting People services deliver diverse and innovative services to a range of client groups, from people with mental health and substance misuse problems, to older people and single homeless people with support needs. The services are preventative and achieve long-term, positive benefits for service users to maximise independent living. External partners have worked well to deliver the programme and any risks to providers, services, service users and local employment opportunities, need to be carefully managed and mitigated in partnership with our providers.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The Supporting People Strategy contributes towards delivering Corporate priorities and contributes towards achieving a number of outcomes in the local Sustainable Communities Strategy and national indicators as part of the Local Area Agreement.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 It has been previously agreed that a Supporting People Strategy would be drafted and implemented

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To continue to achieve the positive outcomes outlined in the main report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

- 1. Supporting People Commissioning Strategy, 2011-15

Supporting People Commissioning Strategy **2011-2015**

Commissioning Support Services for
Vulnerable People in Brighton & Hove



Brighton & Hove
City Council

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- 5. Cost Benefit Analysis**
- 6. Our Strategic Priorities 2011-2015**
 - a. Improving Access to Services**
 - b. Flexible services with positive outcomes**
 - c. Working towards greater independence**
 - d. Sustaining Independence**
 - e. Value for Money**
- 7. Implementation & Review**

This strategy is a refresh of the Supporting People Programme in Brighton & Hove and is informed by the national Supporting People Strategy and local and regional strategies from partners.

Foreword

We are pleased to present this new strategy of a very successful programme that makes a real difference to local people in Brighton and Hove. We are fully committed to the principles of Supporting People and believe that vulnerable people in the city deserve greater independence, and that the city as a whole is improved by helping people move on from support services to live in the community.

In Brighton & Hove we have shown that for every £1 spent on Supporting People services the city saves £3.24.

There have been a number of successes over the duration of the last strategy including the development of the Integrated Support Pathway which has helped people with a history of homelessness to gain their own tenancy and improved access to education and work opportunities.

We have worked with our partners in Health and Adult Social Care to commission services that complement each other and reduce dependence on services. This includes the remodelled Recovery Support Houses which support people who have left Millview and helps them with their life skills and well being. This service has been integral in helping people move on to lower support and independence.

This new strategy is a sign of our ongoing support for this programme and the need to reduce the reliance on traditional care services and moving further towards modern personalised services that maximise independence.

With this strategy we will set out our strategic priorities for the next four years, we will review the success and outcomes to show its impact.

Maria Caulfield
Lead Cabinet Member for Housing
Chair of Supporting People Commissioning Body

What is Supporting People?

Supporting People is a government initiative to enable people to achieve and maintain independence through housing related support. This means commissioning support services to help people with areas that would otherwise reduce their ability to live independently.

Support in short term services is based on a re-ablement model of adult social care or the NHS recovery model; both of these look at time limited services working towards specific outcomes to improve independence and 'move on' from the service.

Support in longer term services is based around supporting people to maintain life skills and remain as independent as possible.

Services offer personalised support with a wide range of tasks including:

- Resettlement into more suitable accommodation
- Tenancy issues
- Mental and physical well being
- Safety and security
- Accessing education, training and employment
- Helping understanding finances and budgeting
- Life skills
- Identity and Cultural issues
- Move on

To achieve this in the city we have commissioned services that best meet local need for housing and support. These include:

- Sheltered Housing
- Supported Living
- Floating Support
- Street Outreach
- Hostels
- Work and Learning
- Peer Support

Our Vision

We will improve the well being of people in Brighton & Hove by commissioning services that meet their needs in the community.

We will commission flexible services that support vulnerable people to achieve positive outcomes, and deliver value for money for the city.

We commission services that support vulnerable people to live more independently.

We are driven by the principles of World Class Commissioning. This means putting people at the centre of shaping services by involving users, carers and partners in all projects.

World Class Commissioning works in four stages:

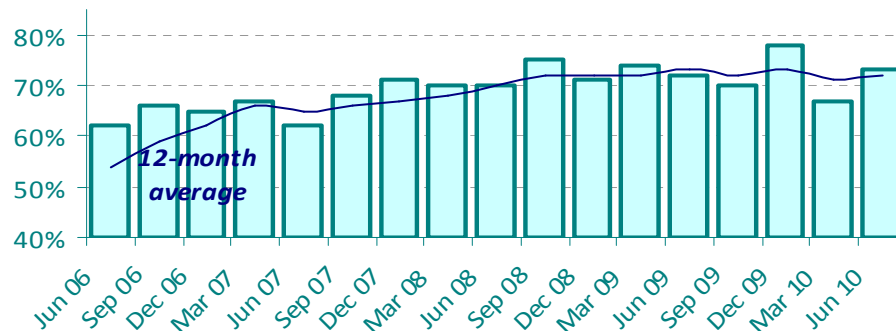
- Commissioning based on needs data – know why we commission
- Consultation – partners/users/carers/stakeholders – knowing what people want us to commission
- Partnership working and joint commissioning – know how we are going to do it
- Reviewing commissioned projects with milestones – know if what we commission is working



Successes of the last strategy

We have reviewed the impact of the last strategy as part of developing the new direction and we can show the positive change over the last five years.

- Since 2005 positive move on in short term services has increased from 45% to 72%:



- Quality against the QAF has increased year on year with 56% achieving ‘best practice’ on all objectives
- Diversity data collected to inform impact assessments and commissioning
- Outcomes Framework - Example - 1 in 10 service users have significant self harm issues – 80% resolve this with an SP service

This has meant that we have commissioned better outcomes at a reduced spend as the SP budget has reduced in real terms every year of the last strategy.

Despite this we have continued locally to commission innovative services that maintain and improve independence. These include:

- Translation and interpreting service
- Remodelling of Recovery Support Houses
- Outreach service for street drinkers
- Deposit guarantee scheme
- Tenancy Access Project
- LD Access service
- High Risk offenders floating support
- Three work and learning services for single homeless people

- Crisis response service
- A drop in service for the Integrated Support Pathway
- Peer support service

Also we have remodelled services to improve outcomes for service users in achieving greater independence.

Example of Supporting People Commissioning #1

As part of the last strategy review we looked to remodel services that were not achieving positive outcomes for services users. One service did not have a good move on rate so we worked with the Sussex Partnership Trust to re-focus the funding to change the four high needs properties into two high needs recovery houses and two medium needs move on properties. This has meant that more people have been able to move on from the service and live independently in the community.

The planned changes will deliver modernised, personalised services enabling a greater number of service users to live as independently as possible, whilst still ensuring that those with the most severe and complex needs receive the in-patient service from the NHS that they need

Feedback from Sussex Partnership Trust

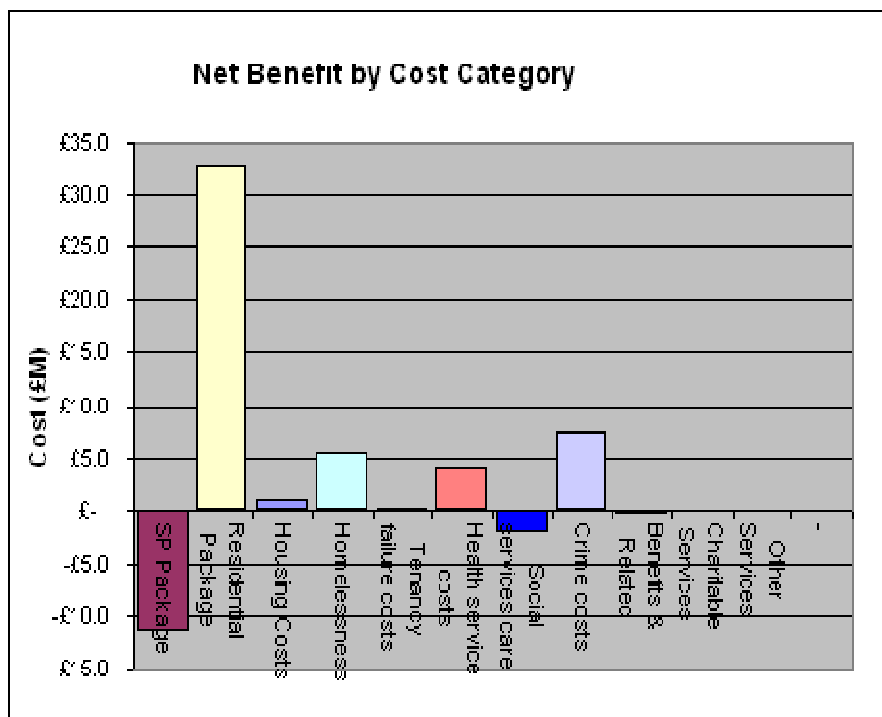
Example of Supporting People Commissioning #2

A provider of sheltered housing informed us that they no longer intended to directly deliver the support service at their projects in Brighton & Hove. We carried out a consultation process to investigate alternative methods of supplying support to the residents; including individual service funds, personal budgets, and floating support. As a result of the consultation the residents decided to tender for new provider to deliver the support. The process of assessing the tender applications was decided by residents with the service specification agreed by nominated residents and stakeholders. A new provider has now been agreed and the service is due to start in 2011.

Cost Benefit Analysis

The CLG model shows that Supporting People Programme makes the city a £36.6million saving for a spend of £11.3million which equates to the fact that for **every £1 we spend on SP the city saves £3.24**. This takes into account reductions in costs for housing departments, Department of Work and Pensions, NHS, and other social costs such as crime and homelessness.

The methodology is based on examining the financial impact if SP funded services were replaced by the most appropriate positive alternatives.



The cost benefit analysis is used to evidence the positive impact of SP services on other sectors such as care. This has informed the joint commissioning decisions within the strategic priorities of this strategy.

In Brighton & Hove all client groups show some positive benefit whereas nationally some client groups do not show this.

Since the beginning of the last strategy in 2007 we have almost doubled the cost benefit from £1.80 to £3.24 which is delivering improved value for money and clearly evidencing improved outcomes for services users. This also shows the impact our commissioned services have on other sectors.

Client group	Cost (£m)	Cost/Benefit ratio	Net Financial Benefit (£m)
Alcohol problems	0.1	12	1.2
Women at risk of DV	0.3	2	0.6
Drug problems	0.5	5.2	2.6
Single homeless	3.3	4.6	15.3
Learning disabilities	1.7	2.1	3.6
Mental health	2.3	2.8	6.5
Offenders	0.7	0.14	0.1
Older people	1.2	4.2	5.0
Physical or sensory	0.03	3.3	0.1
Teenage parents	0.1	0.0	0.0
Young People	1.2	1.3	1.6
Total	11.3	3.24	36.6



Our Strategic Priorities 2011-2015

- 1. Improving Access to Services**
- 2. Flexible services with positive outcomes**
- 3. Working towards greater independence**
- 4. Sustaining Independence**
- 5. Value for Money**

This section will set out the ethos behind each priority and the action we will take to meet these commissioning objectives.

It will also show how we will assess the success of the strategy so that we can inform future commissioning plans.



Priority 1:	Improving access to services
<p>Strategic Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for people with learning disabilities to access mainstream services and make housing choices • Commission a tenancy access project to support tenants and landlords to reduce stigma around vulnerable people and promote move-on access into the private rented sector • Review current move on arrangements to improve take up of the deposit guarantee scheme, moves into the Private Rented Sector and facilitate appropriate move on options for clients with complex needs • Commission a mental health transitions team to support people to move on from acute and residential care • Develop greater personalisation and choice through a review of how clients can access different approaches to substance misuse in hostels • Work with Sussex Partnership Trust to ensure that clients in the Single Homeless Integrated Support Pathway are able to access psychological interventions available in the community • Via the DV forum and Housing Options, ensure that all professionals working in Domestic Violence are aware of housing issues, and address gaps in knowledge • As part of the YHWG action plan, review how Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans needs are being met within support provision for young people • Work with the Domestic Violence co-ordinator and supported accommodation providers in developing local guidelines for dealing with domestic violence within supported housing that link with Safeguarding Children and Adults procedures 	



Success Criteria:

- More people with learning disabilities with their own tenancies living independently in the community
- That all Supporting People services are accessible to people with learning disability who would benefit from their support including sheltered housing, homelessness services, and substance misuse
- Increased move on into Supporting People services from Millview and residential care homes
- Increased personalisation and choice in short term homelessness services
- More people in homelessness services access the psychological therapies they need
- Increased positive housing outcomes for Domestic Violence services
- Ensure that all services meet the need of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans communities



Priority 2:	Flexible services with positive outcomes
<p>Strategic Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission services that are able to respond to crisis situations to support people with learning disabilities in the community • Support the implementation of an alcohol pathway across services so that ‘revolving door’ clients can receive personalised and specialist support with alcohol issues • Enable people with multiple needs such as mental health, substance misuse, learning disabilities, forensic history, physical needs, etc. to get the support and housing that they need 	
<p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced number of people with learning disabilities making unplanned moves • Reduced number of people with multiple needs placed unnecessarily in care services • Reduced voids in housing association properties • Reduced evictions from hostels due to alcohol use • Better outcomes for people with multiple needs regardless of the original point of access 	

Priority 3:

Working towards greater independence

Strategic Actions:

- Commission more low-level supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities
- Commission a tiered service to support people with complex mental health needs
- Commission a floating support service for clients with learning disabilities who are living in hostels (who do not qualify for statutory learning disability services)
- Establish a multi-agency panel to deliver move on solutions for older people and clients with complex needs
- Develop greater personalisation and choice through a review of how clients can access different work and learning opportunities and access support to maintain independence when working, including housing
- As part of the Housing and Domestic Violence Working Group work to improve access to 'move on' for people who are experiencing domestic violence
- Explore commissioning of accommodation and support for high need clients / 16 and 17 year olds
- Review current provision to ensure young people are supported to move to the private rented sector, and that provision of floating support for young people is adequate to ensure private rented tenancies are sustained
- Monitor changes to the Young People Eviction Protocol exploring other methods of effectively managing breaches of licenses/house rules
- As part of the YHWG, (Youth Homeless Working Group) ensure all providers work in partnership with the NEET action plan to ensure all young parents achieve a minimum of level 1 qualification



- Work with partners to manage the changes in provision expected in year one of the strategies to ensure need the need of the city is met within the restricted resources

Success Criteria:

- Increased housing choice for people with learning disabilities and more people having tenancies
- Improved move for people with mental health issues
- Reduced delayed discharge from Millview
- Reduced use of residential care due to housing issues
- Reduced eviction from young people services
- Improved number of level 1 qualifications



Priority 4:	Sustaining independence
<p>Strategic Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain dispersed alarm service with efficiency savings • In Year Two of the Strategy, replace three outreach services that are high quality and highly strategically relevant, but only offer moderate value for money, with a combined service that retains the specialisms of each but offers greater flexibility, value for money, accessibility, and sign-posting to other services, and very high strategic relevance • Remodel long term learning disability services to include a re-ablement element that promotes independence 	
<p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quality of life for older people • Better outcomes for older people with more service users supported to stay independent in the community • Improved individual outcomes for people with learning disabilities 	

Priority 5:	Delivering value for money
<p>Strategic Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain (with small efficiency savings) 90% of sheltered/extra care sheltered housing, which offers good value for money and strategic relevance • Reconfigure one small accommodation-based service for older people with mental health needs with low utilisation/strategic relevance • Supporting People to implement the recommendations of the Intelligent Commissioning Pilots for domestic violence and alcohol to address gaps in provision • Working with longer and flexible contracts with agreed outcomes 	
<p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better use of council resources • Improved reporting mechanisms to show the outcomes of commissioning • Stable and thriving third sector partners 	

Implementation & Review - Conclusion

During the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, the Chancellor George Osborne specifically commended the Supporting People Programme for helping with housing for the most vulnerable people in our communities. To continue with this work we will be commissioning the projects and services outlined in the action plan but we are also setting out a number of commissioning commitments to ensure that we continue to meet standards such as world class commissioning and the innovative practice expected by our providers:

- We will commission services that complement the services commissioned by our partners in care and housing
- We will implement this strategy over the four year period ensuring remodelling is well managed over an appropriate length of time and that new services are commissioned with clear timescales
- We will make all commissioning decisions public and transparent with a clear rationale
- We will review our commissioning annually to check that we are meeting local needs
- We will publicly report on our commissioning annually
- We will check quality in partnership with Adult Social Care and NHS
- We will commission services with long term aims based on the strategy
- We will support providers innovative within their contract to get the best outcomes
- We will involve providers, partners and service users in developing the programme over the next four years

*The SP world leads the way in demonstrating the connection between needs, expenditure, services and outcomes for users. The commissioning arrangements for SP services have been an effective partnership based on needs analyses, strategies and investment plans, generally with a high level of provider, and in some areas, user input. **This is a model to build on and replicate, not one to dismantle.***

Sitra Bulletin Issue 222 March 09

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 89

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Tenancy Fraud Policy
Date of Meeting: 1 December 2010
Report of: Strategic Director Place
Contact Officer: Name: Helen Clarkmead 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 Tenancy fraud can take a variety of forms; the most common being unlawful subletting, and obtaining a council property by deception. This report sets out how Housing Management prevents, detect and resolve tenancy fraud, and includes our response to a recent Internal Audit review of how we deal with tenancy fraud.
- 1.2 The council received a government grant of £30k to use to improve the prevention and detection of tenancy fraud. This report proposes that part of this grant is used to introduce photographic tenant identification.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees the action points arising from the Internal Audit report.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees that the government grant is used to fund equipment to introduce photographic records of tenant identity for new tenants.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Tenancy fraud exists where the legitimate tenant unlawfully sublets their home, obtains a council property by presenting false information or claims succession rights by presenting false information. Tenancy fraud removes homes from the available housing stock that would otherwise be available to people in housing need.

- 3.2 A tenant is not permitted to sub let their home. A condition of secure tenancy is that the dwelling must be the main home of the tenant(s).
- 3.3 We will take action against tenants who sub let their home, and against those who obtain a council tenancy by deception.
- 3.4 We started a publicity campaign in the summer including posters, leaflets, articles in City News and Homing In.
- 3.5 Suspected tenancy fraud is reported through Internal Audit, who lead any investigation, working closely with tenancy management officers and the Housing Benefit Investigations Team, where appropriate. Residents who suspect tenancy fraud can report this by telephone to 01273 291700 or email to anti-fraud@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- 3.6 Officers have received specialist document verification training and are well equipped to detect false documents. Further training around the detection of unlawful subletting is planned in the autumn.
- 3.7 An important aspect of detecting tenancy fraud is verification of a tenant's identity. It is proposed that photographic identification of tenants is held on file and on the tenancy management computerised records system. This will better enable officers to verify if someone presenting as the tenant is actually the legitimate tenant. Tenant photographs will be taken at application or tenancy sign up, and verified, where possible, against formal photographic identification – for example a passport. Photographs will be held securely and under the terms of the data protection act. Having a photograph will not be a condition of the tenancy.
- 3.8 Officers undertake tenancy checks on a routine planned basis, including the verification of identity. Where fraud is suspected, these take place on an unnotified basis and at various times.
- 3.9 There is regular information sharing and data matching to highlight potential tenancy fraud. This will be further enhanced by the collection of National Insurance numbers.
- 3.10 The council's Internal Auditors completed a review of Housing Tenancy Verification in July 2010. A summary of recommendations, agreed action and progress is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 3.11 The Housing Management team are working very closely with internal Audit and are considering proposals to participate in 2 more projects.
- National Anti Fraud Network – to run a pilot carrying out a data matching exercise with Experian.
 - National Fraud Authority are considering using our department as a pathfinder as an example of good practice

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This report was presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 8 November 2010. HMCC welcomed the report and an indicative vote recommended that the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees the recommendations as set out above.
- 4.2 Tenancy Management Focus Group agreed that tenancy fraud needs to be prevented and robustly managed where identified. The group generally supported the measures outlined in this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The cost of introducing photographic tenant identification is approximately £15,000 which will be met from the government grant of £30,000, which was received for the purposes of the prevention and detection of tenancy fraud. The ongoing annual costs of producing photographic identification will need to met from within existing Housing Revenue Account budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen

Date: 08/09/10

- 5.2 Subletting of part of a property is not unlawful, as long as a secure tenant has the landlord's written consent. If the whole of a property is sublet, security of tenure is lost (section 93 Housing Act 1985) and the landlord has the right to seek possession through the courts. Where a tenant has obtained a council property by deception, the landlord can seek a possession order in the county court as long as it can prove that it was induced to grant the tenancy by a false statement made knowingly or recklessly by the tenant or a person acting at his instigation. This ground for possession is not widely used.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 08/09/2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 A robust and effective approach to tenancy fraud will ensure property is available to people in need

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no specific sustainability implications

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 There are no specific crime and disorder implications

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 If a robust approach is not adopted, there is a risk that council property may be occupied by people who are not the legitimate tenants.

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.

6. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 This report is a response to an Internal Audit report, and as such considers each recommendation of that report in the main body and appendix. The alternative of considering Internal Audit recommendations is not feasible.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To effectively address tenancy fraud.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices: Recommendations of 2010 Internal Audit report – Housing Tenancy Verification, agreed actions and progress.

Documents In Members' Rooms : None

Background Documents: None

Appendix

Internal Audit Report – Housing Tenancy Verification July 2010

Summary of Recommendations and Action

	Recommendation	Action Agreed	Completion target	Progress
1	Information recorded on the Tenancy Check record spreadsheets to be consistent across the five area housing offices	Standard recording spreadsheet format to be adopted	30/06/2010	Achieved
2	Properties visited prior to January 2009 should be revisited prior to the beginning of 2011 to ensure the target of visiting each property within a two-year cycle is achieved	We will attempt to do this	31/12/2010	This is unlikely to be achieved. The number of tenancies where we have been unable to gain access is relatively high, and these need to be prioritised before revisiting tenancies last checked in 2009. A cycle of tenancy visits every 3 years is more realistic.

3	Management to review the current processes for undertaking tenancy check visits including when they are undertaken to ensure that the chances of identifying illegal subletting/occupancy are maximised	Procedure to be reviewed. Tenancy checks where indicators suggest fraud to be made on an unnotified basis	30/09/2010	Achieved
4	Tenancy files to contain details of all tenancy visits	All tenancy visit documentation to be placed on the file	30/06/2010	Achieved
5	Management to review the list of documents that can be accepted as evidence of identity	Agreed	31/08/2010	Achieved
6	Out of date documentation not to be accepted as evidence of identity	Agreed	30/06/2010	Achieved
7	Management to review how identity documents are examined and whether it is feasible to take a copy of such documents shown during tenancy visits and place them on the tenancy file subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act	Agreed	31/08/2010	Review completed. Mobile copying technology is not available to officers undertaking tenancy checks.
8	Management to ascertain whether it is feasible to record tenancy checks on the OHMS system in future instead of completing individual spreadsheets at each area office	Agreed	31/10/2010	This would be possible with system enhancements. However there are greater priorities for the OHMS team, and this may not be implemented until March 2011

9	All cases of suspected unauthorised occupancy to be reported to Head of Audit and Business Risk or the Principal Auditor (lead for counter fraud) to enable the matter to be logged and the intelligence disseminated and investigated by the appropriate personnel within the council following a risk assessment of the evidence available	Agreed	30/06/2010	Achieved
10	Risk Assessments undertaken prior to tenancy management visits to be documented	Agreed – tenancy visit checklist to be reviewed	30/06/2010	Achieved
11	Three ‘cold call’ visits should be made to a housing property where there is a suspicion of unauthorised occupancy before a card is left	Agreed, although this will have a negative impact upon officer ability to meet the challenging two year visit cycle	31/08/2010	Achieved
12	Details to be maintained as to how many properties have been recovered as a result of proven unauthorised occupancy	Agreed. Housing Managers collect this information and report quarterly	30/06/2010	Achieved
13	Claims for damages should be considered where it is found that a tenant occupying a property unlawfully has substantial assets	Agreed. Legal Services consider this as part of case management	30/06/2010	Achieved
14	Tenancy files to be reviewed prior to a tenancy check being undertaken to	Agreed	30/06/2010	Achieved

	ensure that there is a tenancy agreement on file. Housing Officer to investigate each case where one cannot be located, ensure the tenancy is legal and complete a tenancy agreement as appropriate			
15	Photographs to be taken of all tenants if there is sufficient funding available to set up and maintain a system	Agreed to undertake a feasibility study	30/09/2010	Report to HMCC November 2010 and Housing CMM December 2010
16	Access controls to be implemented if a decision is made to go ahead with and introduce a system whereby photographs of tenants are held on a centralised system.	Pending decision	Pending decision	Pending decision

HC BIMTM September 2010.

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 90

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing Act 2004 – Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Fees and Additional Licensing		
Date of Meeting:	1 December 2010		
Report of:	Lead Commissioner Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Reid	Tel: 29-3321
	E-mail:	martin.reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 On 6 April 2006 national licensing for certain categories of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) came into effect as required by the Housing Act 2004 (The Act). Since then there have been nationally prescribed criteria that describe which HMOs must be licensed, plus the provision for local housing authorities to pursue additional licensing areas – defined geographically and/or by HMO type – if appropriate.
- 1.2 Fees for different categories of licensable HMO were agreed by Housing Committee on 30 March 2006 and were set, in accordance with Government guidance, at a figure which would be self-financing for the council, having regard to resources needed to process applications and issue licences.
- 1.3 Fees were set for an initial licence that would be granted for up to five years. These fees have not been reviewed since and from April 2011 routine reapplications will become necessary as initial licences expire.
- 1.4 The Student Housing Strategy, adopted in November 2009, is part of the overarching city-wide Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014. The goal of the Housing Strategy is to work to ensure student housing provides a positive contribution to students' lives and the city. The Student Housing Strategy considers residential geographies of students in the city, identifies issues arising and areas where over-concentration of student households occur and includes consideration of the implementation of additional licensing among its action points.
- 1.5 This report reviews HMO licensing fees and considers additional HMO licensing, seeking approval for: -
 - the introduction of a re-licensing fee
 - an increase to initial application fees to reflect increased costs since 2005/6 and

- consultation on whether additional licensing might be appropriate in Brighton & Hove

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing approves revised fees, as outlined in this report, for initial HMO licence applications and the introduction of new fees to apply to applications to renew a licence that has expired.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Housing approves that a landlord making more than one initial or renewal application in any financial year should receive a reduction of £24 for each application other than the first one.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet Member for Housing approves initiation of a 12 week consultation on additional HMO licensing of HMOs of two or more storeys and three or more occupiers in the wards of Hanover and Elm Grove, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean and St Peters and North Laine, the wards with the highest concentrations of smaller HMOs, including student HMOs, as identified in the Student Housing Strategy action plan.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Act requires re-licensing of HMOs that have already been licensed when the licence period has expired or if the ownership changes. 546 mandatory licensing applications were received in 2006/7 – about 65% of the total applications received since HMO licensing began. The licences issued in respect of these will all expire in 2011/12. New applications will have to be made and processed in 2011/12 for all of those properties that are still licensable HMOs.
- 3.2 It is illegal to operate licensable HMOs without a licence.
- 3.3 A licence or renewal of licence can be granted for a maximum period of five years.
- 3.4 The Government's advice is that HMO licensing schemes should be self-financing. There should be no element of profit and any shortfall would have to be subsidised through revenue budgets.
- 3.5 The re-licensing process reflected in the proposed fees includes:
 - Checking and processing applications;
 - Re-inspection to check standards;
 - Monitoring of the condition of the HMO involved;
 - Issuing the licence documents and maintaining a public register.
 - Continuing development of licence procedures.

- Continuing development of the IT package;
- 3.6 The setting of the renewal fees has been achieved with reference to the principles set out in guidance and recommendation on the justification, calculation and structuring of HMO Licence Fees produced on behalf of the East and West Sussex Chief Environmental Health Officers by an independent consultant in October 2005.
- 3.7 HMOs which currently have to be licensed are those which are three or more storeys in height and have five or more occupants from two or more households. About 800 full HMO licences have been issued to date with about 40 more applications currently at draft licence stage.
- 3.8 A property that is being re-licensed will have been inspected before. The officer time required is less than that required to process an initial application and this is reflected in the proposed fees below. In para 3.9 below the prices in brackets are the initial licensing fee corresponding to the proposed re-licensing fee.
- 3.9 The proposed renewal fee for a shared house with five occupants, **based on 2006 prices**, would be £320 (£640). Additional occupants above five would be charged at a rate of £5 per person (£10). The renewal fee proposed for a bedsit or mixed use property would be £320 for the first bedsit (£640) plus an extra £20 for each additional bedsit (£40). For hostels the renewal fee proposed would be £320 for five occupants (£640), increasing by £5 for each additional occupier (£10).
- 3.10 It is proposed that landlords with multiple properties should be allowed a reduction of £20 per application, based on 2006 prices, for second and subsequent renewals in the same financial year in order not to charge where there is a duplication of information.
- 3.11 It is proposed that HMO licensing fees remain at £nil where the applicant is a registered charity.
- 3.12 As with the initial licence application fees, the proposed renewal fees are felt to be a reasonable reflection of average costs having regard to officer time, etc. For consistency, the fees in 3.9 and 3.10 were calculated based on January 2006 cost levels - see section 3.13 below for proposed inflationary increases.

Revision to reflect increased costs

- 3.13 Since 2005/6, salary costs and associated overheads have risen by just under 20%. To reflect government advice that HMO licensing should be cost-neutral it is proposed that fees be increased accordingly, rounded as follows:
- Initial fee for a shared house or hostel with five occupants – £760, with an additional fee of £12 for any additional occupant;
 - Relicensing fee for a shared house or hostel with five occupants – £380, with an additional fee of £6 for any additional occupant;

- Initial fee for a bedsit or mixed use property – £760 for the first bedsit plus an extra £48 for each additional bedsit. For example, for a five-bedsit HMO this would give an initial fee of £952;
- Relicensing fee for a bedsit or mixed use property – £380 for the first bedsit plus an extra £24 for each additional bedsit. For example, for a five-bedsit HMO this would give a relicensing fee of £476.

Information/Background – Additional HMO Licensing

- 3.14 The Act permits a local housing authority to designate additional licensing area(s) if occupiers of HMOs or members of the public are being caused problems due to sufficiently ineffective management. Such ‘areas’ can be defined geographically and/or by type of HMO.
- 3.15 Many HMOs in the city, especially smaller HMOs, are occupied by students. While recognising the many benefits that students bring to the city, and supporting the role of the private rented sector, and many excellent landlords, in providing accommodation for students the Student Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014 acknowledges the negative effects that can arise for local neighbourhoods and associated risk to community cohesion and social relations where over concentration of student households occur. In light of this the Student Housing Strategy includes in its action points a recommendation that the council considers the implementation of additional licensing schemes in the city, identifying areas which may be appropriate for additional licensing.
- 3.16 The Student Housing Strategy sets out a strategic approach for the supply and management of student housing in the city, to ensure that students are integrated into established residential communities in ways that do not unbalance local population structures and housing markets. In doing so, the strategy seeks to harness the many benefits of a large student population for the long-term health and well-being of the city, and engender mixed, cohesive and sustainable communities. The strategic goals of the student accommodation strategy:

Strategic Goal 1: to ensure effective management and support high-density student housing and populations within HMO-dominated studentified neighbourhoods, using an area-based approach

Strategic Goal 2: to reduce or halt over-concentrations of HMO across studentified neighbourhoods via the sustainable development of affordable and appropriately-designed, purpose-built student accommodation, which offers relative ease of access and proximity to place of study/campus

Strategic Goal 3: to work collaboratively to ensure effective management and support the impact(s) of high-density student populations within large purpose-built student accommodation on adjacent residential environs

Strategic Goal 4: monitor the effects of the movement of students into purpose-built student accommodation, and identify the signs of destudentification

Strategic Goal 1 - Action 4 is to ensure that non-licensed HMO is identified, and consider the possibility of additional licensing of HMOs in the city.

3.17 Before making an additional licensing designation a local housing authority must: -

- consider that a significant proportion of the HMOs of that description in the area are being managed sufficiently ineffectively as to give rise, or to be likely to give rise, to one or more particular problems either for those occupying the HMOs or for members of the public.
- have regard to any information regarding the extent to which any approved codes of practice have been complied with by people managing HMOs in the area in question.
- consider whether there are any other courses of action available to them (of whatever nature) that might provide an effective method of dealing with the problem or problems in question.
- consider that making the designation will significantly assist them to deal with the problem or problems (whether or not they take any other course of action as well).
- consult people likely to be affected by the designation.
- ensure that the exercise of the power is consistent with their overall housing strategy.
- seek to adopt a coordinated approach in connection with dealing with homelessness, empty properties and anti-social behaviour affecting the private rented sector as regards combining licensing with other action taken by them or others.
- consider whether there are any other courses of action available to them that might provide an effective method of achieving the objective(s) that the designation would be intended to achieve.
- consider that making the designation will significantly assist them to achieve the objective(s) (whether or not they take any other course of action as well).

3.18 Some buildings that would otherwise be HMOs are excluded from mandatory HMO licensing and these are also excluded from additional licensing. They include: -

- Buildings where the person managing or having control of it is a local housing authority, a police authority, a fire and rescue authority, a health service body or a body which is registered as a social landlord.
- Certain buildings where the occupation is regulated under other enactments, such as those governing detention centres, children's homes and care homes.
- Certain buildings occupied by students which are controlled by the educational establishment that the students attend.
- Buildings occupied principally for the purpose of a religious community whose principal occupation is prayer, contemplation, education or the relief of the suffering

Additional Licensing Considerations

- 3.19 Before any additional licensing designation(s), research would be necessary into what areas and HMO types might be appropriate for inclusion. It is proposed that the Student Housing Strategy provides the basis for this research.
- 3.20 Earlier this year, planning legislation was introduced to create a new use class (C4) covering small houses in multiple occupation. The intention was to give local planning authorities some control over such uses in areas where HMOs caused an adverse impact. Legislation introduced in April this year required developers to make a planning application if they wished to change the use of a single house (C3 use class) to a small HMO (C4). Revised legislation, which came into force on 1 October 2010, created a permitted development right (which has the effect of granting planning permission) allowing a change of use from a C3 use to a C4 use. A change of use from a C4 use to a C3 use has benefitted from a similar permitted development right since April. From 1 October, therefore, no planning application has been required to change the use of a single house (C3) to a small HMO (C4) or vice versa.
- 3.21 Local authorities can remove permitted development rights by use of an Article 4 direction. Justification is required for an Article 4 direction, such as adverse impact upon neighbours from a concentration of such uses, and they relate to a clearly defined geographical area. The Planning team is looking at options around considering whether such a direction relating to permitted development rights for HMOs would be appropriate in Brighton and Hove. To provide an initial evidence base a study is planned, starting in January 2011, aimed at identifying and mapping streets and areas with high concentrations of student and other HMOs.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation on additional HMO licensing will take place following agreement in principle to the proposals. The statutory consultation period for additional licensing is 10 weeks but a 12 week period is proposed in line with the council's standard consultation protocol.

- 4.2 Information on the proposed new HMO licensing fees will be placed on the Brighton & Hove City Council website and made available to other departments, to the National Landlords Association, the Southern Landlords Association and Sussex and Brighton Universities.
- 4.3 The Student Housing Strategy was developed in close consultation with members of the Strategic Housing Partnership. The research undertaken in the formulation of the Student Housing Strategy involved focus groups and consultation with a range of stakeholders across the city. The Student Housing Strategy also built upon a number of University of Brighton and Sussex research projects which involved primary research with local community organisations and residents, and actors in the city, and analyses of student term-time addresses, census data and other datasets. In addition, the Strategic Housing Partnership undertook a cross referencing exercise to ensure the Student Housing Strategy encompassed recommendations arising from the Adult Social Care & Housing Scrutiny report on Students in the Community.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The proposed fees have been calculated on the basis of recovering the costs of the estimated officer time taken to process the applications. It is anticipated that there will be a large number of renewals in 2011/12 although it should be noted that as previously, the income will continue to be aligned over the period of the license (5years).

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington Date: 19/11/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Part II of the Housing Act 2004 provides a comprehensive framework for the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation. Section 56 gives local authorities the power to require the licensing of HMOs which are outside the mandatory licensing scheme by making a designation. The pre-conditions to the making of a designation are set out in paragraph 3.17 of the report. The 12 week consultation period proposed in recommendation 2.3 exceeds the minimum period provided for in the Housing Act 2004: Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Selective Licensing of Other Accommodation (England) General Approval 2010. Section 63 of the Act allows local housing authorities to require an application for an HMO licence to be accompanied by a fee fixed by the authority. This is not a general revenue raising power, but the Council is entitled in fixing the fee to take into account its costs incurred in carrying out the HMO licensing function. The proposed charges contained within this report have been formulated in accordance with the statutory provisions. The council must take the Human Rights Act into account in respect of its actions but it is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights would be adversely affected by the recommendations in this report.

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. The recommendations in this report have been developed as a part of the overall City-Wide Housing Strategy 2009 – 14: healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the City-Wide Housing Strategy during its development.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report. The recommendations in this report have been developed in line with the strategic approach set out in the Housing Strategy. In particular, the Student Housing Strategy sets out a strategic approach for the supply and management of student housing in the city, to ensure that students are integrated into established residential communities in ways that do not unbalance local population structures and housing markets. In doing so, the strategy seeks to harness the many benefits of a large student population for the long-term health and well-being of the city, and engender mixed, cohesive and sustainable communities.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report. The City-Wide Housing Strategy 2009 – 14: healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city, of which proposals in this report form a part, recognises appropriate housing and support is essential in helping to reduce antisocial behaviour and other crime and also to support the victims of crime. Specific actions within the housing strategies recognise hate crime and aim to support victims and help develop safer communities.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no risk and opportunity management implications arising directly from this report. In relation to the Student Housing Strategy, key objectives include an area based approach to managing student housing to mitigate the negative effects of high density student populations on established communities while also continuing to support private sector landlords to supply high-quality student accommodation. Positive benefits from the powers of the Housing Act should improve the health and safety of housing for HMO residents in the City.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The proposals outlined in this report are related to housing related strategies that support the overarching Citywide Housing Strategy 2009-2014: healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 For HMO licensing fees the alternative options are to leave the fees unchanged, to increase them by less than inflationary rates or to increase them by more than inflationary rates. Leaving them unchanged or increasing by less than inflation is not considered appropriate as the shortfall in costs would fall to be subsidised by Council Tax payers. Increasing by more than inflation and/or failure to introduce a relicensing fee would result in a profit element, which would not be in accordance with government recommendations.
- 6.2 Alternative options for additional licensing are not to introduce it, to introduce it in more or less areas and to introduce it for a wider or narrower range of HMOs. The proposed areas have been chosen to reflect the greatest concentration of HMOs that are just below the mandatory licensing criteria, as identified in the Student Housing Strategy. It is considered that evidence does not support adding more areas at this time and taking areas away would not fully address relevant issues in areas where they are most prevalent. Introducing it for a wider range of HMOs is considered a disproportionate burden on property owners without evidence of issues to support such additional licensing. Introducing it for a narrower range would not address relevant issues.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The reasons for the report recommendations are outlined above in the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None.

Background Documents

1. Approval steps for additional and selective licensing designations in England, Department for Communities and Local Government, Revised edition February 2010
2. Student Housing Strategy 2009-2014

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 91

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Mobility Scooter Storage Pilot Proposal
Date of Meeting: 1 December 2010
Report of: Strategic Director Place
Contact Officer: Name: Robert Keelan Tel: 293261
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.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To authorise a pilot project to build external stores and convert internal storage space for the storage of mobility scooters at Leach Court and Clarke Court.
- 2.2 To use the pilot to determine the actual service charges required to cover costs.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 A report for comments was taken to Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC) on 27th September 2010. (please see appendix 1 attached for full report) This was broadly agreed but there remained some outstanding questions about the recommended service charge of £4.50 p/week

- 3.3 The estimated service charge has been calculated based on the cost of electricity supply and to recover the cost of the capital investments required to build storage units and maintain them over a life-time of the stores.
- 3.4 The service charges could be further reduced by offsetting the cost of building new stores against the average costs of converting indoor spaces. There would therefore be a standard service charge for both indoor and outdoor storage which would reflect overall costs. This would ensure that there is not a two tier system for charging for mobility scooter storage space.
- 3.5 We intend to explore reducing service charges further by arranging for electricity key metres to be installed.
- 3.6 These options would be explored as part of the pilot and in this way we would be able to ascertain the final service charge. We will be aiming to include the final service charges in the HRA Budget Report in February 2011.
- 3.7 Working with tenant and resident representatives on the Mobility Scooter Working Group we have identified two buildings where tenants with mobility scooters would be happy to be involved in the pilot project and would pay up to £4.50 service charge. These buildings are Leach Court and Clarke Court where up to 14 individual stores would be piloted at first instance.
- 3.8 We will also be able to use the pilot to work through other issues of concern to residents who use mobility scooters, such as movement from the front door to the store.
- 3.9 The results of the pilot will be brought back to HMCC for discussion before a city wide rollout is started.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A short term project working group was 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. The group has met three times and agreed all of the proposals in this document.
- 4.2 A mobility scooter report was discussed at the housing management consultative committee on 27 September 2010.
- 4.3 There has been a mobility scooter presentation at City Assembly 15 May 2010 and City Assembly 20 November 2010

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Funding for the pilot schemes at Leach Court and Clarke Court will come from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2010/11

which includes £100,000 for scooter storage solutions. The pilot schemes will enable a detailed costing exercise to be carried out in order to calculate service charges

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 03/11/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council is entitled to make reasonable charges for services. The proposed pilot will provide objective information on which to base future charges. The Human Rights Act forbids the council from acting in a way that is incompatible with Convention rights. It is not considered that any individual's human rights will be adversely affected by the report's recommendations

Lawyer Consulted:

Name Liz Woodley

Date: 04/11/10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 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. Housing Officers can also discuss Housing Options should the mobility of the tenant be such that they need to consider more supported accommodation. The solution of where to store a scooter will be tailored to the individual.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The proposed stores are made from concrete with re-enforced steel doors which reflect the value of the items kept inside.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 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.

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

Internal Storage units would also need to be secure to deter crime.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

- 5.6.1 The risk of failing to run a pilot is that following a city wide building programme the service charges will either be prohibitively high and prevent take-up. This would waste resources and could ultimately mean that the council makes a financial loss.
- 5.6.2 The pilot will also provide us with the opportunity to gather data to inform our policy on mobility scooter storage.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The council's plans regarding fire safety and mobility scooter storage have already been shared with the city-wide Social Landlords Forum. No other landlords who attend this forum are dealing with these issues as yet. We will continue to keep them informed.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The council could decide that there will be no service charge for the provision of scooters. However this would mean that the cost of provision of scooter storage would be subsidised from elsewhere in the HRA and ultimately by residents who do not use scooters.
- 6.2 The council continues to explore other options for meeting the increased demand for mobility scooters. Two sheltered schemes have mobility scooters that are accessible by all residents. We are working with Shopmobility who are actively looking for citywide storage bases. If we can provide free storage, they will run a scheme from it where users can hire a scooter for a small charge.
- 6.3 The Shopmobility scheme would run alongside individual storage options to promote freedom of choice.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To authorise a pilot scheme to ensure that the city wide roll out of such a significant investment project is successful and will meet the needs of our tenants and residents.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. HMCC Mobility Scooters Report 27th September 2010.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None
- 2.

Background Documents

1. None

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

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

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 92

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Interim Amendment to Working Households Local Lettings Plan		
Date of Meeting:	1 December 2010		
Report of:	Strategic Director Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Helen Clarkmead	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 The Working Households Local Lettings Plan (WHLLP) was agreed on a pilot basis by the Cabinet Member for Housing in July 2009 and amended in November 2009. It is currently under review, as is the Allocations Policy.
- 1.2 The Evaluation of the Local Letting Plan Pilot has been completed and is due to be brought to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 13th December 2010. The findings have already been fed into the review of the Allocations Policy which is currently being consulted upon. It is proposed that the Local Lettings Plans will be integrated into the Allocations Policy. This report recommends that the pilot is extended pending ratification and implementation of the policy.
- 1.3 There is currently no household income cap in respect of eligibility for the Working households Local Lettings Plan. An income cap would better target the property to lower income households in greatest need of affordable housing. This report proposes an income cap. The level of this cap will be reviewed as part of the Allocations Policy Review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees to extend the pilot period of the Working Households Local Lettings Plan until the recommendations of the Allocations Policy Review are implemented.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees an interim cap of £35000 total household income in order to be eligible for the Working Households Local Lettings Plan.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Working Household Local Lettings Plan (WHLLP) was agreed on a pilot basis by the Cabinet Member for Housing in July 2009. The pilot was to advertise 25% of all properties which were 2 bedrooms and above within the 9 most deprived areas of the city to working households. It was agreed that a working household would include 1 member who was working for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Mobility standard flats and houses and sheltered accommodation were excluded from the pilot.
- 3.2 In November 2009 the WHLLP was amended to allow up to 50% of properties that meet the above criteria to be advertised for working households only. It was also agreed that the pilot would be reviewed after 12 months had elapsed so that the Cabinet Member for Housing could assess the impact of the pilot.
- 3.3 The intention of this pilot was to encourage people who can, to work and therefore to raise levels of aspiration and ambition. It was also intended to enhance balanced communities within the 9 most deprived areas. This policy has operated within existing priority bands, but working households have taken priority within those bands. For example, if 10 people from band A bid, five of whom work, then the property would go to the working bidder with earliest priority date, even if that is later than a priority date of someone who is not working
- 3.4 The WHLLP pilot has come to an end. The evaluation of the Local Lettings Plan Pilot has demonstrated that under the pilot scheme there is a broader spread of properties allocated within each band to working households. It is anticipated that this scheme will encourage households to seek employment and to hopefully influence households in the locality to also seek employment and thus reduce financial exclusion and inequality. A full review of WHLLP pilot will be brought to Housing Management Consultative Committee on 13th December for discussion.
- 3.5 It is intended the WHLLP will now be built into the Allocations Policy. The Allocations Policy is currently under review and a 12 week consultation period commenced on 17th November 2010.
- 3.6 There is currently no household income cap restricting eligibility for the Working Households Local Lettings Plan. An income cap would better target affordable housing for lower income working households.
- 3.7 An interim household income cap of £35,000 is proposed. This level represents the average household income in Brighton and Hove according to the findings of CACI Wealth of the Nations Report 2007, which provides a specialist Housing Market Analysis data source.
- 3.8 The household income cap will be reviewed as part of the ongoing Allocations Policy Review.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This is an interim decision. Full consultation will take place as part of the broader Allocations Policy Review

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Housing Revenue Account arising from the recommendations made in this report.'

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 16/11/2010

Legal Implications

- 5.2 "By virtue of section 169 Housing Act 1996, the Communities Secretary is entitled to issue guidance to local housing authorities in connection with the exercise of their powers under Part VI of the Housing Act 19976. - allocation of housing accommodation. Local Authorities are required to have regard to this guidance when exercising their allocation functions. In pursuance of this section, in December 2009 CLG issued a guide entitled, " Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England. The guidance endorses using local lettings policies to achieve a variety of policy objectives, including dealing with concentrations of deprivation , or creating mixed communities by setting aside a proportion of vacancies for applicants who are in employment. The proposal to extend the Working Households Local Letting Plan and to introduce an income cap for the duration of the pilot are compatible with the guidance. "

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 17/11/2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 This would help ensure affordable housing let under the Working Households Local Lettings Plan is prioritised for lower income working households less able to afford private sector housing. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be included in the review of the WHLLP pilot and brought to Housing management Consultative Committee on 13th December 2010.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no specific sustainability implications

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no specific crime and disorder implications

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 A household income cap would help ensure property let under the Working Households Local Lettings Plan is allocated to lower income households most in greatest need of affordable housing

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 There are no specific corporate or citywide implications.

6. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 This will be considered as part of the broader Allocations Policy Review.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To ensure property let under the Working Households Local Lettings Plan is targeted at lower income households.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices: None

Documents In Members' Rooms : None

**Background Documents: Cabinet Member for Housing Meeting reports;
17 July 2009 and 11 November 2009**

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

