

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

2.00pm 10 JUNE 2025

MINUTES

Councillors: Mohammed Asaduzzaman, Tobias Sheard, Raphael Hill

Residents: Donna James (Chair), Barney Miller, Ian Beck, Desmond Jones, Jenny Simmons, Heather Hayes, Ian Knowles, Mitch Watkinson

Officers: Tom Trigwell (Community Engagement Administrative Assistant), Marie Button (Democratic Services Officer), Francis Mitchell (Democratic Services Officer), Geof Gage (Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management), Clare Nichols (Community Engagement Officer), Michael Raywood (Housing Manager), Simon Bannister (Community Engagement Officer), Harry Williams (Director of Housing People Services), Chloe McLoughlin (Housing Estates Manager), Sam Nolan (Community Engagement Manager), Grant Ritchie (Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance), Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), Mikila Beck (Interim Head of Repairs), Gabs Tiranti (Community Engagement Officer).

Press: Sarah Booker-Lewis

1 ELECTION OF COUNCILLOR CO-CHAIR

1.1 **RESOLVED:** Councillor Asaduzzaman was elected as Councillor Co-Chair.

2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

2.1 There were no apologies.

3 MINUTES AND ACTIONS

MINUTES

3.1 Barney Miller advised that his name had been written as plural on the first page and in items 3.6, 3.7 and 9.3.

3.2 Barney clarified that the record of item 4.7 was specifically about The Pines and should read 'Barney Miller stated that water had entered The Pines through the stairwell air vent and caused an accident, a resident slipped on the water that had got through and fell'.

3.3 Ian Beck advised that on p13, action ONA4 should read 'Hollingdean', not 'Hollingbury'.

3.4 Barney Miller advised that item 9.3 should read 'Canterbury Drive', not 'Canterbury Road'.

- 3.5 Michael Raywood advised that regarding 7.3, it wouldn't be Housing using drone enforcement, this is something the police will do or have done in the past.
- 3.6 **RESOLVED:** That subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 March 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

ACTIONS

- 3.7 The Chair confirmed that action ONA4, regarding street cleaners in Hollingdean, has been completed.
- 3.8 Regarding action NA1, concerning why Canterbury Drive and Bromley Road had not been thoroughly swept, Chloe McLoughlin has messaged Melissa for an update and Barney Miller advised that mechanical sweepers had been to the eastern cul-de-sac but were unable to get close enough to the road edges to sweep everything away from the double yellow lines.
- 3.9 The Chair confirmed that action NA2, regarding availability of maps that detail Council vs Highway roads, has been completed.
- 3.10 Regarding action NA3, concerning Emma Gilbert bringing the clutter rating presentation to a future meeting, the Chair advised that they were not at the agenda setting meeting so this one will need to be looked in to.
- 3.11 Regarding action NA4, concerning claims of anti-social/dangerous bike riding in the North Area, Ian Beck gave an update including incidents reported to the police, complaints received and an interview with Sussex Radio. Ian advised it is still a problem that needs resolving. Michael Raywood advised that police have been contacted and a complex case officer has been allocated.
- 3.12 The Chair confirmed that action NA5, relating to Jan Dowdell delivering an ASB presentation, has been completed and said the presentation was very helpful. Michael Raywood advised they are organising a presentation to Coldean.
- 3.13 Regarding action NA6, concerning Geof Gage following up regarding windows, the Chair confirmed that this was being left with Geof.

4 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT ANNUAL ROUNDUP - 2024/25

- 4.1 Justine Harris presented the report on Council Housing Performance.
- 4.2 Justine outlined reasons phone calls may not have been answered in response to Ian Beck's question regarding an 82-year-old resident without a computer who was unable to get through to customer services by phone.
- 4.3 Barney Miller asked when they will get an idea of how many new homes will be built for 2025-26.
- 4.4 Justine discussed that new homes will be a combination of purchased properties, buy-backs and new builds and that the next big newbuild developments will be in Moulsecoomb, Swanborough Drive and Edward Street. Justine explained that over

the next year there are no new big developments planned but they are expecting 125 buy-backs over 2025-26.

5 HEALTH & SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATE

- 5.1 Grant Ritchie presented a Health and Safety Compliance update.
- 5.2 Grant answered a question from Barney Miller concerning fire doors at The Pines, confirming that they are going to be replacing the fire resistant doors with newly certificated doors and frames. Grant advised that they estimate the work will be able to start at The Pines in September and residents will be written to.
- 5.3 The Chair asked if the tenant handbooks have been updated with the fire safety regulations or with information on what to do if there is a fire in a flat. Grant Ritchie and Geof Gage confirmed that parts had been updated and that every October tenants are sent a letter regarding fire safety in their flats.
- 5.4 Sam Nolan advised that Community Engagement are going to be doing some work with residents to update the tenant handbooks.
- 5.5 Mikila Beck asked that all tenants report if the smoke detection in their home isn't working as the council are responsible for repairing it.
- 5.6 Grant Ritchie advised that smoke detectors can be tested by pressing the test button on them.
- 5.7 Residents discussed the new smoke detectors and Grant Ritchie advised that they are being rolled out over the next two years.
- 5.8 Barney Miller raised the issue of fire safety signs stating 'stay put until told otherwise' only being put up after the fire at The Pines. Grant Ritchie advised that of the approx. 6000 signs discussed, only about 800 of them were not specific about staying put. Grant confirmed that thousands of them have been changed.
- 5.9 Grant advised that the advice is there to help people feel confident and that the expectation is people use common sense and intuition to make the best decision they can on the day.
- 5.10 Residents answered Harry Williams' question regarding their experience of improvements in repairs, discussing that they are being handled a lot better than they were a couple of years ago and that it is helpful to be able to submit pictures and send emails.
- 5.11 Barney Miller raised that a resident in The Pines had reported a main front door not working in December and as of last month, this had not been fixed. Barney also discussed that due to the list of inappropriate people being housed, there can be also safety considerations within the need for repairs to be completed.

6 RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY - HIGH RISE

- 6.1 Geof Gage gave an update on the Resident Engagement Strategy for high-rise blocks.

6.2 There were no questions.

7 BREAK

8 RESIDENT QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 STAR

- 8.1 The Chair read out the question and response for N2.1 regarding poor and/or illegal parking causing obstructions to pedestrians.
- 8.2 Ian Beck discussed the lack of parking enforcement in Hollingdean which has been reported multiple times. Justine Harris advised there was a consultation in Hollingdean a couple of years ago so they will find out the plan for the area.
- 8.3 Mitch Watkinson advised that this is also an issue at Bates Estate.
- 8.4 Des Jones discussed how lack of enforcement can cause health and safety issues when ambulances are not able to get access to residents' properties.
- 8.5 The Chair advised they are not sure if Councillor Muten responded to the question but would try and find out.
- 8.6 Geof advised he would suggest a walk-around with Benjamin Tedder on each estate.
- 8.7 The Chair advised this question should be left as ongoing.
- 8.8 The Chair discussed that question N2.2 regarding motorbike gangs in Hollingdean and other areas causing noise and other issues is ongoing and being dealt with.
- 8.9 The Chair introduced question N2.3 regarding lack of information about the fire on Bates Estate, confirming that they will never know how the fire started but that they need to think about what to do going forward.
- 8.10 Grant Ritchie confirmed they will provide an update on the common way repairs.
- 8.11 The Chair advised that the fire brigade is happy to speak to people about fire safety if needed.
- 8.12 In response to Jenny Simmons' concerns that fires seem to be on the increase, Grant Ritchie reassured residents that the two fires were similar but this is only co-incidental and there has not been any increase in fires in council properties in the last few years.
- 8.13 Grant confirmed that as the fire started in a leaseholder's flat, the findings of the fire service's investigation won't be shared with them. They advised they will speak to the fire service to find out if there is anything that can be shared.
- 8.14 Councillor Sheard discussed that they should exercise caution when discussing the cause of the fire as it doesn't relate to any council processes and what happened could have been personal to the individual living in that property.

- 8.15 Grant Ritchie explained that if there were any systematic concerns, such as property condition or design, they would be told and so residents can be reassured it is not an endemic issue.
- 8.16 The Chair introduced question N2.4 relating to the new inner front doors being installed across Bates Estate and confirmed they are more than happy with the progress and thinks the team and doors are amazing.
- 8.17 The Chair introduced 3-star question N3.1 regarding Tenants'/Residents' Associations in Brighton & Hove.
- 8.18 In response to Barney Miller's question regarding whether the council recognises any associations under the Landlord & Tenant Act, Sam Nolan confirmed that to their knowledge they have never had a formal request.
- 8.19 Barney informed the Chair that they were not aware they could request voluntary recognition from the council and they had been told they would have to apply to the first-tier tribunal property chamber for a certificate of recognition.
- 8.20 Sam Nolan advised that until the question was asked, they hadn't done the research to know the answer in that level of detail and that it would need some work for them to know how to respond.
- 8.21 In response to Des Jones' question regarding whether any of the small groups who represent their own little areas are legally recognised, Sam Nolan advised that none of the associations are legally recognised, but they are recognised by the council as representing their communities. Sam advised that some of the smaller groups are recognised by the council if they work with community engagement and meet the minimum standards.
- 8.22 The Chair advised that they wanted to touch on one of the questions from Central Area. She discussed the training session given by Jan Dowdell and Michael Raywood about anti-social behaviour and said this is really helpful. The Chair expressed their hope that they may be able to roll out more training in the future.
- 8.23 Sam Nolan advised that they have also delivered Mental Health First Aid training if this is of interest.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Grant Ritchie announced he is retiring and introduced Mikila Beck as the new interim Head of Repairs.
- 9.2 The Chair thanked Grant on behalf of the panel.
- 9.3 Sam Nolan advised that this years' tenant's conference is being held on Saturday 13 September in Hangleton and that they are going to put a call out to tenant and resident associations to do something in their areas in that week. Sam stated this will be publicised as part of the conference week and that there will be activities across the city.

- 9.4 Ian Beck raised issues regarding waste collection in Tavistock Down. Ian advised he has asked the estate cleaning team to clear up after the waste collectors but this is not being done.
- 9.5 Mitch Watkinson advised they have been having the same issue and they have been told the trucks do carry the equipment to pick up the additional rubbish but this is not being actioned. Mitch confirmed they are trying to arrange a walkabout so officers can see the issue.
- 9.6 The Chair added that the estates services cleaner for Bates Estate is incredible and it shouldn't be left to him to clean up the mess.
- 9.7 Des Jones discussed that they either need a special collection or they need a road sweeper to attend after the waste collections.
- 9.8 Geof Gage advised that Benjamin Tedder is going to contact the Chair and Ian Beck to arrange a walkaround to see the parking issues.
- 9.9 In response to Mitch Watkinson's query, Chloe McLoughlin confirmed the CCTV they referred to was now up and that dropped curb signs are the responsibility of Highways.
- 9.10 In response to Barney Miller's enquiry about the estate cleaners in their area, Chloe McLoughlin confirmed that it has always been a one-person site.

The meeting concluded at 3.39pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of