



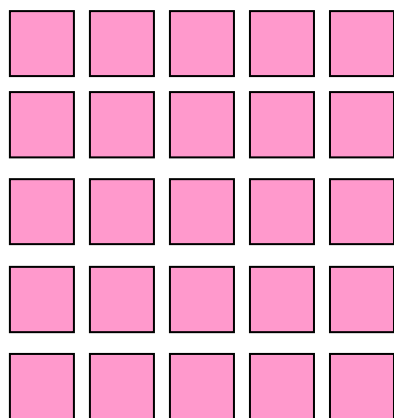
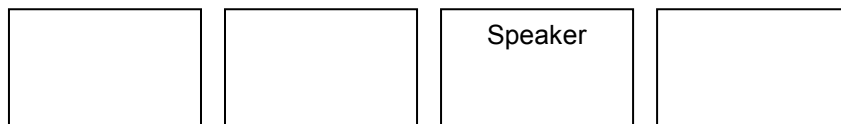
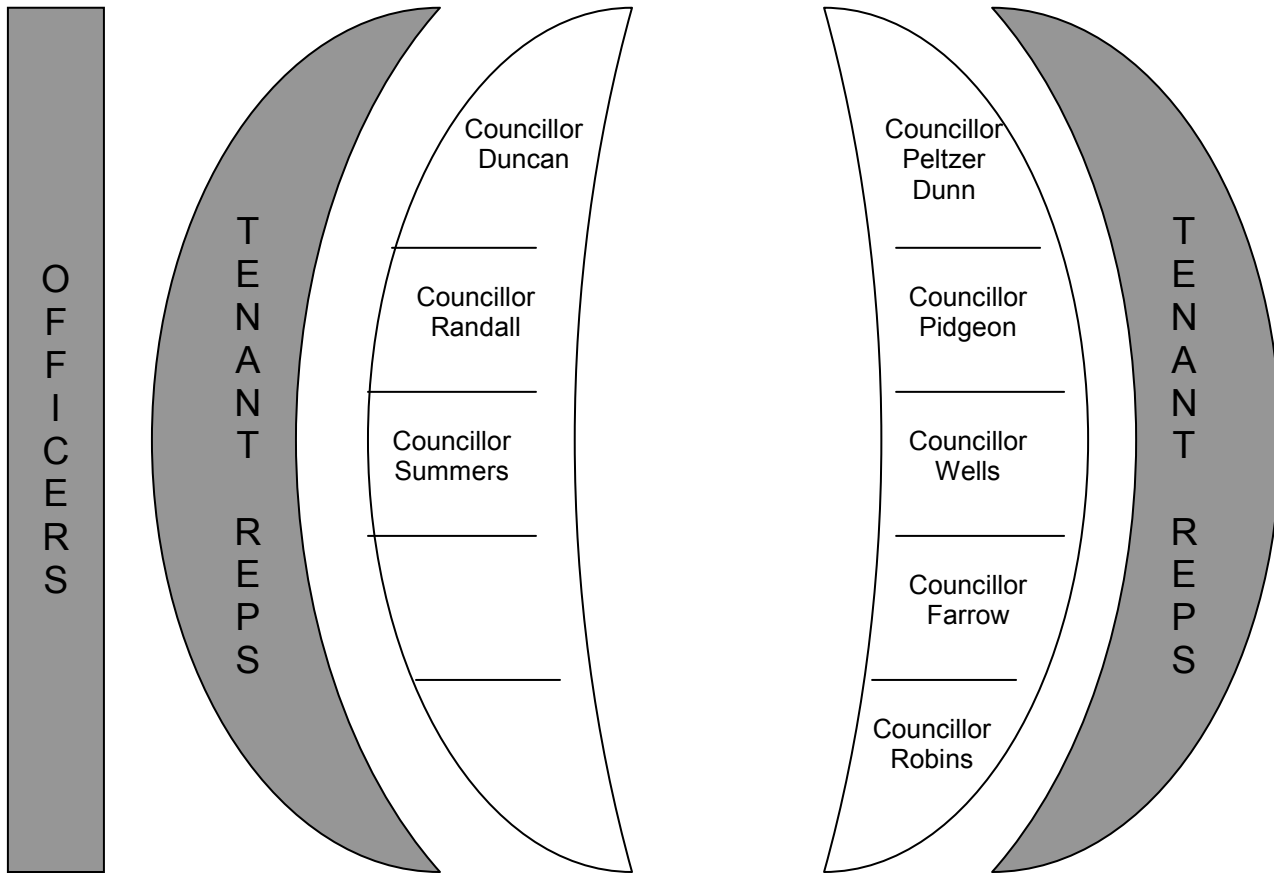
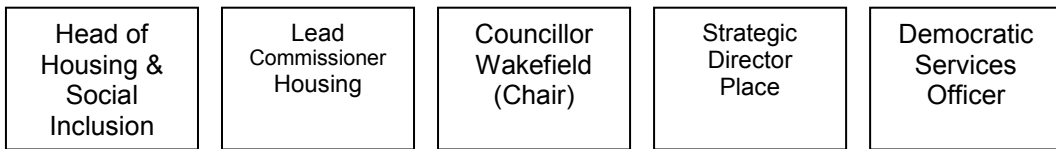
**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Title:	Housing Management Consultative Committee
Date:	19 December 2011
Time:	3.00pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillors: Wakefield (Chair), Duncan, Farrow, Peltzer Dunn, Pidgeon, Randall, Robins, Summers and Wells
Contact:	Caroline De Marco Democratic Services Officer 01273 291063 caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

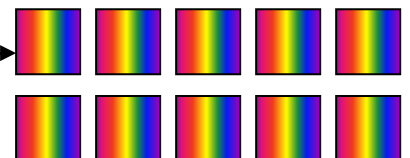
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Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



Public Seating

Members in Attendance



Press



Tenant Representatives:

Ted Harman, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

David Murtagh, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Trish Barnard, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Jean Davis, 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

John Melson, Hi Rise Action Group

Muriel Briault, Leaseholders Action Group

Colin Carden, Older People's Council

Tom Whiting, Sheltered Housing Action Group

Barry Kent, Tenant Disability Network

AGENDA

54. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declaration of Substitutes - Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) Declarations of Interest by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (c) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

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

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

55. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 12

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011 (copy attached).

56. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

57. CALLOVER

58. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received by the date of publication.

59. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 12 December 2011)

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

60. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon 12 December 2011)

No deputations have been received by the date of publication.

61. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

62. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No written questions have been received.

63. HOUSING & SOCIAL INCLUSION PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 2) 13 - 18

Report of the Head of Housing & Social Inclusion (copy attached).

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

64. REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENTS HANDBOOK 19 - 44

Report of Director of Housing & Social Inclusion (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Tom Gillham, Perrin *Tel:* 01273 294641, Tel:
Horne 01273 294641
Ward Affected: All Wards

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

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

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

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

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

Date of Publication - Friday, 9 December 2011

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 7 NOVEMBER 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Wakefield (Chair); Duncan, Farrow, Peltzer Dunn, Pidgeon, Robins, Summers and Wells

Tenant Representatives: Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), David Murtagh (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Trish Barnard (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Jean Davis (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), David Avery (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Roy Crowhurst (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), John Melson (Hi Rise Action Group), Muriel Briault (Leaseholders Action Group), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group) and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network).

Apologies: Councillor Bill Randall, Beverley Weaver, Tina Urquhart and Stuart Gover.

PART ONE

41. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

41A Declarations of Substitute Members

41.1 Roy Crowhurst declared that he was attending as a substitute for Beverley Weaver. Dave Avery declared that he was attending as a substitute for Tina Urquhart.

41B Declarations of Interests

41.2 There were none.

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

Suggested amendments

- 42.1 *Brighton and Hove Seaside Community Homes Limited (the Local Delivery Vehicle) – Item 27* - John Melson stated that Councillor Mears had remarked that it was essential that there be a clear audit trail on the income in relation to the Brighton and Hove Seaside Community Homes Limited. He asked for this to be recorded in the minutes.
- 42.2 *Allocation Policy – Item 38* – John Melson stated that Councillor Mears had asked for the changes to the Allocation Policy to be presented to the Area Panels and he wished this to be recorded in the minutes. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion confirmed that the Allocations Policy would be presented to the Area Panels before coming back to the HMCC.
- 42.3 *Allocations Policy – paragraph 38.10* – Councillor Peltzer Dunn suggested that the second sentence should be reworded to make it clearer.

Comments on the minutes

- 42.4 *Homemove/Internet Access – Paragraph 32.1, 34.4, 34.7* – John Melson stressed that many tenants used Homemove. He asked if it was possible to print a few copies of Homemove to place in council offices. The Chair replied that it had been agreed to put copies of Homemove in Community Centres. There had also been discussions in relation to placing Homemove in Sheltered Housing Schemes. She suggested that Mr Melson should send her a list of places where it might be helpful to place Homemove.
- 42.5 *Residents Involvement Strategy – Item 36* – John Melson expressed his concern that the strategy would have minimal impact. He considered that there was a need to rationalise groups and look to involve more people. There was a lack of information and feedback from groups.
- 42.6 *Establishing a Tenant Scrutiny Panel – Paragraph 36.4* – Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to the sentences “The Chair replied that HMCC and the Area Panels would remain. In addition, there *could* be involvement at scrutiny level.” Councillor Peltzer asked if the second sentence should say “could” or “would”. The Chair replied that it was up to the Innovation Group to decide. There would be an Innovation Group and the Tenants Scrutiny Group would be tenants. Councillor Peltzer Dunn requested that the chair agree to say there would be involvement at scrutiny level. This was agreed by the Chair.
- 42.7 *Innovations Group – Paragraph 36.10* – Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked about the progress of establishing this group. The Chair replied that the Area Panels had elected 10 people to be part of the Innovations Group. Two dates were currently available for the first meeting.

- 42.8 John Melson stated that he wanted to highlight a failure of consultation on this issue. None of the city wide groups was policy making. He stated that every tenant should have their say. The Chair thanked Mr Melson for his comments but stressed that this matter had been discussed a great deal already. David Murtagh pointed out that this matter had been discussed at the Area Panels.
- 42.9 *Victoria Road Housing Office – paragraph 37.4* – Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked if there was a timescale in relation to the relocation of the office to Portslade Town Hall. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion replied that the current office had not been marketed yet. It was likely to be some time in 2012 or even 2013 before the move would take place.
- 42.10 Councillor Peltzer Dunn acknowledged that the original decision had been taken 18 months ago by the previous administration, but commented that 18 months was a long time for a property to be marketed. The Chair agreed that she found the amount of time it took to get things done extremely frustrating. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion agreed to contact the Property and Design Team to obtain a written response.
- 42.11 Councillor Robins stated that people in Portslade found the current situation frustrating. They asked questions but were not getting answers. The Chair asked officers to produce a succinct A4 paper with information points on the current situation with regard to the Victoria Road Housing Office.
- 42.12 *Access to Portslade Housing Office - Paragraph 37.7* – John Melson stated that it should be noted that Chris Kift had a powered wheelchair.
- 42.13 Tom Whiting asked for an indicative vote on the accuracy of the minutes. An indicative vote of the tenant representatives was taken and it was unanimously agreed that the minutes should be agreed with suggested amendments.
- 42.14 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Management Consultative Committee Meeting held on 26 September 2011 be agreed with the suggested amendments. The Chair would sign the minutes once the amendments had been made.

43. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Fire at Leach Court

- 43.1 Jean Davis reported that on the evening of 29 October there had been a fire and bad water leak on the 6th floor of Leach Court. There had been a power failure as a result, with flats being plunged into darkness. Jean stated that on behalf of the tenants she wished to thank Nick Hibberd and other council officers along with the emergency services for dealing so well with this serious situation. She mentioned that Daniel Gray had spent 6 days with the tenants at Leach Court. Jean also thanked old Patcham Lodge for providing residents with wonderful meals and drinks.
- 43.2 The Chair also passed on her heartfelt thanks on behalf of the administration and all councillors.

City Assembly

- 43.3 The Chair reported that the City Assembly had been arranged for Saturday 19 November 2011 in the Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall. A crèche had been arranged for the first time. She hoped it would be a very inclusive day. A great deal of work had been carried out to ensure its success.

Leaseholder Action Group - AGM

- 43.4 The Chair reported that the Leaseholder Action Group AGM would take place on 26 November from 10.00am to 1.00pm. She urged all leaseholders to come along to this event.

44. CALLOVER

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

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

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. COUNCIL HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

- 50.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion which stated that the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing required that social housing providers had a Neighbourhood Policy in relation to their housing. The Council Housing Neighbourhood Policy set out in appendix 1 of the report, related to Brighton and Hove City Council's housing and its estates.

- 50.2 The Chair reported that the Committee would receive a joint PowerPoint presentation on all three policies submitted to this meeting. This would be followed by a discussion and individual decisions on each item.
- 50.3 The Head of Tenancy Services reported that all three policies were developed with the help of the Estate Services Monitoring Group. The Neighbourhood Policy was the overarching policy. Copies of the presentation were circulated to all members of the Committee.
- 50.4 John Melson congratulated Policy and Performance Officer on the Neighbourhood Policy report which he considered excellent. However, he noted in relation to paragraph 4.2 to 4.4 that there was no mention of consultation. This was the first time he had seen the report.
- 50.5 The Head of Tenancy Services agreed with Mr Melson's point. It was set out in the Tenant's Compact that the reports should be presented to the Area Panels. If the tenants wished to defer a decision on the reports until after the next round of Area Panels, officers would respect that decision. However they might like to decide that the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group's decision was sufficient.
- 50.6 Mr Melson stated that he had no wish to delay the decision. However he stressed the need to establish a clear audit trail. It was not right for a city wide group to decide for the whole of the city, without consulting various groups. He suggested that a small focus group should look at this matter.
- 50.7 The Chair stated that the Innovation Group would consider this matter.
- 50.8 Muriel Briault stated that there had been a good discussion on these policies at her group along with consultation with residents.
- 50.9 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the contents of the policy and relevant policies and procedures are noted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to agree the proposed Council Housing Neighbourhood Policy as set out in appendix 1 of the report.

51. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE REVIEW

- 51.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion which stated that Social Housing Regulatory Framework had set National Standards for Social Landlords to have policies that outlined how neighbourhoods would be looked after. The Grounds Maintenance Policy was one of a range of policies that would sit beneath the Housing and Social Inclusion Neighbourhood Policy. The report set out the key service improvements that had come out of the Ground Maintenance review following partnership working with residents.
- 51.2 The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation on all three policies submitted to the meeting. The presentation had been circulated to Members at the meeting.
- 51.3 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to a suggestion in the presentation that residents at Wellington Road had wanted to get involved in a grass cutting scheme. He asked about

insurance cover for the council, if a tenant or leaseholder were involved in an accident after taking on work on behalf of the council, and having taken part in risk assessment and training.

- 51.4 The Housing Manager replied that he had made enquires with the insurance section. They had not gone into details yet but had said that if the scheme were to take off they could provide cover under the council's insurance. However, there would have to be risk assessment and adequate training carried out.
- 51.5 Tom Whiting asked whether grass cutting was the most expensive item in ground maintenance. The Housing Manager explained that shrub beds had the highest unit price and grass cutting the cheapest unit price. He was not aware if the council spent more overall on grass cutting than shrub maintenance. The Chair informed Mr Whiting that this information would be sent to him.
- 51.6 Mr Whiting suggested that prostrate grasses were grown instead of vertical grasses in order to save on expenditure. The Chair replied that she had heard that one type of prostrate grass could be quite invasive and cause problems, however some might be ok. She suggested that Mr Whiting emailed her with details She would like to see actual costs. .
- 51.7 Heather Hayes expressed concern that the grass on many high banks was not cut, as a special grass cutter was required. She asked if the reason no action was taken was due to cost.
- 51.8 The Housing Manager reported that there were restrictions to working on banks due to health and safety. Officers were trying to address these problems. Meanwhile, some areas were being allowed to turn into scrub in order to attract wildlife. The Parks and Green Spaces Operations Manager reported that Health and Safety legislation had tightened up over the years. No charges were made for banks not that were not cut.
- 51.9 Barry Kent mentioned that Ferris Machines could cut grass on banks. The Parks and Green Spaces Manager confirmed that some banks in the city could be cut with Ferris Machines.
- 51.10 Ted Harman complained that a grass cutting machine had been driven too fast over the pavements. The Chair suggested that Mr Harman should phone the council immediately if this happened again.
- 51.11 Roy Crowhurst expressed concern that the Estate Development Budget was being spent on tree cutting. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion explained that pruning work was carried out under the Grounds Maintenance Budget. Any additional projects such as new planting would be addressed through the Estate Development Budget.
- 51.12 An indicative vote was taken by tenants' representatives. 8 tenants voted for the recommendations. Three tenants abstained from voting.
- 51.13 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the contents of the policy and relevant policies and procedures are noted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to agree the proposed Council Housing Neighbourhood Policy as set out in appendix 1 of the report.

52. HOUSING & SOCIAL INCLUSION ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY 2011

- 52.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion which stated that the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing required that the social housing providers had a Neighbourhood Policy. The Adverse Weather Policy (Appendix 1) sat under the Neighbourhood Policy and contributed to the neighbourhood and community standards outlined in the policy, and the Annual Report to Council Tenants and Leaseholders.
- 52.2 The Chair had agreed that the Committee would receive a joint PowerPoint presentation on all three policies submitted to this meeting. The presentation was circulated to all Members at the meeting.
- 52.3 Councillor Farrow stressed the need for housing to successfully liaise with other departments such as highways, particularly in relation to gritting. He also mentioned the serious flood in Lower Bevendean in 2000. Councillor Farrow suggested housing officers liaised with emergency planning officers to check the dams in Bevendean, before the start of inclement weather.
- 52.4 The Chair concurred with this view. She was keen to see cross department working in the Council.
- 52.5 Roy Crowhurst stated that he was pleased that there would be housing grit bins. He asked for assurance that they would be filled with grit. The Head of Tenancy Services explained that the bins were all filled with grit or were being filled with grit. There was a major incident team with 4 wheel drive cars that would prioritise helping vulnerable people in the event of bad weather. However, they could be used to re-fill grit bins if necessary. Officers would do their best to fill grit bins. Grit bins on estates were kept locked.
- 52.6 John Melson referred to paragraph 7.6 of the policy (areas of greatest risk) and asked if this included high rise blocks. The Head of Tenancy Services confirmed that it did include high rise blocks.
- 52.7 Mr Melson expressed concern about the distribution of grit bins. He applied for one some time ago and would like one supplied for his high rise block.
- 52.8 Heather Hayes mentioned that there were two steep hills to get to Crespin way in Hollingdean. A grit bin had been requested last year, but only arrived after the snow had gone. She asked if grit could be supplied in the event of snow if there was no grit bin. The Team Manager, Highways explained that there would be no more grit bins provided on highways. Officers were looking to provide grit drops. Ms Hayes' comments had been taken on board and officers were investigating whether a grit bag could be provided. Officers would do their best to provide grit bags before the event occurred.
- 52.9 Councillor Wells asked if the grit bins were kept locked. The Head of Tenancy Services explained that the bins were locked during the summer. They were unlocked during the winter. On estates, the grit was kept in cleaners' store cupboards. If there was an area that could store grit, officers could supply grit for that area.

- 52.10 Councillor Duncan mentioned that there had been a number of complaints last year that bins were blocking access for wheelchair users and buggies.
- 52.11 Councillor Farrow mentioned that a BBC TV programme had reported a prediction of snow showers in December and heavy snow in January . He suggested that the council should have everything in place in time for the predicted period of snow and ice.
- 52.12 Councillor Robins mentioned that he had attended a meeting during the morning where the Civil Contingency Manager had spoken. He had only identified vulnerable buildings and not vulnerable people. The Head of Tenancy Services replied that officers did have data on where vulnerable residents lived. Officers were in the process of carrying out three yearly visits. The Chair asked Members to let officers know if they were aware of vulnerable tenants.
- 52.13 John Melson stated that one issue that was not properly addressed was the delivery of medicines in the event of snow and ice. Some areas were cut off and the delivery of medicines failed. He asked if it was possible for chemists to participate in a scheme where there could be a central point where an emergency “hit squad” could deliver emergency medication.
- 52.14 The Head of Tenancy Services explained that the major incident team included Adult Social Care and health officers. There would be 4 wheel drive cars working 24 hours a day to help vulnerable people with care packages. She would take back Mr Melson’s suggestion to see if something could be done.
- 52.15 David Murtagh mentioned that he had requested grit for a steep road in East Moulsecoomb. He had been told he had asked for too much. He stressed that residents needed to get to work and to the shops.
- 52.16 The Chair suggested that a map showing locations of grit should be made available. The Team Manager, Highways informed the Committee that there was already a map on the council’s website. The map located grit bins and grit drops. The Chair suggested it would be helpful to have printed copies of the map. The Head of Tenancy Services agreed to provide paper copies for the HMCC members.
- 52.17 An indicative vote was taken by tenants’ representatives. The vote was unanimously in favour of the recommendations.
- 52.18 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to a approve the Housing and Social Inclusion - Council Housing Adverse Weather Policy 2011 for publication and implementation.

53. MANOR PLACE HOUSING OFFICE AND THE WHITEHAWK HUB

- 53.1 The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation from the Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement. A copy of the presentation was provided to all members at the meeting. Members were informed that there was an opportunity to move staff to join community services colleagues at the Whitehawk Hub. The hub already housed a library, GP Surgery, Children’s Centre, Pharmacy, Health Centre, School, IT Learning Suite and Community Café.

- 53.2 It was considered that the move would provide a better service, and would save money with regard to accommodation. The money could be reinvested into homes and in helping the most vulnerable tenants. Visits to the Manor House Office in 2010 had been on average 25 a day. This figure had now reduced.
- 53.3 Conversations had been held with all Whitehawk tenant representatives, Ward Councillors, Residents, Staff, the Library Service, the Youth Services and the Children and Families Service.
- 53.4 The presentation detailed resident consultation. 203 tenants had been consulted. One impact of the move would be no cash taking facilities at the Hub. A map of the location of respondents was presented.
- 53.5 The presentation showed pie charts and graphs to report the consultation findings. 71% of tenants surveyed used the housing office to make payments. 11% had housing enquiries and 15% had other enquiries. A number of residents already used the Whitehawk Hub to visit the Chemist, GP, Library and School.
- 53.6 A graph showed alternative payment preference, including payment with a Paypoint Card, post office, direct debit, and the internet. The presentation listed methods of paying household bills and showed that 84% of tenants surveyed had a bank account. 55% had access to the internet and 37% had mobility concerns.
- 53.7 Residents' main concerns were listed. These included making payments, access to the Whitehawk Hub (distance, incline and icy weather) and the Robert Lodge Laundry (how to top up payment card).
- 53.8 The presentation showed how these concerns would be addressed. Officers would provide support to residents who needed to make payments. The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement stressed that officers did not want the elderly or vulnerable tenants travelling to the Hub in bad weather. Officers could visit these tenants. Meanwhile in terms of distance, both offices were about the same distance from the bus stop. Following consultation, the path leading to the Hub had now been levelled, the bus stop had been moved and there was additional lighting. Gritting would be a priority for housing. There was more parking provided at the Whitehawk Hub. A secure machine would be provided for residents at Robert Lodge to top up their payment card.
- 53.9 The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement listed the opportunities that would arise as a result of moving to the Hub. The move offered excellent value for money, and would result in savings that could be reinvested to help vulnerable tenants.
- 53.10 Councillor Farrow stated that his main concern was payments. He considered that the way forward was Paypoint. Residents would need to easily obtain a Paypoint card.
- 53.11 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to the physical improvements to the Hub. He asked if the fears Councillor Mears referred to at the last meeting (paragraph 37.14 of the minutes) had all been addressed. These concerns related to the twitten leading to the Library being icy in winter, and elderly people having problems accessing the office.

- 53.12 The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement of Housing and Social Inclusion replied that those concerns had been addressed through levelling the path and moving the bus stop nearer to the hub. Residents at a meeting had told her that this was their main concern. Those residents who had visited the Hub had spoken highly of the improvements made. One was a resident using a mobility buggy.
- 53.13 Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked for clarification about cash payments. The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement explained that 484 people in the Whitehawk area visited the office during the six month period to make cash payments. Most people visited weekly or fortnightly. This would be 23% of the Whitehawk population. Councillor Peltzer Dunn remarked that the 71% of tenants surveyed would make a much higher figure.
- 53.14 Ted Harman asked for clarification about the 84% figure quoted for people who had a bank account. The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement explained that the consultation findings were based on the people interviewed. 203 people had been sampled. 84% of those people said they had a bank account.
- 53.15 John Melson made the point that because some people had a bank account did not mean they could pay by direct debit. Some people only used cash cards.
- 53.16 Councillor Mitchell was permitted to address the meeting as Ward Councillor. She stressed that there was concern about the bus service. Chris Kift was not happy with the path to the hub and Faith Matyszak had some issues.
- 53.17 Faith Matyszak confirmed that there was a bus service to the main road, but not to the cul-de-sac. The bus company had been requested to provide a small bus to that road but had refused.
- 53.18 Councillor Mitchell reported that there had been a history with regard to access to the hub. It had to be made to work after the event. The bus stop had been moved and the path rebuilt. There was now proper highway standard lighting and the path would need to be gritted. In terms of Whitehawk Road, she had taken the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director Communities to look at this issue. The Chief Executive was exploring whether housing land was required to create a turning circle. He supported the request to get Whitehawk Road (a highway road) on the gritting schedule.
- 53.19 The Chair expressed surprise that Whitehawk Road was not on the gritting schedule. She suggested that if the HMCC members were in agreement she would write a letter to the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director People, on behalf of the HMCC requesting that Whitehawk Road be put on the gritting schedule. This action was agreed.
- 53.20 Roy Crowhurst stated that he came from a generation who paid cash for everything. Many people preferred to pay by cash. He asked how many people it would affect overall. The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement acknowledged that some people liked to pay by cash and a lot of people had expressed a preference for paypoint outlets. It was possible to pay at other locations. She remarked that there were 2000 residents on the Whitehawk estate and 203 persons were surveyed. This was high percentage.

- 53.21 Councillor Robins asked if people surveyed were for or against the changes. The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement explained that this question had not been asked. However, those that supported the changes realised that there would be a cash benefit to the housing revenue account and agreed that wherever the office was situated it would not suit everyone. Tenant representatives were saying that people did not like change but could get use to change.
- 53.22 John Melson asked if Chris Kift and Faith Matyszak could speak on this issue. The Chair agreed.
- 53.23 Faith Matyszak stated that the cul-de-sac was created after Whitehawk was rebuilt. The through road to the Hub could not be put back. She stated that most people were against the move. It would be difficult for mothers with buggies who had no car and had to walk. The bus company had stated categorically that they would not supply a small bus to take people to the Hub. They stated that if the council wanted a bus they would have to fund it.
- 53.24 Chris Kift thought the number of people used for the survey was fine. The questions that were asked were the problem. He believed percentages could be misleading.
- 53.25 The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement informed the meeting that residents had told her that access to the hub was good. It had improved a great deal since the period of consultation and a tenant with a mobility buggy had confirmed it had improved and that they had no problem in accessing the hub. People were already accessing services located at the Hub, including the GP surgery, health centre and school. With regard to the consultation, people were asked questions in order for the council to know the impact of the move.
- 53.26 The Chair remarked that the main issue related to access by bus. She stated that she would write to the bus company on behalf of the HMCC, regarding this issue. She would circulate the letter to all HMCC members before it was sent.
- 53.27 Councillor Peltzer Dunn queried the figures relating to people who paid by cash to the overall number of people who lived in the area. He felt the figures quoted in the presentation were misleading. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion stated that officers would investigate this matter and provide correct information to Councillor Peltzer Dunn. The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement agreed that the figures did not seem to marry overall. It was possible that some people made multiple transactions.
- 53.28 David Murtagh felt that a decision on the move should be made by the people of Whitehawk.
- 53.29 Barry Kent stated that people with powered wheelchairs would have difficulty with dropped kerbs. Accessibility was not very good and if there was snow on slopes it was difficult to keep powered wheelchairs moving.
- 53.30 The Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement reaffirmed that she had been told access was better. The path leading to the hub had been levelled. Officers did not

want vulnerable tenants to visit in icy weather. Officers preferred to visit people in their own homes in these instances.

53.31 The Chair stated that the proposed move was ongoing and officers were working to improve the access. Any feedback would be welcome.

The meeting concluded at 5.57pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 63

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing & Social Inclusion Performance Report (Quarter 2)		
Date of Meeting:	19 December 2011		
Report of:	Head of Housing & Social Inclusion		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ododo Dafé	Tel: 293201
	Email:	ododo.dafe@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This is the second quarter performance report for Housing & Social Inclusion for the financial year 2011-2012 and follows the format for presenting information agreed at the last meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:







- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee comments on the report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The report continues the use of the 'RAG' system of red, amber and green traffic light symbols to provide an indication of performance and also trend arrows to provide an indication of performance.

3.2 Key to symbols used in the report

See table below:

STATUS		TREND	
Performance is below target (Red)		Poorer than previous reporting period	
An area close to achieving target, but in need of improvement (Amber)		Same as previous reporting period	
Performance is on or above target (Green)		Improvement on previous reporting period	

3.3 Rent collection and current arrears

Rent collection and current arrears					
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SERVICE PLEDGE	TREND	TARGET	ACTUAL	STATUS
Percentage of rent collected as proportion of rent due each year	Y	↑	98.86%	98.75%	See comment below
Percentage tenants with more than seven weeks rent arrears	Y	↑	3.72%	2.91%	As above
Percentage of secure council tenants served a Notice of Seeking Possession for rent arrears	Y	↑	22.39%	13.66%	As above
Percentage of households evicted because of rent arrears	N	↔	Less than 0.29%	0.07%	As above
Number of households evicted because of rent arrears	Y	↓	Less than 35	8	As above
Percentage of rent loss due to empty properties (excl. TACC)	N	↑	1.9%	1.63%	As above
This figure includes properties set aside for Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes. Once it is set up, the target will be revised.					
Total former tenant arrears	N	↓	£447,641	£576,137	As above
Percentage of rechargeable repair debt collected	Y	↑	20%	11.42%	As above
Percentage collection rate of leaseholders' recoverable arrears (end of year figure)	N	Not year end	95%	-	Not year end

NB: As these targets are for year end (rather than for each quarter), no traffic lights will be applied to this table until the end of year report.

3.4.0 Empty home turnaround time

Empty home turnaround time					
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SERVICE PLEDGE	TREND	TARGET	ACTUAL	STATUS
Average re-let time in days (all properties)	N	↓	21	18	G









3.5.0 Property & Investment

Carrying out repairs to your home					
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SERVICE PLEDGE	TREND	TARGET	ACTUAL	STATUS
Emergency repairs completed in time	Y	↑	98%	99.93%	G
Urgent repairs completed in time	Y	↑	98%	98.80%	G

Routine repairs completed in time Total 9,964 repairs completed	Y	↑	97%	99.81%	G
Average time to complete routine repairs	Y	↑	15 days	7 days	G
Percentage of appointments kept Appointments performance has slipped over the last quarter. This is related to the new appointments system which now provides information on every appointment rather than every job. Core Group has tasked the partnership with identifying the reasons for missed appointments and improving performance in Quarter 3.	N	↓	95%	91.75%	A
Tenant satisfaction with repairs	N	↑	95%	97.54%	G
Percentage of responsive repairs passing post-inspection	Y	↑	95%	97.54%	G
Percentage of repairs completed right first time	Y	↓	94%	98.20%	G
HOME IMPROVEMENTS					
Percentage of homes that are decent	N	↑	81%	79.70%	A
Energy efficiency rating of homes (SAP)	N	↑	71 (Year end)	70.7	On target to meet year end figure
Percentage of planned works passing post-inspection	Y	↓	95%	97.72%	G
Stock with up-to-date gas certificates A total of 10,625 properties require safety certificates. The shortfall of 0.17% below target equals 18 properties of which all 18 have been referred to the local housing offices to seek access through the gas access procedures.	Y	↑	100%	99.83%	A
EMPTY HOMES					
Percentage of empty properties passing right first time.	Y	↓	98%	97.93%	A

3.6.0 Estates Service

Estates service					
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SERVICE PLEDGE	TREND	TARGET	ACTUAL	STATUS
Percentage passing quality inspections of our cleaning service (280 checks carried out)	Y	↑	96%	99.6%	G
Percentage passing quality inspections of our minor repairs service (277 checks carried out)	Y	↓	96%	95.7%	A
Reduction in fly tipping removed from common areas Removal work is continuing but an initiative is being developed with CityClean and progress in this matter will be reported on later in the year	Y	-	n/a	%	-
Reduction in graffiti reported	Y	↑	n/a	21 cases	G

Customer satisfaction eg with cleanliness of the blocks 'rate your estate' satisfaction 'Rate your estate' has not been fully rolled out across the city so this will also be reported on later in the year.	Y	-	n/a	-	-
Completion of cleaning tasks Since the last quarter a drop of 0.2% has been recorded which equates to seven tasks not completed. This was due to annual leave in August.	N	↓	98.5%	97.1%	
Emergency removal of bulk waste that met the target time	N	↔	100%	100%	
Routine removal of bulk waste that met the target time	N	↑	96%	98.1%	
Emergency removal of graffiti that met the target time	N	↔	100%	100%	
Routine removal of graffiti that met the target time	N	↑	96%	100%	
Three day replacement of lights that met the target time	N	↔	100%	100%	
Routine replacement of lights that met the target time There was a fall during this quarter due to the reorganisation of the light checking regime and also as a result of the need to re-set timers in communal areas.	N	↓	96%	92.8%	
Neighbourhood response team jobs completed within target time Although still below target, performance improved over the quarter due to improved work practices.	N	↑	95%	92.8%	






3.7.0 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

3.7.1 The service pledges relating to ASB concern areas of work that do not easily lend themselves to target setting, eg the number of new cases or the number of new cases resolved. The details below on each service pledge are as follows:

3.7.2 Our activity against the ASB service pledges are as follows:

- **Number of new ASB cases – 11**
- **Number of enforcement and support actions taken – 359**
- **Number of closed cases that were resolved – 12**
- **Customer satisfaction – 80%**

3.8.0 Sheltered housing

Support plans, daily call service and social activities					
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SERVICE PLEDGE	TREND	TARGET	ACTUAL	STATUS
Percentage of people with an up to date support plan This represents a minor fluctuation in monthly performance and no significant deterioration.	Y	↓	100%	92%	
Percentage of people who decline a support plan The number of declined support plans remains static at 2%. This represents a core group of sheltered residents who choose not to take up the offer of a personalised support plan.	N	↔	0%	2%	
Percentage of new residents with a support plan completed within 21 days This represents two residents where a plan was not completed within 21 days. Staff sickness and a delay in one of the new tenants moving into sheltered housing contributed to the target being missed.	Y	↔	100%	90%	
Call each resident personally (if requested)	Y	↔	100%	100%	
To provide at least one social activity per week (in 21 of our 24 schemes)	Y	↔	100%	100%	

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Work is currently taking place to expand and develop the methods and means of consultation. For the first time the November City Assembly was broadcast, live, over the internet and there was a live blog available to draw in comments from those unable to attend. In addition a Twitter site has been established as a means of using new technology further. An Innovation Group has been established to investigate productive ways of drawing in under-represented groups and finding ways of including those unable to attend meetings. In addition a discussion group, at the City Assembly, examined practical ways to make the objective of tenant scrutiny of services, a reality.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Although there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, changes in most performance areas will have a financial implication. An example is the improvement in the rent collection and arrears management, which has reduced the amount required to be put aside for bad debts during 2011-12 within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Any financial implications affected by performance are included in the HRA Targeted Budget Management report, which is reported quarterly to Cabinet.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 22/11/2011yy

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are legal implications attached to many of the performance indicators mentioned in the report. For example, that relating to stock with up-to-date- gas certificates relates to the duty imposed on the council as a landlord by the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that an annual gas safety check is carried out by an engineer. However, none of them are so significant that they need to be specifically drawn to Members' attention. It is not considered that any individual's human rights are adversely affected by the information contained within the report.

Lawyer Consulted:

Liz Woodley

Date: 22/11/2011

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Where appropriate, equalities implications are included within the body of the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Where appropriate, sustainability implications are included within the body of the report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report..

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct risk and opportunity implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are no direct public health implications arising from this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 There are no direct corporate or city wide implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 64

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Repairs & Improvements Handbook		
Date of Meeting:	19th December 2011		
Report of:	Director of Housing & Social Inclusion		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Perrin Horne / Tom Gillham	Tel: 294641
	Email:	Perrin.horne@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Wards affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report presents Housing Management Consultative Committee with a proposal for a new and updated 'Repairs and Improvements Handbook'. This handbook gives details and advice to all tenants on repairs and improvements to their homes and has been designed to complement the existing tenant handbook.
- 1.2 Property & Investment team has involved residents in a number of different ways whilst developing, producing and agreeing the revised Repairs and Improvements Handbook.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee welcomes the new updated version of the 'Repairs and Improvements Handbook' attached (appendix 1) and recommends that the Cabinet Member for Housing approves it for publication.
- 2.2 That Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the extensive involvement of residents and the partnership to produce this document

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Repairs Handbook was last updated in March 2008. Following this, the ten year partnership agreement with Mears for repairs and maintenance was started in April 2010 managed by the council's new Property and Investment team. Since then, there have been changes and enhancements to the process of repairs and planned work carried out to tenant's homes. For example:

- One point of contact for all reported repairs
- Updated information on the decent homes and planned work
- New and updated information on damp and condensation
- Customer satisfaction surveys carried out at 100%
- Contractor Code of Conduct

It is now necessary to convey these changes and to all residents through a new repairs and improvements handbook.

3.2 In June 2011 a working group was set up with residents and officers to:

- Review the current version of the Repairs Handbook.
- Note and review any changes.
- Review best practise in examples of other local authority handbooks.
- Ensure the design and contents were clear and concise.

3.3 For continuity, the Repairs handbook has been designed and illustrated in a similar format to the Tenant Handbook using more pictures and colour.

The group reviewed the contents of the previous handbook and included relevant information such as gas leaks, planned works process and a customer care section.

3.4 A draft of the Repairs handbook is attached at Appendix 1, which if endorsed will be forwarded to the Housing Cabinet Member for approval. Amendments and alterations to the content were submitted via the web portal to tenants for four weeks during September 2011. The feedback was very positive and it was noted how clear and easy it was to read. They requested the category section of jobs so that tenants would see clearly what was classed as an emergency. They saw this as a crucial part of communication to tenants, this has been added. The Asset Management Panel (AMP) also gave positive feedback on the content and the diagrams, and asked if the handbook would include a clear indication of tenant and council responsibilities. A specific tick list box was added and it was then noted by tenants that this was a clear and concise method to communicate this information to tenants.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Extensive consultation has been carried out from the very first draft of the document. At the first stage of the resident involvement it was immediately identified that it would also be useful to include and engage with individual residents that do not attend resident led groups and that their comments and suggestions could prove to be more diverse and varied Twelve tenants were selected from the resident involvement survey and the initial draft document was downloaded onto the tenant portal intranet for their edits and comments. Their suggestions proved invaluable and changes were made as follows:

- Right to repair legislation was checked and added
- One phone number as point of contact
- Examples of emergency, urgent and routine work

- Clearer bold headings for ease of reading

4.2 In October 2011 the draft was presented to other tenant groups including the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group (RMMG) where they discussed the draft document and gave positive feedback. They agreed that the inclusion of the planned work section was very informative. And they agreed the document gave clear information on the decent homes programme.

Following this the draft was presented to group Management Team (GMT) and the Partnership Core Group. They were all very positive and found the document easy to read and clear. The members made some suggested edits and changes which were incorporated and it was agreed that this edition had the following information that the previous repairs handbook did not:

- Clearer wording and more descriptive pictures
- A clear tick box method for council responsibilities and tenant responsibilities
- Planned work information
- Decent homes information
- Mears code of conduct
- The Brighton and Hove Standard
- Clear guidance on tenants responsibilities and council obligations

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 The costs related to the production of the Repairs and Improvements Handbook including design, print and distribution will be met from the HRA budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 5 Dec 2011

Legal Implications:

5.2 It is not a legal requirement to produce a "Repairs and Improvements Handbook", although the council considers that it is important that residents are informed of the council's responsibilities. Those responsibilities derive from not only the tenancy agreement but also from a number of legislative sources, including the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 as amended and the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1988. It is not considered that any individual's human rights are adversely affected by the issue of the Handbook.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 5 Dec 2011

Equalities Implications:

5.3 During consultation with tenants due regard for equalities and diversity has been acknowledged and the handbook will be available in other formats such as audio and different languages. We have used feedback from residents and staff to draft the Equality Impact assessment on the Repairs and Improvements Handbook.

"Equality Impact Assessment" on the Repairs and Improvements Handbook will be tabled at the meeting.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The group looked at other methods of producing the handbook in order to minimise the printing of hard copies. As with the Homing In magazine it can be sent in an electronic format via email. Specific sustainability advice is contained with the Tenants Handbook.

Preventative measures such as advice to minimise condensation and other suggestions to avoid repairs and property damage are also included in the handbook so that tenants are made aware of who is responsible.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The revised Repairs and Improvements Handbook will positively contribute to preventing crime and the fear of possible crime by informing tenants where to report lost or stolen door keys and advice on lock changes.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The publication of the revised Repairs and Improvements handbook should mitigate the potential long term effects of damage to property by enabling tenants to access clear contact information for council repairs.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 The information in the handbook covers all health and safety information under section headed 'Safety in your home' including: carbon monoxide, gas, Legionella and asbestos.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The introduction of a revised Repairs and Improvements handbook will have citywide implications for tenants. This document will inform them of their rights and responsibilities as a council tenant and what repairs the council are responsible for.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Do Nothing – This option was discussed and dismissed as the previous Handbook is now over three years old and, following the new Repairs and Maintenance contract, updated information needed to be provided to Tenants.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee should welcome the new updated version of the 'Repairs and Improvements Handbook' as it provides clear and concise information required by Residents. This will support the City's objective to focus on tenancy by communicating and improving the customer experience to an excellent standard.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Repairs and Improvements Handbook

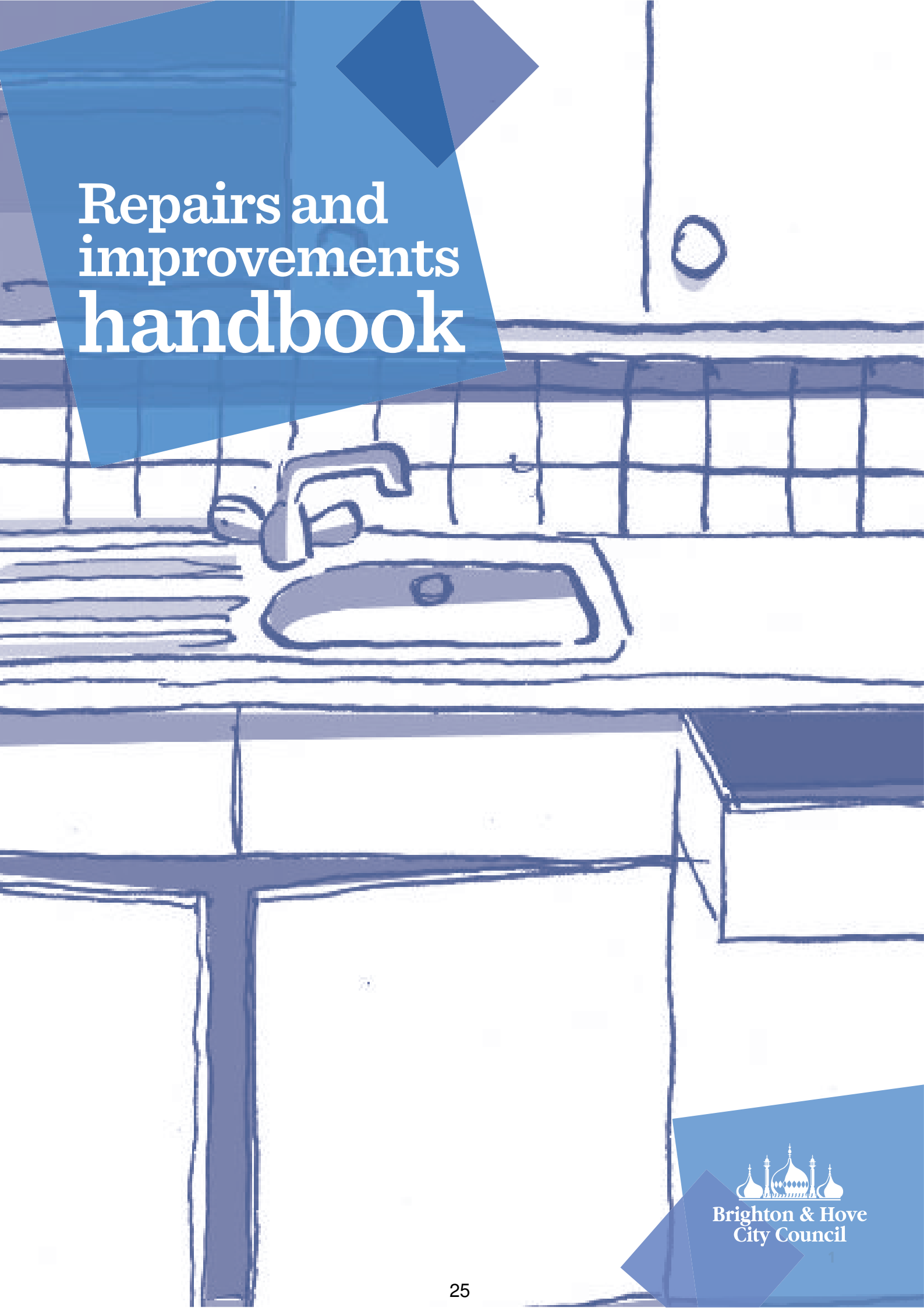
Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Equality impact assessment

Repairs and improvements handbook



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1. Welcome

This is your repairs and improvements handbook. It has been put together by staff and tenants to give you information and guidance about Brighton & Hove City Council's repair service.

This handbook includes:

- how to order repairs for your home
- what to do in an emergency, eg if you smell gas
- an explanation of your rights and your responsibilities
- the council's responsibilities as your landlord
- information about the steps you must take when planning your own improvements

We would like to express our special thanks to the tenants involved for all the hard work they put into helping us develop this handbook. They spent many hours making it as clear and useful as possible for you.

Tenants are involved in everything that we do because tenant involvement is at the heart of all the services that we provide. Our repairs partnership is made up of the council, contractors and tenants. From an individual tenant's comment to city-wide groups like City Assembly, residents have a say in shaping the repair service that we deliver. Tenants monitor the service that we provide and lead on making the improvements that are important to you. Your opinion is important to us so please contact your local association or Resident Involvement Officer to find out how you can influence the repair service that you receive.

Estate Development Budget

Is there something you'd like improved in your neighbourhood?

The Estate Development Budget is a 'tenant choice' budget of over half a million pounds a year that delivers resident-led improvements for their area. Each idea is considered by an elected panel of resident representatives and the work done can really make a positive difference to a neighbourhood.

If you have ideas on the improvements that your area needs, contact your local resident association or your Resident Involvement Officer and let us know.

2. Reporting a repair

To report all repairs just call:

0800 052 6140

24 hours a day, seven days a week

You can also report a repair:

- by completing our online repairs reporting form at **www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/report-repairs**
- by e-mailing BHCC.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk
- by calling 01273 294409 from your mobile phone
- via the freephone at your housing office
- by writing a letter to the Repairs Helpdesk, Housing Centre, Unit 1, Fairway Trading Estate, Eastergate Road, Brighton, BN2 4QL

Before you report a repair, please gather as much information about the problem as you can, as this helps us to order the correct repair. Our helpdesk staff are trained to identify and order the correct repair for your home, and you can refer to the diagrams at the back of this book to help you.

Gas leaks

If you smell gas, you must turn off all gas appliances, then leave the property and call the **National Grid** immediately on **0800 111 999**.

3. When will my repair be done?

Emergency repairs

An emergency repair is one which needs to be carried out quickly to avoid danger to you or serious damage to the building. An emergency repair will be completed within 24 hours and wherever possible you will be given an estimated time of arrival.

Examples include:

- serious water leak
- no power in property
- no heating or hot water from boiler (winter months only)
- overflowing drains
- collapsed ceiling or roof
- ground floor window not closing
- attending a lift breakdown
- a blocked toilet (if it's the only one in your home)

If an emergency repair is needed due to deliberate damage, vandalism, neglect or botched DIY by any members of your household or visitors to your home, we will carry out your repair and recharge you.

Urgent repairs

An urgent repair will be complete within three working days and you will be offered an appointment.

Examples include:

- a containable water leak
- no heating or hot water from boiler (summer months)
- no hot water from shower unit
- a broken bathroom light (where there is no window)
- smashed glass in a window or front door
- a blocked toilet (where there is no access to another one)

Routine repairs

A routine repair will be complete within 20 working days and you will be offered an appointment.

Examples include:

- anti-fungal wash down for mould on walls
- adjusting a communal door closer
- broken kitchen units
- broken paths and paving
- flashing light in communal area
- a dripping tap

Out of hours (emergencies only)

Between 8pm and 8am, we provide a service for emergency repairs only. In these cases, we only carry out a temporary repair to stop the emergency situation or make it safe. We'll then order a further job and make an appointment with you, so that the repair can be completed.

Some jobs are larger than a simple repair. If this is the case with work needed in your home, we will write to let you know that you are included in the 'Planned Work' programme and tell you when the work is due to start.

4. Repair responsibilities

What repairs are the council responsible for?

By law, the council has an obligation to look after the structure of your home. Repairs must be carried out to make sure that fixtures and fittings for water, sanitation, gas and electricity are safe and in working order. The council must also maintain any equipment it has installed to provide hot water and heating, and communal facilities, such as lifts and door entry phones.

We are responsible for checking for any repairs needed in the communal areas, and carry out quarterly estate inspections. However, if you do see anything that needs repairing, please call the repairs helpdesk as you would for home repairs. In sheltered housing schemes, tell the scheme manager about communal repairs and they will report them.

What repairs am I responsible for?

You are expected to make sure that your home, garden and balcony are kept safe, clean, free from rubbish, and are not neglected. As a tenant, you are responsible for all fixtures and fittings in the property.

The table below gives examples of who is responsible for a repair:

Repair	Comment	Responsibility	
		Council	Tenant
Central heating	Problems with boilers, storage heaters, radiators, hot water, etc	•	
Chimneys	Brickwork, replacement pots, etc	•	
Clothes lines / rotary driers	Except communal areas		•
Cookers	Gas and electric, including connections		•
Coal bunkers			•
Internal decoration, including the inside of the front door	Except making good following other repairs		•
Doors	Except lost or stolen keys, repairs to internal doors, door numbers and door bells	•	
Drains	Blocked drains and gullies	•	
Electricity	Except tenants' own fittings, appliances, plugs, fuses, light bulbs and meters	•	
Fire places	Except tiled surrounds	•	

Repair	Comment	Responsibility	
		Council	Tenant
Fire and smoke alarms	Unless battery operated	•	
Floors	Including concrete structure and floorboards	•	
Floor coverings			•
Garages	Including structure and doors	•	
Gas cooker	Including connections and meters		•
Gutters	Clearance and repairs to gutters and fascia boards	•	
Immersion heaters	Repair or replacement	•	
Keys and locks	Including garage keys		•
Lifts		•	
Outhouses and sheds (council)	Except lost or stolen keys and glazing	•	
Paths	Leading to front or back doors but not patios	•	
Pipes, water tanks and cylinders		•	
Plumbing and fittings	Replacement of toilets, sinks, baths, wash hand basins (including refix of brackets)	•	
	Taps running continuously, tap replacement and other tap repairs	•	
	Replacement of WC seats and toilet chains		•
	Blocked toilet, bath, sink or wash hand basin	•	
	Repair/replacement of kitchen and bathroom tiles		•
	All plugs and plug chains		•
Roofs	Loose or damaged tiles, rain penetration, flashings, etc	•	
Stairs		•	
Utilities	Gas and electrical meters (including key and card types), water meters		•
Walls	Rendering, brickwork, pointing and internal plastering	•	
Windows	Glazing (except wilful damage, which requires a crime reference number)	•	
	Misted / fogged windows	•	
	Secure window frame	•	
	Window not opening/closing	•	
	Repair or replace window catches and handles	•	
	New window frame sills	•	
	Rain penetration	•	
	Lubricating catches, hinges, etc		•
	Maintenance of locks		•
	Lost or stolen keys		•

Exceptions are made in some cases for vulnerable tenants, including people over pensionable age, people who are registered disabled, and sheltered housing tenants.

What if I lose my keys or fob?

It is your responsibility to replace any lost or stolen keys. If you have lost a key or fob to a main entrance door, please contact us to purchase a replacement. We need two forms of identification before we can issue any replacements.

If you become locked out of your home, you are responsible for regaining entry. Exceptions are made in some cases for vulnerable tenants - please contact the repairs helpdesk for advice.

If you would like **additional** copies of a main entrance door key, you need written consent from us that you then need to take to either of our approved locksmiths below:

- Dockerills Ltd, 3 North Road, Brighton
- Thomas Locksmiths Ltd, 97 Portland Rd, Hove

Home Contents Insurance

The council is responsible for insuring the building but not the contents in tenants' homes. You are responsible for insuring your furniture, belongings and decorations against theft, fire, vandalism and water damage.

You can insure your contents privately or through the council scheme. We have negotiated competitive rates with an insurance company and premiums can be paid weekly with your rent.

For further information, please contact the Rent Accounting team on 01273 293303.



5. Planned work

What is planned work?

The planned work programme includes major project work throughout the city to improve the condition of our buildings internally and externally. This work includes communal area decorations, renewal of roofs and guttering, and lift replacements.

It also includes the work required to bring your home up to the Brighton & Hove Standard, such as replacement gas boilers, rewiring, external doors, kitchens and bathrooms.

What is the Brighton & Hove Standard?

This is a quality standard for council homes developed in consultation with tenants. The standard is based on the government's Decent Homes Standard, with additional items agreed with tenants to meet local priorities.

The Brighton & Hove Standard means that your home will:

- meet the current minimum standard for housing
- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have reasonably modern facilities
- be warm and comfortable
- include other items above the national standard which have been agreed in consultation with tenants

For more information on the standard:

- go to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bh-standard
- get a leaflet from your housing office
- call the Property & Investment team on 01273 293346

How will I know if work is due in my area?

A surveyor from our repairs partnership will visit and carry out a survey to decide whether your home meets the Brighton & Hove Standard. Work will only be done in homes that **do not** meet this standard.

To see when work is provisionally planned for your area, have a look at our planned work programme by:

- visiting www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-investment-programme
- requesting a copy from the Property & Investment team on 01273 293346

Do I get a say in the style of improvements?

Yes, you can choose the following:

- door - a choice over the style and finish
- bathroom - a choice of flooring
- kitchen - you are involved in the design and choice on the style of kitchen doors, worktops and flooring

You will be given details on the choices available before the work begins.

What quality of work can I expect?

The council and its partners are committed to delivering quality work to your homes. We ensure that this is achieved by:

- involving tenants at every stage in all we do
- inspecting work and monitoring quality
- measuring and monitoring performance with tenant representatives
- asking you to complete a customer satisfaction survey once work is complete
- carrying out mystery shopping exercises to test quality

6. Customer care

We aim to deliver an excellent service by putting tenants at the centre of everything we do. In this section, we detail the customer care you can expect from our repairs service.

Code of Conduct

To ensure that you and your home are treated with respect, tenant representatives worked with the council and its partners to develop a Code of Conduct for all staff to follow when working in your home. Here are our promises that make up the code:

When visiting tenants, we promise to:

- drive and park courteously at all times
- introduce ourselves to you and show our identity cards
- explain the work we are there to do
- behave in a polite and courteous manner
- store all our materials and equipment in a safe manner
- always use dust sheets, unless it is unsafe to do so
- never smoke in or around your home
- never use any of your items, including phone, tea, coffee, etc
- clear and remove all waste or make arrangements to collect it
- show you the work we have done and get your signature on completion of the job

If you feel that a member of staff has not stuck to any of our promises, please call the Repairs Helpdesk immediately on 0800 052 6140.

You can help us by:

- being at home for your appointment
- ensuring clear access to the repair area
- treating staff with respect
- giving feedback and reporting any areas where we might have fallen short, as this helps us deliver a high level of customer service

Customer satisfaction surveys for repairs

To ensure that you are happy with the service received, we'll ask you to complete a customer satisfaction survey.

Your feedback is vital in helping us to provide excellent customer service, so please do take the time to respond.

Your responses are used to identify any service areas that need improving and to build our training programme for staff. We investigate any negative responses and make sure we put things right.

We use a more in-depth customer survey to measure your satisfaction with any planned work done in your home.

We may also invite you to jointly inspect the work with a member of staff to make sure that the work is finished to your satisfaction.

What can I do if I'm not happy?

Step 1: Who do I contact if I wish to raise an issue?

We always try to get things right first time but appreciate that this does not always happen. If you are not happy, your first step is to speak to a member of staff on the Repairs Helpdesk by calling 0800 052 6140. Trained repairs staff are there to help resolve your issues quickly and will refer your query on if necessary.

Step 2: What do I do if I am still not happy?

If you are not satisfied with our first response, you can raise the issue with our repairs partnership team on 01273 574354.

The liaison staff will investigate your complaint thoroughly and may arrange for a member of

staff to visit your home in order to resolve your issue to your complete satisfaction.

Step 3: What next?

If you are still unhappy, or think what you have been told will not help, you can make a formal complaint. Our 'Complaints, Comments & Compliments' booklet explains the process and includes a complaints form you can complete. You can hand it in at any council office or post it free of charge, or can:

visit: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/complaints

e-mail: complaints@brighton-hove.gov.uk

phone: **0500 291229 (freephone)**

fax: **01273 291535**

Right to Repair Legislation

The Right to Repair scheme came into force in April 1994. The scheme covers small urgent repairs costing up to £250 which have to be completed within specified times.

If the repair is not completed within this time, you can ask the council to appoint a second contractor to complete the work.

If the repair is still not completed by the end of the second period, you will be entitled to

compensation of £10, plus £2 a day for every day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £50.

The Right to Repair Scheme does not apply if:

- you have agreed an appointment for the repair to be carried out beyond the specified time
- you have told the council you no longer want the repair carried out
- you haven't allowed the contractor access to carry out the work

In some cases, the council may have to inspect the repair before work begins to make sure that it is covered by the Right to Repair Scheme.

If parts are required to complete the repair, the scheme allows for the specified time to be reasonably extended. All repairs should be reported to the council as normal. If you want further information about claiming compensations, please contact us.

For more information about the scheme, see the 'A Better Deal for Tenants: Your Right to Repair' booklet, which is only available online at www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/138340.pdf

7. Tenant alterations and improvements

Can I carry out my own improvements?

The council allows you to make improvements to your home, but you must get written permission from us before starting. Only secure tenants can carry out improvements. If you are an introductory tenant, you need to wait until your tenancy is secure.

You do not need our permission to decorate the inside of your home, lay carpet or carry out minor improvements. You must contact us before starting all other work, including:

- laying laminate or tiled floors
- erecting a shed or greenhouse
- replacing a kitchen or bathroom
- installing a new aerial or satellite dish

It is vital that you get our permission, as there

may be health and safety issues concerning the area you plan to work on. Your home may contain asbestos which is dangerous when disturbed, so you need to contact us before doing any structural or maintenance work. Your home may have been tested for asbestos in the past and we will have that information. We may visit you to check for any risks.

We will always write to tell you whether you have permission for the work. We will normally give permission, unless the work is likely to affect the safety of the building, cause a future maintenance problem, or cause a nuisance to your neighbours. We may attach conditions to the permission, such as insisting that the work is carried out by a competent contractor and to a satisfactory standard.

Some alterations and improvements may also require planning permission or building regulation permission. You must get this in advance, as it could cost you a lot to put things right afterwards.

Please remember that any improvements that you do could affect your eligibility for planned work as part of the Brighton & Hove Standard. For example, if you replace your kitchen or bathroom to a high standard, your property may not then qualify for a replacement kitchen or bathroom under the standard.

What happens when I move out?

If you move, you will be expected to leave your home in a good condition. You should leave any alterations that we have given permission for in place. If we have to do any work as a result of authorised or unauthorised alterations that you have done, the cost will be recharged to you.

If you have made improvements to your home with our permission, you may be able to apply for compensation. To make a claim, you will need to give us details of the improvement when you give us notice to end your tenancy. We will need to see bills for the work or, if you don't have these, tell us the cost and when the work was done. Any payment will depend on when you made the improvement, how much you have benefited from it, the cost, and its quality and condition.

Adaptations

If you or someone living with you has a disability there are a number of ways we can help you live more independently in your home. These include providing equipment to make daily tasks easier, adapting your home to improve access or helping you to use bathing facilities, etc.

Adaptations include providing ramp access, widening doors, raising electrical sockets, replacing a bath with a level access shower, or installing special equipment for people with hearing or visual difficulties. If you think that you need an adaptation please contact the Access Point team:

e-mail: accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk

phone: **01273 295555**

minicom: **01273 296388**

Some small adaptations such as grab rails, lever taps and window openers can be fitted by us without a referral from an Occupational Therapist. Call the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 0526140 and they will let you know if we can install the item you need.

The Repairs Helpdesk will also help if your adaptation needs to be repaired. If an adaptation needs repairing within 12 months of being installed, please tell us, as the item will still be under warranty.



8. Safety in your home

Gas and carbon monoxide

By law, it is essential that we service all gas appliances installed by us once a year - this could save your life. If an appliance is in a poor condition, it can produce too much carbon monoxide gas. Carbon monoxide cannot be seen or tasted and does not smell, but it is poisonous if breathed in, even for a short time.

When your property is due for a service, one of our gas contractors will contact you directly to make an appointment. You must allow them to access your home to carry out the service. It is a condition of your tenancy agreement and, if you refuse, we will take legal action against you to gain access. If we do this, we will seek to recover any legal costs from you.

Are there signs of carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is difficult to detect but there are a number of ways that you can see if an appliance is faulty. **These include:**

- the boiler pilot light continually going out
- an orange or yellow flame (pilot light and gas cooker)
- a black, brown or scorched area on the appliance
- a musty smell or signs of soot

What can I do to reduce the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning?

- always allow engineers in to your home to carry out yearly checks of your gas appliances
- never cover the appliance, vents or flues as they provide the air the appliance needs to work properly
- do not let anyone sleep in a room with a gas fire – this is very dangerous
- buy a carbon monoxide detector and check it regularly

If you have doubts about the safety of gas appliances in your home, call the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 without delay.

Fire

What precautions can I take?

- never leave cigarettes burning
- never smoke in bed
- keep matches away from children
- never leave the room when a hob or grill is on
- regularly check electrical appliances and their leads and do not overload plug sockets
- make sure you know where your door and window keys are
- close all inside doors at night when you go to bed
- if you have battery-operated smoke alarms, check them every week

If you do not have any smoke alarms, please contact the Fire Brigade who may be able to install one for you.

If a fire breaks out in your home, call 999 immediately and follow the advice they give you.

Legionella

What is Legionella?

Legionella bacteria are common in natural sources of water. Under certain circumstances, Legionella can be a risk and infection can occur, but this is extremely rare.

What can I do?

To reduce the risk, you can take the following precautions:

- if you have a shower, regularly descale and clean the shower head to protect against the risk of legionella
- if you are going on holiday or away for

longer than a week, take the shower head off and place it in a bowl of diluted disinfectant or a shower head cleaning agent

- when you return, run the shower without the shower head for a few minutes and then refit it

Condensation

Condensation is dampness caused by water vapour and it can cause a lot of damage to your home. Condensation occurs when there is too much water vapour in the air or when warm moist air meets cold surfaces.

Condensation is worse in cold damp weather and when heating is poor, but it can be controlled by proper heating and ventilation.

You can minimise condensation by:

- closing kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking and bathing to stop water vapour spreading through the home - it also helps to have a window open
- avoiding drying clothes indoors - if you have to, always dry clothes near an open window with the door to the room closed
- avoiding using bottled gas heaters as these give out a lot of water vapour
- keeping a constant level of heat throughout your home
- using air vents and opening windows slightly - never block air vents
- wiping your windows and sills regularly to prevent mould growth and other damage from standing water, which is quite common in winter

- washing off black mould growth with a weak solution of bleach - this is a common symptom of condensation but it will not usually become a serious problem if you remove it
- leaving a gap between your furniture and the wall to let air circulate

If you follow these tips but still have problems, report it to the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140.

Asbestos

There may be asbestos in your home, but it is only dangerous when it is disturbed and fibres are released into the air. This can happen when it is cut, sanded or drilled, which is why it is important that you contact us for permission before starting any improvements. If the asbestos in your home is not likely to be disturbed, we may decide not to remove it.

Asbestos could be found in:

- corrugated or flat cement roofing and wall panels
- ceiling and floor tiles
- bath panels
- textured coatings such as Artex
- boilers and flue pipes
- drainpipes and gutters

If you think that you have got asbestos in your home, please call the Repairs Helpdesk on **0800 052 6140**.



9. Reporting repairs – illustrated guides

The following pages contain illustrations designed to help you when reporting a repair. You can refer to these to give us better information about your repair.

