



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# Housing Management Panel

Title:	<b>Housing Management Panel: North Area</b>
Date:	<b>4 February 2016</b>
Time:	<b>7.00pm</b>
Venue	<b>St Georges Hall, Newick Road, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, BN1 9JJ</b>
Members:	<b>Councillors:</b>  Hill (Chair); <b>Ward Councillors for the Area, Delegates of Tenants Association in the area.</b>
Contact:	<b>Gregory Weaver</b> Democratic Services Assistant 01273 29-1214 greg.weaver@brighton-hove.gov.uk



**AGENDA**

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<b>34 REVIEW REPORT</b> (copy attached).	<b>51 - 52</b>
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**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA**

**7.00pm 10 DECEMBER 2015**

**LABURNUM GROVE, GROUND FLOOR LOUNGE, BURSTEAD CLOSE,  
BRIGHTON, BN1 7HX**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Hill, Meadows, Yates.

**Representatives:** Dave Eve (Nettleton & Dudeney), Peter O'Connor (Bates Estate), Heather Hayes (Coldean), Bob Spacie (Laburnum Grove), Tracey Cox (North Moulsecoomb), John Marchant (East Central Moulsecoomb)

**Non-Voting Delegates:** Paul Wright (Coldean), Jay Simmonds (Coldean), Terrence Hill (Bates Estate), Joanne Hills (Laburnum Grove), Mary Marchant (North Moulsecoomb), Ray Metcalf (East Central Moulsecoomb)

**Officers:** Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Keely McDonald (Resident Involvement Officer), Ododo Dafe (Head of Income, Involvement and Inclusion), Nick Kitson (Performance and Improvement Officer), Rachel Chasseaud (Head of Tenancy Services)

**Guests:**

**16 APOLOGIES**

16.1 Apologies from Barbara Castleton, North Castleton.

**17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

17.1 Tracey Hill questioned offer of possible walk around in Hove at 12.9

17.2 Rachel Chasseaud stated that her offer to join panel member on a walk still stands.

17.2 12.8 that the word read 'contacts' not 'contracts'.

**18 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

18.1 Chair gave brief statement on recently deceased panel member.

18.2 A Minutes silence was observed.

18.3 Councillor Meadows stated that recently, 2 landlords of HMO's have been fined for trying to avoid being licensed. She noted that this was good news for

BHCC as it showed it was cracking down on Landlords operating illegally in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean.

- 18.4 John Marchant enquired as to how many cases have been reported
- 18.5 Councillor Meadows clarified that there are 48 currently being investigated however it will take time due to the legal process.

## **19 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME**

- 19.1 (Item 1 – Scaffolding)
- 19.2 Heather Hayes stated that she there has been scaffolding up by her area for 24 weeks now, she noted various concerns regarding work still outstanding.
- 19.3 John Marchant confirmed similar cases have been ongoing for years. Stated that issues will not be rectified unless reported.
- 19.4 Cllr Tracey Hill, Chair, agreed and suggested keeping this on the agenda through meetings.
- 19.5 Anne Meadows stated BHCC's monitoring of the Mears contract is strict and will continue to be scrutinised closely.
- 19.6 Panel agreed to revisit issue in 1 year.
- 19.7 (Item 2 – Porous brickwork on houses in Coldean)
- 19.8 Heather Hayes stated that BHCC must invest in properties as damp is being accrued due to the quality of materials previously utilised.
- 19.9 The chair stated that some are leaseholder property and need to go through consultation first.
- 19.20 HH stated that legal ought to expedite the process.
- 19.21 Councillor Meadows stated that Mears will be in a better position to take this on once consultation with leaseholders have taken place.
- 19.22 Councillor Yates stated consultation should begin earlier if section 20 is holding the process up. He noted that the Leaseholder action group want longer consultation times.
- 19.23 Councillor Meadows stated the entire program of works has been planned in; this can be assessed to identify priorities.
- 19.24 Bob Spacie stated that Mears promised this 6 months ago.
- 19.25 Councillor Meadows stated she will help to enforce it.

- 19.26 (Item 3 – Travellers in Wild Park)
- 19.27 Tracey Cox stated that bollards cannot be effective as a caravan has taken residence in the park. She
- 19.28 The chair stated that this meeting is for housing issues and clarified that concerned parties should liaise with City Parks.
- 19.29 Bob Spacie enquired if it would be possible to invite City Parks officers to future meetings.
- 19.30 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement, stated that area panels have invited members of City Park in the past however officers commented it was difficult to attend many meetings.
- 19.31 Rachel Chasseud stated that this issue was discussed 10 days ago with Robert Walker.
- 19.32 Ray Metcalf enquired if the café owner is being invited
- 19.33 Rachel Chasseud stated that a meeting has taken place with the café owner and the police.
- 19.34 Chair stated that this issue should be taken to City Parks.
- 19.35 (Item 4 - Replacement bulbs in kitchen and bathrooms)
- 19.36 Councillor Yates stated the issue was that bulbs were expensive; as a result light fittings were chosen.
- 19.37 Bob Spacie stated this has been discussed before at Service Improvement Group Meetings and that light fittings were concluded as the most effective way of lighting.
- 19.38 (Item 5 – Cleaning of road gutters)
- 19.39 Chair stated this has been passed on to City Clean.
- 19.40 (Item 6 – Litter bin on Barkham road)
- 19.41 Chair stated this has been passed on to the City Clean Association and shall get a response from them in due course.
- 19.42 (Item 7 – Grass cuttings)
- 19.43 Chair stated that this will go back to groups for discussion.
- 19.44 (Item 8 – Contacting neighbourhood officers)
- 19.45 Dave Eve stated this has been resolved and remedied.

19.46 (Item 9 – Code of Conduct)

19.47 Becky Purnell confirmed that this is an agenda item.

19.48 (Item 10 – Stage 2 complaints)

19.49 Bob Spacie stated almost a year has been spent on stage 1-2 complaints.

19.50 Councillor Meadows stated she cannot get involved once it has entered the legal stage.

## **20 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

20.1 Ododo Dafe gave a brief overview and presented the report noting customer satisfaction in terms of survey response is very good. She stated that there was an issue regarding internal referred calls creating issues as calls are bound out, as a result the figures will look different next quarter.

20.2 Councillor Yates stated that the number of tenants on 4.0.2 on page 29 doesn't add up to total of all number above it.

20.3 Ododo Dafe apologised for the error.

20.4 **RESOLVED** – That the panel agreed to note the report.

## **21 MUTUAL EXCHANGE INCENTIVE SCHEME PROPOSAL**

21.1 Nick Kitson presented the report stating that other Council's such as Harlow and Cambridge have been cross referenced and found that there were positives such as financial benefits and a quick changeover if agreed by committee. He noted that money was set aside this financial year and that it is already available.

21.2 Dave Eve stated the financial incentive is large.

21.3 Tracey Cox stated there were elderly tenants in the area residing in 4 bed houses who have been told they cannot downsize to 2 bed.

21.4 Nick Kitson stated that it will not be a black and white issue. He noted that for the moment this is the best medium while acknowledging the hard decisions needed to be made.

21.5 Terence Hill highlighted a typo regarding the date which referred to 2016.

21.6 Nick Kitson acknowledged and apologised for this mistake.

21.7 **RESOLVED** – That the panel agreed to note the report.

## **22 WELFARE REFORM CHANGES**

- 22.1 Ododo Dafe presented the report on Welfare Reform Changes stating that universal credit will be introduced next month and that it is likely to initially have a significant impact on a small number of people. She noted that Universal credit will now only be available to people over 21.
- 22.2 Heather Hayes stated computer illiteracy will be a problem. She enquired if BHCC will begin a specialist team to tackle this large issue.
- 22.3 Ododo Dafe stated that some people with specific disabilities can be exempt also some officers are involved in a project to look at getting volunteers to help others. She noted that there are more disadvantages to not being able to use the internet.
- 22.4 Rachel Chasseaud stated that there is free internet access at libraries around Brighton and Hove.
- 22.5 Tracey Cox in terms of online literacy, libraries are going to be at full capacity. She enquired how this is going to work.
- 22.6 Councillor Meadows stated that there are ongoing efforts to assess the impact on tenants and to create a policy for the future designed to enable them to live a life where they can be supported.
- 22.7 Peter O'Connor stated that many people will be a week in arrears rent by no fault of their own.
- 22.8 Ododo Dafe stated that as universal credit comes in, single jobseekers will be first. She noted in regards to free internet access; an effort via secured funding to provide more training hours at places like the Whitehawk inn, the Bridge, Hangleton and Knoll Centre and other areas is being undertaken.
- 22.9 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## **23 MODEL CONSTITUTION**

- 23.1 Becky Purnell presented the report. She noted that the West Area Panel moved to change the work to, 'genuine' on the last line on page 65.
- 23.2 Terence Hill stated that this has been update 5 times though the Resident Involvement Officers team, he noted that they have been very helpful.
- 23.3 Members agreed to this request.

## **24 REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

- 24.1 Becky Purnell enquired if area panels would like someone elected or volunteered to meet with herself and other representative from other area panels to discuss and create a report for the next June area panels.

24.2 Terence Hill and Bob Spacie elected to engage with Resident Involvement Manager for new report.

24.3 **RESOLVED** – that the report is noted.

**25 CITY WIDE REPORTS**

25.1 **AGREED** – to note the report.

**26 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

26.1 Panel raised concern around BHCC effort to be cost effective in its response to tackle legionella at ponds, stated that they can reduce the price from £2000 to £450. Panel noted that Council prices are excessive.

The meeting concluded at 21:00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

Items from the Tenant Only meeting held on 14/12/2015

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**1. Setting start and end dates for repairs and improvements**

The Residents meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> August put forward the following proposal to the Area Panel:

*“Following any commitment made at an Area Panel meeting to carry out work, officers will report back to the chairs of the Residents Meeting within 4 weeks (20 working days) to advise them of the date when the work will commence. If the chairs do not receive a response within 4 weeks (20 working days) they will decide on how best to follow up the issue, and this may involve them initiating a formal complaint.”*

The meeting felt that this still isn't happening, and reports to the Area Panel do not include clear information about when work will be done.

**Action: \*\*\***

**It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and request that clear timetables be attached to all commitments of work to be done.**

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**Response from Theresa Youngman, Contracts Compliance Manager,  
Tel:- 01273 293190**

We would like to thank the panel for this feedback. We will ensure that we provide clear timetables and as much detail as we can when providing information to the panels in relation to repairs.

Timescales for individual projects can be subject to change depending on need, priority and the overall programme of works across the city. The majority of city wide projects are also subject to statutory leaseholder consultation process and the council is obliged to have full regard to any leaseholder observations before we issue an order and confirm a start date for work.

Finally we would encourage any residents that are concerned about repairs to contact the repairs helpdesk who will be able to provide specific detail about any outstanding repairs. The process for resident representatives for making repairs enquiries is below.

## **Working together to resolve repair and maintenance issues - process for resident representatives**

We know that if you are dealing with a repair problem that you want to get it resolved as quickly as possible.

The process below will help you do that by ensuring you contact the right team at the right time.

1. **Contact the repair help desk: [BHCC.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk](mailto:BHCC.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk) or call 0800 052 6140 or call 01273 294409 from a mobile.** In the first instance always contact the repair desk to try and resolve the matter. Please ensure that you've as much information as possible and that you have permission from the tenant you're representing.
2. **Contact the Property & Investment team: [P&Ienquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:P&Ienquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or call 01273 293427.** If you have done this and are still not satisfied then call the Property & Investment Team who will log your enquiry and respond within five days. If the problem is a policy issue then it will also be added to the Resident Action Plan, which is overseen by the Home Service Improvement Group.
3. **Contact the Customer Feedback Team: [customerfeedback@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:customerfeedback@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or call 01273 291229.** If you are still not satisfied then contact the Standards & Complaints Team and log an official complaint.

## 2. Scaffolding

*The meeting felt that scaffolding being left up for extended periods of time is still a problem that hasn't been fully resolved with Mears review of procedures or the existence of the Responsive Scaffold Team.*

*The example of 122 Birdham Road was given, where the scaffolding was put up on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, and the actual repair work is scheduled to start on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015.*

*Action: \*\*\**

**The meeting agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and request the following information:**

- a. **What information is held about the number of weeks scaffolding is kept up beyond the time it is required?**  
*(As there is a legal duty to inspect scaffolding every 7 days and record these inspections, the residents felt that this is information that should be held by Mears)*
- b. **What are the contractual obligations that Mears are obliged to fulfil?**  
*(Residents would like to view the exact wording in the contract)*
- c. **What are the new procedures that Mears have put into place?**  
*(Residents would like to view the procedure)*
- d. **What action is Mears taking to enforce these contractual obligations and procedures with all of their sub-contractors?**

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- a. *What information is held about the number of weeks scaffolding is kept up beyond the time it is required?*  
*(As there is a legal duty to inspect scaffolding every 7 days and record these inspections, the residents felt that this is information that should be held by Mears)*

**Response from Keith Dadswell, Interim Repairs Manager, Mears,  
Tel:- 07899 862211**

Mears have a comprehensive scaffold register which is held by the responsive repairs team. The register tracks any scaffold works from the notified request date until the scaffolding is removed. It monitors in full the following information:

- Request date
- Erection date
- Handover date
- Actual works date
- 7 day inspection dates
- Works post inspection date
- Strike date
- Any issues arising

It is worth noting that there are sometimes mitigating circumstances that can affect the time scaffold is up for. For instance scaffold may need to stay up for works to be post inspected and be kept up pending the results of the post inspection, scaffold

may stay up to be used for other repairs identified, also due to Health and Safety reasons scaffold cannot be struck in adverse weather which may cause a delay in some cases.

The example noted was a complex repair that ultimately meant removing the chimney from the property. Structural changes to the property can be complex and a number of tests and checks were required in this case which meant that the scaffold was up for an extended period.

However the actions detailed in the answer should improve the timeliness in the future. The rear scaffold was recently removed following the completion of this work. There are still some repairs to be completed to the front of the property so that scaffold is still up.

*b . What are the contractual obligations that Mears are obliged to fulfil?  
(Residents would like to view the exact wording in the contract)*

**Response from Glyn Huelin, Partnering & Performance Manager,  
Tel:- 01273 293306**

The exact wording on the contract is as follows:

Any scaffolding should be erected and dismantled only by firms that are members of the National Association of Scaffolding Contractors. Mobile towers are to be used in accordance with the PASMA Code of Practice. All scaffold and access systems (including ladders) shall comply with:

- a) The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- b) The relevant sections of CP97 Part 2 and BS 5976/4.
- c) The Work at Height Regulations 2005 and any other statutory requirements appertaining at the time.

The requirements of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 will apply in respect of all hoists and other lifting operations/equipment.

*c . What are the new procedures that Mears have put into place?  
(Residents would like to view the procedure)*

**Response from Keith Dadswell, Interim Repairs Manager, Mears**

Mears have introduced a new scaffold register (as described in item a above). This is a local document which is monitored daily. Contractors are prompted for start dates and these are updated on the repairs system (MCM).

Communications have been greatly improved and Mears are working not only with the scaffold contractors but also with the council's Property & Investment Team to reduce turnaround time. Mears have also mobilised directly employed roofing teams to improve the current situation.

*d . What action is Mears taking to enforce these contractual obligations and procedures with all of their sub-contractors?*

## **Response from Keith Dadswell, Interim Repairs Manager, Mears**

We have been reviewing our scaffold contractors' performance and working practices. We hold regular Performance Review meetings with contractors. We have a dedicated Responsive scaffold team which has improved communication with the council, customer and contractors.

The team has also invested in other access equipment options and training courses to enable repairs to be carried via mobile towers where possible to minimise the amount of scaffold being erected.

### **3. Mears compliance with contract**

*Mears have not attended the last two Area Panel meetings. When they were awarded the contract they made a clear commitment to attend residents meetings and this seems to have dropped off.*

*It was also felt that Mears take longer than they should to complete repairs. For example, a property in Goodwood Way reported plastering work that needed to be done to the back of the house on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015. The tenant was given an appointment for 13<sup>th</sup> October. The property has been inspected several times, but the work still has not been completed.*

**Action: \*\***

***The meeting agreed that this should be raised at the Area Panel, and information is requested on how Mears' compliance with their contract is being monitored, and what action is being taken when they are non-compliant.***

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**Response from Delia Hills, Resident Liaison Manager, Mears,  
Tel: – 01273 574354**

Mears attend all Area Panels.

Mears attended all four Area Panels in September and three of the four Area Panels in December, as unfortunately they were not advised of the meeting date change of the North Area Panel in December.

Delia Hills, Mears Resident Liaison Manager attended on the 28 September 2015 and took four queries for further investigation.

Please find below the queries and investigation responses emailed to Democratic Services on 1 December 2015 that were distributed at the North Area Panel in December.

1. *18 Twyford Road – window installation delayed due to large cracks in property.*

The windows are now installed, (job number 9440368).

2. *15 Haig Avenue – windows not installed*

The windows were installed and post inspected on 27 May, (job number 9430529). Delia called tenant after Area Panel to ask if he had any issues with the windows and he did not.

3. *65 Newick Road – what is the partnership approach to the subsidence in her home since Ken Warren & Paul Diplock have left.*

Nigel French, (BHCC Building Surveyor), and Graham Biddlecombe, (Mears Surveyor) are now overseeing this.

4. *EDB Fencing – we are required to submit fencing lists in November so pricing, property checks etc can be carried out in time to start fencing in April each year. In this area the fencing has not started to date, why?*

Mears received 87 fencing jobs through the EDB this year and upon approval we published a programme guide for the whole of EDB. Although every effort is made to stick to the EDB fencing programme Mears also manage and deliver a fencing and boundaries budget for Brighton & Hove City Council. This work is in response to health and safety and vulnerability issues and these jobs take priority over the EDB fencing programme (which has to be delivered in the financial year).

It is not possible to give a response regarding the work at Goodwood Way as the number of the property has not been given. Rather than wait for the Blue Pages the process for resident representatives for making repairs enquiries is given in response one of these Blue Pages.

#### **4. Review of Resident Involvement Officers**

*The meeting discussed the Resident Involvement Officers and the possibility that the service could be affected by budget cuts.*

**Action: \*\***

***It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and to ask what proposals are currently being considered.***

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**Response from Ododo Dafe, Head of Income, Inclusion & Improvement,  
Tel:- 01273 293201**

Thank you for enquiry. The review being planned is not simply a review of Resident Involvement Officers, but a review of our resident involvement service.

It will cover all aspects of resident involvement, and there will be more information coming to all Area Panels, including this January meetings' agenda and again an update in June. The information will be about the purpose and scope and the review, the various ways that feedback will be sought from a range of tenants and staff, and the expected timetable for consulting, conducting and reporting back to residents as well as to staff.

## **5. Estate Development Budget (EDB)**

*There was concern that officers are trying to control the bids that residents put forward for EDB money, and are over-riding bids that residents have discussed and voted on.*

*Two examples were given.*

- a . *In Laburnum Grove residents wanted to bid for a disused cupboard next to the guest room be converted into a shower room, with a door being knocked through so that it would be 'en suite'.*

*Council officers had separately decided that they want to use the cupboard for something else and tried to get the Residents Association to change their bid, for a shower room to be fitted inside the existing guest room.*

- b . *In Nettleton and Dudeney the Residents Association had discussed and voted on a bid for new entrance doors to the blocks. They were advised that they wouldn't get it and should bid for something smaller, like some benches.*

*The meeting felt that the EDB panel is responsible for making decisions and that officers should not be able to vet them in advance.*

**Action: \*\*\***

***It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and request clarification on residents' right to put forward EDB bids of their own choosing.***

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### **Response from Martin Reid, Head of Service, Tel: – 01273 290507**

a. The EDB budget has always been a resident led budget where tenant representatives can bid for items or work to improve the community and estates across the city. In the majority of cases EDB bids are approved and can go ahead without any intervention. However, there are some situations where the work requested may not be feasible. They are as follows:

- If a bid changes or alters the structure of the building
- Where the bid has any health and safety implications
- Where a bid requires future ongoing maintenance or repairs for which the council will then require a budget to sustain
- Where leaseholders are required to contribute towards work but replacement is not necessary
- The work does not represent value for money

In these instances the council can and should advise that this is not the best way forward and were possible we should be able to give an alternative.

### **Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, Tel:- 01273 293022**

a. The bid for converting the cupboard at Laburnum Grove has been submitted for feasibility and it is possible to install a shower in the guest room.

b. The EDB form for two new doors has been submitted as the association's number one and two priorities.

In March last year the Housing Committee agreed to the recommendation that all replacement front and rear doors to blocks need to be multi steel and security accredited. The feedback from the Mechanical & Electrical Team is that sliding doors do not meet the agreed specification.

The Resident Involvement Officer may have attempted to explain this, in order for the association to have a bid (or bids) that are more likely to be agreed. A report regarding doors will be going to the April Area Panels.

## **6. Charges to tenants – pricing policy**

*There is concern that tenants are being charged for things in with their rents at a far higher price than necessary.*

*Laburnum Grove has recently had a filter fitted to their water feature. The council officer calculated a charge of 33p per tenant per week, which would give a revenue of £1000. However, the Residents' Association arranged to have the work done with the same contractor for £450.*

*The council officer calculated that there should be an ongoing charge of 8p per tenant per week to cover the maintenance fees for the water feature, which would give a revenue of £200/year, but the Residents' Association was able to arrange for a maintenance contract with the same contractor for £50/year.*

*It was felt that council officers are failing to get value for money for the tenants.*

**Action: \*\***

***It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel and to ask what procedures are followed when work is carried out that has to be charged back to tenants through their rents.***

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## **Response from Adrian Day, Building Services Engineer, Tel:- 01273 293453**

Brighton & Hove City Council initially received a survey and quotes from the company the residents' association instructed to carry out the work, but the council has concerns regarding their competences.

The council are still waiting for the residents' association to return the maintenance regime of their contractors as well as the installation certification. To date this has not been supplied and without this documentation the council may withdraw the agreement with the association around the water feature. The specification and maintenance details given by the association above may not include all the necessary requirements which are:

- A new power supply
- A power upgrade to the pump
- Electrical PAT Testing to the supply
- The original power supply (RCD) will also need to be tested periodically
- The service regime required is two visits a year which includes the service of the equipment, and the draining and cleaning of the pond. (This would need to be signed off by a BHCC Officer)

The specification, service and compliance regime which was put forward to the Residents' Association was of a high quality. The council considers we have done everything we can to ensure the safety of the tenants and the public while demonstrating value for money with a specification that is required and manageable. We are unsure whether the contractors the tenants have chosen will give us these assurances. Please supply all documents required by 12 February 2016.

## **7. Competitive tendering for EDB work**

*All EDB work is done by Mears and no other contractors are asked to quote for this. This enables Mears to over quote and means that residents do not get value for money.*

**Action: \*\***

***It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel with the proposal that more than one bid be requested for EDB work.***

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**Response from Theresa Youngman, Contract Compliance Manager,  
Tel:– 01273 293190**

All EDB work is done by Mears as the council is in a long term partnering arrangement with them for the repairs and improvements contract, and this extends to EDB work. Using Mears as the delivery vehicle means that we can carry out the works at a rate that can demonstrate value for money and efficiency. Through long term procurement and mobilisation arrangements around major works we can pass on significant savings on all areas of work including EDB.

## **8. Washing machines**

*The current 5 year contract for washing machines is due to end. There is a proposal for all the machines to be switched to a card payment system and for charges to increase. The meeting felt that a card payment system would not be suitable for a lot of elderly residents who may find it confusing.*

*A consultation is being carried out on this, but it was felt that residents are being told what will happen rather than being genuinely consulted.*

**Action: \*\***

***It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel with a proposal that the switch to a card payment system and the price increase be reconsidered.***

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**Response from Robert Nayan, Projects Manager, Contract Compliance Team,  
Tel:- 01273 293021**

The face-to-face consultation on the laundries contract and the proposed changes is now complete. The feedback and responses are currently being collated and analysed. In addition Housing will be sending out a paper survey to all residents in seniors housing later this month. Residents were informed of this survey at all the laundry meetings.

There have been meetings with residents of all 22 senior housing schemes covered by the contract. At each meeting we explained that the letter received in advance of the meeting was a consultation letter (not a decision letter). The meetings were a follow-up to discuss the changes and to gain residents' feedback and suggestions. Residents were assured that no decision had been made on the future of the service and would not be made until they were fully consulted and informed.

In all cases, residents discussed and advised us what they believed the future of the service should be. In some cases residents conducted their own "indicative votes" to decide which way they wanted the service to go, (either pay as you go, **or**, an increase in the service charge). Other residents had already got together and agreed what they wanted prior to the meeting. SHAG requested representation on the procurement panel and nominated the chairman of SHAG to represent them at all stages of the process. This has been agreed.

The intention was to conduct an honest and genuine open consultation with residents and this is what we believe we have achieved. Residents openly gave us their views and they were appreciative we had taken the time to visit them to explain what the options are. The interactions and feedback that we have received from the meetings and SHAG has been fed back to the Housing Leadership Team for a decision.

We appreciate your further comments and will ensure that it informs future consultations on any similar projects.

## **Three Star items from the Central Tenant Only meeting held on 03/12/15**

### **1. Homing In**

*It was agreed that Homing In is a valuable publication, and that it is important to continue communication with residents through printed material. The magazine encourages community involvement and activity as well as providing information and contacts.*

*It was agreed that the impact of Homing In would be increased by widening the circulation, and insuring that all residents and leaseholders receive copies, not just tenants.*

*This reflects the fact that everyone living in the area is part of the Residents' Association, and will contribute to community cohesion.*

*There was concern that the lead officer on Homing In has recently left the council, that the number of communication officers is down from eight to four and that the Council may not have a strong commitment to continuing Homing In.*

*It was agreed to raise these concerns about the future of Homing In on the Blue Pages for the next Area Panel meeting.*

**Action: for Blue Pages \*\*\***

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### **Response from Ododo Dafe Head, of Income, Inclusion and Improvement, Tel:- 01273 293201**

Many thanks to the Central Area Panel representatives for raising your concerns, which are likely to be shared by others.

I would like to offer a certain level of reassurance to the Panels that Housing staff also value Homing In as a very useful vehicle for communications between the service and tenants, and have not considered withdrawing it. That said, the reduced level of staffing in the Corporate Communications Team, the need for Housing to ensure it achieves value for money in all aspects of its service, and the impending review of resident involvement means that this is really an opportune time to review what Homing In should or could look like in the future, and what it can offer residents.

Without prejudging the outcome of such a review, although we would certainly like to see its readership increase, I regret that there can currently be no promises about extending its circulation. However, new or varied circulation methods might enable Homing In to become more accessible to more people. Some people might be happy, willing and able to receive and view the publication online, and this could improve circulation as well as readership.

Housing staff are very keen to hear the widest range of views on these matters, to keep an open mind, and to take soundings from other organisations that produce similar tenant publications. We are also extremely heartened that at least one tenant representative with previous experience in this field is keen to work collaboratively

with us to look at how we can improve upon our current printing and circulation methods and cost.

## 2. Spacing of Resident Only meetings

*It was noted that the Resident Only meetings are very unevenly spread over the year. There is a particularly short gap between the October and December meeting. The meetings are timed to lead into Housing Committee meetings. It is recommended that this timetable is looked at with the aim of establishing more regular intervals between the four Resident only meetings held in a year.*

**Action: for Blue Pages \*\*\***

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**Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager,  
Tel:- 01273 293022**

The Housing and New Homes Committee meeting dates are set to tie in with the meetings cycle of the Policy and Resources Committee and Full Council and cannot be changed. As stated the Area Panel (AP) meetings are also timed to lead into these meetings.

End of July AP	September Committee
Mid Sept AP	November Committee
Start of Dec AP	January Committee
End of Jan AP	March Committee

There are five Housing and New Homes Committee meetings a year and an option could be replacing the January Area Panel with a meeting in March.

End of July AP	September Committee
Mid Sept AP	November Committee
Start of Dec AP	January or March Committee
March AP	June Committee

A March Area Panel would be close to the April Estates Development Budget Area Panels which don't have Resident Only meetings.

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Housing Asset Management Strategy  
2016-2020 FINAL DRAFT (v2.7)

*Investing in safe, well  
managed homes for  
all our residents*



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## Executive Summary

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Strategy is the key to ensuring that we align our assets with the current and future needs of residents. As such, it aligns directly with the City's Housing Strategy 2015, which was developed in collaboration, and sets out the detailed housing challenges affecting the City. It has 3 key priorities: improving Housing Supply, Improving Housing Quality and Improving Housing Support.

This new Asset Management Strategy acknowledges that there are a number of challenges in meeting these priorities, such as rental, welfare and housing policy reforms, demographic changes, changing customer expectations, the constraint of the borrowing cap, and ensuring we utilise assets in the most effective way. By consulting, and continually working closely with our customers, staff and other key stakeholders, the aim is to strike the optimum balance between investing in existing stock and creating new homes.

This strategy places residents of Brighton & Hove, and our staff, at its heart. The key priority objectives of the Asset Management Strategy are:

- **Investing in Homes and neighbourhoods to provide safe, good quality housing and support services**
- **Supporting new housing supply**
- **Ensuring financial viability within the Tenancy Strategy**

All of these priorities are underpinned by, and will continuously support, our agreed Tenancy Strategy Commitments.

Effective asset management means that homes and services will be based on affordability and will be able to adapt to changing circumstances. We aim to provide stability for residents to live successful, independent lives. It will also ensure we have the right mix of homes and other assets in the future by setting out stock viability criteria and decisions.

The Asset Management Strategy spans a 4-year period, but will be delivered via a more detailed, and annually reviewed, Asset Plan, which will set out asset information, action plans, targets and monitoring arrangements in more detail.

This is an ambitious strategy, which will entail us doing things differently sometimes, but it is based on extensive research, consultation and robust financial business planning.

## Our Vision

This strategy is for everyone living in the city as housing has a fundamental effect on our lives whether we are living in social housing or not. Our vision is that:

***Everything we do aims to help Brighton & Hove to be an inclusive city with affordable, high quality, housing that supports a thriving economy by offering security, promoting health and wellbeing and reduces its impact on the environment. We want to help bring about integrated communities in a society that values everyone to recognise and tackle the inequality faced by families, the poor and the vulnerable.***

We have listened to local people and our residents to identify the housing needs that matter most and set out our priorities for action that will make a real difference to their lives and have a positive impact on the city. Our strategy also supports the council's priorities where housing impacts on their success, particularly in helping to alleviate the pressure on social care and health services arising from an expanding older population.

The council's Values of Respect, Customer Focus, Openness, Creativity, Efficiency and Collaboration underpin the work we do by going beyond the traditional bricks and mortar focus of housing to deliver real change focussed on the needs of individuals and communities.

## The Housing Challenges

It is estimated that an additional 17,400 affordable homes are needed by 2017 above that planned<sup>1</sup> however, limited subsidy and high land values are pushing up costs. This highlights the need to think differently and explore wider partnerships that can demonstrate viable business cases for development of the housing needed by residents.

Against this background the HRA is aiming to support various types and mixes of development on its land, to contribute to the aim of adding 500 homes to the city. This is a significant challenge and will require flexibility and innovation, as well as seeking new partnerships and ways of working. This aim has to be balanced against investment choices in existing homes. By maximising the use of our existing assets, and reviewing our cost base, through this strategy, we will be able to improve the options available whilst remaining financially stable.

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<sup>1</sup> Assessment of Affordable Housing Need Report 2012: [http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/downloads/ldf/Assessment\\_of\\_Affordable\\_Housing\\_Need.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/downloads/ldf/Assessment_of_Affordable_Housing_Need.pdf)

## Our Achievements

Housing Quality has been improved through long-term investment commitments -100% of homes were brought up to the Government's Decent Homes Standards before the target of 31 December 2013. This work continues with an ongoing capital programme supporting investment in kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, roofs, re-wiring, efficient boilers, external repairs and decorations.

We have assisted residents in reducing their fuel use, and costs, through the installation of over 6,000 high efficiency condensing boilers and modern controls.

The estimated carbon emissions from homes we manage has fallen from 46,000 tonnes per annum in 2010 to around 30,000 tonnes in April 2015.

High rise major works refurbishments and thermal performance improvements, including successful projects at the Bristol Estate, Essex Place, Hereford Court & Warwick Mount

Consistently high levels of gas servicing compliance, this has been at 100% for the six months March-August 2015, for example.

New scheme to provide properties with level access showers through the letting process

Residents identified lifts as a priority for investment some years ago, and this supported the lift modernisation programme, now well underway, with improved access for residents

We now have in place a door entry system and new main entrance doors programme

Targeted extension and conversion scheme to make the most of existing assets and support families with mobility needs or overcrowding

100 apprenticeships provided through our partnership with Mears

Provided learning opportunities for residents through decorating workshops

Special training workshops given to Resident assessors for property inspections

New access procedure implemented

Working more closely with leaseholders giving specific financial advice and assistance to resident leaseholders

In 2014/15 we invested over £1 million adapting council homes, delivering 893 adaptations, 238 major adaptations and 655 minor adaptations.

### *Seniors Housing*

Enhancements to Senior Housing schemes including dementia-friendly painting schemes

Redesign of schemes with shared facilities so all properties now have their own bathrooms

Planned programme of modernising schemes to change studios into one bed flats

## **Consulting and working with our residents**

We listen to our residents, and involve them throughout procurement and delivery to make sure that the services we provide are scrutinised and improved to reflect changing needs and aspirations.

Residents have helped shape our asset management strategy from a very early stage through a series of discussion events with residents living in flats, houses, and leaseholders too. These were chaired by the Head of Housing, with the views of residents forming a key part of the strategic direction of future services and investment. For example, residents were particularly keen to prioritise investment in the exterior repair of buildings and common parts, such as decorations in stairwells and lighting, with the aim of achieving a more consistent standard across the city. This is now both being reflected and supported through the capital programme proposals.

Additionally, resident feedback was that generally the focus for investment should be mainly on improving the quality of the existing housing stock, and ensuring that all housing should be of a good standard, and well insulated, to help with fuel costs.

Residents are at the heart of our partnerships, and form part of the executive decision making Core Group that oversees the repairs partnership with Mears. Residents also fully participated in the procurement of the 10- year contract when it was tendered.

More details of the feedback from the consultation exercises are available on request.

## **Valuing our Staff**

We conduct our service delivery with integrity, to show respect and value our relationships with colleagues, residents and other stakeholders. To support this approach we invest in our teams, and recognise that the motivation, skills and knowledge of all our staff are crucial to delivering a high quality service.

All staff are supported and encouraged to seek professional qualifications and active personal development.

One of Housing's rising stars has been Nick Hibberd who came to work as a Housing Service Advisor at the housing office in Whitehawk in 1995. By 2006 he was a Housing Manager, and in 2012 he moved from being Head of Housing Management to Head of Regeneration and is now an Acting Executive Director.

# Priority 1 – Investing in Homes and neighbourhoods

## Housing Quality Investment Standards

### Brighton & Hove Property Standard

Our property standard was developed closely with residents in response to feedback that the government's Decent Homes Standard was very basic and that we should aim for an improved local standard. During late 2013 and early 2014 the Council reviewed the existing standard in consultation with stakeholders, with the aim of maintaining, and exceeding, where possible, the standard across all HRA rental dwellings over the next 5 years. The new Brighton & Hove Property Standard was implemented as of 1 April 2014 and has the following key aims:

- To maintain 100% achievement of properties meeting the government's Decent Homes Standard and our local Brighton & Hove Standard over the medium term (initially the next 5 years)
- To ensure that all homes are as suitable as practicable for the needs of its occupants, in line with council policy
- To continue working closely with residents to help increase levels of resident satisfaction with the quality of their home

A copy of the full standard is available at : <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/council-housing/brighton-hove-standard>

### Our commitment to a high quality and affordable Repairs and Maintenance Service

Through efficient procurement, the partnership arrangements deliver a high quality responsive repairs and empty homes service that puts residents at the heart of its management and development.

Additionally, based on feedback from residents on their priorities, there is a long-term investment plan for the upgrading and modernisation of passenger lifts. This is already helping residents to be able to rely on their lift to be safe and in service when they need it. Again, following consultation with residents, extra resources have been identified to improve external repairs and decorations on properties, including shared areas. This will be funded by reducing resources and lengthening programmes in other areas of investment.

In order to continue to balance investment in existing assets with the need to provide additional homes, a review of the detailed investments that are deliverable will continue to be undertaken regularly alongside the development of a New Homes Plan and annual financial business planning arrangements. The New Homes Plan will be directly linked to this strategy alongside the Asset Plan.

## **Our Asset Management approach to support communities**

### **Our Assets**

We directly manage around 11,650 homes, and over 2,700 leasehold dwellings, along with car parks, garages, land, commercial property and related assets.

Our managed stock is mixed, including some 1,800 homes in high rise flats, and around 4,400 houses or bungalows.

The stock is ageing, with around 75% of homes constructed before 1970. There is a mixture of dwelling size, with 36% of homes being 1-bedroom or studio types, and a further 38% being 2-bedroom dwellings.

### **Ensuring health and safety for residents, visitors and staff**

We are committed to having robust arrangements in place to help ensure the health and safety of all of those using and visiting our assets, to a reasonable level. This is a key responsibility, and as such we ensure that the investment required is maintained and made available ahead of other investment decisions. This includes good practice procedures and resources to support the management of asbestos, fire risk, legionella, gas and electrical equipment, amongst others.

### **Asset Management Information**

Our approach to asset information aims at providing robust data to ensure that we:

- target Investment in existing homes effectively, based on need and improving quality
- are able to plan effectively to ensure investment is sustainable in the long-term

We set up an asset management database over a decade ago, and have since added details of works carried out, as well as undertaking many more surveys. Using a variety of input sources, and working closely with all our partners, we ensure that risks are managed effectively. We aim to survey an average of 10 per cent of homes each year from 2016.

### **Our commitment to improving energy efficiency, health & wellbeing**

Helping residents to live in well insulated, efficiently heated, healthy homes remains a key long-term commitment. Progress on achieving this has been consistently good, with national Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) energy rating performance monitoring being used to benchmark these. Key investments that contribute to these include installing high efficiency boilers, new doors, windows, insulation and renewable energy where appropriate. We are continuing to plan future additional improvements, including identifying potential community & district heating schemes and sustainable delivery methods to ensure affordable warmth for our residents, alongside emission reductions. We are committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure any potentially technically viable schemes are maximised, including full engagement with local communities and potential heat sources.

### **Adapting homes to help enable residents to continue to enjoy them**

Home adaptations play a key role in enabling safe, healthy, independent living at home.

Timely housing adaptations can significantly improve people's quality of life, reduce health and social care costs, help to reduce risk of injury [e.g. from falls], enable faster hospital discharge, delay onset of admission to residential care and reduce care costs [e.g. for people with dementia]

## **Supporting long-term affordability**

### **Achieving value for money and social value**

The Partnership benefits go much further than just improved living standards. Our long-term investment in housing quality is now leading to savings in the cost of responsive repairs. In 2014/15 the total cost of repairs fell by 10%, saving £414,000 from this budget, which can now be used for future strategic investment in homes. The average repair value also fell to £92.00 against a target of £115.

We are committed to promoting enhanced social, environmental and economic values through the procurement and management of goods and services. Through long-term partnerships are delivering well in excess of 100 apprenticeships for local young people.

### **Reviewing assets to ensure long-term viability**

Ensuring financial viability is the key consideration when it is established that assets, or a group of assets, may be unsustainable in the long-term, either financially, or for other reasons. As such, regular reviews of stock viability, which include the use of financial and other criteria, take place. Where a form of non-viability is established, a range of options need to be considered. These will include the potential for alternative delivery models, such as joint ventures or partnerships or asset release, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis. The HRA will seek to consult as early as possible with residents and other stakeholders. More details of stock which may fall into this category are included in the Asset Plan.

### **A vision for success**

We believe that successful tenancies help residents to achieve their aspirations. We will review the tenancies we provide for new lettings to ensure the best fit between peoples' housing costs and their changing financial and family circumstances. Our key principle is to ensure that homes and services continue to be a safety net and a springboard for success.

### **Freeholds**

The HRA currently manage several hundred blocks that are now 100% sold leasehold. As such these now have no direct link to delivering our key social housing aims, but still utilise our administration and inspection resources. Where a block is fully leasehold we will review the residual value, and, where appropriate, seek to implement the most effective financial option for the HRA, subject to any consultation. This policy seeks to both create a value for money financial solution, and allow more focus on our remaining managed homes.

### **Proactive adaptations**

Over the next four years we are aiming to reinforce early intervention and a preventative approach to adaptations to help reduce demand and expenditure on reactive adaptations. Our focus is to promote advice and support to tenants, develop the accessible housing register, and make the best use of adapted and accessible homes.

## Priority 2 – Supporting new housing supply

### New homes targets and current delivery

The council is committed to delivering the City Plan commitments for new affordable homes, in addition to the new supply delivered by our housing association partners.

Top priority in the Council's [Housing Strategy 2015](#) is improving housing supply in the city and includes commitments to:

- prioritise support for new housing development that delivers a housing mix the city needs with a particular emphasis on family, Affordable Rent and where feasible, Social Rented housing
- directly provide more council housing, such as by developing ourselves through our New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme
- use Right To Buy receipts and developer contributions to fund new housing
- maximise housing provided from best use of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) investment, land and buildings.

The "New Homes for Neighbourhoods" programme was launched in March 2013. Since then Housing Committee has approved the development of 209 new homes of which two homes have been completed and six schemes to deliver 77 new homes are currently on site, with a further 57 already having planning permission.

Further sites continue to be identified through an ongoing review of housing assets in order to supply more homes and improve the neighbourhoods. There are also opportunities to convert redundant spaces within existing blocks to supplement the building of new homes.

So far, the additional homes are being delivered on either unused 'infill' land or unpopular garage sites. Communities are always fully consulted before we apply for planning permission. Changes have been made to the architects' proposals as result of community feedback.

The next challenge is to provide additional homes on those estates or parts of estates which are becoming unviable to maintain, or have wider design or related issues which point to them coming towards the end of the practical life. Our focus for regeneration will be on these parts of the stock, with the aim of regeneration to not only improve the built environment and provide additional homes, but also improve the training and employment opportunities of people who live there. These will be challenging times for the council and its communities as we consider phased demolition and re-building of blocks, and the tenure mix achievable. Council staff will ensure that residents are involved throughout the process, and supported sensitively, as well as given choices about where they live in future.

## **A strategic approach to delivery**

We plan to maximise delivery of new homes within the HRA borrowing cap limits, whilst supporting wider delivery projects where it makes sense to do so. This will only be possible through a variety of approaches, including establishing new and innovative partnerships, and multi-tenure supply.

We aim to build homes based on local housing need and maximise affordability. Our principle for supporting new supply is that each new housing scheme must be internally financially viable over the agreed financial planning period. To achieve this, the programme will consider, where agreed, a range of tenure types.

All new homes will be based on our core principles of delivering good quality, adaptable, long-life dwellings which are well designed and require low maintenance within a positive community context.

The details of how homes will be delivered will be set out in a New Homes Plan to be set out in partnership with the City Councils' Regeneration Team, and other stakeholders.

## **Using empty assets to provide housing**

There may be occasions when a managed decant of blocks will be required. To help ensure that these continue to be utilised positively to meet housing need, empty properties may be utilised to provide temporary housing, or similar, solutions whilst regeneration is progressed.

## **Reviewing empty or underused commercial assets**

These will be comprehensively reviewed to ensure they are contributing positively to the 3 priorities set out in the strategy. All options will be considered, and the sites to be initially looked at in detail are set out overleaf. Commercial assets can also assist in regenerating areas, and provide business rate income to the City. Area-based programmes will consider investment in these assets, and identify opportunities for growth.

## **Identifying communities we will work with further**

Through various stock analysis approaches, including financial viability, strategic analysis, housing quality, local improvement opportunities, and other indices, some parts of the stock may require a further consultative review. Where this is needed we are committed to working alongside local communities, to discuss and agree the best long-term plans for supporting a sustainable future. Reviews will consider all options and opportunities, including the potential for re-investment in the existing homes, where appropriate.

## Priority 3 – Ensuring secure financial foundations

### HRA MEDIUM TERM & 30 YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

The introduction of self financing in 2012 provided additional resources from the retention of all rental income and, through greater control locally, enabled longer term planning to improve the management and maintenance of council homes.

The medium term and 30 year forecast is provided in the Appendix along with the business planning assumptions used for income and expenditure.

Essentially although the financial plan shows that the HRA has healthy financial indicators to borrow to source funding for regeneration and development it is restricted by the self financing cap (or limit) on the amount of HRA borrowing permissible for capital investment by each local authority. This limit is currently set at £156.8m for Brighton & Hove and the outstanding debt reaches its peak in 2023/24 where the borrowing level is £147.4m leaving headroom of only £9.4m.

In addition to the debt cap, the reduction in rental income of 1% per annum will also restrict resources available for new build and regeneration so alternative options and delivery mechanisms for funding outside the HRA will be required alongside a review of priorities included in the financial plan.

There are also a number of uncertainties due to impending government legislation which may significantly impact on the long term health of the financial plan such as:

- Housing & Planning Bill – requirement to sell off high value homes when they become vacant with the capital receipts pooled by government and redistributed to Housing Associations.
- Welfare Reform – roll out of universal credit, reduction in tax credits, single room rates for under 35's in social housing and benefit cap to £20,000 per annum, all of which will impact on tenants' ability to pay their rent.
- Welfare Reform & Work Bill 2015 – proposal that households earning more than £30,000 per annum will be subject to rents charged at market rate. This may result in an increase in right to buys, greater administration costs and possibly an increase in bad debts. Any additional rental income will not be retained by the council but returned to the Government for redistribution to Housing Associations to fund their RTB discounts.
- Uncertainty of future rent policy after 2019/20.

The 30 year financial plan will be further updated in 2016 to reflect the impact of the changes resulting from government legislation, once the detail is known, and the 2016/17 budget proposals. This will enable a review of future opportunities for additional investment in existing housing stock and building new homes and also how the housing debt could be structured to accommodate these plans or possibilities.

## **Ensuring we maximise the use of our assets**

### **Maximising income from commercial assets**

Commercial assets will be reviewed to ensure that we are investing in assets to maximise the income we receive, whilst supporting local community needs and services.

### **Seniors housing and over 55's blocks**

Our Seniors housing service consulted on an agreed new service offer early in 2015. This strategy aims to support the delivery of this by investing to improve housing quality in the vast majority of schemes. Improvements will need to be supported on a sustainable financial basis by implementing appropriate service charging arrangements. Additionally, some schemes require more discussion to agree future plans and use.

We also have blocks designated for over 55's only, and these will be reviewed against the aspirations of this strategy via the asset plan.

### **Supporting adult social care**

The HRA is committed to supporting the wider needs and emerging demands of the City as set out in the Housing Strategy, as demonstrated through the construction of an extra-care housing scheme at Brooke Mead in the Albion Hill area of the City, and the designated Better Care fund.

### **Innovative housing provision**

We will consider utilising underused assets, such as some car parks or garages, for innovative, short-life housing provision. Modular buildings, with time-limited planning consents will be considered where they support overall strategies for the City.

### **Creating extra resources for re-investment**

We aim to maximise the budgets available for re-investment by ensuring that proposals for the future use of related assets, such as car parking, includes a full financial viability analysis, considers all potential options, and aims to increase income. Capital investment will be supported where there is a robust business case to do so.

In addition, we believe there is scope to create new partnerships and service offers in the future. These will aim to utilise our current expertise and infrastructure to deliver services beyond the Housing managed assets. This could, for example, include joint procurement of services with other housing providers to reduce costs, as well as creating new income streams by offering high quality services to other asset owners and landlords across the city-region through mutually beneficial partnerships.

### **Leasehold buy backs**

The HRA is committed to ensuring that it maximises the potential for adding to its asset base where it makes financial sense to do so. A wider 'buy-back' policy is to be developed and agreed to ensure opportunities are identified and evaluated effectively.

## **Arrangements for Strategy implementation and monitoring**

This strategy covers the period 2016-2020, and will be fully reviewed at the end of that period.

The detailed strategy delivery will be achieved through the Asset Plan, which will include action plans and timetables against all the key policy areas. The Asset Plan will be updated and reviewed annually.

## **Supporting Documents and abbreviations lists**

Housing Strategy (2015)

Brighton & Hove Tenancy Strategy (2013)

HRA Brighton & Hove Tenancy Policy (2014)

The Brighton & Hove (Property) Standard (2014), available at <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/council-housing/brighton-hove-standard>

**Medium Term**

The Medium Term Financial revenue position provides a cumulative surplus of £98.405m that can be used to support the delivery of the capital programme during this period. When compared to last years MTFs there is a significant reduction in the revenue surplus available due to the 1% reduction in rents, a total reduction of £14.15m over 4 years. However this has been partly mitigated by accumulated efficiency savings identified over the same period totalling of £7.2m (which are £1.260m in 2016/17, £0.569m in 2017/18, £0.369m in 2018/19 and £0.269m in 2019/20).

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Management & Service costs	15,542	15,459	15,345	15,383
Repairs and maintenance	10,604	10,706	10,874	11,146
Other costs	1,138	1,149	1,161	1,176
Borrowing costs	8,363	9,626	7,362	7,238
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>35,647</b>	<b>36,940</b>	<b>34,742</b>	<b>34,943</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Rental Income	50,393	50,545	50,613	49,931
Service Charges (tenants)	3,441	3,510	3,580	3,652
Other Income	5,335	7,635	6,011	6,031
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>59,169</b>	<b>61,690</b>	<b>60,204</b>	<b>59,614</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>23,522</b>	<b>24,750</b>	<b>25,462</b>	<b>24,671</b>
Allocated to:				
Direct Revenue Funding	23,522	24,750	24,381	22,092
Reserves	0	0	1,081	2,579

## 30 YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

### Introduction

The introduction of self financing provided local authorities with the opportunity to develop longer term planning to improve the management and maintenance of council homes. The government's self financing valuation agreed at April 2012 was based on using the rent restructuring formula with increases set at RPI + ½% + £2 per week and was set at a level to provide a balanced business plan over the next 30 years.

Since then the Government has imposed two changes to the rent calculation which both result in significant reductions in future rental income. From April 2015, government guidance revised annual increases to Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1%. This change removed the flexibility of social landlords to increase social rents each year by an additional £2 where rents were below target, resulting in lower annual rental increases over the long term. From April 2016, the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015/16 proposes that rents should be reduced by 1% per annum for the next 4 years (2016/17 to 2019/20). This proposed reduction in rents by 1% per annum will reduce resources by £14.1m over that four year period with a cumulative reduction in resources of £223m over 30 years when compared to previous business planning assumptions.

The current financial plan projections shown below continue to provide a balanced business plan but there is less opportunity than before for regeneration and new investment within the HRA due to the significant reductions in rental income projections. The current plan projections should also be viewed with caution due to the uncertainties from impending government legislation not yet modelled in the plan, which may significantly impact further on the long term health of the financial plan such as:

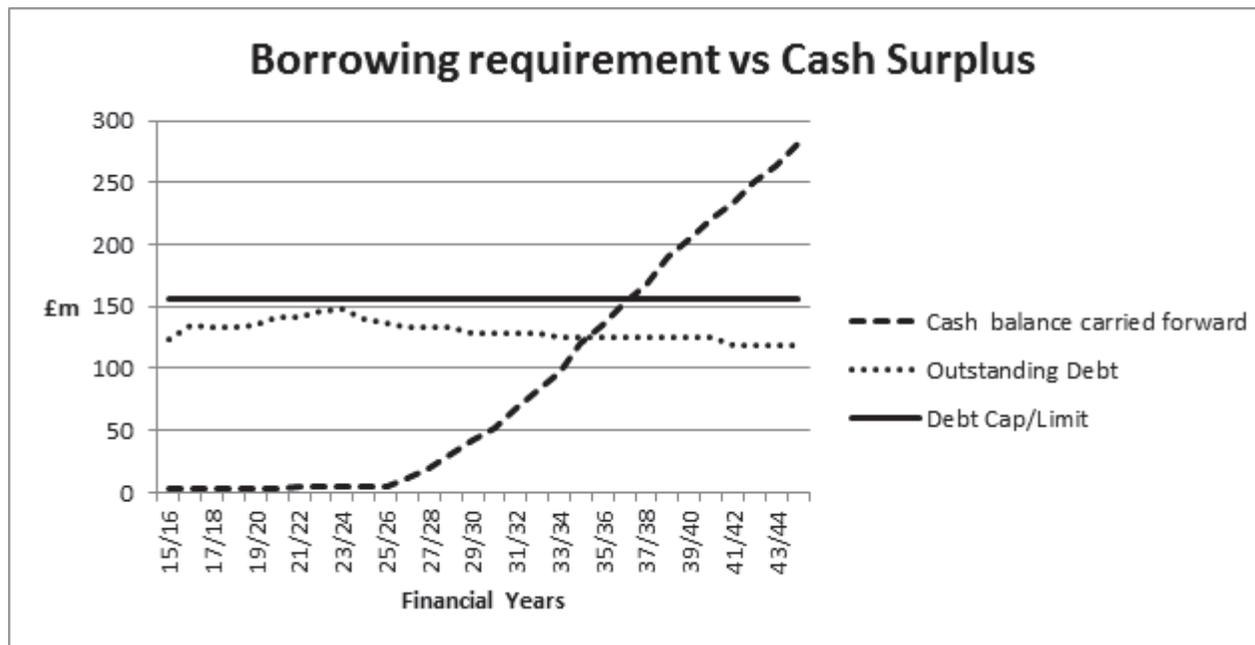
- Housing & Planning Bill – This bill includes a requirement to sell off high value homes when they become vacant and pay the capital receipt to government for redistribution. These properties are likely to be those that contribute most financially to the overall surpluses over 30 years. The full details of this scheme are not yet available to inform business planning.
- Welfare Reform & Work Bill 2015 – This bill includes a proposal that households earning more than £30,000 per annum will be subject to rents charged at market rate with the additional income being paid to central government for redistribution to Housing Associations. This may result in an increase in right to buys, greater administration costs and possibly an increase in bad debts. A significant reduction in the number of homes through increased right to buy sales may also include those properties that contribute most financially to the overall surpluses over 30 years.

- Welfare Reform – The roll out of universal credit, reduction in tax credits, single room rates for under 35's in social housing and reduction in benefit cap to £20,000 per annum will all impact on tenants ability to pay their rent. The assumptions used for bad debts and voids may need increasing resulting in a loss of projected income.
- Uncertainty of future rent policy after 2019/20. It is not clear at this stage whether the rent policy will revert to the previous policy of increases capped at CPI + 1% or something entirely different.

The 30 year financial plan will continue to be updated to reflect the impact of the changes resulting from government legislation and the 2016/17 budget proposals. This will enable a review of future opportunities for additional investment in existing housing stock and building new homes both within the HRA and through alternative delivery models.

**Forecast** The net position of the financial forecast is shown in the graph below. The cash surplus over the period of the financial plan totals £280.6m. Assuming that no additional borrowing repayments are made over the life of the plan aside from those planned in the current loan schedule, the debt outstanding in year 30 is £119.2m. The cash surpluses equal outstanding debt by year 20 and this provides an indication that in the long term, based on current assumptions, the HRA maintains a balanced position with some surpluses.

Essentially, although the financial forecast shows that the HRA has healthy financial indicators to borrow to source funding for regeneration or development it is restricted by the self financing debt cap (or limit). This is a government restriction on the amount of HRA borrowing permissible for capital investment by each local authority. The cap for Brighton & Hove is £156.8m. The outstanding debt reaches its peak in 2023/24 where the borrowing level is £147.4m leaving headroom of only £9.4m. Therefore, alternative delivery models outside of the constraints of the HRA may need to be considered in the future alongside a review of priorities included in the financial plan.



Note: Cash balance carried forward is net revenue surpluses generated after funding the capital programme.

The 30 year financial forecast has been developed based on the following assumptions:

- A general inflation of CPI assumed as an average of 1.4% for years 2 to 10 and 2% thereafter.
- Revenue repairs and maintenance costs are assumed to increase by 2.5% throughout the plan.
- Right to buy sales are assumed to continue at an average of 40 sales per annum.
- The forecast currently includes approved schemes only, totalling 209 new homes. There is no allowance for any future regeneration schemes or new build schemes.
- The forecast assumes that all stock is fully maintained to the Brighton & Hove Standard with capital investment costs increasing by CPI with a 5% uplift in year 6.
- Rents are assumed to decrease by 1% per annum for the next four years and then revert to the previous policy of increases capped at CPI plus 1%. The CPI assumptions used provides total inflationary increases of an average of 2.6% for years 5-10 and 3% per annum for years 11-30.

The following table provides a summary of the 30 year income and expenditure flows.

<b>30 Year Forecast</b>	<b>Years 1 -5 £'000</b>	<b>Years 6-10 £'000</b>	<b>Years 11-20 £'000</b>	<b>Years 21 -30 £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
<b>Revenue expenditure:</b>					
Management costs	57,454	58,809	132,678	155,859	404,800
Service costs	17,047	19,133	47,559	63,487	147,226
Repairs and maintenance	55,228	63,281	149,168	185,205	452,882
Other costs	5,844	6,186	14,343	17,484	43,857
Bad debt provision	1,955	1,991	4,273	4,638	12,857
Capital repayments	41,360	54,335	76,597	62,070	234,362
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>178,888</b>	<b>203,735</b>	<b>424,618</b>	<b>488,743</b>	<b>1,295,984</b>
<b>Revenue income:</b>					
Rental income (net of voids)	252,347	265,374	644,311	834,224	1,996,256
Service charges	17,047	19,133	47,559	63,487	147,226
Other income	16,472	17,093	38,905	47,424	119,894
Leaseholder income	14,365	11,633	11,447	15,172	52,617
<b>Total income</b>	<b>300,231</b>	<b>313,233</b>	<b>742,222</b>	<b>960,308</b>	<b>2,315,993</b>
<b>Net revenue income</b>	<b>121,343</b>	<b>109,498</b>	<b>317,603</b>	<b>471,565</b>	<b>1,020,009</b>
<b>Capital expenditure</b>					
Capital investment	131,636	135,093	203,477	309,982	780,188
New build schemes	47,605	0	0	0	47,605
<b>Total capital expenditure</b>	<b>179,241</b>	<b>135,093</b>	<b>203,477</b>	<b>309,982</b>	<b>827,793</b>
<b>Capital funding</b>					
Other capital income	27,065	0	0	0	27,065
Borrowing	31,022	27,336	0	0	58,358
Revenue contribution to capital	121,343	109,499	317,603	471,565	1,020,010
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>179,430</b>	<b>136,835</b>	<b>317,603</b>	<b>471,565</b>	<b>1,105,433</b>
Opening HRA reserves	3,000	0	0	0	3,000
<b>Cash surplus at year 30</b>	<b>3,189</b>	<b>1,742</b>	<b>114,126</b>	<b>161,583</b>	<b>280,640</b>





# Asset Management Strategy Briefing

for Area Panels  
Jan/Feb 2016

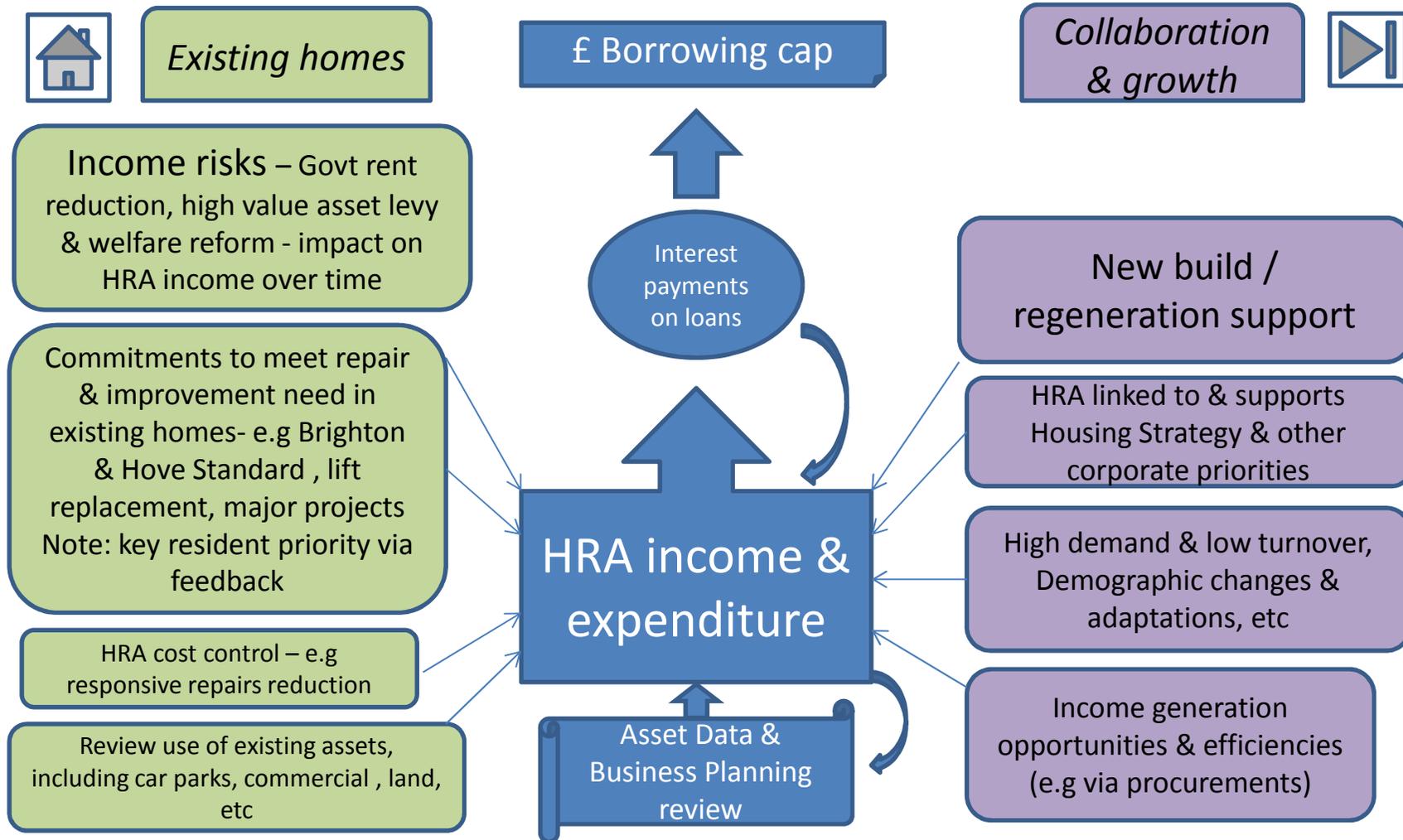
John Currell, Housing Asset Manager

[john.currell@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:john.currell@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

# The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Assets – Stats/Background

- HRA own and manage 11,600 dwellings, and around 3,000 leasehold, plus other assets/land (car parks, commercial etc)
- 1,800 high rise flats & 4,400 houses/bungalows
- Specialist seniors housing (around 850 units)
- non-traditional type homes (around 300 houses) & other block types
- Ageing stock – 75% of the stock built before 1970, including 2,600 built pre 1945. Size of units – 36% studio/1-beds & 38% 2-beds
- Some issues linked to the stock profile include:
- Suitability & future demand, older style design & how to meet modern needs (e.g kitchens, adaptations)  
,demographics , repair costs
- Health – heating / mould growth & energy efficiency

# HRA Asset Management Strategy – current considerations



# Asset Management Strategy & resources available

The Asset management Strategy aims to strike the optimum balance between investing in existing stock and creating new homes.

The HRA Asset Management Strategy is the key to ensuring that we align our assets with the current and future needs of residents, through continuous community engagement and partnerships.

It aligns directly with the City's Housing Strategy 2015

3 key priority objectives of the draft Asset Management Strategy are:

- **Investing in our homes and neighbourhoods to provide safe, good quality housing and support services**
- **Supporting new housing supply**
- **Ensuring financial viability**

All of these priorities are underpinned by, and will continuously support, our agreed Tenancy Strategy Commitments

The 30-year business plan and Asset Management Strategy are aligned to ensure that the resources available for investment are maximised. This approach is helping ensure that the Capital Investment Programme continues to deliver improved Housing Quality.

Asset Management Strategy is expected to be discussed at Housing & New Homes Committee in March.

## Area Panels: January and February 2016

### Summary: Housing Management Performance Report Quarter 3 2015/16

#### Background

The Housing Management Performance Report covers Quarter 3 of the financial year 2015/16. Due to the close timing of the end of the quarter to when papers are dispatched to Area Panel representatives, we are unable to bring the full performance report to Area Panels in January and February. However, information is currently available for this summary report for the Area Panels to note and comment on.

To ensure the timely reporting of performance information we would like to take the full report to Housing & New Homes Committee in March. We hope this will be acceptable to the Area Panels and if representatives would like a copy of the full report once it is available this can be provided.

#### Rent collection and current arrears

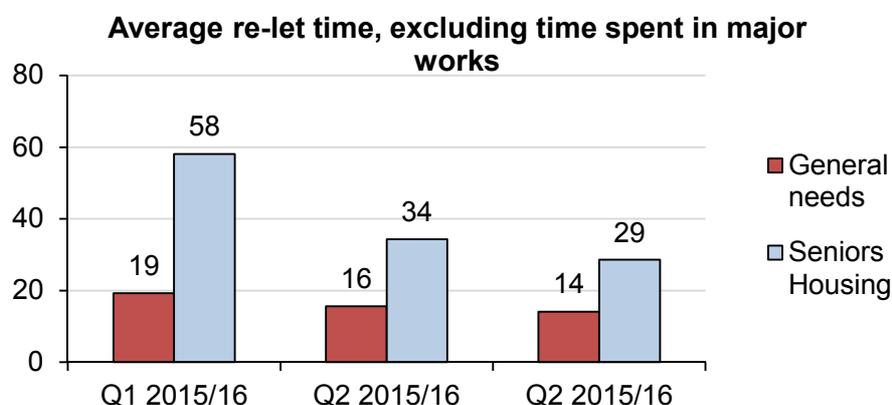
- Overall current tenant arrears have fallen by a quarter since December 2014
- Arrears of under occupying tenants at £88k (11% of overall arrears)

#### Customer services and complaints

- 94% of direct dial calls answered by Housing Customer Services Team
- 35 formal complaints dealt with (at Stage 1)

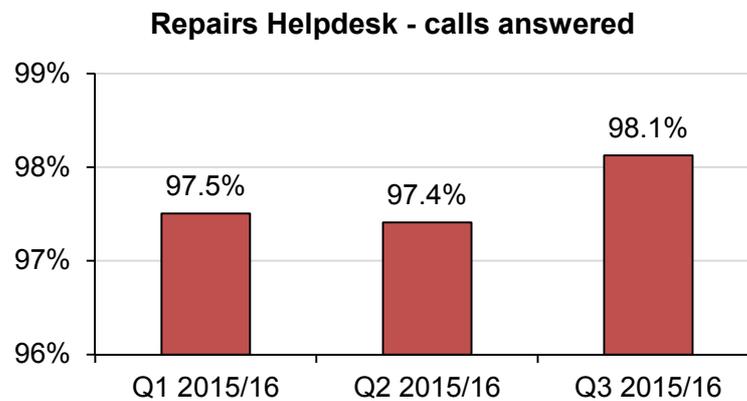
#### Empty home turnaround time

- 134 homes let, of which 112 general needs and 22 Seniors Housing
- 16 calendar days taken to re-let a home, excluding time spent in major works
- Re-let times have decreased for both general needs (14 days) and Seniors Housing (29 days)



## Property & Investment

- 8,054 repairs completed
- 96% of appointments kept by contractor
- 98% of calls to repairs helpdesk answered
- Longest wait time of 4 min 23 sec



## Estates Service

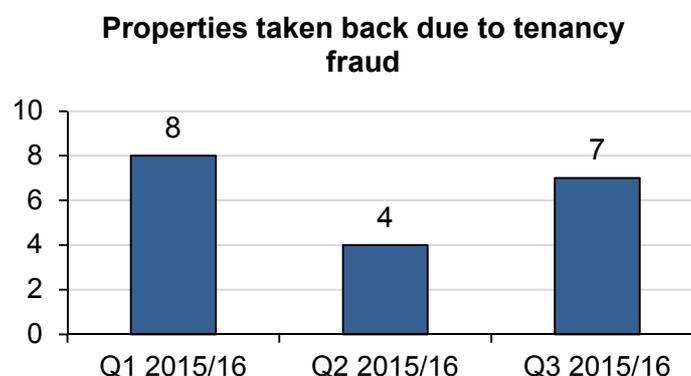
- 99% cleaning quality inspections pass rate
- 100% Neighbourhood Reponse Team quality inspections pass rate

## Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- 62 cases closed, of which five resulted in tenancy legal action
- 100% success rate for closed Tenancy Sustainment Officer cases

## Tenancy fraud

- 33 cases closed
- Seven properties taken back
- 89 open cases under investigation as of end December 2015.



# **Area Panels: January and February 2016**

## **Briefing Paper: Resident Involvement**

### **Review**

#### **Background**

Brighton & Hove City Council has a long history of working collaboratively with residents to shape housing services. The Everyone Counts review of resident involvement was undertaken with residents and agreed by Housing Committee in 2012. Its aim was to modernise and widen resident involvement enabling residents to get involved in ways that they prefer, while strengthening the more formal resident involvement framework. This upcoming review will work with residents to build on Everyone Counts, evaluating the action plan and identifying where improvements can be made.

In addition, the council's corporate plan makes it clear that the council needs to 'aim much higher than trying to remain the same' while making sure services are 'right and fit for modern, digital expectations..... accessible when and how people want them' and at a time when budgets are reducing.

As residents will be aware, there are significant budgets pressures on the whole council and as part of the council's budget review process, housing is required to deliver efficiencies, which will include a value for money review of the Tenant Involvement structure over the next two financial years. (Required, as part of the budget setting currently being considered).

#### **Regulatory requirements**

Current regulatory requirements state that the council is required to adopt a co-regulatory approach in the delivery of housing services where it, the regulator and tenants together set, monitor and ensure standards are met.

The aim of resident involvement is to enable residents to influence housing services and policy, to improve customer satisfaction, broaden engagement, and for the council to be accountable and transparent as a landlord.

#### **Time for a review?**

As outlined at the citywide conference in December 2015, the housing service will be undertaking a review of resident involvement, in 2016 to meet the twin challenges of delivering efficiencies and improved services.

The core outcomes for the review will be to

- Broaden tenant engagement
- Increase tenant satisfaction with the landlord service

- Ensure the tenant involvement framework and leaseholder consultation achieves value for money for tenants receiving housing landlord services and the council

### **Who will be involved in the review?**

The Resident Involvement Team will work with residents through ‘task and finish groups’, on line surveys and workshops. This will lead to a report for Area Panels and the Housing & New Homes Committee later this year.

Residents who are interested in taking part in this review are asked to contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01273 292112, or email [RIT@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:RIT@brighton-hove.gov.uk). In order to involve a broad spectrum of residents the database of residents who want to give feedback (currently 1,630 people) will also be used to get the views of people who don't usually come to meetings.

### **Scope of Resident Involvement Review**

The review will be comprehensive and cover all aspects of Resident Involvement, including:

- Tenant and leaseholder involvement structures
- Methods of communications for the future
- Benchmarking, best practice and value for money
- Delivering against required outcomes

### **What next?**

An update will be brought to the Area Panels in June.

In the meantime Housing will get the work with residents underway and organise focus groups to plan the shape and scope of the review, making sure it captures those areas of key interest to residents.

**Contact:** Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager  
Telephone: 01273 293022  
Email: [becky.purnell@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:becky.purnell@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

# New homes for neighbourhoods Update



January 2016

Brighton & Hove City Council's New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme is building much needed new council homes on council owned land. We work with local resident associations and ward councillors to improve council estates and neighbourhoods, while making best use of council housing land and buildings to help meet the city's housing needs. We are aiming to build at least 500 new council homes across Brighton, Hove and Portslade.

Nine new council homes are due to be completed in March, adding to the two completed last summer. Over 200 more are currently on site or in the pipeline, with more completions due this summer.

## Former Manor Place office – 15 new flats at Robert Lodge



North side of the new Robert Lodge South block, facing the communal gardens

Applicants have been bidding through Homemove to rent the nine one bedroom flats being completed in the new Robert Lodge South block. The new block, which includes a lift and a wheelchair adapted flat, should be ready for residents to move into in early March.



South side of the new Robert Lodge South block

Transferring tenants releasing larger accommodation will get priority for the Mobility 2 and 3 flats, so that more people on the housing register will get the chance to move to a home that meets their current needs.

Work will start to build the new northern block of six flats facing Manor Way in March.

## 12 new family houses in Hangleton and Portslade



Work is well advanced on building four new 3 bedroom houses on the former garage site at Hardwick Road in Hangleton, which will be ready for letting by the summer. They will be known as 1 to 4 Aldwick Mews and one is designed especially for a household with a wheelchair user.

In Portslade, the timber frames are going up for four new houses being built on two former garage sites at Flint Close. And construction of another four 3 bedroom houses at Foredown Road former garage site will start as soon as tree protection measures have been agreed. This new development will be called Pierre Close, after the founder of the Emmaus charity which has a project nearby.

## Brooke Mead – 45 extra care flats



The concrete foundations and frame for the new extra care scheme at Brooke Mead are now starting to appear out of the ground. The 45 one bedroom flats with community facilities should be ready by summer 2017.

Albion Hill Residents Association and local residents had their say on landscaping plans for the new block at a workshop in December. Another workshop in February will consult local residents on a proposed new community garden next to the site.

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



Funky graffiti art is brightening up the site of the five new council homes being built in Ardingly Street near Ardingly Court and St. James's House.

Behind the scenes, builders have filled in an old air raid shelter they uncovered, diverted the sewer and other services and are nearing completion of the concrete frame. All is on track to be completed this summer and the new block will be called Darwell Court.

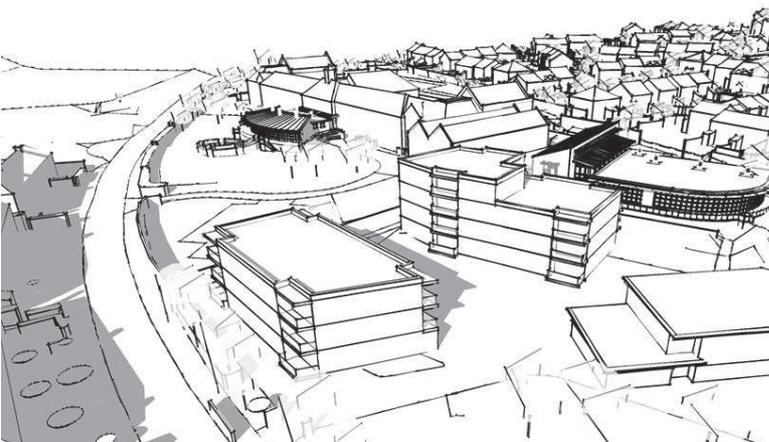
## **Findon Road, Whitehawk – 57 new flats on former library site**



The site of the former Whitehawk library is being prepared to start work on building 57 new council flats in February.

The two blocks will be named Kite Place East and West, following the birds of prey theme. We expect them to be completed in autumn 2017.

## **Wellsbourne site, Whitehawk – latest designs for 29 new flats**



Local residents have been invited to give us their views on plans for 29 new homes on the Wellsbourne site on Whitehawk Road, on 9th February from 3 - 6pm.

The drop in event is being held with Due East Neighbourhood Council at the Whitehawk Library in the Whitehawk Hub, next to the site for the new homes.

There will be another Planning for Real model of the area and the proposed two new blocks, so residents can comment on the latest designs and pass on their views on how the area could be improved to Due East Neighbourhood Council.

## Former Selsfield Drive Housing Office

Bates Estate and other local residents will be invited to meet the architect and give their views on plans for a new block of flats on this site at a drop in consultation on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February from 11am to 3pm at Moulsecoomb Hall. Bates Estate Residents Association are working closely with the Estate Regeneration Team to publicise the consultation event.



### How are the rents set for the new homes?

Rents for the new homes are 'affordable rents' set at the Local Housing Allowance rates of Housing Benefit. These help to pay for the cost of developing the new homes. Although they are higher than rents for existing council homes, they will stay within the Local Housing Allowance Housing Benefit limits. And rents for the new homes include all service charges, apart from heating and hot water where the council provides these to residents from a communal boiler.

Although rents for new developments are higher than those for older council homes, the new homes are very energy efficient and newly finished to high standards.

## RIBA Design Competition for small sites

Architects whose designs were preferred for the Royal Institute of British Architects design competition sites at Hinton Close, Rotherfield Crescent, Natal Road and Frederick Street, Brighton are now responding to the panel's feedback and refining their initial designs. The winners will be announced in March.

### For more information

You can see our short film and more information about the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/nhfn](http://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](mailto: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

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

Held on Wednesday 9 September 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), Allan Davies (Rosehill Court, Central) Jean Davis (Leach Court, Central), Kath Davis (Broadfields, North), Peter Lloyd (Health Watch), Tomm Nyhuus (Somerset Point, Central), Charles Penrose (Sloane Court, Central) , Walter Sargison (Broadfields, North), Elizabeth Tinkler (Laburnum Grove, North), Colin Vincent ( Vice-Chair, Brighton and Hove Older People’s Council).

**Observers:** Ernie Tidy (Churchill House, West)

**Officers:** Chantel Cooper (Resident Involvement Assistant – Minute Taker) (RIA), Rebecca Mann – ‘Becca’ (Resident Involvement Officer) (RIO) (covering for RIO, Hannah Barker), Peter Huntbach (Older Persons Housing Manager, BHCC).

**Councillors:** Councillor Tracey Hill (Deputy to the Chair for Housing and New Homes For Neighbourhoods Committee)

**Apologies:** Councillor Anne Meadows (Chair for Housing and New Homes For Neighbourhoods Committee), Rachel Chasseaud ( Head of Tenancy Services), Ray Goble (Elwyn Jones Court, North).

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

1.1 Chair introduced Cllr Hill, newly elected in May who was attending this meeting for the first time.

1.2 Everyone introduced themselves round the table for Cllr Hill’s benefit.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

2.1 (p2 point 3.2) Update regarding Evelyn Court’s sprinkler system: finished yesterday.

2.2

2.2.1 (p2 point 3.4.4) Regarding Tomm Nyhuus’ issue about Mears’ sub-contractors – Tomm has now finally had a response to his letter giving specific examples from Ian Stone, Mears. The matter is being dealt with via the Core Group. Tomm gave Chantel Cooper copies of his letter to Ian Stone and Ian Stone’s response to copy and distribute to the group for their reference, and to pass to Hannah Barker.

**Action:** Chantel Cooper to copy Tomm’s letter and Ian Stone’s response and distribute to the group (which she will do with the papers for the next meeting on 11 November).

2.2.2 Peter Huntbach (Peter H): There is guidance as to how residents should expect contractors to behave in our Repairs Handbook – can send copies of this to the group if required.

Charles Penrose: Clarified that Tomm's point was about *Mears'* relations with *their* contractors, *not* contractors' relations with residents. Also clarified that Mears' contractors tend to immediately sub-contract a job out (to a cheaper sub-contractor) - this is where the chain of communication begins to breakdown , as a job becomes more and more devolved.

- 2.2.3 Peter H: Suggested someone from the Property and Investment team (P and I) should come to a meeting of the Seniors Housing Action Group (S.H.A.G.) to discuss the qualities of jobs done by contractors and sub-contractors, making contractors and sub-contractors accountable and ensuring that they provide value for money.

P and I also have information regarding capital works e.g. lifts and boilers so, if they were to come to a meeting, several birds could be killed with one stone.

**Action:** Chair to invite someone from the Property and Investment team, as well as a representative from Mears to the next meeting.

- 2.2.4 Charles: There are supposed to be site meetings with Mears, contractors and sub-contractors – whoever is doing the job.

Tomm: Raised this Ian Stone in his letter, who responded as follows: for all major works projects there is to be a pre-commencement meeting, a meet the contractor meeting, monthly meetings with minutes produced and coffee mornings etc. For planned works Mears will produce newsletters advising residents and Scheme Managers of said works in advance and for responsive communal repairs, which cannot be predicted and notified in advance, Mears will liaise with the Scheme Manager concerned.

- 2.3 (p3 3.6.2) Peter H distributed copies of the studio flat conversion timetable to the group. A leaflet has also been produced regarding the programme which has gone out with letters to Jasmine Court etc.

- 2.4 (p11 point 10.51) Tony reiterated his question about boilers at Evelyn House.

A – Peter Huntbach (Peter H) Has no further information – there are no immediate plans to do the boilers at Evelyn House under Decent Homes.

Peter H clarified that there are no plans to do the boilers in tandem with the studio flat conversion programme at Evelyn Court. Could find out when this job is going to be done under a capital works programme.

**Action:** Peter Huntbach to chase the Policy Team regarding this matter (the boilers at Evelyn House).

- 2.5 Tony: Observed that there was no rep from Mears at this meeting as had been requested as a previous Seniors Housing Action Meeting.

A – Peter H: This is because today's meeting is an Annual General Meeting (AGM). Arrangements are being made for a representative from Mears to attend

the next meeting on 11 November.

- 2.6 (p11 point 10.6.1) Colin Vincent: Follow-up on the closure of Goodwood Court Surgery. The Older People's Council (OPC) has had two meetings with representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as to how overnight closures like this can be avoided in future and more notice given – this may involve changes to General Practitioner (GP) contracts.

**Minutes** – agreed as an accurate record.

### **3. Minutes of the last AGM ( 10 September 2014) and matters arising**

- 3.1 No comments made.

**Minutes** – agreed as an accurate record.

### **4. Chair's Communications**

- 4.1 Chair (Roy Crowhurst) is putting an article in October's *Homing In* to encourage gay men to move into Seniors Housing.
- 4.2 The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transexual (LGBT) Switchboard has a meeting on 18 September – is looking at producing a 'watermark', to recognise those organisations etc which have gone the extra mile for the LGBT community.

### **5. Update from Peter on Policy**

- 5.1 Further to p4 point 4.2 of the previous minutes, Seniors Housing staff received LGBT awareness training last month from LGBT switchboard and the Stonewall Housing Association. Another session is booked for next month.
- 5.2 Studio flat conversion programme is underway as the group is aware.
- 5.3 Took a paper on re-modelling communal areas to the Housing Leadership Team.
- 5.4 Staff
- 5.4.1 The last Scheme Manager to be recruited is due to start on Monday (14 September, 2015). This brings the service up to full strength.
- 5.4.2 There is one agency Scheme Manager still on site who may be retained to cover a Scheme Manager who is on long term sick leave.
- 5.4.3 Comments and Queries

Tony: It is his scheme, Evelyn Court which has the agency Scheme Manager. Residents appreciate she has to do other things e.g. provide cover at Muriel House on a Friday (which she in turn is covered for) but, if staffing levels are up to full strength, she should be at Evelyn Court full-time.

A – Peter H: We are not quite there yet – staff are now in place but some still need to be inducted , which is why this is happening. Once these staff are

inducted, it should be one Scheme Manager per scheme.

## 5.5 Lettings Revision Focus Group

Peter H: Is pleased that Roy Crowhurst, Bob Spacie and Charles Penrose met with Satti Sidhu, Performance and Improvement Officer regarding revising lettings. Good suggestions were made about communications and welcome packs. Properties which had remained un-let for a long period of time have now been let – as a result of reviewed eligibility and ‘preventative work’ – i.e. placing those with an urgent housing need in these properties rather than in expensive temporary accommodation.

## 5.6 Has reduced the burden of administration on Scheme Managers e.g. condensed three forms into one to free them up so they can ‘be more visible’ within their schemes.

Peter H has told his Scheme Managers at team meetings to ‘be more visible’ within their schemes and to attend more activities.

Elizabeth Tinkler : Her scheme exemplifies this – her Scheme Manager, Greg meets with them and attends coffee mornings. Bridget went on a social.

Charles: Requested that a Scheme Manager should attend the S.H.A.G.

Peter H: Yes, they will, especially the new ones.

## 5.7 Finances

5.7.1 Peter H spoke about the financial implications of the council’s projected £8m overspend at the end of the current financial year. This affects budgets on three levels: the council’s budget, Housing’s budget and the Seniors Housing service’s budget.

5.7.2 In terms of the council’s budget as a whole, new, stricter guidelines regarding the authorisation of expenditure, purchase orders and the payment of invoices have been brought in.

5.7.3 Spending is being concentrated on essentials only, not the discretionary.

5.7.4 This has implications where the Seniors Housing service’s budget is concerned. Repairs will be funded, yes but the biggest impact where Seniors Housing is concerned will be the Guest Room Bids budget because this is a discretionary budget.

5.7.5 A concern was raised about what this means in terms of staffing within the schemes.

A – Peter H: Reassured the group that the Seniors Housing service has the money for its staff – staff are funded via service charges.

Controls have been put in place however, where the council as a whole is concerned – there is a recruitment freeze across the council *except* where resident health and safety is concerned.

5.7.6 Peter H is meeting with the Finance Manager today to discuss the implications of the budget constraints for the Seniors Housing service.

5.7.7 Peter H: The Seniors Housing service has always had an annual budget of £2.8M. Is currently projecting an overspend of £23k – this is due to the holding back of some properties because of the conversion programme.

Moreover, the government has announced a rent reduction of one percent year on year for four years –so less money will be coming in at a time when demand is increasing.

5.7.8 Cllr. Hill: Clarified that this projected overspend is occurring because of a massive increase in demand of adult social care and child social care – which is resource intense and an area where we have a duty of care – and not because of how funds have been managed. For example, the council is having to use private sector housing (which is expensive) to meet temporary housing needs.

Peter H: Reiterated that preventative care like this saves more money in the long-term.

5.8 Comments and Queries

Q – Colin: Is there an update on Brookmead?

A – Peter H: It's being built and is due to be completed in May, 2017. It is a 40 unit extra care scheme with a focus on dementia, funded by the government and going to be run jointly by the Seniors Housing Service and Adult Social Care.

## **6. Proposal to change this meeting's timeslot by Councillor Meadows**

6.1 In Resident Involvement Officer (RIO) Hannah Barker's absence Chantel clarified why Cllr. Meadows was requesting this change: Cllr. Meadows is the Chair of the Moulsecoomb Local Action Team (MLAT) which meets on the second Wednesday of every month in the same time slot S.H.A.G meetings occupy, so if the S.H.A.G continues to meet on the second Wednesday of every other month in the same time-slot, Cllr Meadows the Chair for Housing and New Homes For Neighbourhoods Committee will never be able to attend a meeting of the S.H.A.G. She therefore requests that the S.H.A.G change their meeting slot – to the first or third Wednesday of that alternative month (it can't be the fourth Wednesday because this is when the Estate Development Budget Panel meets) or to the afternoon...

6.2 Round the table discussion raised the following points:

6.2.1 Can MLAT move instead?

Charles: Yes, this meeting has occupied the same time slot for 23 years, since its inception. The LATs have only been around for two years. Therefore MLAT should change its date/meeting slot.

A – Becca: This isn't so easy. A Local Action Team (LAT) meeting involves the coming together of a number of different agencies e.g. the Police etc and trying to get a date and time when a representative from all these agencies can attend is a nightmare so, like the S.H.A.G., they have a set time slot they can put in their diaries in advance.

6.2.2 Couldn't someone else chair the LAT every other month?

6.2.3 Allan Davies: This issue (changing the date/time-slot of S.H.A.G. meetings) came up a few years ago- S.H.A.G meetings clashed with a council officer's other duties. The council officer concerned sent a proxy. Could Cllr Meadows send a proxy?

6.2.4 Cllr. Hill: Remember, S.H.A.G. is new to Cllr. Meadows, whereas MLAT is a prior engagement as far as Cllr. Meadows is concerned. Moreover, as well as performing her duties as the Chair for Housing and New Homes For Neighbourhoods Committee, Cllr. Meadows is keen to remain a dedicated ward councillor.

She (Cllr. Hill) is the Deputy to Cllr. Meadows' Chair for Housing and New Homes For Neighbourhoods Committee and has come to S.H.A.G today in her capacity of Deputy. However, Cllr. Meadows is 'better connected' than herself and would therefore be 'better value for money'. Moreover, she (Cllr. Hill) works so will not always be able to attend a meeting. Asked the group whether they had other commitments which tied it to this particular time/date slot or whether it was just a matter of precedent. If the group could be flexible and accommodate Cllr. Meadows' request to change the time/date of S.H.A.G meetings, it would be better off with her.

Chair: Yes, we do have other commitments. The year's S.H.A.G. dates are a given in his diary so he doesn't double-book himself.

6.2.5 Charles: Made a point that S.H.A.G. is a *city-wide* group *not* a local one. We tenant reps have local meetings too but can't change our diaries.

6.2.6 Group **voted** on the proposal. Vote was unanimous – not to change the current date/time-slot of S.H.A.G.

## 7. **Guest Room Bids**

7.1 There were no new guest room bids – Leach Court's bid for a single divan bed (quoted at £300) was dealt with as a latecomer at the previous meeting.

7.2

7.2.1 Tony: There should be another guestroom bid – for a set of bedding for a single bed for Evelyn Court. Submitted it a fortnight ago.

- 7.2.2 Chantel: Jayne Halls, the Administration Officer for the Seniors Housing team hasn't sent any other guest room bids through to her.
- 7.2.3 Peter H: Reiterated that any non-essential expenditure cannot be authorised at this time, can only authorise if needs replacing due to breakage, spoiling or being worn out.
- 7.2.4 Tony: This is to replace spoiled bedding.
- 7.2.5 **Action:** Tony Brown to ask Jayne Halls about this bid for bedding for Evelyn Court (as directed to do so by Peter H).

**Interval**

**8. Elections**

- 8.1 Roy Crowhurst, current chair of the S.H.A.G. thanked Chantel, the minute-taker, the tea-ladies, Hannah and Peter H for their efforts over the last year and stepped down.
- 8.2 Becca Mann: Thanked, Roy for all his work on behalf of the S.H.A.G over the last year.

**8.3 S.H.A.G. AGM Election Results 9 September 2015**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominee (s)</b>	<b>Elected</b>
<b>Chair</b>	Roy Crowhurst	Roy Crowhurst
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Charles Penrose	Charles Penrose
<b>North Area Representative</b>	Kath Davis	Kath Davis
<b>East Area Representative</b>	None	None
<b>Central Area Representative</b>	Jean Davis	Jean Davis
<b>West Area Representative</b>	Tony Brown	Tony Brown
<b>Home Service Improvement Group Representative</b>	Tomm Nyhuus	Tomm Nyhuus
<b>Home Service Improvement Group Deputy</b>	<i>Tony Brown t.b.c.*</i>	<i>Tony Brown t.b.c.*</i>
<b>Neighbourhood &amp; Community Service Improvement Group Representative</b>	Jean Davis	Jean Davis
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	None	None

<b>&amp; Community Service Improvement Group Deputy</b>		
<b>Tenancy Service Improvement Group Representative</b>	<i>Tony Brown t.b.c.*</i>	<i>Tony Brown t.b.c.*</i>
<b>Tenancy Service Improvement Group Deputy</b>	None	None
<b>Involvement &amp; Empowerment Service Improvement Group Representative</b>	None	None
<b>Involvement &amp; Empowerment Service Improvement Deputy</b>	None	None
<b>Business &amp; Value for Money Service Improvement Representative</b>	None	None
<b>Business &amp; Value for Money Service Improvement Deputy</b>	None	None

In each case the vote was unanimous.

(\* **Post Meeting Update:** Unfortunately, due to an oversight, Tony Brown has been elected as both a dep for the Home SIG *and* as a rep on Tenancy SIG – and, of course, the rules are that he can't be on both these groups, so he will have to choose between them. He is aware of this and will be sampling a meeting of the Tenancy SIG on 4<sup>th</sup> November, having previously been a member of the Home SIG, after which he will make his choice).

- 8.4 Roy Crowhurst thanked the group for re-electing him as its chair. Encouraged group members to come to him if they have something which they would like to put on the agenda for a meeting and to make their respective Tenants' Associations aware that anyone resident in Seniors' Housing is welcome to

attend a meeting of the S.H.A.G.

## 9. Round Robin

9.1 Tomm: Peter H needs a new job title – ‘Older Persons Housing Manager ‘ his current job title doesn’t reflect the ‘ethos’ of the reviewed service.

A – Peter H: Yes, this is a good point. There is a debate to be had here.

**Action:** Peter Huntbach to seek advice regarding changing his job title to better reflect the ‘new look’ service and come back to the group.

It was observed that (because of the ‘Scheme Manager’ title) there are too many people with the word ‘manager’ in their job title in the Senior Housing team.

9.2 Walter Sargison:

9.2.1 Regarding the Gardening Competition...

There is a gardening conference on Wednesday 14 October 2015 between 1pm and 3pm here at Leach Court.

There will be a buffet and the Mayor will be presenting prizes between 12.30pm-1pm.

Peter H: It’s good to get people out there growing their own produce, keeping them active and sharing their skills – in keeping with the new ‘ethos’ of Seniors Housing – so he will be promoting the conference.

For example, Lindfield Court has a great vegetable garden and there are amazing things happening in the courtyard of Lavender House.

9.2.2 Still looking for a Secretary and three committee members for the Seniors Housing Gardening Club – has sent a newsletter and a poster out to all the schemes via Resident Involvement Officer, Keely McDonald.

9.3 Jean Davis: Work on the lift (Leach Court) was completed last week – the operatives working on it were fantastic – they even carried residents’ shopping up in the lift. Residents gave a ‘thank-you’ card and threw a ‘thank-you’ party for those concerned.

9.4 Charles: Sloane Court is hosting a shuffleboard tournament on Monday 28 September. Will e-mail Peter H once he has more information so the Scheme Managers can relay the details to their respective schemes.

9.5 Joyce Bean: The residents of Elwyn Jones Court are happy with the re-tarmacing work done in their back garden.

9.6 Ernie Tidy: Further to page 5, point 5.7 of the previous minutes, he thought some of the comments regarding the culture change taking place in seniors housing

amusing.

9.7 Peter H: Clarified that that particular section of the previous minutes was about how Scheme Managers and tenants/residents could work together to promote their scheme to prospective new residents and manage the lettings e.g. by conveying local knowledge about the schemes to prospective new residents.

9.8 Colin:

9.8.1 The OPC has a public meeting on Tuesday 15 September between 10.15am and 1pm at the Jubilee Library.

There will be two presentations, the first on the Fairness Commission and tackling inequality issues in the city by Julia Reddaway from the Policy Team of the Fairness Commission, the second, an update on the implementation of the Care Act, 2015 (which will be phased over two years), by Brian Doughty, Head of Assessment Services.

Colin circulated flyers promoting this to the group.

9.8.2 Thursday 1 October 2015 is 'Older People's Day'. Programme is being drawn up now, in collaboration with Age Concern. Could Peter H's team help distribute the programme when it is ready?

A – Peter H: Yes

9.9 Paul Aguis: Rubbish and recycling at Evelyn Court was last collected three weeks ago.

The bins are overflowing so rubbish is being placed around them in plastic bags (and the binmen don't collect rubbish left *around* the bins, only rubbish in them) – which feral animals and birds e.g. foxes and seagulls are ripping open and strewing the rubbish around. It is becoming a health hazard.

Chair: Woods House is experiencing the same problem. The rubbish and recycling there hasn't been collected for two weeks.

**Action:** Peter Huntbach will take the matter of uncollected rubbish and recycling at Evelyn Court and Woods House up with City Clean and feed-back to the Scheme Managers and the S.H.A.G.

**10. Next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 November 2015, 10am-12.30pm at Leach Court, Park Street, Brighton.**

### **Tenancy Service Improvement Group 4 November 2015**

- Reviewed the succession letters- copies sent to non-attendees
- Agreed to look at conflict coaching and mediation
- Looking at fixed penalty notices for ASB
- Looking at a day in a life of Tenancy Officer
- Preventing fly tipping and developing respectful communities possible areas of work

### **Home Service Improvement Group 19 November 2015**

- Asset Management Strategy - budget, affordability and report from resident consultation
- Sustainability plan - an overview for Housing stock, including solar panels on tenant's homes.
- Loft & Extension Scheme - Information and the change in criteria.
- Updates on jargon busting resident inspectors and resident action plan
- Elections of new reps to Estates Development Budget panel, Partnership Core Group, chair and vice chair

### **Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group 26 November 2015**

- Planning 2016 calendar of community events to promote Resident Involvement on estates
- Finalising text for new Resident Involvement Handbook
- Residents giving quotes about how being involved has made a difference for handbook, online version, and You Tube video
- Exploring recognition scheme for tenants and leaseholders who make a difference
- Working on updated Tenant & Resident Association manual, including information on setting up informal resident groups

### **Neighbourhood & Community Service Improvement Group 3 December 2015**

- Delighted to welcome guest speaker from the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
- Watched a video about community gardening and inspired to start one in Hove
- Will be consulting residents on the estate
- Idea to include neighbouring residents as well as the immediate community
- Fairly low cost, brings people together, and provides fresh produce

### **Business & Value for Money Service Improvement Group 7 December 2015**

- Discussed alternative revenue streams for the council
- Agreed to encourage residents to look out for unused properties for possible use
- Discussed value for money of service charges
- Agreed to promote 'Jargon Buster' to residents to help simplify technical information
- Looked at the Council's Performance Report and commented on content