

Resident Questions for Housing Area Panel

Department	Housing
Date question raised	30/06/2022
Date of Area Panel	17/08/2022
Area in city	West
Star rating applied by residents	3 star- city wide issue
Deadline for officer response	25/07/2022
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Officer job title	Head of Service
Title of Question:	Refurbishment of empty properties
Issue: Unnecessary and time-consuming refurbishment of empty properties	
<p>Background: 24 Bramber Avenue is having extensive refurbishment, including a new kitchen, before it is re-let. Residents know that the previous tenant had recently installed a new kitchen, kept the property in excellent condition and cleaned all the carpets before leaving. The work means a needless delay for a homeless family and the Council incurring unnecessary expenses.</p>	
<p>Action requested by residents: Residents asked if there were exceptional reasons for this to happen, or whether it is Council policy to automatically refurbish whatever the condition of the property.</p>	
Officer Response: Grant Ritchie	
Officer contact details:	Grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk
<p>Response:</p> <p>The number of empty homes within the City continues to reduce and lettings are returning to pre pandemic levels.</p> <p>The property in question required a full electrical rewire. This meant that a significant amount of wall tiling had to be removed to allow the cables to be recessed.</p> <p>The kitchen walls were fully tiled with tenant own tiles; therefore, it was not possible for us to patch the tiles in as we could not source the tiles used. Therefore, all tiles had to be hacked with a new tiled splashback and cooker space being provided. Additionally, all walls above splashback height required plastering to enable the incoming tenant to decorate to a sufficient standard.</p>	

The floor tiles were ceramic and did not have non-slip properties and there were some areas where the kitchen had been fitted above the tiles, specifically the worktop chrome legs. All floor tiles required hacking up and the floor screeded to allow a non-slip vinyl flooring to be fitted.

The cooker space accommodated a range cooker if a standard size free standing cooker had been fitted in this space it would result in a hazard due to the cooker space not having worktop to both sides, as a result a new unit and worktop needed to be fitted to the right-hand side to create a suitable cooker space and this unit and worktop would not match the remainder of the kitchen units.

A cooker hood had been fitted. As this it is hard wired and cannot be tested for electrical safety. One of the unit drawer fronts was damaged, we would not have been able to replace this with a matching drawer front, another complete drawer pack was missing. Again, we would not have been able to replace this with a matching drawer pack.

We also had issues with the mains Southern Water stopcock not working, subsequently the water to the property could not be isolated. We had to arrange for Southern Water to replace their stopcock which added a week to the repair period.

Whilst some of the carpets were in reasonable condition, some were not. The lounge carpet had to be removed due to a fireplace being removed which left a large hole where the hearth had stood.

The property also had a full rewire and therefore floorboards throughout had to be removed to allow cables to be run, the laminate floor in the bedrooms could not be re fitted due to being interlocking system and not reusable.

This property has had all maintenance works discussed above completed.

Specific Action:

Action:

NA

Timeline:

Start date:

NA

End date:

NA