



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Panel

Title:	Central Area Housing Management Panel
Date:	28 July 2015
Time:	2.00pm
Venue	Leach Court (Enter premises via calling number 38)
Members:	Councillors: Gibson (Chair); Ward Councillors for the Area, Delegates of Tenants Association in the area.
Contact:	John Peel Democratic Services Officer 01273 29-1058 john.peel@brighton-hove.gov.uk

AGENDA

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1 APOLOGIES	
2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS	1 - 18
Minutes of the meetings held on 27 January and 14 May 2015 (copies attached).	
3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS	
4 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME	19 - 24
Responses to items raised at the Tenant Only Meeting held on 26 March 2015 (copy attached as 'blue pages').	
5 PERFORMANCE REPORT	
(copy to follow).	
<i>Contact Officer: Ododo Dafe</i>	<i>Tel: 29-3201</i>
6 FEEDBACK FROM TENANT AND RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS ON THEIR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES	
7 CITY WIDE REPORTS	25 - 60
To <u>note</u> the minutes and reports of the following Committees and City Wide groups (copies attached):	
A. Housing Committee Decision Record;	
B. Leaseholder Action Group;	
C. Senior Housing Action Group;	
D. Tenant Disability Network;	
E. Service Improvement Groups;	
F. New Homes for Neighbourhoods Update;	
G. Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes.	
8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS	

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CENTRAL AREA HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL

2.00pm 27 JANUARY 2015

BARNARD CENTRE, ST JOHNS MOUNT FLATS, MOUNT PLEASANT, BRIGHTON BN2
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MINUTES

Present: Councillors Bowden (Chair)

Voting Representatives: Barry Hughes (Sylvan Hall), Ann Ewings (Mount Pleasant), Barry Kingston (Hampshire Court), Carl Boardman (Warwick Mount), Charles Penrose (Sloane Court), Jean Davis (Leach Court), John McPhillips (Albion Hill), Chris Row (St James' House), Alan Hale (Hereford Court), Jane Thorp (Highden , Westmount & Crown Hill)

Non-Voting Delegates: Christina Hadleigh (Hampshire Court), Jason Williams (Hereford Court), Clare Barnard (Hereford Court), Viv Crossweller (Highden, Westmount & Crown Hill)

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Laura Turner (Performance & Improvement Officer), Peter Huntbach (Senior Housing Manager), Graham Davies (Tenancy Enforcement Team), Sam Smith (Housing Programme Manager), Janine Healey (Performance Manager), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services), Keith Dadswell (Project Manager), Rebecca Mann (Resident Involvement Officer), John Peel (Democratic Services Officer), Mel Fraser (Neighbourhoods Team), Alice Matthews (Community Projects Team)

Guests:

33 APOLOGIES

33.1 Apologies were received from James Cryer.

34 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

34.1 Barry Hughes noted that at 29.3, the location should read "Hollybank" not Holbank.

34.2 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 December 2014 be approved and signed as the correct record subject to the above amendment.

35 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

35.1 The Chair relayed the sad news that John Melson had recently passed away. The Chair stated that John had been extremely active in the tenant movement over a number of years and his diligent work would be missed.

36 UPDATE ON NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMME

- 36.1 The Panel considered a report that provided a progress update on the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme.
- 36.2 Charles Penrose enquired as to the rental price of the new properties.
- 36.3 The Housing Programme Manager stated that it had been agreed to set rents on new builds at affordable rent status that was up to 80% of market rent.
- 36.4 Christina Hadleigh asked if there was any intention to build upwards on low rise properties.
- 36.5 The Housing Programme Manager replied that this was not currently on their programme but may be considered in the future.
- 36.6 Barry Hughes suggested that the development at Ardingly could be named 'Kift Court' in memory of Chris Kift who had recently passed away.
- 36.7 The Housing Programme Manager stated that this was a good suggestion that he would put to the street naming team.
- 36.8 Jane Thorp asked when the draft Housing Strategy might be agreed and specifically, discussion of any proposals on building upwards on medium rise properties.
- 36.9 The Housing Programme Manager stated that discussions on build upwards were at a very early stage and there were no firm plans. It was clarified that the draft Housing Strategy had been approved by Housing Committee at their meeting the previous week.
- 36.10 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

37 LEVEL ACCESS SHOWERS

- 37.1 The Panel considered a report that provided an update on the 6-12 month pilot to install level access showers in ground floor properties that became empty and requires a bathroom replacement.
- 37.2 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

38 HIGH RISE SECURITY OPTIONS

- 38.1 The Panel considered a report that provided information on the steps taken to manage and reduce unwanted visitors accessing low and high rise blocks, provided recommendations on a sustainable approach to manage the issue ongoing and expanded upon options raised such as CCTV systems and concierge service.
- 38.2 Ann Ewings stated that removal of the trades button would not have any impact at Tyson Place as their problems arose from residents providing access and people following residents in through the main doors. Therefore, she did not believe the proposal should be implemented everywhere.

- 38.3 Carl Boardman stated that whilst the removal of the trades button at Warwick Mount had helped to some extent, it had also led to a rise in tailgating and copying keys.
- 38.4 The Performance & Improvement Officer stated that Royal Mail had requested in discussions for the trades button to be available until 5-6pm instead of the current 1pm as they now required access much later. The Performance & Improvement Officer stated that the council hoped to introduce a key fob system that could be monitored remotely and the fobs easily cancelled in cases of misuse. Whilst this was a complete resolution to the issue of block security, it was a step forward.
- 38.5 Chris Row stated that St James' House were in support of the proposals and acknowledged that tailgating was a significant problem as well as unsecure emergency exits.
- 38.6 Alan Hale stated that he supported the recommendations as long as the costs were not passed on to residents.
- 38.7 Carl Boardman asked if the installation of multi steel doors would have an impact on daylight in the premises.
- 38.8 The Performance & Improvement Officer stated that the door design would be suited toward what was best for the building and the doors would have windows.
- 38.9 Ann Ewings asked if leaseholders would be charged for the installation of multi steel doors.
- 38.10 The Performance & Improvement Officer clarified that the doors would be installed as part of the overarching door replacement programme and leaseholders would be charged under that policy as per the terms of their lease.
- 38.11 Carl Boardman stated his uncertainty regarding the regular reporting of drug litter referenced at paragraph 3.8 as he felt this issue was not often reported.
- 38.12 The Neighbourhood Liaison Officer stated that a significant amount of work had recently been put in to encourage reporting to one point of contact and that information was collated and shared with other relevant agencies.
- 38.13 Carl Boardman stated that he believed a more extensive CCTV network would be very costly to maintain.
- 38.14 The Head of Tenancy Services stated that there was no clear case for the usefulness of CCTV as perpetrators of ASB and other crimes often found methods not to be recognised clearly and there were also related privacy issues.
- 38.15 Chris Row stated that St James' House was listed in the report and asked what actions had been or were intended to be implemented.
- 38.16 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement stated that improvements had been made to the car park including wire casing over lights, CCTV, additional lighting and whitewashing and additional improvements may include painting of floors and additional barriers.

- 38.17 Charles Penrose stated that gaining evidence from CCTV was often a complicated process, an issue that representatives needed to be made aware of.
- 38.18 The Head of Tenancy Services clarified that only council officers could view and share CCTV footage with police for the prevention and detection of crime. Residents were not permitted to view CCTV footage and it was a system that could be manipulated for those who knew how to escape detection.
- 38.19 Chris Row stated that he felt there needed to be better feedback on what had been found on CCTV within the scope of data protection and even if the footage did not lead to prosecution.
- 38.20 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

39 IMPLICATIONS OF ASB AND POLICING ACT 2014

- 39.1 The Panel considered a report that provided an update on the new provisions for tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) contained within the Anti-Social bad Policing Act 2014.
- 39.2 Chris Row noted the difficulties in compiling evidence of ASB and conveyed his view that the current legislation appeared to protect perpetrators of ASB rather than victims.
- 39.3 The Senior Tenancy Enforcement Officer stated that under the current legislation, the council had to demonstrate a provision of support to resolve the problem. The Head of Tenancy Services added that the provisions were an attempt to redress the perception of an imbalance in duty of care and support and it was important for residents to be encouraged to report ASB.
- 39.4 Chris Row asked if tenants undertaking a mutual exchange were vetted.
- 39.5 The Senior Tenancy Enforcement Officer confirmed that mutual exchanges were subject to reference checks.
- 39.6 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

40 SHELTERED HOUSING

- 40.1 The Panel considered a report that set out recommendations to better define the aims and purposes of the sheltered housing service following a review conducted in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Housing in 2013. The recommendations also proposed a name change to 'Seniors Housing- Independent and Community Living'
- 40.2 Charles Penrose expressed his view that Senior Housing should be exclusively for older people as the environment and facilities were not suitable for younger people.
- 40.3 Carl Boardman commended the report that he found to be very thorough. Carl asked for more information on the proposal to convert studio properties to 1 bedroom premises.

- 40.4 The Older Persons Housing Manager clarified that when most of the premises concerned had been built in the 1970's and 1980's there had been a different attitude toward what was acceptable for older people. The feedback from residents had indicated a very clear preference for 1 bedroom properties over studio premises. In practice, there was a far lower take up and demand for studio flats particularly amongst female residents and that often led to a gender imbalance in the population of senior housing. The Head of Tenancy Services added that the shift in policy could also be seen in terms of other issues such as mutual exchange and the quality of the housing stock.
- 40.5 Carl Boardman noted his concern regarding the placement of younger vulnerable tenants as there appeared an inadequate provision of housing to cater for their needs.
- 40.6 The Head of Tenancy Services agreed that individual need was a very complex topic and each person needed to be catered for in different ways. Housing Services were currently identifying and commissioning work into how the problem could be addressed.
- 40.7 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

41 ESTATES DEVELOPMENT BUDGET DECISION

- 41.1 The Panel considered a report that requested a decision on whether to use a bus tour or a multimedia presentation to gather information on the Estate Development Budget (EDB) bids submitted in the area ahead of the main meeting.
- 41.2 **RESOLVED-** That representatives agree to view a multimedia presentation.

42 ITEMS FROM TENANT ONLY MEETING

- 42.1 (Item 1 Estate Inspections) Barry Hughes stated he found the response to be very poor. Barry noted that the Neighbourhoods Team had attended the March 2014 Area Panels with many proposals and none had been actioned to date. Barry added that the Neighbourhoods Team should accommodate tenant representatives more in reporting and resolving issues. Barry supplemented that Sylvan Hall had last had an inspection in July 2014 and no action had been undertaken arising from that inspection.
- 42.2 The Resident Involvement Manager stated that the Neighbours Team Manager had requested that tenant representatives report issues in between inspections.
- 42.3 Barry Kingston stated that various inspection dates had been listed as complete for Hampshire Court yet most had never happened. Barry noted that there was an extremely poor standard of communication from the Neighbourhoods Team.
- 42.4 The Head of Tenancy Services stated that whilst estate inspections were one part of the Neighbourhood Teams work, they were clearly not working as they should. She stated that a review of the service was required and would be done so with proper consultation.

42.5 **RESOLVED-** That the responses provided to the issues raised at the Tenant Only meeting be noted.

43 CITY WIDE REPORTS

43.1 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes and reports of the various Citywide groups be noted.

44 PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 2014/15

44.1 The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement presented a report that covered Housing Management Performance during Quarter 3 of the 2014/15 financial year. The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement stated that unfortunately it had not been possible to provide the full report, only the briefing sheet although the latter still provided information on key indicators. The Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement asked tenant representatives for their permission that representatives were satisfied for the full report to still be submitted to Housing Committee once ready and for any comments to inform the fuller report.

44.2 Representatives stated their approval for the full report to be submitted to Housing Committee.

44.3 **RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 4.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

Brighton & Hove City Council

Special Area Housing Management Panel

10.30 14 May 2015

Housing Centre, Moulsecoomb

Minutes

Voting Representatives: Alan Cooke (Craven Vale) Charing, Muriel Briault (North Portslade) Tony Brown (Evelyn Court), Alan Davies (Rosehill Court), Kath Davis (Broadfields), Vic Dodd (Ingram Crescent), David Eve (Nettleton Court & Dudeney Lodge), Ann Ewings (Mount Pleasant), Janet Gearing (Woodingdean), Ray Goble (Elwyn Jones), Alison Gray (Clarendon & Ellen), Heather Hayes (Coldean), Barry Hughes (Sylvan Hall), Barry Kingston (Hampshire Court), John Marchant (East Central Moulsecoomb), John McCabe (Laburnum Grove), Patrick McKenna (Manor Farm), Mary Moore (Muriel House), Peter O'Connor (Bates Estate), Charles Penrose (Sloane Court), Owen Spence (Mayflower Square), Jason Williams (Hereford Court).

Non-Voting Delegates: Chief Blackbear (Ingram Crescent), Christina Hadleigh (Hampshire Court), David Marshall (Sanders House), Ray Metcalfe (East Central Moulsecoomb), Dave Murtagh (East Moulsecoomb), Walter Sargison (Broadfields), Linda Shaw (Sylvan Hall), Jenny Simmonds (Coldean), Mary Whitner (Southawk), Paul Wright (Coldean), Tony Worsford (Leaseholders Action Group).

Officers: Hannah Barker (Resident Involvement Officer), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement), Keith Dadswell (Mears EDB Projects Manager), Hilary Edgar (Housing Services Operations Manager), Pat Liddell (Resident Involvement Officer), Simon Pickles (Housing Stock Review Manager), Scott Lunn (Asset/LDV/Voids Surveyor), Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Satti Sidhu (Performance & Improvement Officer), Lucie Royall (Housing Customer Services Team Leader), Liz Woodley (Senior Solicitor).

1. Apologies

1.1 Jean Davis (Leach Court), Jean Carter (Evelyn Court), Chris El Shabbah (Robert Lodge), Jane Hunter (East Moulsecoomb), Benjamin Okagbue (Head of Property & Investment), Chris Row (St James House), Jane Thorpe (Highden, Westmount & Crown Hill)

2. End of year Performance Report 2014/15

2.1 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement presented a report that covered Housing Management performance for quarter 4 and the whole of the previous financial year. There were many green overall many indicators of green showing that performance was good and had met targets.

- 2.2 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement went through the few targets that were amber or red. The number of tenants with seven or more weeks of rent arrears is slightly higher than last year. The collection rate of leaseholders' gross arrears is high due to the significant increase in major works.
- 2.3 The overall turnaround time target for empty properties was missed because of the disparity between the average-times for general needs and Seniors Housing properties that have difficult to let studios.
- 2.4 Tenant satisfaction with repairs has increased over the year but did not quite meet the 96% new target. The wait time for the repairs helpdesk has improved over the year and was almost on target for the last quarter.
- 2.5 The removal of bulk waste did not meet the year-end target due to the team being called away on other jobs like office removals in quarter four.
- 2.6 The light replacement target was not met but the margin was small, of the 2,117 jobs completed during the year, 44 were done late.
- 2.7 Janet Gearing asked if the tiny increase in rent arrears was a result of cash desk closures.
- 2.8 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said that the increase had only been small, largely due to excellent work of the cashiers and several teams; Income Management Team, Customer Services and Performance & Improvement. The council contacted all residents and set up alternative arrangements and direct debits increased by almost 900. Most people now use Paypoint card facilities. Feedback is that there now is a much wider range of places to pay and people get do get a receipt.
- 2.9 Ann Ewings said it is positive that the extra effort officers made was successful.
- 2.10 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said it is a priority for Housing to make it easy for tenants to pay their rent and the council is keen to prepare for the future when Universal Credit comes in, which may be at the end of 2015.
- 2.11 Christina Hadleigh asked if Housing identifies the top 10 worst estates for arrears. Is there a worst estate? Do we know why?
- 2.12 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said Housing doesn't identify a top10 but we struggle more to collect in the Whitehawk area. There are other hot spots. The general reason for the increase is the under-occupancy penalty. There is a higher concentration where there are larger houses. May be issues in other areas but Whitehawk and Moulsecoomb have more large family accommodation.
- 2.13 Christina Hadleigh noted an increase and rush of work at Hampshire Court. And asked if it is anything to do with the elections or end of year?
- 2.14 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said it is coincidental. As residents on the Home Service Improvement Group will know major works programme is set far in advance, consulted on and agreed and the council sticks with the programme,

unless there are small alterations.

- 2.15 David Eve noticed that a high proportion owe small amount of money. What are we doing about this? Are we catching people early? Is there anything in place to support?
- 2.16 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said he is correct, 70% owe less than £300 and 25% owe less than £50. If they are monthly payers, they may be a week or so in arrears. Most pay in advance. Also Housing Benefit may not have been paid. Generally the council's approach is to contact people as early as possible as it's easier to deal with smaller rather than larger debt. The council wants to stop debt creeping up and as well as our own services, signposts tenants to access Money Advice and Community Support (MACS) who also help tenants try to save money on all bills, (eg mobile, phone, energy, shopping).
- 2.17 Tony Worsfold asked what the council is doing about bulk waste and graffiti.
- 2.18 The Head of Tenancy Services recognised it is a very large problem city wide and is a Labour manifesto commitment to address it. Housing does collect fly-tipping and if the person is identified action is taken, although it is very hard to do that. People do start to assume that this is the method to dispose of bulk items. Estates Services are working on a plan to address the situation. The City Clean service was affected by the bin strikes. Housing are meeting them about graffiti. Normally Housing is good on dealing with graffiti but it is increasing. Housing is looking at the cause of East Brighton and Queens Park area based issues and what can be done.
- 2.19 Christina Hadleigh said the area identified had a drug and alcohol problem to rival Grimsby that goes back before 2008 as well as high levels of poor mental health.
- 2.20 The Head of Tenancy Services said it was before her time but was a very good point. People in Queens Park and in all tenures where there is a high density of housing may be aware of high levels of rough sleepers. There is a national increase in rough sleeping; people are living in desperate times. There have been a number of activities and residents will have seen increased security in some areas. This is in council business plans and the council can report back to residents on this.
- 2.21 Tony Brown stated there is a problem with bins, when you ring City Clean, you never get the job done properly. He asked if City Clean is back as part of the council?
- 2.22 The Head of Tenancy Services said that City Clean has always been under Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC).
- 2.23 Tony Brown asked why all this rubbish is being left around and nothing being done about it?
- 2.24 The Head of Tenancy Services said this echoes frustrations across the city and all tenures. She can feed this back to City Clean's Senior Officers – and ask them to feedback to Tony directly.
- 2.25 Tony Brown stated that if bins are not emptied on regular basis the city looks disgusting. Also where bins have been put in the road is sometimes dangerous.

Whole system needs to be put in correct positions, including where parking has been lost.

- 2.26 John Marchant asked why rubbish stays for days in Moulsecoomb? He felt that Hove is treated differently; mattresses are removed quickly. Do City Clean & Estate Services communicate with one another back at the office and why can't they come out straight away?
- 2.27 The Head of Tenancy Services said Housing doesn't have information about this and the target to remove bulk waste is 7 days. There is a huge amount being fly-tipped across the city. When tipped-off that it is on Housing Revenue Account land, the council's Estates Service takes it away. We almost met this target last year performing at 96% against a target of 98% (that is 2,758 out of 2,874 reported cases of fly-tipping was removed within 7 days)
- 2.28 John Marchant said he disbelieved this.
- 2.29 The Head of Tenancy Services said this is a serious allegation; Housing is subject to external audit and works to targets. It is not treating one area different from any another. Housing's bulk truck is out all day every day. Housing moves as quickly as it can. Where there is hazardous waste reported a contractor will move within 24 hours. If it's on Highways land then Housing reports it to City Clean who have the same targets.
- 2.30 Ann Ewings said she found the service to be good.
- 2.31 Resolved** – that the report be noted.

3. Annual Report 2015

- 3.1 The Performance & Improvement Officer stated that Housing has taken a similar approach to last year's report with some new features including New Homes for Neighbourhoods and tenancy fraud and plans for the year ahead. It is linked to the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) satisfaction survey showing where teams can improve and how they are doing.
- 3.2 There was resident involvement through the Business & Value for Money Service Improvement Group and there was an article in the spring edition of Homing In. We hope to have a similar design. Residents present were asked to give their feedback on the design and colours, and copies were passed around.
- 3.3 Charles Penrose asked who the Chair of Housing is and who wrote the report?
- 3.4 The Performance & Improvement Officer stated that the report was put together by her team. The Chair of Housing will do an introduction to the report.
- 3.5 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said it is like any book that has a foreword. It is not yet known who the new Chair of Housing will be (post-election). When in post, they will write an introduction.

- 3.6 Charles Penrose said it would have been good not to push the date (of publishing) forward.
- 3.7 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said Housing knew there were elections and didn't want to delay the panel seeing this information. Not having a Chair of Housing now doesn't affect the information as it is factual.
- 3.8 Charles Penrose said he felt that to have Special Area Panel this week was asking too much of residents with the Seniors Housing Action Group (SHAG) and City Assembly also meeting this week.
- 3.9 The Resident Involvement Manager stated a Special Area Panel had been called now as reports are going to the June Housing Committee.
- 3.10 Barry Hughes said the Tenant Editorial Board will need copy in good time before it goes to Housing Committee – before 15 June.
- 3.11 The Performance & Improvement Officer said she would circulate it.
- 3.12 John Marchant said the report states that 63% residents are satisfied with ways to get involved. With our Tenants Association meetings we don't get the same information. Where did you get the percentage?
- 3.13 The Performance & Improvement Officer said the figure is taken from the STAR survey.
- 3.14 John Marchant asked what the STAR survey is and if residents in this room agree? How did the survey go out? He had never received this survey.
- 3.15 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement advised that a report about the STAR Survey went to an Area Panel last year and it went to Housing Committee. It had included information on where the full report could be seen. The STAR survey is conducted by an external organisation; 3,000 out of 12,500 randomly selected homes take part, not every tenant is invited to take part. The research company said it is a good statistical sample rate widely adopted by research companies in UK.
- 3.16 Ann Ewings asked if Housing has to spend money out of its budget employing an external company?
- 3.17 Alan Cooke said if Housing employs its own staff to do the survey then it is open to accusations of bias.
- 3.18 Charles Penrose raised the section on Seniors Housing. He said at the SHAG meeting there was much unrest regarding the conversions of flats and a Special General Meeting will be arranged.
- 3.19 The Resident Involvement Manager stated that this question has also been raised for City Assembly this Saturday.
- 3.20 Ray Metcalfe commented that the report says that 90% of sheltered residents are

satisfied.

- 3.21 Tony Brown felt that tenants are not being informed of what is going on as at Evelyn Court they just walked in.
- 3.22 Ann Ewings said that when the new design for the conversion of studio flats to one bedroom flats was discussed residents were told that tenants would be given choice of whether to have it converted.
- 3.23 Charles Penrose said SHAG will be insisting there be a site meeting before work starts.
- 3.24 The Housing Stock Review Manager said he was sorry to hear about the concern about the proposals and the level of consultation at Evelyn Court. Housing had run a pilot to discover what best way to proceed. The aim is to make a better living environment, but if people don't want a conversion they will not be forced to have the work done, so it is not compulsory. Communications will be improved with a communications and consultation plan put together involving residents.. There are 235 flats to convert over three years. Housing will share the programme details with the Seniors Housing Action Group.
- 3.25 Ann Ewings asked that if people have doubts can they see a show flat?
- 3.26 The Housing Stock Review Manager said that we can arrange this and have offered taxis to help with this. Any concerned tenants can see a flat.
- 3.27 Asked whether the results of the survey shouldn't reflect this dissatisfaction, the Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement said while it would be wrong to alter the results of the survey for the report. However the annual report can express that there is an issue of dissatisfaction about the conversions.
- 3.28 Christina Hadleigh said a lot of people in Seniors Housing either aren't conscious or they say they are satisfied because they don't want the hassle.
- 3.29 The Head of Tenancy Services refuted this. There are a lot of active people, plus if people don't have mental capacity they wouldn't be our tenants.
- 3.30 John Marchant asked how many of the sample surveyed were in Seniors Housing?
- 3.31 The Head of Tenancy Services stated one in four homes were surveyed across all housing stock. When the results come back the company tells us what is statistically significant and whether we can report it as such.
- 3.32 Resolved** – that the report be noted.

4. Loft Conversions and Extensions Scheme

- 4.1 The Asset / LDV / Voids Surveyor informed the meeting that in order to meet the needs of some overcrowded families there is now a loft conversions and extensions scheme.
- 4.2 To spend the budget wisely it is better to carry out the works when the property

becomes empty rather than move a family out (into alternative accommodation) and get the work done then.

- 4.3 He said the length of time the work took depended on the size of the property. The system is being improved so that different elements of the work can be coordinated better, but some projects can take 16 weeks to complete.
- 4.4 Janet Gearing asked why some properties are left empty when the council doesn't have enough housing?
- 4.5 The Asset/LDV/Voids Surveyor stated there were lots of reasons; subsidence, some being unlive in but there is a tenancy, and other reasons why the council can't undertake work on them. Sometimes while waiting for planning permission, Mears can still do rewiring, or foundations. Or the property might be a long-term empty waiting to be transferred to Brighton & Hove Seaside Homes or a property that is apart of the extensions project.
- 4.6 The Head of Tenancy Services said herein lies the wider issue where empty properties are concerned, which the council tracks and monitors. The quarterly report explains what's going on with empty properties. Sometimes they look empty. Other times people don't realise that the council doesn't own them any more so has no control over them.

Sometimes there is a reason why a tenant can't be in that property, domestic violence or hospital for example. In order to protect tenants' property, the council sometimes boards it up. Such properties can become abandoned. It is useful if residents can please let Housing know if they suspect properties have been abandoned. If a property is abandoned the council also can't just take it back, but has to go through a process which can include giving notice and trying to locate the tenant.

- 4.7 Janet Geering said she had known of a drug raid and then the tenant hadn't got in touch for months. Surely you can get it back then?
- 4.8 The Head of Tenancy Services said there are different scenarios such as needing evidence from the police. Sometimes for a length of time or if a coroner is involved the council cannot take the property back, that would be in contempt of court. The council tries to keep to this to a minimum, because of the financial cost and the housing need in the city.
- 4.9 Alan Cooke reminded that the agenda item is the loft extension program item.
- 4.10 The appendices were handed out at the meeting. They were a map and table of overcrowded dwellings and a map of homes that may be suitable for wheelchair conversion.
- 4.11 Heather Hayes asked if Seaside Homes are still picking up empty properties.
- 4.12 The Asset/LDV/Voids Surveyor said the process is that an offer is made to the Housing Asset & Investment Manager who says whether the property concerned meets the criteria and is suitable for passing to Brighton & Hove Seaside Homes.

4.13 Resolved – that the report be noted.

5. Visitor Parking Charges

- 5.1 The Housing Customer Services Team Leader said that they manage car parks and garages on housing land. The proposal is to introduce visitor parking charges. The Car Parks & Garages Team currently provides a permit scheme for residents of council houses and flats to enable their visitors to use designated bays in Housing car parks. There is currently no charge to residents for these permits.
- 5.2 The current scheme has run for a number of years, with permits available to all residents who live near to car parks with bays designated for visitor use. The scheme is not open to residents who live outside these areas. At moment there are visitor parking across the city with lots parking bays in some areas and not so many in others. Housing are re-looking at need.
- 5.3 Sometimes this system is being abused and permits have been sold and genuine visitors can't park. The proposal is that Housing introduces a paid for visitor permit scheme, in line with the one operating on highways.
- 5.4 The Housing Customer Services Team Leader said that Housing is looking at Hampshire Court separately as it is managed by the resident's association
- 5.5 Jenny Simmonds said her daughter lives at Essex Place and they can't park in the nearby disabled bays as they are always in use, so her partner has to go home, after dropping her off.
- 5.6 Alison Gray said Ellen Street has no visitor parking bays but some disabled bays. People park in the disabled bays so there is nowhere to park. Some spaces are too tiny for getting wheel chair in and out of a car.
- 5.7 If residents without a blue badge are parking in disabled bays in car parks where parking is enforced, residents should contact Ethical Parking, who can issue a parking ticket.
- 5.8 Charles Penrose said that the Leach Court car park serves both Patching Lodge and Sloane Court too. Doctors visit every day, some three times a day.
- 5.9 The Housing Customer Services Team Leader said that carers mostly have badges and can park on the street. If changes are made to visitor parking Housing will work with Adult Social Care to let them know about the changes in advance so they can let carers know.
- 5.10 Charles Penrose felt there should be no visitor parking charge on Park Street.
- 5.11 Ray Metcalfe visits The Pines twice a day. He advised he would not pay to do this.
- 5.12 Owen Spence asked about private contractors? Any contractor for Housing is entitled

to a permit.

- 5.13 Heather Hayes asked how long does it take to get an untaxed vehicle moved? Could Mears be told not to park in parking bays because carers can't park? Mears are also parking in an ambulance bay at Elwyn Jones Court.
- 5.14 The Housing Customer Services Team Leader agreed to look into this after the meeting.
- 5.15 Chief Blackbear said that Ingram Crescent had historically said no to parking enforcement but across the road from the estate they now have controlled parking and they are parking in the estate.
- 5.16 The Housing Customer Services Team Leader said Ingram Crescent is currently being reviewed and parking enforcement will be introduced there later this year.
- 5.17 Resolved** – that the report be noted.

6. Review of Area Panels

- 6.1 This report presents the work of the Strengthening Area Panels Task & Finish Group which was set up at the request of the September 2014 round of Area Panels to identify ways to increase tenant consultation and input into the decision making process, following the abolition of the Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee. The group met five or six times and have come up with a number of suggestions.
- 6.2 Barry Hughes said the number of Tenant & Resident Associations (TRAs) has reduced from 70 to 50, so there are less Area panel members. This is due to apathy or a combination of being an aging population and people not having time. Need to bolster attendance at Tenant Only (TO) meetings too. A pledge was made to strengthen Area Panels with the abolition of the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee (HMCSC). At the Central TO we have tried some experiments and looked at the location and given people directions.
- 6.3 To strengthen the blue pages information flow from TO meetings to Area Panel, we have suggested a star system. Because of the skills of people at TO meeting we can resolve a one star matter between ourselves. The second star might be restricted to that area only. Three stars would be communicated across the city and to Housing Committee for action.
- 6.4 Also we requested that blue pages move forward to the start of meeting to make sure officers have not left.
- 6.5 If a tenant representative has not attended the Association will be written to. Have had a request from Jane Thorpe, she has a specific problem in that her deputy is not confident about attending on their own. Please can a RIO liaise with them on this?
- 6.6 Generally the mantra is to quote back to the council "Resident Involvement is at the

heart of everything we do in Housing.” Your attendance at Area Panel is important and do take back to the TRAs the need to strengthen TO meetings.

- 6.7 We want less ‘death by PowerPoint’ and papers sent to delegates earlier so representatives can read the reports in good time before the meetings.
- 6.8 The council says how good it is. It is for us residents to tell it where it is going wrong.
- 6.9 Regarding the chairing of Area Panel, we asked to have a member of the Housing Committee as Chair. Bill Randall agreed, it will help to directly feed to the Housing Committee.
- 6.10 Charles Penrose asked if it possible for this group to resurrect HMCSC to the council?
- 6.11 Barry Hughes bemoaning this is a recurring theme. It is incumbent on Area Panels to lobby to see if similar can be restored.
- 6.12 Charles asked if this could be on the next agenda of Area Panel
- 6.13 Barry Hughes said Charles is a chair of a Tenant Only meeting and could ask for this.
- 6.14 Resolved** – that the report be noted.

7. Community Payback Estate Development Budget (EDB) process

- 7.1 The Resident Involvement Manager explained that each Area Panel has put aside £2,500 for Community Payback (CP) tools and specialist equipment for their area. A process for requesting CP work has been developed and there is a form available from the Resident Involvement Team (RIT). Left over materials like paint can be reused and tools can be pooled.
- 7.2 RIT will check that work is on Housing land, there is a toilet for workers, if residents will provide refreshments, and that proposed work is not to be done by paid staff.
- 7.3 A monthly jobs list will be published and quarterly reports will go to the Neighbourhood & Community Service Improvement Group, and an annual report will go to the Area Panels.
- 7.4 Sylvan Hall uses CP and Barry Hughes said they are good and experienced and have facilities. The association has a specific need for gardening tools for its 7.5 acres.
- 7.5 The Resident Involvement Manager said there is a stand-alone CP project at Clarendon & Ellen and there was one at the Bristol Estate and these can continue. She wasn’t aware of the Sylvan Hall project as Housing has not given any funding. Stand-alone projects can continue. The idea of this procedure is to get CP into areas where they have not previously worked.
- 7.6 Christina Hadleigh said they would not have CP back at Hampshire Court as they have had problems with them in the past.

- 7.7 The Resident Involvement Manager said associations would have to apply to get the work done.
- 7.8 Ann Ewings felt this was unusual behavior; she had had decent work done by the service. They come supplied and don't misbehave.
- 7.9 The Resident Involvement Manager said that EDB main bid forms have just been sent out to TRA Chairs and Secretaries. Further copies are available from the Resident Involvement Team. The deadline for submission is 13 November 2015.
- 7.10 Ray Metcalfe asked if the CP representative can come to meetings? He could cover some of the main ones, especially to start with.
- 7.11 The EDB Project Manager said in the past CP communication has not been brilliant. There have been lots of quick bids for CP works. This will be better as we can get more areas covered and help with any issues. Also we can help identify work as we talk to TRAs. CP will publish a diary so we can advise the TRAs.
- 7.12 Resolved** – that the report be noted.

8. Request to sell a Piece of HRA Land at Connell Drive

- 8.1 The Housing Stock Review Manager stated that Housing would not ordinarily sell land, quite the opposite; it looks to build on more land. This request to buy is on a private estate in Woodingdean. The request has been made by a recent ex-councillor.
- 8.2 Christina Hadleigh asked why can't Seaside Homes take this on? Can we put a disabled flat there?
- 8.3 The Housing Stock Review Manager replied that while the size of the land in question was just large enough to build one property, its size and position meant that planning consent would not be granted, so it was not developable by the council.
- 8.4 The Housing Stock Review Manager stated that before Housing considers selling Housing have to be sure the land would not benefit the council. The site is next to two garages, and consists of shrubs which attract litter. If Housing sold it, the council would get a capital receipt and would no longer have to spend money on shrub maintenance and litter clearance.
- 8.5 Alan Cooke asked can you confirm there is no other council housing in the area?
- 8.6 Ray Metcalfe asked is it now to time to put the price up? This valuation was from a while ago, the price of land has gone up.
- 8.7 The Housing Stock Review Manager stated that he had mentioned this to the valuers but, in this time, the build costs have also gone up, cancelling each other out.
- 8.9 Patrick McKenna had left this point to be raised, he thinks the land is and being sold

too cheaply. The cost of the land is £26,000 so a future sale of the building by the applicant would make a large profit.

8.10 The Housing Stock Review Manager he is happy to look into this point.

8.11 Linda Shaw felt it could be a one off property. Housing is crying out for land. Someone might build to sell.

8.12 The Housing Stock Review Manager has looked at this site with other sites and this site is not viable for Housing. Housing does have to build 500 homes by 2030 but this site is not viable.

8.13 Ann Ewings said the profit will stay in the Housing Revenue Account. £26,500 would be earmarked for major works, refurbishment or new building.

8.14 Christina Hadleigh felt the site should have a no build clause. This could be the old boys club.

8.15 The Housing Stock Review Manager hadn't picked that up. The case was being handled transparently and is going to the Housing Committee for a decision.

8.16 Ray Metcalfe felt one lone council home in a private estate served no purpose. It is better invested elsewhere.

8.17 The Housing Stock Review Manager said people can email any questions to him after this meeting or he will be present on Saturday at the City Assembly.

8.18 Resolved – that the report be noted.

9. Any other business

9.1 The Resident Involvement Manager stated that is a really good time to switch energy providers. Please bring copy of your bill to the City Assembly.

9.2 Charles Penrose thanked the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 12.40.

Items from the Central Area Resident Only meeting held on 26/3/15

1 Venue for next Area Panel meetings

All of the next Area Panel meetings, which are discussing Estate Development Budget (EDB) bids, are being held at the Housing Centre.

Two concerns were raised about this:

- *Area Panels should be held in the Area they relate to*
- *This decision was made without any discussion or agreement from residents*

It was noted that special equipment was needed for EDB presentations, but also pointed out that they had previously been held in each Area without a problem.

It was agreed to censure this decision. In future, decisions about venue should be made at Area Panels, and any reasons for a change in venue explained to residents and agreed by them.

Action: for Blue Pages

Response from Becky Purnell Resident Involvement Manager - Tel 01273 293022

This time the Resident Involvement Officers put together the multimedia presentations, last year one of the films cost £810 and the other one was put together by the Social Media Officer.

The presentations used photos and video clips on a power point (now possible with the computer operating system upgrade). These files are enormous and too big to save on the laptop and having the presentation at the Housing Centre enabled the presentations to be run from the council's computer network. It also meant they could be edited and there were a number of last minute changes. The smart board ensured a good picture quality.

Residents gave positive feedback, "I was not sure about the changes but it was brilliant", and "I have been doing the EDB for years and it was the best EDB ever".

2 Rubbish Collection at Hyde Housing

John McPhillips reported on problems with the large black rubbish bins at Ebenezer apartments, managed by Hyde Housing. The door to the rubbish store was often left open, and a problem developed with street drinkers and drug takers. An agreement was then made with the Council that the door to the rubbish store can be kept locked, with one bin left outside on the street and replaced when full with an empty bin from the store.

There are two problems with this:

- *No one actually replaces the bin, so rubbish just accumulates on the street, creating a hazard and a nuisance.*
- *From the earliest planning stages of the Ebenezer development it was guaranteed that garbage would be managed within the confines of the development. There was concern about this at the time, because so much of the site was built on.*

Hyde are now claiming that the situation is resolved, but it clearly isn't.

Albion Hill Residents Association is concerned about the impact of this on their community, and the general degradation of the area.

It was agreed to raise this on the Blue Pages and ask:

- *Why did the Council agree to what is clearly an unworkable situation?*
- *What is the Council doing to make sure that Hyde Housing stick to the agreements they made when the development was planned?*

Action: for Blue Pages

Response from Eileen Leavers Projects Officer City Infrastructure City Clean - 01273 294709

I visited this afternoon and went through the documents when the building was at the planning stage. We have never advised or agreed that bins would be left outside. I can find no written evidence of an arrangement where refuse would be on the pavement outside.

I have found emails from 2008 and 2010 where we advised that residents could use on street communal refuse bins but would still need a bin store for recycling. We can see that these roads do not have on street communal refuse bins so the amount of recycling and refuse bins in the bin stores were adapted. The bin store we visited today had 2xcomingle and 4x refuse containers inside.

There are two bin stores and we have a key for each of them. When we visited today, we could see a small amount of bags left outside and found out the refuse was put there by a household who claims to not know how to use the internal bin store key.

The small amount of bags being left outside is a local issue with one resident involved (the residents told us only 2 flats have babies in nappies in) – so perhaps the Managing Agent could contact them to be shown how to use the internal key to the bin store. Refuse and recycling must be put into the bins inside the bin stores.

I have checked with the collections and they said that as long as we have the relevant keys to the bin stores (which we currently do), we can get in to empty the refuse and leave them locked

after, as we do with many other flats with bin stores.

3. Estate Development Budget Process

Carl Boardman said that he has been elected as a tenant representative on the EDB panel, and Jason Williams is the deputy representative. Carl said he will be asking for a proper review of the way the EDB bids are administered, to ensure it is done in the best possible way. It was agreed that there have been a lot of changes to the EDB process, and that it is time for a review.

It was recognised that time was needed for the Council to survey and price bids so they can be quickly actioned after agreement. However, it was also important that Resident Associations had sufficient time to consult with their members fully and properly.

It was agreed that any information and decisions about EDB should always go through the Area Panels, and that the Area Panels must be kept fully informed about the decision making process for EDB bids.

Action: for the Blue Pages

Response from Becky Purnell Resident Involvement Manager – 01273 293022

The purpose of the Estate Development Budget (EDB) Panel includes meeting regularly to review and stimulate the progress of the EDB, and to review the processes for the EDB and make recommendations for improvements and it is a good suggestion that a review takes place following the changes. It would make sense to do this when the works have been completed. The Property & Investment Team reviewed the EDB process with the EDB Panel last autumn and a report went to the December Area Panels where residents agreed to a number of recommendations.

The council checks whether the bids are possible and if the work is being carried out from another budget, then Mears survey and price the bids.

Last year the EDB forms were sent out in the first week of July giving the deadline of 16 November to enable associations time for consultation. This year I am sending out the letter and forms at the beginning of May with the City Assembly reminder.

Last year the December Area Panels received an update on the progress of the EDB works along with the EDB review, and a report about the EDB process went to the Area Panels in July (this was also sent to the Chairs and Secretaries with the EDB forms). Residents voted on whether to have a bus tour or a multimedia presentation at the January Area Panels. The Community payback EDB Process went to the Special Area panel in May. The Area Panels are regularly informed about the EDB.

4. Anti Social Behaviour at Warwick Mount

a) Deferred case

Carl reported that an anti-social behaviour case had finally gone to court, only to be deferred as there was too much evidence and not enough time to discuss it. It will now go to court again at the end of April.

This was very disappointing for people who had taken time off work and made the effort to get to court to make statements.

b) Difficulties with resolving anti-social problems

Residents at Warwick Mount have been working for the past 6 months to try to resolve a problem with someone urinating in the bin rooms. It has been reported numerous times, and photograph evidence supplied. It can't proceed any further until there is evidence about who is doing it. Although there is CCTV in the bin room, it can't be looked at unless you know the exact time you need to look at. As this can't be ascertained unless you look at the CCTV evidence, the situation becomes circular and impossible to resolve.

This is very demoralising for residents working hard to improve the situation at Warwick Mount. Carl said he had given up reporting incidents in the bin room, as there seems to be no point.

It was agreed that there should be a better way to resolve this situation. If there isn't, then the procedures should be looked at and improved.

Action: for Blue Pages

Response from Graham Davies Senior Enforcement Officer Tel -01273 293218

a) We completely understand tenants' frustrations and the impact a situation like this has, particularly after they have invested time & effort into it. Legal processes can be protracted and lengthy, often involving adjournments or other delays. The council tries to minimise this impact and support tenants through this process. However, it is ultimately the court that decides when a case is heard.

b) Our Neighbourhood Team is aware of this issue and has been attempting to collect evidence to address this. The following text message was sent to all tenants on 29-1-15:

"There has been a problem with people or their pets urinating in public hallways. Urinating in any communal areas is a breach of tenancy & further action will be taken. If you witness any urinating in any communal areas, please report the time, date, location & description of perpetrator to the Housing Customer Service team on 01273 293030."

Since this was sent out we have had no further reports of urinating in the bin room or the block, from any tenants.

We do use CCTV evidence wherever possible however, without a specific time frame to check it is not feasible to search the CCTV for extended periods due the staff resources involved. For example checking a 12hr period takes several hours itself. In this instance a member of staff spent nearly seven hours viewing the CCTV footage to collect evidence, but this did not produce anything useful.

The council is looking at other ways of resolving this, such as the possibility of moving the bins onto land outside the block & closing the bin room down.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE

4.00pm 17 JUNE 2015

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, SHIP STREET, BRIGHTON

DECISION LIST

Part One

7 CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Contact Officer: Caroline De Marco *Tel:* 01273 291063
Ward Affected: All Wards

- (1) That the committee's terms of reference, as set out in Appendix A to this report, be noted.
- (2) That the establishment of an Urgency Sub-Committee consisting of the Chair of the Committee, and two other Members (nominated in accordance with the scheme for the allocation of seats for committees), to exercise its powers in relation to matters of urgency, on which it is necessary to make a decision before the next ordinary meeting of the Committee be approved. (Councillor Mears indicated that she would be the Conservative representative on the Urgency Sub-Committee. The Green Group would nominate their representative at a later date.)

8 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - FINAL SCHEME APPROVAL - FINDON ROAD AND GARAGE SITES UPDATE

Contact Officer: Jaine Jolly *Tel:* 01273 290356
Ward Affected: East Brighton

- (1) That approval be given for:
 - i. The final design.
 - ii. The scheme rent levels.
 - iii. The estimated levels of additional investment required from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the chosen rent model and

delegates authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Estate Regeneration Member Board to agree reasonable amendments to that subsidy if changes arise.

- (2) That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to:
- iv. Approve that the land at Findon Road, former Whitehawk library site is appropriated to the HRA for a capital receipt of £0.940 million for planning purposes and the development of new housing.
 - v. Approve a budget of £14.1 million for the Findon Road scheme in the HRA Capital Programme which will be financed through a mixture of unsupported borrowing and retained Right to Buy capital receipts.
 - vi. That the site at 4-7 and 15-20 Kensington Street is appropriated for planning purposes and the development of new housing.

9 HOUSING ADAPTATIONS SERVICE UPDATE

Contact Officer: Sarah Potter, Martin Reid *Tel:* 01273 29-3168, *Tel:* 01273 93321

Ward Affected: All Wards

- (1) That the outturn and investment in adaptations be noted.
- (2) That the measures in place to manage the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) expenditure within budget over the next three years be approved.
- (3) That the report be referred to the Health & Wellbeing Board. The Committee's concerns are also referred to the Board.

10 PROPOSED ADDITIONAL LICENSING SCHEME FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO)

Contact Officer: Martin Reid *Tel:* 01273 93321

Ward Affected: Brunswick & Adelaide;
Central Hove; East
Brighton; Goldsmid;
Preston Park; Regency;
Westbourne

- (1) That the results of the consultation and evidence gathering exercise undertaken in relation to the proposed additional HMO Licensing Scheme as summarised in the report and detailed in the Appendix, be noted.

14 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - BROOKE MEAD EXTRA CARE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Contact Officer: Jo Thompson
Ward Affected: Queen's Park

Tel: 291466

- (1) That it be noted that the final contract costs for the Brooke Mead Extra Care Housing scheme are within the approved £12m budget.
- (2) That the risks associated with this project are noted.

15 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4 AND END OF YEAR 2014/15

Contact Officer: Ododo Dafe
Ward Affected: All Wards

Tel: 29-3201

- (1) That the report, which was submitted to the Citywide Area Panel in May 2015, be noted, along with the comments of the Committee.

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG) **'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'**

Minutes of LAG Committee Meeting

Monday 18 May 2015, 6.00pm to 8:00pm
Hampshire Lodge

1. **Present:** Linda Shaw (LS), James Corbett (JC), Barbara Roberts (BR) and Tony Worsfold (TW)

Officers: Dave Arthur (DA) (BHCC) & Keely McDonald (KM) (BHCC)

Apologies: Apologies were offered for Muriel Briault, Dee Howland and Dave Croydon

Minutes: Trevor Jones (BHCC)

2. **Introduction of New Members.**

2.1 LS –welcomed Barbara as a new member to the LAG committee and the rest of those present introduced themselves.

3. **Minutes of previous meeting & matters arising.**

3.1 LS – mentioned that we would be going through the minutes from the last LAG committee meeting but that Dee Howland had taken notes during the closed session at April's AGM and points from these could form part of this year's LAG action plan. LS -provided copies of the notes for those present to consider.

3.2 Page1. Point 2.4 TW – mentioned that a single incidence of ASB is unlikely to see action taken if it is noise related and you report it to Environmental Health. You need to keep a diary of ASB and it will have to have occurred on several occasions before action will be taken.
DA – recommends an email to Housing Customer Services or contact the Neighbourhood Team. They will then contact Environmental Health if appropriate or if it is a major problem pass it on to the ASB team.
LS – asked if an update on the new ASB powers could be printed in the next edition of Homing-In.

3.3 Page 3. (AGM)

LS –felt the new format used at this year's AGM had worked well. In particular the closed session that allowed people to speak openly and the stands. The venue (Brighthelm Centre) was good but, getting there was a problem for some.

DA –from the council's point of view agreed the new format worked very well. The closed session was a step forwards and it is worth trying the same format for next year's AGM at which ever venue we decide to use. The attendance for this year's AGM was disappointing.

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG)

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

TW –didn't believe LAG should close their minds to there being a presentation from a council officer if the issue was relevant.

3.4 Page 4. Point 4.1 LS –mentioned LAG had requested copies of the Resident Involvement and Neighbourhood Officers job descriptions so they knew who was responsible for what.

3.5 Page 4. Point 4.5 DA –the government intends to extend Right to Buy to Housing Associations. The discounts are on a sliding scale, more than £100,000 on properties in London, with a maximum of £77,900 for properties elsewhere in the country for 2015/16.

LS –this will reduce the pool of properties available for social housing.

DA –part of the new Labour administration's pledge on housing is for 500 new council homes in the next 4 years.

JC –asked how many properties BHCC had sold under RTB in the last financial year.

Answer: 21 houses & 31 flats (DA – 29/5/15)

3.6 Page 5. Point 5.1 LS –attended the recent Special Area Panel at the Housing Centre and LAG will now be represented on the four area panels. TW –we managed to get the Terms of Reference changed and LAG will have a representative and a deputy for each of the four areas.

3.7 Page 5. Point 6 DA – Property & Investment are being re-structured and are to review the consultation procedures for high cots major works. Glyn Huelin has offered to attend the next LAG committee meeting.

Action: DA –to invite GH to the next LAG meeting.

TW –asked what prompted the review.

LS –accountability has always been a contentious issue for leaseholders.

TW –the consultation at Warwick Mount was satisfactory.

DA –P&I continually review their procedures with the aim of implementing improvements on lessons learned from previous consultations. The key lesson really is to engage with residents at the earliest possible stage.

TW –asked if council procedures were available to residents?

DA – didn't know what procedures were available to the public, but the high cost major works procedures to be reviewed would certainly be made available to the committee who whose consultation was very important to their final shape.

Minutes –were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting.

4. Key committee action points for the year 2015/16

4.1 KM –asked those present for suggestions for issues LAG wish to add to the action plan to be taken forward in the coming year.

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG)

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

4.2 LS –mentioned she had spoken to Dave Croydon who agreed leaseholder engagement was a big issue for the coming year and needed to feature in the action plan. He is willing to take responsibility for setting up a closed Facebook page for leaseholders in an attempt to get more leaseholders to engage.

TW –didn't HRAG have a Yahoo forum?

KM –RIT are working on a Menu of Engagement which will rely strongly on Facebook. Facebook is popular with more people than Ning as a social media platform and would likely attract more leaseholders than other forums.

Action: LAG to discuss with DC the setting up of a closed Facebook leaseholder page.

Issues taken from the notes taken at the AGM

4.3 Page 1 Point 3 TW – Rachel Chasseaud said the council are working on what information they can share to help us identify the leaseholders living in the different blocks.

DA – we are happy to write to all leaseholders in a building on behalf of any leaseholder who would like to set up a Recognised Tenants Association in their block. But we cannot disclose personal data that is given to us in confidence & protected by the Data Protection Act.

4.4 Page 1 Point 6 LS –the council website is difficult to navigate and needs simplifying.

TW –the search facility on the council's website is helpful and you can subscribe and get alerts on reports as they are published.

JC –there needs to be a page telling you how to navigate the website.

KM –LAG could invite a member of the council's media team to a meeting.

4.5 Page 1 Point 9 JC –having a cap on the cost of major works and communication and consultation with leaseholders by the P&I team is another issue we could add to this year's action plan.

DA – the council must be able to justify the cost of works that are proposed & where there may be an alternative method, to compare the pros and cons of the two. The financial implications to leaseholders also needs to be taken into account when procuring work.

4.6 Page 2 Point 5. LS –removing redundant television cables from some blocks needs addressing.

KM –in Queens Park redundant cables will be removed if there is a Health & Safety issue.

4.7 –after further discussion the following issues were agreed for this year's LAG Action Plan:

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG)

'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

1. Communications strategy for leaseholders (including use of Facebook as a forum; different ways of communicating; countering the decline of the meeting as a social norm; building a leaseholders network; improvements to council website)
2. High cost major works: communications; consultations; project management
3. Seek implementation of workable procedure for removal of redundant cables which cause nuisance or damage at a building
4. Review the current Leaseholders Disputes Procedure.

5. Next Meeting dates.

5.1 Dates for next LAG committee meetings:

- 6 July, 6pm-8pm 2015
- 7 September, 6pm-8pm 2015
- 2 November, 6pm-8pm 2015
- 4 January, 6pm-8pm 2016
- 7 March, 6pm-8pm 2016
- 9 April, AGM 10am-1pm 2016

Leaseholder Action Group (LAG)
'Working for Council Leaseholders across the city'

Minutes of the Senior Housing (Independent Community Living) Action Group Meeting

Held on Wednesday 13 May 2015 10.00am-12.30pm
Leach Court, Park Street, Brighton.

Present: Roy Crowhurst (Chair), Paul Agius (Evelyn Court, West), Joyce Bean (Elwyn Jones Court, North), Peter Bentley (Lindfield Court, North), Tony Brown (Evelyn Court, West) Jean Carter (Evelyn Court, West), Allan Davies (Rosehill Court, North) Jean Davis (Leach Court, Central), Kath Davis (Broadfields, North), Jack Edmunds (Lindfield Court, North), Ray Goble (Elwyn Jones Court, North), Bette Lewis (Jasmine Court, North), Peter Lloyd, David Marshall (Sanders House, West), Mary Moore (Muriel House, West) , Tomm Nyhuus (Somerset Point, Central), Charles Penrose (Sloane Court, Central) , Walter Sargison (Broadfields, North), Ernest Tidy (Churchill House, West), Elizabeth Tinkler (Laburnum Grove, North), Colin Vincent (Brighton and Hove Older People's Council), Beverley Weaver (Sanders House, West) Jonathan Woolven (Jubilee Court, North).

Officers: Chantel Cooper (Resident Involvement Assistant – Minute Taker) (RIA), Hannah Barker (Resident Involvement Officer) (RIO), Peter Huntbach (Older Persons Housing Manager, BHCC), Michael Logue (Scheme Manager Woods House and Evelyn Court, attending as an observer).

Councillors:

Apologies:

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 (p1, 2.2) Update on elections to the Older People's Council (OPC)– election now taking place on 2 July 2015 via postal ballot, not sometime in June. The over 70s will get a ballot paper automatically. Those under 70 will only get one if they are registered with Electoral Services.

2.2 (p4, 5.5.1) regarding the conversion of studio flats at Evelyn Court.

Tony: Work is bogged down. Site foremen, when asked either won't tell residents anything or don't know anything. When you ask Mears, they say that they need to 'get parts' and, to do this, they need to go back to the council and ask for authorisation to get such parts. Question is, why, if this is part of a scheduled programme of works, do they need parts/authorisation?

In residents' minds this work is not being done and is dragging on longer than scheduled and they want something done about it...

2.3 (p5, 5.5.4 and 5.5.6) regarding the Sanders House studio flat conversions.

2.3.1 Beverley: Show flat at Sanders *did* take three weeks to convert – due to pressure from the council's chief executive to get it done on schedule. *But* the rest took longer – eight to twelve weeks, then there were further delays while the council

decided what rent rates to charge for the converted flats.

- 2.3.2 Residents were told not to go back to their old flats – had to go back to new flats which were allocated to them.
- 2.3.3 Furthermore, there was *no* consultation regarding the conversions at Sanders - the first the residents knew of the proposed conversion of their flats was a Health and Safety talk from Mears in their lounge.
- 2.3.4 At this point a big problem with the studio flat conversion programme as a whole erupted within the group.
- 2.3.5 Jonathan: viewed the converted flats at Sanders this Monday morning (11 May, 2015) – thought them very nice but cramped. Couldn't live in one himself. Was concerned therefore whether residents in his block will be asked whether they want their flats converted because it seems to have been done as a *fait accompli* at Sanders House.
- 2.3.6 Chair proposed that someone from Mears should attend the next S.H.A.G. meeting to be questioned about these concerns (the delays and the apparent lack of consultation) and so their responses can be minuted for the record and set down in black and white.

Trouble is, next meeting is in two months' time – 8 July, 2015, which is too late – need a meeting sooner – a special, 'emergency' meeting.....

- 2.3.7 **Action 1:** Jonathan will raise the issue of consultation at tomorrow's Special Area Panel meeting.

Elizabeth however, maintained that at her block, they *were* consulted and there was no compunction to have their flat converted if they did not want it converted

- 2.3.8 **Action:** Tomm, as the Home Service Improvement Group's representative on the Core Group can raise the issues directly with Ian Stone and James Cryer, Mears at its next meeting at the end of May.

Beverley: You need to talk to Alan Shaw, the project manager and Nigel French about this, *not* James Cryer.

- 2.3.9 Peter (Huntbach's) response to these queries

Principle behind these studio-flat conversions is that there are lots of studio flats - these are hard to let and can take up to 72 days to re-let, if they are let at all. This is because, these days people want to have a separate bedroom and so want to move into one-bedroom lets.

The council has lost 80k in revenue (lost rents) because of this. This situation was untenable so the council agreed something had to be done about it...

Original idea was to convert flats as they became available to re-let but this would

be too slow, so the conversion programme came about, with Sanders House being the first up for conversion.

Problem is however that, even after conversion, the flats at Sanders still can't be shifted so conversion might not be the best way forward after all and needs to be re-thought.

Simon Pickles, Housing Stock Review Manager is looking at re-configuring the whole conversion programme e.g. knocking two studio flats into one one-bedroom flat to create more space.

There is also the issue of the disruption caused to the resident by converting flats which are occupied.

So there are question marks over the whole programme, the project and its mechanics need to be clarified.

Agrees therefore that there should be a special meeting to discuss this, with the Property and Investment team, Simon and the contractor all present.

- 2.3.10 Suggestion, as it was observed Hannah was taking notes from this discussion, that she should use these to formulate a question to put to City Assembly on Saturday (16 May, 2015).

Action: Hannah to use her notes from this meeting to formulate questions for City Assembly on Saturday.

It was queried whether a special meeting was still required if a question/questions were being put to City Assembly.

2.3.11

Group **agreed** that it still wanted the special meeting, as soon as possible.

Action: Chair to contact Alan Shaw and Simon Pickles to agree a date for this special meeting and send out invitation letters via Hannah.

Action: Peter (Huntbach) to liaise with Simon Pickles to ensure that the right people attend this meeting.

It was clarified that this special meeting would have a one point agenda – the studio flat conversion programme.

Q - Hannah to Peter (Huntbach): Regarding consultation (or lack of it) – is there a document which sets out the level of consultation?

2.3.12

A – Peter: There's a principle of consultation but no actual document and perhaps there should be...

(p 7,5.66) Alcove at Elwyn Jones Court is still locked.

- 2.4 Peter: A programme to re-furbish communal areas has been approved – will look

at the better use of space e.g. alcoves.

(p 10, 7.5) Update regarding the water-leak damage at Elwyn Jones Court:

- 2.5 Carpet belonging to the flat which experienced the water-leak has been located and it is fine so it is now back down again.

The flat below however, is still in a state of disrepair – it has now been five months...

Minutes – agreed as an accurate record.

Interval

3 Update from Peter Huntbach

3.1 Staffing

Has three Scheme Manager vacancies

Has more Scheme Manager hours than ever but still not at full capacity so still using agency staff to bridge the gap.

A prospective Scheme Manager from the agency is currently awaiting a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service check – what was a CRB or Criminal Records Bureau check) to come through.

3.2

Events

Peter circulated an information sheet to the group, detailing what events the Fabrica Art Gallery is running for adults.

The Fabrica Gallery is located inside an old church, opposite the old Post Office at 40 Duke Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 1AG (since this information was missing from their information sheet).

Their contact telephone number is : 01273 778646

Their web-site is: www.fabrica.org.uk

- 3.3 Further to the previous minutes (p8, point 5.9.1) Peter spoke to the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transexual (LGBT) housing group base on how LGBT 'friendly' BHCC's seniors housing policies are. The feedback from this was positive. There will be staff training on serving the LGBT population.

Peter also circulated a leaflet promoting 'networking' lunches for LGBT over-50s which are held every second Friday of the month between 1pm and 3pm at the Somerset Day Centre, St. James Street.

- 3.4 One Church's 'Time 2 Talk' service has visited several schemes. Is looking to

produce a guide/leaflet on 'Being Neighbourly'.

Peter circulated a draft copy of this leaflet to the group. Would like volunteers to do further work on this leaflet.

3.5

3.5.1 The Seniors Housing team is changing their contact number.

3.5.2 To enable the Seniors Housing team to focus on calls more specific to their service, the Housing Customer Service team on 01273 293030 will be handling the bulk of its more 'generic' calls as at a date yet to be determined.

3.5.3 Peter distributed the draft of a letter advising Seniors Housing residents of this proposed change to the group for its input.

Group **signed-off** on the above-mentioned letter.

3.5.4 Suggestion to put Customer Service's number and the 24:7:365 Repairs Help Desk number up in all the schemes once this change has been finalised.

3.5.5 Questions

Q – Are the Customer Services reps trained to deal with seniors housing queries?

A – Yes. Many calls allegedly for Scheme Managers are actually generic issues which can be dealt with by any housing staff or are information requests.

Q – Will all the officers still have their direct lines?

A – Yes

Q – The number given for the Repairs Help Desk is a 0800 number, is there a landline number which you can dial from a mobile?

A – Yes – 01273 294409 - this will be added to the letter.

3.5.6 Peter (Huntbach) suggested that a line should also be added to the letter to the effect that repairs queries shouldn't be raised via the tenant reps but via the tenant concerned themselves as this was causing issues – although a tenant rep could provide support e.g. escorting the tenant concerned back to their flat and helping them to make the call.

This is because a tenant rep or Scheme Manager calling on someone else's behalf might not be able to answer the questions asked by repairs staff, so it is better a tenant reports problems themselves.

AGENDA ITEM 7C

- 3.5.7 Chair clarified that a senior housing resident's first port of call should be their Scheme Manager so there is no comeback on tenant reps e.g. over the weekend or after hours.
- 3.5.8 For repairs-related matters there is the 24-hour Repairs Help Desk number which is available every day, 365 days a year.
- 3.5.9 For other e.g. medical-related matters etc, Care Link is there when the Scheme Managers have clocked off. The trouble is not everyone understands that Care Link is there or how to contact/talk to Care Link i.e. that only one person can talk on the line at once. (There is a lot of information in the welcome pack to digest).
- 3.5.10 Peter: Can include a 'this is how you use the Care Link Plus system' session with proposed session on contact telephone numbers/communications and talk about the time-lag between speaking and the response received experienced when using the Care Link Plus system.
- 3.5.11 **Action:** Peter to tell his staff to invite Carelink along to their Scheme Manager meetings with residents to talk to their residents about Carelink's service.
- 3.6 The Role of the Scheme Manager
- 3.6.1 Peter has been talking to area reps as to the way forward regarding this role.
- 3.6.2 Asked the group for ideas as to how the Scheme Manager service might be 'designed' – what the key things which they, as tenant reps would like to see their Scheme Managers deliver.
- 3.6.3 Scheme Whiteboards

Scheme Managers should keep the whiteboards at their scheme as up to date as possible.

If they put 'off-site' they should give an indication as to where off-site so tenants/residents are kept informed – it's all about communication again.

A problem was highlighted where one whiteboard at one location is not enough where a scheme is big or split on two sites.

Suggestion to have another/other whiteboards on these sites as appropriate however, then the Scheme Manager has the problem of trying to keep two or more whiteboards up to date.

Need to find a more 'circulatory' way of getting the information out to residents.

Suggestion that Scheme Managers should get a newsletter out to their residents , advising them of availability, periods of anticipated upcoming leave, who might be covering for them during periods of absence etc, advising the residents in advance of what's going on. Making it a two way thing, with articles by both the Scheme Manager and the residents.

Elizabeth: Newsletter in her scheme, as well as their rep meetings with their Scheme Manager are very good.

Another problem was highlighted in the fact that the information on the whiteboards is static and dependent on the Scheme Manager updating it, which isn't always possible due to the need to respond to emergencies or being unavoidably called away (this is partly due to the staff shortages which are currently being worked on). For example times when a Scheme Manager had put their movements for the week on the whiteboard then been moved to provide cover at another scheme mid-week without having had the chance to update the board – causing confusion.

Peter: Is keen on getting electronic noticeboards which Scheme Managers can update wherever they are however, this is in the future.

Service Charges

3.6.4

Woods House – their current Scheme Manager's time is divided with another scheme. Woods House is therefore only receiving half of the Scheme Manager service residents are paying for in their service charge and residents have issued a complaint accordingly. Moreover, the residents figure that they should have a rebate on some of the service charge they have paid as they are only receiving some of the service.

A – Peter: Service charge is a flat rate throughout the city based on one scheme manager per scheme, the idea being that the charge is equal throughout the city. But the question is, *is* this fair? Charge could be 'un-pooled' i.e. separated out for each scheme but what would be liable to happen? Larger schemes would pay less *pro-rata* and smaller schemes more. This is therefore a subject up for debate. Is open to discuss this if the group wishes...

Staffing actually costs more than what the council is charging people for the service. Indeed, the council is considering increasing the service charges incrementally over three years.

3.5 Peter encouraged the group to imagine what a Scheme Manager's service to them should look like if their Scheme Manager was full-time.

Scheme Manager should pay particular attention to those residents who don't come out of their flats e.g. pay them regular visits and try to persuade them to come out of their flats e.g. to attend coffee mornings etc.

Peter: Currently Scheme Managers are supposed to pay one home visit on a resident every three months. But could we tailor this to more or fewer visits as required?

A – Chair: Consult the tenant. Give them the choice as to the frequency of Scheme Manager visits.

Peter: Or should a more informal 'door-knocking' approach be adopted?

Q – Hannah to Peter: Is arranging social activities part of the Scheme Manager's role?

A – Peter/Chair: Not to lead on or arrange necessarily but to facilitate and support them.

Action: Since time is getting on, Peter to draft the group's expectations of a Scheme Manager and circulate it for their feed-back.

4. Update from service improvement groups

4.1 None

5. Guest Room Bids

5.1 Sanders House – four each: single duvet sets, fitted single sheets and pillows, two hand-towels - £102.00. **Agreed.**

5.2 Jasmine Court – two duvet covers, one pair of curtains, one curtain pole, two pillow protectors, two mattress protectors - £110.00. **Agreed.**

6. Round Robin

6.1 Tomm: Core Group – Partner Assessment

There was conflict – Mears is not performing as well as expected.

6.2 Walter: Seniors Housing Gardening Group needs a secretary – to help sort out the finances and swap from one bank to another.

6.3 Jean (Davis): Proposed maximum period of four weeks for occupying a guest room as guest rooms were limited and others might want to use them.

A – Peter: Agreed. Guest room use is reviewed every seven days. There is currently no maximum limit on length of stay. Consequently lots of people use them as a cheap hotel.

Action: Chair will put this issue on the agenda for the next meeting (is aware of the background to this proposal).

- 6.4 Charles: advised how at tomorrow's Special Area Panel there was going to be a proposal to introduce visitor parking charges – Leach Court, Sloane Court are mentioned. Would like them to take Leach Court and Sloane Court out of this and to exclude/exempt seniors housing from this proposal.
- 6.5 Ray: Brought up an issue which was discussed at a previous S.H.A.G. meeting last year – the issue of people within one's scheme going into hospital and the other residents not being told anything about how they're doing on the grounds of 'data protection'. People at Elwyn Jones Court are 'disappearing' into hospital never to be heard of more.

Suggestion to ask the Scheme Manager to contact the person concerned and find out whether they would mind the Scheme Manager letting people know how they are doing.

A – Peter: Yes, this is a good idea and something which we will be implementing shortly.

- 6.6 Colin: Next OPC meeting is 19 May 2015, 10.15am-1pm, Jubilee Library. Topic will be July's upcoming elections. Information will be provided on the OPC's work programme for the year coming forward.
- 6.7 Ernie: Had two Estate Development main bids converted to Quick Bids at the West Area EDB area panel. Meeting was well conducted and very successful. Most got their bids agreed.

Mary: Regarding the new mixer taps which have just been put in at Muriel House. Big gadgets have been fitted under the sink – allegedly to stop people scalding themselves. But these new taps are useless and there was no consultation before they were fitted. The water comes out very slow which means it has cooled right down by the time it hits the sink and you have to wait ages for the sink to fill....So people are having to boil the kettle to get hot water and fill the bath... which means that you have older persons in seniors housing carrying around kettles of boiling water – doesn't this defeat the object?

Apparently these mixer taps were just supposed to be fitted in the bathroom but at Muriel , they were fitted in the kitchen too.

Action: Peter to get the council's water management expert, Adrian Day to visit Muriel House and look at the problem.

7. Any other business

- 7.1 Elwyn Jones Court now have a display cabinet, exhibiting residents' handiwork from Fabrica art workshops etc –it looks nice.
- 7.2 Lindfield Court – was decorated one week and the next, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers replaced but not made good/re-decorated afterwards.

Peter Huntbach: This lack of co-ordination frustrates him. He will speak to Mears to rectify the situation.

Lindfield Court – is a twinned scheme and difficult to get to via public transport. It takes their Scheme Manager 45 minutes on the bus each way to travel between the two schemes which means that effectively Lindfield Court only receives two hours of their time a day.

- 8. Next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 July 2015, 10am-12.30pm at Leach Court, Park Street, Brighton**



Minutes of meeting held Monday 13 April 2015
2pm-4pm -Hampshire Lodge, Hampshire Court, Brighton

Present: Alison Gray (Chair), Muriel Briault (West), Joe MacRae (West), Jason Williams (Central)

Officers: Susan Andrew (Adaptations Customer Support Officer), Chantel Cooper (Resident Involvement Assistant - RIA) (Minute-taker), Rebecca Mann (Resident Involvement Officer - RIO), Sarah Potter (Operations Manager, Housing Adaptations Service).

Guests: Janine Healey (Performance Manager), Liz O’Kane (Senior Welfare Rights Co-ordinator)

Observers: Ted Harman (North), Barry Kent (North), Ann Packham (West).

Apologies: Trish Barnard (Observer).

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Group welcomed guest-speakers Janine and Liz.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising
Minutes – agreed as an accurate record.

3. Welfare Benefits – guest-speaker Liz O’Kane, Senior Welfare Rights Co-ordinator.

3.1 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is ending for working age people (those aged between 16 and 64). Currently people of this age who have not claimed DLA need to claim PIP. Existing DLA claimants from June 2015 will start to be informed that their DLA is coming to an end and they need to make an application for PIP. The DLA will continue until there is a decision on the PIP claim.

3.2 From now onwards working age people need to claim Personal Independence Payments (PIP) instead.

3.3 Problem with PIP is that it takes a long time to assess – can take up to a year. And that they don’t pay anything out until they’ve fully assessed the claim. This means people could be without money for up to a year.

3.4 PIP claims are based on a *descripta* – a factual description of an individual’s condition – e.g. how independent they are (or not), how they are coping with their condition/situation (or not) and what support they have in place (or not), with points awarded accordingly – the more able a person is to cope with their situation on their own, the less money they will receive (and *vice versa*).

3.5 Applicants/claimants are advised to provide as much medical evidence as they can for their *descripta* in support of their claim.

3.6 PIP Claim Process

- Stage 1: Telephone interview.
- Stage 2: Application form - this is very long and complicated. Applicants /claimants are advised seek help completing it from either Liz’s team or the FED, Centre for Independent Living based in Montague Place (Somerset Street), Brighton.
- Medical assessment by a medical assessor (from ATOS) on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

These are conducted on an on/off basis at Hove medical centre so applicants/claimants are usually referred to Eastbourne (in which case the DWP covers the taxi fare).

In cases however, where an applicant/claimant is house-bound or whatever, the individual concerned can get their GP to write the DWP a letter, making a case for that person to be seen at home. Sometimes they ask whether the disabled person is able to go to their GP or whether the GP sees them at home.

3.7 The issue of the unacceptable delays in processing applications has been raised in Parliament. For new claims the expected time frame is 16 weeks.

3.8 The DWP will write to those affected advising them that their DLA will come to an end (even if they have an indefinite award).

3.8.1 Those whose DLA has stopped because they did not complete a renewal form have to claim PIP instead. Their benefit will stop until there is a decision about their new PIP claim.

3.9 Whether you are turned down for PIP or DLA, it is now compulsory that if you disagree with the DWP’s decision, they are obliged to reconsider it. You have 28 days to request this. Advice is that it’s best to hold out for as long as you can before this 28 day period expires for any outstanding evidence, medical or

otherwise to arrive so that you send the evidence and the request together - but they have to receive it within 28 days of the decision date.

3.9.1

If you are still not satisfied with the result, you have 28 days to appeal.

Post meeting update from Liz: This should be done on appeal form SSCS1 which can be found on gov.uk

3.10

Sarah: The Occupational Therapists found Liz coming to talk to them about these changes helpful.

3.11

Questions

Q – What impact will the May elections/ a new government have on PIP?

A – PIP will not be affected by a new government because it's already been legislated for.

Q – Is Attendance Allowance affected by this change?

A – No.

4.

Bathroom conversion project – guest-speaker Janine Healey, Performance Manager

4.1

Janine reminded the group that she had spoken to it this time last year about a twelve month pilot project the Housing Committee had agreed to as part of the Decent Homes Review to convert the bathrooms of a number of one bed ground floor flats which had become vacant to wetrooms and level access showers (LAS).

4.2

Project covered general housing stock only, not sheltered housing stock.

4.3

Eight void properties were converted as a result of the project.

4.4

The Housing Committee was pleased with pilot project and agreed for it to continue.

4.5

Q – If a property has been adapted like this and the resident moves out does the property remain converted?

A – Yes, and the property is advertised appropriately so that it is let to someone else with a matching need.

4.6

Comments

Sarah: These adaptations are pro-active 'quick-wins' which anticipate and avoid the need for future adaptation after someone has moved in.

In addition to this project there is a loft/extension project to increase the supply of larger family homes and to extend some properties where there is an overcrowding and disability need.

5. Housing Adaptions Update – Sarah Potter

5.1 Mapping Exercise

5.1.1 Group has had some input into this, identifying areas where it is most suitable to adapt council properties. This information has been shared with those managing the lettings and loft conversion work.

5.1.2 The map, showing the distribution of council housing and areas most suitable to adapt has been produced in-house, so there was no charge for it.

5.1.3 Sarah circulated hard copies of the map to the group showing properties with adaptation potential highlighted in pink.

5.1.4 Map is incomplete and still requires further work – further input is required from the group.

5.15 Sarah requested the members of the group to distribute copies of the map to their local Tenants' Associations (TAs) etc for their input and knowledge.

5.2 **Action:** Group to do this.

5.2.1 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) adaptations

5.2.2 New budget for the year is £1.150 million, same as it has been for the last three years.

5.2.3 There was an overspend of around £35k at the end of the last financial year , 2014/15 – this shows how much adaptations work was done.

5.3 Still collating the figures of how many major and minor adaptations were done over the previous financial year. Should hopefully have these available for the next meeting on 15 June.

5.4 Sarah is starting work on a written 'Adaptations Policy' and will be consulting regarding this soon.

6. Newsletter

6.1 This hasn't been done due to the Chair being very sick.

6.2 Chair is well this week so would like to get together with Ann and Barry this week to collate it before City Assembly on 16 May. (This means the draft newsletter might not come back to the group before City Assembly).

Action: Chair, Ann and Barry to organise a time when they can meet this week to collate the newsletter.

6.3 Resource Centre to deliver copies of newsletter to Housing Centre (City Assembly venue) via taxi.

7. Agenda planning for next meeting

7.1 Chair would like to invite Vicki Garcia of Brighton and Hove buses who has done a lot to make Brighton and Hove buses more disabled-friendly e.g. introducing the 'buddy card' which has often been mentioned at previous TDN meetings to come along as a guest-speaker.

Action: Chair to invite Vicki Garcia, Brighton and Hove buses to next meeting.

7.2 **Action:** Chair also to invite Diane, a blind bus user in to talk to the group about her experience on the buses.

7.3 **Action:** Chair to invite John Hastie from the FED to talk to the group about non-housing related issues which TDN members bring up from time to time at meetings e.g. lack of drop kerbs in a certain area (which is a Highways issue).

7.4 Sarah: There is a capital budget this year for improving communal accesses - believe this budget belongs to the Senior Housing Action Group/service - but could TDN feed into this with Occupational Therapy's involvement?

Action: Janine to find out who's leading on this.

7.5 Plus the usual agenda items:

- Welcome, introductions and apologies
- Minutes of the last meeting/matters arising
- Housing Adaptations update (Occupational Therapy Team)
- TDN Newsletter
- Agenda planning for next meeting
- Any other business

8. Any other business

8.1 Further to agenda item seven of the previous meeting , 'Reviewing Terms of Reference around attendance', page 8 points 7.2 and 7.6:

- Resident Involvement Officer (RIO) Hannah Barker was asked to try and recruit a deputy for East representative, Faith Matyszak who finds it difficult to attend meetings but none was to be found.
- Becca has drafted a letter to Faith Matyszak for the group to check and sign off on.

Group **signed off** on the above-mentioned letter to Faith.

Action: Becca to send Faith's letter off now group have signed off on it.

8.2 Ted: Has had his level access shower (LAS) fitted at last and is very pleased with

it. This positive feedback has been passed on to the contractors concerned.

Comment:

Sarah: This is a reflection of the benefit of involving residents in the tender evaluation process for a product/service –Alison, Chair of TDN was on the tender evaluation panel.

This is a good 'living' example of the TDN at work.

8.3 Chair /Alison: The Resident Involvement Team (RIT) has a contact list of her carers – so don't panic if she has a seizure at a meeting.

8.4 Ann: Warned the group that Brighton General Hospital is now charging for parking. Even as a blue badge holder you still need to go in and ask to park in a disabled bay. The height of the barrier there is a problem too.

Meeting closed at 3.20pm

9. Next meeting will be held on Monday 15 June 2015 between 2pm and 4pm at Hampshire Lodge, Hampshire Court, Brighton

All Housing Service Improvement Groups brief overview

Home Service Improvement Group 10 February 2015

- Elections to Estates Development Budget (EDB) Panel.
- Core Group: satisfaction surveys to new lets, benefits of cladding, multi-trade repairs review.
- Partnership Group: performance remains good. Focus on satisfaction, post inspection, repairs desk wait time, bathroom completion.
- EDB Panel: Quick Bid limit up to £750, more detail needed in bids, EDB Report went to Area Panels.
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel interviewed residents as part of study on responsive repairs.
- Goals for next 12 months: heating costs & poverty, jargon busting, resident assessors, citywide fencing program, three year investment plan.

Home Service Improvement Group 21 May 2015

- Six Resident Assessor workshops developing the programme, nearing agreement on role description & reporting process. To agree Terms of Reference next.
- Revived the Resident Action Plan to pick up any citywide service improvements.
- Core Group: staff survey reviewed, management and performance improving, customer focus is strong.
- Partnership Group: reviewed key performance indicators, customer care and overdue orders.
- Two volunteers will work with Property & Investment to produce Jargon busting information.
- Explored fuel poverty that affects 2.28M homes in the UK F. Discussed the Warm Homes discount and energy saving tips.

**Neighbourhood & Community Service Improvement Group
19 March 2015**

- Recommendations for improving services of Estate Services, City Parks, City Clean, Tenancy, and Neighbourhood Teams and follow up letters.
- Considering the difference CCTV makes to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour – cost versus benefit.
- Discussing recharges.
- Looking at ways to improve working relationship with Community Payback Team.

**Neighbourhood & Community Service Improvement Group
2 July 2015**

- Discussion around the benefits of residents growing their own food on council estates and support available from Harvest Brighton & Hove and use of the Estates Development Budget.
- New Community Payback procedure now in place following review and input from group.
- Influenced a Car Parks & Garages Review Report that has been to Area Panels.
- City Parks – Manager Richard Bradley intends to come to talk to group in response to letter sent by the group.
- Estates – welcome suggestion of working flexibly to address problem areas which might require 'one off' cleans.

**Tenancy Service Improvement Group
18 March 2015**

- Date of clean up and green up day confirmed with residents and logistics arranged by the group.
- Contributing to the review of tenancy succession letters with the Performance & Improvement Team.
- Presentation of group's work at City Assembly discussion.
- Progress work on attendance and getting new recruits to the group.

**Tenancy Service Improvement Group
5 May 2015**

- Exploring contribution group can make to the new ASB victim-centric policy.
- Clean up and green up project to end with wild flower planting on 10 May.
- Anti-Social Behaviour standards introduced as a topic for future group input.
- Allocation sub group may reconvene after the Local Election.
- Work on the new Succession to a Tenancy letter ongoing.
- Main meetings to be held bi-monthly; subgroups more frequently.

**Tenancy Service Improvement Group
9 July 2015**

- Feedback given on group's successful Planting Day on 10 May.
- Reviewed the draft updated Tenancy Handbook.
- Discussion about forming a focus group to update the Succession to a Tenancy letter.
- Looked at the new enhanced Service Standards for tenancy enforcement – the level of service victims and witnesses can expect to receive from the council with regard to anti-social behaviour
- Group to provide feedback on the new service standards.

**Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group
2 April 2015**

- Reviewed and agreed group's aims and objectives for 2015/2016.
- Reviewed and agreed the group's business plan for the year ahead.
- Worked on draft "menu of involvement" leaflet.
- Received update on revision of resident representative handbook and recruitment of resident sub-group to work on this.

- Agreed associations and Area Panels to gather calendar of community events to advertise resident involvement at.
- Agreed resident involvement information pack to include success stories.
- Agreed to advertise resident involvement success stories more widely.
- Planning in place for May's City Assembly.

**Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group
6 June 2015**

- Reviewed new draft resident involvement leaflet and suggested improvements
- Discussed key areas of first draft of resident involvement handbook.
- Went through calendar of community events including the play bus service
- Fed back initial thoughts about the City Assembly.
- Looked at the Resident Involvement Budget that is the same as last year.

**Business & Value for Money Service Improvement Group
8 April 2015**

- Living Our Vales Everyday – discussed how Resident Involvement was working.
- Group asked what Annual Reports they would like to review this year.
- Reviewed the Council's Performance Report.
- Agreed to incorporate the Housing Income Management Sub-Committee.
- Reviewed the Everyone Counts Action Plan for Resident Involvement.
- Looked at the cost of Resident Involvement compared to similar Local Authorities.
- Approved an article promoting newsletters for Homing In.

New homes for neighbourhoods Update



July 2015

Brighton & Hove City Council's New Homes for Neighbourhoods Programme is building much needed new council homes on council owned land and improving council estates and neighbourhoods. We are aiming to build at least 500 new council homes across Brighton & Hove.

Two new council homes will be completed at the end of July and constructors are on site to build another 72 new council homes at five locations across the city. Five further homes have received planning consent and a planning application has been submitted for 58 more.

All will be let at affordable rents within Housing Benefit limits through the council's choice based lettings scheme, Homemove.

The council's Estate Regeneration Team works with local residents and ward councillors to improve their neighbourhoods and make best use of council housing land and buildings to help meet the city's housing needs. We update and consult resident associations and local ward councillors directly about development of new homes in their area. We consult wider residents before putting in a planning application.

The team are working with council architects, housing and many other council teams and partners to deliver the programme of new council homes as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Preston Road – 2 new wheelchair accessible family bungalows



Two new wheelchair accessible three bedroom family bungalows are on target to be completed at the end of July. They are built on the site of former temporary accommodation prefabs which were no longer fit for use.

The bungalows are now being allocated through Homemove.

Former Manor Place office – 15 new flats at Robert Lodge

Foundations for the first block of nine new flats have been laid on the site of the old prefab Manor Place Housing Office and work has started on the new concrete structure. This addition to Robert Lodge should be finished in early 2016. The second block of six flats won't be started until the first block has been completed.



Initial works to the communal garden are now finished and it has been handed back to Robert Lodge residents who recently enjoyed a summer BBQ there.

12 new family houses in Portslade and Hangleton

Work has started on three former garage sites at Foredown Road and Flint Close, Portslade and Hardwick Road, Hangleton where 12 two and three bedroom houses, including a wheelchair accessible home, will be built.

The Guinness Trust, the council's development agent for these three schemes, has been talking to local residents to ensure the construction goes as smoothly as possible. We expect the completed homes to be handed over to the council and ready for letting in the first half of 2016.

Brooke Mead – 45 extra care flats

Hoardings have also gone up around the Brooke Mead former temporary accommodation block in Albion Street where a new extra care scheme is to be built. The gas and water mains are being diverted before the existing building is demolished in September. Completion of the new homes is expected by summer 2017.



The council successfully bid for £2.4 million in government grant to help pay for this scheme of 45 flats with community facilities. We are working closely with Adult Social Care to make sure it will meet the needs of future tenants and holding regular meetings with local residents and businesses and Albion Hill Residents' Association.

Ardingly Street car parking site – 5 new homes in Kemp Town

The council's corporate strategic construction partnership is preparing to start works in early autumn on five new one and two bedroom council homes in Ardingly Street, Kemp Town, including a two bedroom wheelchair accessible flat. Users of the 13 car parking spaces on the current site have all been relocated to other spaces nearby.

As well as the local resident association, residents and businesses, we are also keeping St. James's Community Association Group (LAT) updated.

Findon Road, Whitehawk – 58 new flats on former library site



The council's Housing and Policy and Resources Committees have agreed proposals for 58 new homes, including ground floor flats designed for households with wheelchair users, on the former Whitehawk Library site. A planning application has been submitted.

Residents' comments on community issues which came out of the 'Planning for Real' consultation event we organised

in Whitehawk in March have now been analysed and prioritised and Due East Neighbourhood Council is developing these into an action plan.

Design Competition for small sites

There has been a tremendous response to our design competition with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) for former or underused car parking sites on council housing land at Hinton Close, Rotherfield Crescent and Natal Road and a small council owned commercial parking site in Frederick Street, all in Brighton.

A technical panel will now whittle down architects' initial proposals to five designs for each site, on which local residents around the sites will then be consulted. The winning designs will be announced in December.

Kensington Street car parking site – 12 new homes in the North Laine



Design of 12 flats and houses on three small, constrained sites in Kensington Street in the North Laine is progressing.

This follows successful consultation with local residents and businesses earlier this year.

Former Selsfield Drive Housing Office

The council architect who will be developing the initial design for 20 flats on the site of the former Selsfield Drive Housing Office on Lewes Road will meet with the Bates Estate Residents Association in September to discuss the proposals and get their input.

For more information

There's more information on the New Homes for Neighbourhoods council webpage at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/nhfn, including regular updates on individual schemes and links to planning documents.

You can contact the Estate Regeneration Team by:

Email: estate.regeneration@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Phone: 01273 290591

Post: Estate Regeneration Team, Brighton & Hove City Council, Room 506,
Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2SR



Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes

Latest Information – 14th July 2015

Since Seaside Homes went live in November 2011, we have leased and refurbished a total of 416 properties and the partnership has now generated just over £21.5 m for the HRA to continue the decent homes work.

All 416 Seaside properties are now complete and tenanted.

Property Details

Property Type	Batch 1 1 st Nov 2011	Batch 2 1 st Feb 2012	Batch 3 30 th Mar 2012	Batch 4 1 st Jun 2012	Batch 5 1 st Aug 2012	Batch 6 1 st Oct 2012	Batch 7 27 th Mar 2013	Batch 8 17 th Mar 2014	Batch 9 1 st Sep 2015	Total
Studio	5	1	5	3	6	8	11	4		43
1 Bedroom	19	21	20	12	27	23	32	29		183
2 Bedroom	20	17	12	18	16	18	13	27		141
3 Bedroom	14	9	3	2	6	3	2	5		44
4 Bedroom	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0		5
Total Properties	61	48	41	35	56	52	58	65		416

The transfer of batch 9 is scheduled to take place on the 1st of September 2015. Original batching projections indicate that this batch should consist of 48 un-refurbished properties.

However, we have been advised that a number of the properties may have already undergone refurbishment prior to transfer. Final batch numbers will not be known until the end of July 2015.

The following tables provide a breakdown of the number of refurbished and un-refurbished properties received in each batch and progress made on refurbishment works.

Table 1	Refurbished Properties	Un-refurbished Properties
Batch 1	44	17
Batch 2	8	40
Batch 3	0	41
Batch 4	0	35
Batch 5	3	53
Batch 6	0	52
Batch 7	2	56
Batch 8	43	22
Batch 9	TBC	TBC
Total	100	316

Table 1 - the breakdown of properties leased to date:

At the time of handover Seaside Homes receives a mix of properties some of which have already undergone refurbishment and are ready to be tenanted and others for which refurbishment is about to commence.

Refurbishment – Progress to date:

Table 2	Refurbishment Works COMPLETED	Refurbishment Works Incomplete
Batch 1	17	0
Batch 2	40	0
Batch 3	41	0
Batch 4	35	0
Batch 5	53	0
Batch 6	52	0
Batch 7	56	0
Batch 8	22	0
Batch 9	TBC	TBC
Total	316	0

Table 2 – 316 properties were transferred to Seaside as un-refurbished.