

Residents Questions – 3-star, All Areas

E3.1 Anti-social behaviour

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star/ city-wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	{Housing Area Panel team completes}
Officer job title	{Housing Area Panel team completes}
Contact Details	{Designated Officer completes}

E3.1 Question

Issue	Residents are fed up with lack of visible outcomes to longstanding and persistent problems of reported anti-social behavior.
Background	<p>Issues around anti-social behaviour were raised at the last East Area Resident Only meeting (11th April 2024). It was raised again at the meeting on 27th June 2024.</p> <p>All estates reported ongoing issues with various types of anti-social behaviour: drug dealing, drug taking, aggressive/threatening behaviour, drunk and disorderly behaviour. These are ongoing, persistent, and frequently have lasted years. Many of the problems are linked to identifiable and repeat offenders. Residents feel unsafe in their homes and in the communal areas of their buildings.</p> <p>It was felt that there was insufficient support for vulnerable residents, leaving them exposed to drug dealing/taking, cuckooing and/or generally descending into anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The residents are not satisfied with the response from the Council Officer Janet Dowdell (ref Residents Questions, page 75, E 3.1).</p> <p>It was felt that the current actions that the Council is taking to tackle anti-social behaviour is piecemeal and tokenistic. Residents don't feel like the issues they report are being addressed; they do not see action being taken, and most importantly, they are not seeing positive outcomes. They simply experience the same issues again and again. Residents feel like reporting ASB issues doesn't result in anything changing so do not see the point of reporting at all.</p>
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents suggest that regular and visible Police presence (PCSOs etc) around the estates would help deter ASB. Can the Council ensure that PCSOs are reinstated in and around the estates? The Council Officer stated that a series of visits is carried out at set points during the 12-month probationary period for new tenancies to

	<p>nip any issues in the bud. What if a person is in a secure tenancy already and is reported for ASB – what systems do the Council have in place to monitor this person regularly and ensure that any support needs are met?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the Council claims to be taking various actions around tackling ASB, this is not producing the outcomes that residents are looking for. Clearly - given the extent to which ASB is reported as an issue across all areas in the city - what the Council are currently doing is ineffective and needs to be reviewed. What actions are the Council taking to improve outcomes for residents affected by ASB? • Why are Council tenants expected to continue to live with the ongoing stress of anti-social behaviour?
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E3.1 Response

Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents suggest that regular and visible Police presence (PCSOs etc) around the estates would help deter ASB. Can the Council ensure that PCSOs are reinstated in and around the estates? <p>The way police resources are deployed across the city is a decision for the Police. We work alongside the police on issues happening on our estates and will highlight areas of concern. Residents are encouraged to report crime to the police as this helps them with deployment of resources in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Officer stated that a series of visits is carried out at set points during the 12-month probationary period for new tenancies to nip any issues in the bud. What if a person is in a secure tenancy already and is reported for ASB – what systems do the Council have in place to monitor this person regularly and ensure that any support needs are met? <p>In my last response E.3.1 I mentioned our work with ASB is still reactive and that we would like to undertake more home visits and be more present on our estates to understand more about how people are managing their tenancies and relationships with neighbours. We are looking into how we could resource this approach but we remain a reactive service at this time. When we receive reports of ASB from a council tenant, our investigations begin and reporters are asked details of the situation, risk assessed and contact arrangements are agreed.</p> <p>Each ASB case will present differently, and our officers have to work within guidance and legislation to manage the situation. It will not always be possible to disclose our actions and it is not always obvious that action is being taken. The type of action we will be taking will depend on the situation but will include working with other agencies and colleagues such as adult social care, police, community safety team, mental health services, children services and other support providers to better understand what needs to happen to bring resolution.</p>

We are expected to work with perpetrators to bring about a change in the behaviour and part of that will be exploring support needs of individuals living in our tenancies. It has to be acknowledged that not all individuals with identified support needs are happy to accept support and that can sometimes present a barrier to behaviour change. In such cases we have to explore options for enforcement depending on the seriousness of the situation and the impact it has on others.

- While the Council claims to be taking various actions around tackling ASB, this is not producing the outcomes that residents are looking for. Clearly - given the extent to which ASB is reported as an issue across all areas in the city - what the Council are currently doing is ineffective and needs to be reviewed. What actions are the Council taking to improve outcomes for residents affected by ASB?

ASB remains a top priority for us and remains one of the areas of service we look continuous improvement in. As mentioned above, we would like to be more pro active in preventing ASB by being more present on our estates and improve our level of communication around the work we do to tackle ASB on council estates.

We continue to have a high caseload of ASB work and I take this opportunity to share some statistics from the tenancy team who manage this area of service.

We currently have 297 open ASB cases across the city. The case types range from serious crime and physical violence to noise and pet nuisance.

Most cases are resolved with informal tenancy warnings or serving of a notice of seeking possession (NOSP-the first step to taking action against someone's tenancy).

When warnings or notices are not effective in bringing about a lasting change to behaviour, we must consider formal legal action to bring about an end to the breach of tenancy. We have legal tools and powers available to us such as injunctions, closure orders, possession orders which all come with the need for good, corroborated evidence as they require a case to be presented at court.

Its worth saying that without a weight of evidence, we may be unable to build a case for formal legal action. Below are some of the actions the team have taken since January 2024 –

- 20 NOSP's have been served and are being monitored
 - 1 injunction
 - 6 cuckooing cases – working with police to resolve situations within our estates
 - 23 Community Protection Warnings
 - 11 Community Protection Notices
 - 4 Closure Orders – properties are closed to all for a 3-month period
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- Why are Council tenants expected to continue to live with the ongoing stress of anti-social behaviour?

As mentioned above, the majority of cases are resolved with warnings and informal action, but when perpetrators do not respond to our initial efforts to effect a change in behaviour, we have to consider use of our available tools and powers. We are expected to have a stepped approach which requires us to try all available options before presenting a case to court. The court expects to see that we have given good opportunities for change and that we have attempted to support the person to bring behaviour change.

This can be a very complex area of work, and will take time for us to resolve. During this time we aim to support the reporters and victims of ASB with regular contact arrangements, risk mitigation measures and a review of the risks on a regular basis.

Previous response referred to in the question

E 3.1. The council's approach to casework is to take prompt action to deal with reports of ASB. Experience shows if we don't do this it may become harder to resolve. We are also aware that the way we work is still reactive and there are instances where we could have prevented the ASB from occurring in the first place, such as being more present the estates, undertaking more home visits This enables us to gain good information in an area and understand more about how people are managing their tenancies and relationships with neighbours. In every case where there are victims or witnesses to incidents of ASB the case officer will contact them to get details of the situation, carry out a risk assessment and put in place appropriate risk reduction measures. During this contact there will be a wider discussion regarding what measures the victim or witness feel need to be taken, and the measures that housing are able to take. Ideally this contact may need to be more frequent so that tenants are supported. In situations where it is appropriate, housing will liaise with resident representatives. However, in most cases housing is unable to discuss case details with other people because it would involve the sharing of sensitive and personal information, and this cannot be done without a lawful basis. There is a probationary period for all new tenancies. Every new tenant hasn't previously held a secure tenancy, will have an introductory tenancy which is a probationary tenancy lasting for a period of 12 months. This enables us to understand whether people are sticking to the terms of their agreement. A series of visits are carried out at set points during the 12-month period and where there are concerns, including anti-social behaviour issues or support needs, monitoring visits can be put in place until the issues are resolved or action to extend or end the introductory tenancy are taken.

E3.1 Action

Action	{Designated Officer completes: Please include what will be done}
Start date	{Designated Officer completes}
End date	{Designated Officer completes}

E3.2 Visitor Parking Permits

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star/ city-wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024

Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22nd October
Name of officer responding	Paul Nicholls, Benjmain Tedder
Officer job title	Projects and Policy Lead, Car Parks and Garages Manager
Contact Details	paul.nicholls@brighton-hove.gov.uk benjmain.tedder@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.2 Question

Issue	It was noted that the residents were no clearer on the specific issues they raised following the Residents Questions (p77, item E3.2).
Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents request that visitors' parking permits are made available to community assets – such as community centers – to allow volunteers and users of the centre to be able to park in the area, as well as delivery vans (delivering to the food banks etc.). Parking Review update to be given at the next East Area Panel as suggested.

E3.2 Response

Response
<p>Community groups can rent numbered spaces for their regular use at managed Housing parking sites, where these are available, at a weekly charge. Visitor bays on Housing sites are limited in number and are primarily for the use of residents' visitors, such as relatives or carers.</p> <p>The parking review update is available on the council website –This did not include a review of parking on Housing land.</p> <p>There are currently no plans to expand the criteria beyond residents as this would come with significant cost.</p> <p>The purpose of the parking review was to create a simpler, fairer and better service for our city.</p> <p>A report was presented to Cabinet it set out a parking plan for residents, support local businesses and help the growth of our visitor economy.</p> <p>The review has helped to set out a series of objectives and actions for an improved and sustainable service in both the short and long term. It addressed aspects of parking, from resident permits and restriction times to car parks and tariffs. As well as the long-term plan for parking, the report also outlined measures the council can take between now and April 2025 to improve parking services and help reduce the forecast shortfall in the parking income budget.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging people to use under-used car parks through promotion and reducing prices, Introducing early bird/commuter rates, Considering a merger of overnight and evening tariffs, Offering weekend parking tickets

Following a review of parking zones in central parts of Brighton & Hove, 56 additional parking spaces have been identified in zones X, Y (Central Brighton) and M (Brunswick & Adelaide) and 16 more in zone C (Queens Park area), improving availability for residents and visitors.

E3.2 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

E3.3 Estate Inspections

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star/ city-wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Emma Gilbert
Officer job title	Interim head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	emma.gilbert@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.3 Question

Issue	Estate inspections haven't happened in a long time.
Question	When are Estate Inspections scheduled to happen?

E3.3 Response

Response
<p>We are very keen to start up a programme of planned estates inspections. Once we are in a position to do this we will we publish the two year schedule, this includes 128 routes. Feedback from residents was that they wanted blocks to be included in the inspections which we will do. The delay in implementing a planned programme of inspections has been caused by a lack of capacity in the area Housing teams, we are working through how we resolve this and are confident we will be in position to start them from April '25.</p> <p>In the mean time, until we have a planned programme, estate inspections/ site visits are carried out on an ad hoc basis in response to resident and or cllr requests. Please contact us if you want to arrange a visit/walkabout in your area.</p>

E3.3 Action

Action	N/A
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Start date	
End date	

E3.4 Overgrown Weeds, Bushes, Trees

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star/ city-wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22nd October
Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Contact Details	Chloe.mclaughlin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.4 Question

Issue	There is insufficient maintenance of overgrown weeds, bushes and trees.
Background	<p>Residents reported various locations in their areas that required maintenance. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overgrown weeds on pavements between 81-95 Langley Crescent – which is a tripping hazard for people with mobility issues • Brambles growing into the verge at Robert Lodge. Residents are taking it upon themselves to maintain these spaces but this is the Council's responsibility.
Request or Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Can Community Payback be used to address the problem that green spaces and communal pathways are not being maintained regularly enough? Park rangers used to be responsible for maintaining these areas. Are they still responsible for this? If not, who is?

E3.4 Response

Response
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Housing will be working with Cityclean to look at how we work with Community Payback. A meeting has been set up for January '25, an update will be provided after then. 85-91 Langley crescent is the responsibility of Cityclean and the Streets Operations Manager requested on the 18th October 2024 that this area is weeded, however, they have advised it could be a couple of weeks before this work can be completed due to other work priorities.

Cityclean is responsible for the public footpaths around Robert Lodge and the Estates team responsible for the grounds itself. This was cleared earlier in the year.

E3.4 Action

Action	Meeting with Housing and CityClean in January 25 and follow up provided afterwards.
Start date	January 25
End date	January 25

E3.5 Support For Older Residents During The Winter

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star/ city-wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Tabitha Cork
Officer job title	Revenues & Benefits Manager
Contact Details	tabitha.cork@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.5 Question

Issue	Residents are concerned about the welfare of older residents during this winter, particularly in terms of keeping warm.
Background	Residents shared what community groups and centers were doing to assist people to access vital information and support regarding accessing Winter Fuel Allowance (form-filling), getting grants for heated blankets and other items to keep warm during the winter, tips on how to heat homes, and where to find warm community hubs and warm meals.
Request or Question	What are the Council doing to ensure the welfare of their elderly residents during this winter?

E3.5 Response

Response
The council will be using the Household Support Fund to support older residents with their energy costs this winter. Proactive use of data analytics will identify residents eligible for Pension Credit, but not currently claiming. Officers will make

contact and support these households to apply for Pension Credit, ensuring they continue to receive their Winter Fuel Payment this year and in the future.

In addition, the Community Hub team will be delivering the council's Energy Support for Older People (ESOP,) taking incoming calls from residents concerned about their energy costs this winter, checking their eligibility for Pension Credit and supporting them to make a claim, providing financial support to those struggling who do not qualify for a winter fuel payment this year and sharing money saving tips on reducing energy consumption in the home. The Community Hub will have ESOP up and running by mid-November, with city-wide promotion of the scheme.

E3.5 Action

Action	As above
Start date	Winter 24
End date	Spring 25

C3.1 Unresponsive Estates Team

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	19 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Emma Gilbert
Officer job title	Interim Head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	emma.gilbert@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.1 Question

Issue	Multiple issues that are the responsibility of the Estates Manager are not being addressed and residents' emails are going unanswered
Background	Multiple issues including cleaning, fly-tipping and overgrown weeds have been raised in multiple emails to the Estates Manager. All these issues have been raised in more than one email, and none of them have received any response at all from the estates team.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are multiple emails to the Estates Manager going unanswered, by the manager or any of her team? • When and how is this going to be rectified? • Residents at Craven Vale have requested a meeting with the estates manager. Are they unwilling or unable to come to this meeting and, if yes, who should residents be

	meeting with instead to discuss Estate Management issues?
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C3.1 Response

Response
<p>The Estate Services Team are happy to meet with residents on site and do Estate Inspections to identify issues and find solutions where possible, they do this on a regular basis with tenant groups and ward Cllrs.</p> <p>Emails should always be sent to the Estates Team inbox which is monitored throughout office hours rather than individual email addresses to avoid delays in response, caused by annual leave etc.</p> <p>Due to the level of service demand, if we have already responded to an enquiry we will not continue to respond to repeated emails in relation to that enquiry, we would refer to the earlier response.</p> <p>The Complaints Process provides the route to escalate issues if residents are unhappy with the response they have received.</p> <p>In relation to the specific question about Craven Vale.</p> <p>The service has responded to issues raised, met requests for information and the Estates Service Managers and Team Leaders have also met with residents on site on several occasions.</p> <p>We do not have any outstanding enquiries that we have not responded to directly by the Estates Team or through the Complaints process at this time.</p>

C3.1 Action

Action	
Start date	
End date	

C3.2 Gas Pipe Maintenance

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	19 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Robert Mabey

Officer job title	Mechanical and Electrical Manager
Contact Details	robert.mabey@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.2 Question

Issue	The external gas pipes at Essex Place are visibly rusted and need to be inspected.
Background	Gas companies are responsible for inspecting and maintaining the gas pipes in/on Council buildings. Residents don't know who to contact about gas pipe issues. It is clear that the pipes at Essex Place have not been inspected recently because (i) they are clearly in a state of disrepair, cover in rust, and no longer coloured yellow as they should be; and (ii) the pipes are covered in cladding for most of the height of the building, only being exposed towards the bottom. In order for the pipes to be inspected, this cladding would have had to be removed – at least temporarily – and residents know this has not happened. The gas pipes at Essex Place are external and metal, whereas at Craven Vale they are internal and plastic. Residents questioned whether all gas pipes are now supposed to be plastic, or whether external pipes are still allowed to be metal.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is responsible for inspecting and maintaining gas pipes in Council properties? • How can residents get information about how frequently gas pipes need to be inspected, when they were last inspected (and associated reports), and when they are next due to be inspected? • Can the Council put pressure on the gas companies to ensure that safety standards are being met and that residents have access to appropriate information to evidence that safety standards are being met? • Would new external gas pipes now be metal or plastic? • What are the expected life spans of external, metal gas pipes?

C3.2 Response

Response
<p>Southern Gas Networks (SGN) are the regulated, local network provider and distribution company. They are responsible for the upkeep, repair, replacement/upgrade of gas service pipework throughout Southeast England. They are an independent company and are not under the Council's control. However, we always seek to work closely with them to minimise disruption where possible.</p> <p>The Council will raise issues with SGN where there are significant concerns with compliance. Many High-Rise Buildings were supplied with plastic piping historically. In line with more recent regulation however, all plastic pipes in our buildings over 18 metres have now been replaced with metal equivalents.</p> <p>SGN check the condition of these pipework between 1, 5 or 10 years in a schedule, based on the last inspection condition, location and environmental conditions. Pipework can last around 62 years, depending on environmental conditions such as exposure to moisture and corrosive</p>

minerals like salt. Latest inspection reports will be shared with Building Owners like the Council, over the coming months.

Residents with concerns about the condition of their pipework can contact SGN directly on 0800 912 1700, by email customer@sgn.co.uk or through their website <https://www.sgn.co.uk/>.

C3.2 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

C3.3 Communications About Major Works

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	19 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Geof Gage
Officer job title	Head of Housing Investment and Asset Management
Contact Details	geofrey.gage@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.3 Question

Issue	Residents are not told about plans for works that are going to cause disturbance.
Background	Warwick Mount has had new scaffolding put up recently and there have been no communications from the Council about what it is for. Wiltshire House has had scaffolding up for many years and residents can't remember what it is there for and haven't been told when the job will be completed and the scaffolding taken down.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has the scaffolding been put up at Warwick Mount for? How and when is the Council planning to communicate with residents about these works? • When are the works at Wiltshire House going to be finished? How and when is the Council planning to communicate with residents about these works?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the Council clarify what the policy and procedures are for communicating with residents about major works that cause significant disruptions to their lives?
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C3.3 Response

Response
<p>Scaffold was erected at Warwick Mount as part of the building safety works for the external wall fire risk assessments for a short amount of time. I'm very sorry this was not communicated to residents.</p> <p>The works at Wiltshire House are subject to the Building Safety Act submission for all works now required, the regulator is experiencing delays of up to 20 weeks for responses and until we receive the necessary consent from them, we are unable to proceed with the project, the delay is out of our remit.</p> <p>For major works we prepare and send to all residents an FAQ and hold meetings with them before and during the works. The residents at Wiltshire House have been updated throughout the project and a further coffee morning has been arranged for October. We have in place a resident engagement procedure.</p>

C3.3 Action

Action	
Start date	
End date	

C3.4 - Council Staff Accountability

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	19 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Victoria Paling
Officer job title	Customer Experience Lead
Contact Details	Victoria.Paling@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.4 Question

Issue	Ensuring the complaints process about Council staff is neutral and effective
Background	Central residents feel that their complaints are not always taken seriously or dealt with in a neutral manner.

Request or Question	How does the Council ensure that complaints raised by residents about staff actions and behaviour are dealt with in a fair and unbiased way?
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C3.4 Response

Response
<p>Complaints which mention dissatisfaction with the actions or behaviour of a staff member are taken seriously and investigated according to our policy - https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/brighton-hove-city-council-corporate-complaints-policy-and-procedure#tab--10-complaints-about-staff, which is based on the statutory complaint handling code from the Housing Ombudsman and the best practice guidance from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.</p> <p>All complaint handling staff receive detailed training which puts emphasis on the importance of the principles of good complaint handling and specifically focuses on the need for complaint investigations to be objective, neutral and non-defensive. The training also gives clear instruction to staff regarding how to take forward complaints where the staff member may have a conflict of interests (e.g. if they have a personal relationship with any party involved, or for other reasons feel that they may not be able to be entirely independent or neutral in their investigation).</p> <p>If a customer remains dissatisfied following the initial (Stage 1) response to their complaint, then they are invited to escalate their complaint to Stage 2 of the process. Stage 2 complaints are considered by a separate, central team who are independent of service areas, further reducing the risk of defensiveness or bias in the investigation. The complaints process gives ultimate recourse to complain to the relevant ombudsman who are entirely independent of councils, if the customer is still dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, or how it has been handled. Whenever fault is found through an investigation at any stage, careful consideration is made as to whether any actions/learning or service improvement can be put in place to prevent future complaints of the same nature.</p> <p>Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to the principles of good complaint handling, outlined in the policy which includes an explicit statement regarding complaints being "...dealt with in a way that is fair to both the complainant and the staff involved." The policy describes how complaints about members of staff will be considered:</p> <p>10. Complaints about staff</p> <p><i>If a complaint involves criticism of a member of staff, they should be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>advised as soon as possible</i> • <i>given a copy of the complaint</i> <p><i>The member of staff should be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>given the opportunity to comment on the issues of the complaint</i> • <i>kept informed of any proposed action taken as a result of the complaint</i> <p><i>Senior Officers must formally respond to complaints about named officers.</i></p> <p><i>In cases of complaints about misconduct by an employee, the matter should be investigated and, where appropriate, action taken in accordance with the council's disciplinary procedure, in Part 4 of the Constitution.</i></p> <p>If the senior officer who considers the case finds that the staff member has not behaved appropriately, then further action may be taken in line with internal HR procedures. If it is found the staff member was acting within the scope of their role, but that the outcome or decision is the root cause of the dissatisfaction, then this will be investigated through the complaint process and a full response and explanation will be provided to the customer.</p>

We recognise that some responses to complaints about staff behaviour can seem less transparent than responses to other types of complaint. This is because complaints about staff behaviour may lead to action through the council's internal HR processes, rather than through the complaint process, depending on the nature of the allegation. If the matter is subject to an internal process, then we would not be able to share that information, or the outcome of that process with a customer because of our duty to protect individual data privacy rights.

C3.4 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

C3.5 - Broken Lifts

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	19 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	James Deamer
Officer job title	Mechanical & Electrical Engineer (Lift Services)
Contact Details	james.deamer@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.5 Question

Issue	Lifts are regularly broken and take weeks or months to get fixed
Background	Lifts in all buildings break down regularly. The Council have just renewed their contract with Liftech to maintain the lifts in the city's Council housing, despite the fact there are often long delays in fixing lifts when they are broken. Residents have been told that the delays are because the parts aren't available in the UK. Lifts matter to all residents, especially those who are elderly or disabled. Broken lifts mean that some residents cannot leave their blocks.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Council's policy on how long repairs to lifts should take? • How does the Council hold their contractors to account and ensure these policy obligations are being met? • What is the Council's legal responsibility, policies and plan for a situation where all the lifts in one block are broken simultaneously?

C3.5 Response

Response
<p>Firstly, we want to assure residents that we appreciate the huge inconvenience caused when lifts are out of operation. We work hard through servicing and repairs to minimise disruption as much as possible.</p> <p>Terms in Tenancy agreements and the Landlord & Tenants Act 1985, obligates the Council to keep communal equipment such as lifts well-maintained. The Council is also aware of its responsibilities under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and Equality Act 2010. However, we also recognise that completing a repair in reasonable timescale depends on the extent and complexity of the repair, as well as ease of obtaining spare parts.</p> <p>To manage the service, we have a comprehensive Lift Breakdown Procedure which is reviewed regularly. We also track outstanding repairs through daily reports from Liftec and respond quickly to new incidents. Where there are no alternative lift services, we work quickly to identify vulnerable residents and provide support services through our area housing teams. We aim to keep all residents informed while the lift is out of service.</p> <p>We hold monthly and quarterly meetings with Liftec, keeping minutes and tracking follow-up actions. We also monitor and review spend on the contract regularly, addressing any contractual issues promptly.</p>

C3.5 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

W3.1 - Impact Of Time And Resources Going To High Rise

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Rachel Kelly
Officer job title	Interim Programme Director Housing Regulatory Response
Contact Details	rachel.kelly@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.1 Question

Issue	Following a recent Government report, a lot of time and money is being spent ensuring that High Rise blocks meet fire and safety standards.
Background	While it is recognised that this work has to be done, there is concern that other housing services and types of properties will be neglected as funding and staff time is diverted.
Request or Question	<p>Raise the following question at Area Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the money and staff time for the High-Rise work coming from? • Who is losing out as a result? What impact is the increased spending and diversion of staff time having on other areas of service delivery, maintenance and capital works?

W3.1 Response

Response	
<p>The funding for these safety improvements comes from the council’s overall Housing Revenue Account (HRA).</p> <p>To manage this increase in work without impacting other services too significantly, we’ve brought in extra staff specifically for compliance.</p> <p>We’ve brought in additional resources for electrical compliance who are working across all properties, and we also have water safety contractors starting soon. This added capacity helps us tackle safety comprehensively, ensuring other services and improvements are not sidelined. Additionally, we’ve engaged two additional contractors to help address the backlog in repairs across all our portfolio. This way, we can keep other maintenance needs moving forward as we focus on safety upgrades.</p> <p>Our approach to fire and safety work is based on prioritizing the highest-risk areas first. While we’ve started with Large Panel System (LPS) blocks due to their priority, this focus is expanding as we take a broader, measured approach across our full portfolio. For example, we’re also actively working on senior housing blocks. We completed Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) across all properties, so we know exactly where the most urgent actions are needed and are tackling these first.</p> <p>Initially, our attention was on the Large Panel System blocks to ensure swift action where it was most necessary. Now, we are shifting to a more steady, long-term approach that allows us to roll out these safety improvements across our wider housing portfolio. Our “test and learn” method lets us improve as we go, so each stage of work benefits from prior learning.</p> <p>To further support this, we’ve brought in additional resources for electrical compliance who are working across all properties, and we also have water safety contractors starting soon. This added capacity helps us tackle safety comprehensively, ensuring other services and improvements are not sidelined.</p> <p>Our capital program and maintenance continues to operate as it always has, unaffected by these changes. In fact, through our current safety work, we are building a stronger base of information that will guide future capital works, helping us plan even more effectively.</p>	

While we can't do everything at once, please be assured that we're actively working to address housing needs across the board. By focusing on the highest risks first, we are building a safer, more sustainable housing environment for everyone.

W3.1 Action

Action	As above.
Start date	
End date	

W3.2 - Building Strong Residents Associations

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week of Area Panel	25 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Sam Nolan
Officer job title	Community Engagement Manager
Contact Details	sam.nolan@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.2 Question

Issue	How can the Community Engagement Team support stronger, more vibrant Residents' Associations? Are they still committed to doing this?
Background	<p>There are a diminishing number of Residents Associations. Those which are still operating are not getting the same level of support they have in the past. Residents who are interested in setting up Associations are not receiving sufficient encouragement and help, making it difficult to establish themselves.</p> <p>A further block to building a successful Association is how difficult it is to get things changed. Residents must continually raise the same issues, while seeing very little progress. It is hard to convince people that an Association is useful if there is no evidence of them being listened to or the Council addressing their concerns.</p>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is supporting and building Residents' Associations still a central part of the Community Engagement Team's work? • How can residents and the Community Engagement Team work together constructively to build stronger Residents' Associations? • How can Residents' Associations get action more quickly and effectively around the issues they raise?

W3.2 Response

Response

The Community Officers have six core priorities, this included support to residents to develop groups and TRA's.

1. Help residents to develop strong & active tenant-led groups that can be a representative voice, develop and deliver ideas and projects and are open and inclusive and actively seek to be diverse.
2. Develop the use of Community rooms and spaces so that they can be used for activities/events that improves the quality of life for people living in the area
3. Make sure residents have many varied area-based opportunities to share their views on housing and other council services, using many different approaches - events, fun, door knocking, surveys, meetings, going to existing activities etc
4. Build strong working relationships with other teams and area-based services and organisations, i.e. housing, TDC, family hubs, networking sessions to meet the aims of the Social Housing Regulation Act and the council plan
5. Work with residents to help them develop new skills and confidence.
6. Actively provide feedback to local communities, tenants and resident/tenant groups, community organisations, Area Panels, Cllrs, senior managers.

We have been very short of staff over the last year, and we are very pleased to announce that we will have a complete full team from the 5th November 2024. This means we have more support for tenants in each area. Contact details for the team are below. All Community Engagement Officers work approximately 18.5 hours in each area. This will make sure we have enough staff to work with any tenants that wish to set up a new group or promote the work of a current TRA.

West

Community Engagement Officers
Barry Winchester and Steph Mooney

Senior Community Engagement Officer
Hannah Barker

Central

Community Engagement Officers
Simon Bannister, Rich Wheeler and Hemangi Sharma

Senior Community Engagement Officer
Hannah Barker

East

Community Engagement Officers
Gabs Tiranti, Steph Mooney and Hemangi Sharma

Senior Community Engagement Officer
Keely McDonald

North

Community Engagement Officers
Clare Nicols, Barry Winchester and Simon Bannister

Senior Community Engagement Officer
Keely McDonald

Community engagement Manager
Sam Nolan – all areas of the city

Digital engagement
Ufuoma Itoje

Estate Development Budget
Lucy Beasley

Email addresses and phone numbers

Barry.winchester@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Steph.mooney@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Hemangi.sharma@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Simon.bannister@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Richard.wheeler@brighton-hove.gov.uk

gabriel.tiranti@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Clare.nicols@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Sam.nolan@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Keely.Mcdonald@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Lucy.beasley@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Hannah.barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

I would be happy to work with a group of residents to look at what issues are commonly getting stuck and see if there is a better way to report or resolve them.

W3.2 Action

Action	
Start date	
End date	

W3.3 - Staffing Levels at Community Engagement Team

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Sam Nolan
Officer job title	Community Engagement Manager
Contact Details	Sam.nolan@brighton-hove.gov.uk

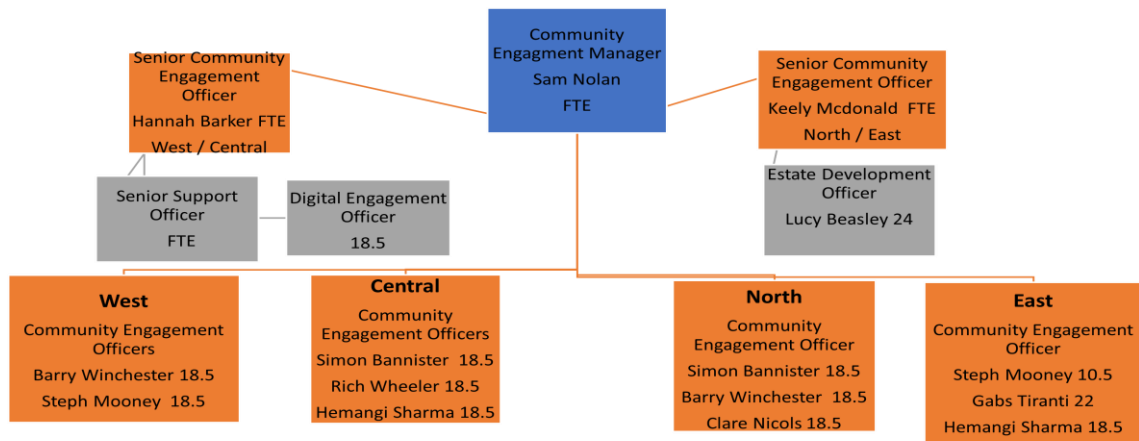
W3.3 Question

Issue	What staffing levels are the CET operating at?
Background	A lot of resident engagement meetings are cancelled or postponed at short notice. It can also be difficult to find staff available to attend Resident Association meetings or supervise AGMs. Residents have been told that these problems are down to a shortage of staff, and that with new appointments the situation will improve.
Request or Question	it was agreed to ask the following questions at Area Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many staff should the Community Engagement Team have if all posts were filled? • How many staff do they currently have? • How many staff are based at home and not available for face-to-face work with residents?

W3.3 Response

Response
<p>We have been very short of staff over the last year, especially over the last few months. We have had</p> <p>1 x Manager 2 full time Senior community engagement officers, 1 working remotely 1 full time community engagement officer (CEO), 2 part time CEOs, 1 x part time on extended leave EDB officer – part time.</p> <p>However, we are very pleased to announce that we will have a complete team from the 5th November 2024. The complete Community Engagement Team is made up of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x Full time manager 2 x Full time Senior Community Engagement Officers 3 x Full time Community Engagement Officers 4 x Part time Community Engagement Officers (1 x 30hrs per week, 2 x 18.5 hrs per week, 1 x 22hrs per week) 1 x Digital Engagement Officer 18.5 hrs per week 1 x Estate Development Officer 24hrs per week 1 x full time administrator <p>We do recognise that the Community Engagement Team is a face-to-face service and while we have appreciated Keely McDonald remaining in post this was always a temporary situation. Sadly, this means Keely will be leaving us in March 2025 and we will be recruiting to the post locally.</p>

Current Team Structure below



Sam Nolan

W3.3 Action

Action	No further actions
Start date	
End date	

N3.1 Repairs

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 Star/ city-wide issue
Date question raised	19 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Sam Crick
Officer job title	Operations Manager – Housing Repairs and Maintenance

Contact Details	sam.crick@brighton-hove.gov.uk
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N3.1 Question

Issue	Repair and other works are not being quality-checked.
Background	A Moulseccomb resident had two power sockets, and some light switches repaired. When the repair was completed, the resident discovered that tiles had been broken and the light switches had been installed upside down.
Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents would like to know what percentage of repairs/works to properties are assessed for quality upon completion of the repairs/works. If repairs/works are not being regularly quality-checked, how is the Council able to know whether the work is being completed to a decent standard, or whether a sub-contractor is meeting their contractual obligations?

N3.1 Response

Response
<p>In the case of low value, directly delivered responsive repair work our aim is to achieve 10% post inspections.</p> <p>If at any time a tenant has a complaint or concern about works carried out, they should contact the Repairs Helpdesk who will make arrangements for a visit to be undertaken to check works.</p>

N3.1 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

N3. 2 Estates in a state of disrepair

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 Star/ city-wide issue
Date question raised	19 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October

Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Officer job title	Estates Services Manager
Contact Details	chloe.mclaughlin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.2 Question

Issue	Estates are in a state of disrepair and neglect, caused by poor maintenance, uncollected rubbish/fly-tipping, little or no street cleaning, uncut grass, hedges and trees. Residents are frustrated at the poor levels of service they are receiving, in spite of increases in services charges and council tax.
Background	<p>All reported that their areas were poorly maintained and looking increasingly dirty and dilapidated. Street cleaners haven't been seen in the areas for months or years, and staff are not being replaced. Signage around estates is old and out-of-date. Residents are putting a lot of energy into keeping things clean & tidy in their areas but dirty streets, uncollected rubbish and the infestation of vermin and overgrown vegetation means that their efforts are fruitless (See also Item 4).</p> <p>It was noted that other cities/towns managed to be in a much better state (e.g. clean and tidy streets), and questions were raised as to why Brighton was failing to do the same.</p> <p>Hollingdean also reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a dripping tap by the garages, which is on Council land. This has been reported to Southern Water, at the last Area Panel, to Highways, and to Councillors but no action has been taken. • On the grass verge by Flat 8, Southmount, there is water coming up like a spring, which has been going on for 2 months. Again, this has been reported but nothing has been done and the Council are denying responsibility for fixing the issue. • A tree behind a block of flats near Southmount needs cutting back – the branches are banging against a resident's window.
Question	<p>Residents would like to know which department is responsible for what services and areas at the Council – i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the statutory responsibilities of Estate Services, City Parks & City Clean? Which areas do they each cover, what is their remit? • What is the caretaker's role? What are they meant to be doing? How often? • How many vacancies do Estate Services currently have for caretakers? How long have these positions been vacant?

N3.2 Response

Response

- **What are the statutory responsibilities of Estate Services, City Parks & City Clean? Which areas do they each cover, what is their remit?**

The Estates Service Team are responsible for the cleaning and minor maintenance of the council housing estates. Duties include cleaning common areas, removal of fly tipping from Housing land, graffiti removal, lock changes and minor repairs such as light bulb changes.

City Parks are responsible for maintaining areas such as allotments, parks, countryside, playgrounds and trees. Their duties include the general upkeep of these areas by carrying out tasks such as mowing and weeding and other ground maintenance tasks.

City Clean are responsible for the collection of refuse and recycling across the City. Their street's department looks after all the street cleansing, removing fly tips not on Housing land, jet washing and graffiti removal.

- **What is the caretaker's role? What are they meant to be doing? How often?**

The Estates Assistant's role is to keep the common areas of Council Housing blocks clean and tidy. Their duties include, but not exhaustive of, sweeping, mopping, hoovering, dusting and litter picking the immediate areas to the blocks.

If the block is a high rise and has a lift then an Estates Assistant will attend and carry out daily, weekly and monthly tasks. These are:

Daily tasks – Sweep and mop or Hoover ground floor entrance way. Clean accessible glass in entrance lobby. Sweep and mop lift. Check stairwells. Inspect bin areas.

Weekly tasks – Litter pick immediate areas. Clean and tidy bin areas.

Monthly tasks – Sweep and mop of Hoover landings. Clean all accessible internal glass. Clean all edges and ledges. Clean lift doors.

- **How many vacancies do Estate Services currently have for caretakers? How long have these positions been vacant?**

There are currently 2 vacancies for Estates Assistants. They have been vacant for 3 weeks. Recruitment is in progress.

N3.2 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

Residents Questions - 2-star, EAST Area

E2.1 Fly-tipping Bristol Estate

Area in city	East
Star rating	2 Star/ local area issue

Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Officer job title	Estates Service Manager
Contact Details	chloe.mclaughlin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E2.1 Question

Issue	Fly-tipping is rife around the communal bins at Bristol Estate.
Background	There used to be a mobile camera installed at Bristol Estate, which was effective in preventing people from fly-tipping. Now that the mobile camera is gone, fly-tipping is on the increase.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the Council install dummy cameras on the estate to deter fly-tipping, if real cameras cannot be installed? • Can the Council provide signage stating that there is CCTV, to help deter fly-tipping?

E2.1 Response

Response
<p>The next move for the mobile CCTV is due in December/January. Bristol Estate has been included in the areas to investigate for a camera. Chloe McLaughlin is meeting City Clean and the chair of BELTA on 8th November and will discuss any hot spot sites.</p> <p>Dummy cameras are not effective as a deterrent. Signage that says there is CCTV when there isn't CCTV although can deter for a short period, is known to be a dummy camera when footage is requested.</p> <p>Residents are encouraged to report fly tipping to the Estates Service Team on 01273 294769 or by email estatesserviceteam@brighton-hove.gov.uk.</p> <p>Any evidence that can be passed on that can identify the person or persons responsible for fly tipping should also be reported so that this information can be given to the Environmental Enforcement Team to investigate.</p>

E2.1 Action

Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

E2.2 Rubbish & Recycling

Area in city	East
Star rating	2 Star/ local area issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Officer job title	Estates Services Manager
Contact Details	estates Serviceteam@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E2.2 Question

Issue	Communal rubbish and recycling bins are often overflowing - rubbish and recycling piles up on the side, which means that rubbish often gets strewn about.
Background	The bins have limited capacity and get over-full quickly. Residents – particularly on Bristol Estate - noted that the current number of communal bins provided for the number of flats/residents in the area was insufficient and that collections weren't happening frequently enough.
Request	Can the Council either provide more communal bins to serve an area or increase the number of refuse collections to prevent this problem from occurring?

E2.2 Response

Response	The Estates Managers have a meeting on 8 th November 2024 with City Clean and the Chair of BELTA to look at bin capacity. A verbal update will be provided at the next Area Panel following the outcome of this meeting.
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E2.2 Action

Action	Meeting to discuss bin capacity and report back to Area Panel.
Start date	8 th November 24
End date	Next Area Panel

E2.3 Councillor Behaviour at East Area Panel Meeting

Area in city	East
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Star rating	2 Star/ local area issue
Date question raised	26 Sept 2024
Week Area Panels begin	18 Nov 2024
Deadline for officer response	Tuesday 22 nd October
Name of officer responding	Anthony Soyinka
Officer job title	Head of Democratic Services
Contact Details	democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E2.3 Question

Issue	A Woodingdean councillor attending the last Area Panel meeting spoke very rudely to one of the residents. It is not acceptable for councillors to speak to hard-working volunteer council residents in this manner.
Request	Councillors to be reminded that council residents are hard-working volunteers, trying to improve their areas, and they should be treated with respect.

E2.3 Response

Response	
<p>We're very sorry that you have had to complain about one of the Councillors that attended the meeting.</p> <p>All attendees, whether they are council staff, councillors or residents should be treated with respect and dignity in any interaction. This has been noted and a reminder will be included in the Chairs communications for Housing Area Panels on the expectations regarding behaviour and conduct at public meetings to facilitate respectful debate.</p> <p>Councillors and Housing staff really appreciate all the work that the volunteer council residents do for our community.</p>	

E2.3 Action

Action	To include in the running order for Area Panels.
Start date	November 2024
End date	

END