

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 17 JUNE 2025

MINUTES

Councillors: Councillor Ellen McLeay (Co-Chair)

Residents: Lee Catt (Co-Chair), Emma Salcombe, Chris Vine, Martin Cunningham, Heidi Walker, Pippin Boardman, Eileen Stewart, Natasha Burney, Rosemary Johnson, Jason Williams, Tony Price, Nick Wood, Christine Parrott.

Officers: Tom Trigwell (Community Engagement Administrative Assistant), Geof Gage (Head of Housing, Investment & Asset Management), Emma Darlaston-Williams (Project Manager – Building Safety Team), Mikila Beck (Interim Head of Repairs), Grant Ritchie (Head of Housing Repairs & Maintenance), Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), Hannah Barker (Senior Community Engagement Officer), Simon Bannister (Community Engagement Officer), Barry Winchester (Community Engagement Officer), Martin Reid (Director of Homes & Investment), Francis Mitchell (Democratic Services Officer), Marie Button (Democratic Services Officer).

Press: Sarah Booker-Lewis

1 ELECTION OF RESIDENT AND COUNCILLOR CO-CHAIR

1.1 Councillor Ellen McLeay was elected as Councillor co-Chair.

1.2 Lee Catt was elected resident co-Chair.

2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

2.1 There were apologies from Linda King (Chair of Essex Residents' Association), Councillor Theresa Mackey, Councillor Alison Thomson and Mel Denier.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 There were none.

4 MINUTES AND ACTIONS

MINUTES

4.1 Rosemary Johnson advised that on page one of the previous minutes, under item 3, subheading C2.3, they were pointing out that there were samples available at the housing office and suggested that Hampshire Court request that they be brought round so they can have a look.

- 4.2 Rosemary advised that at the top of page three, the reference to the minor works related to something specific and does not relate to all minor works.
- 4.3 Martin Cunningham advised that on page one, under item 3, subheading C2.3, it should be 'Hampshire Court', not 'Hampshire Lodge'.
- 4.4 **RESOLVED:** That subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 March 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

ACTIONS

- 4.5 The Chair confirmed there were seven completed actions and two ongoing.
- 4.6 For action OCA1, concerning arranging a meeting with Highways to discuss drains in Central Area, Emma Salcombe advised that this was also about pathways and parking obstructions and confirmed they had formally requested a meeting with Highways.
- 4.7 For action OCA3, regarding Community Engagement liaising with residents about the High Rise Action Group, there were no updates.
- 4.8 For action OCA4, regarding arranging a special budget meeting being arranged for residents, there were no updates.
- 4.9 For action OCA7, regarding the possibility of providing residents with SGN inspection reports, Grant Ritchie confirmed the SGN don't do a report so there is nothing to share but they are waiting to hear if they can go and see the installation.
- 4.10 For action CA1, regarding Geof Gage following up with Lee Catt soakaway, Emma Salcombe confirmed they would speak to Grant Ritchie after the meeting.
- 4.11 For action CA2, regarding Geof Gage following up with Eileen Steward on c.2.2 windows, Geof confirmed they haven't arranged the meeting yet but they will.
- 4.12 For action CA3, regarding Emma Salcombe requesting a meeting with officers about ASB victims, Emma confirmed they had a meeting with John Evans and they have also spoken to Community Engagement about setting up training on anti-social behaviour and the support available for residents. Emma is working with Justine Harris on how best to proceed with this so it is still ongoing.
- 4.13 For action CA4, regarding the broken fence on Somerset Street, residents confirmed this has been completed.
- 4.14 For CA5, regarding the removed ambulance bay at Somerset Point, Eileen Stewart discussed accessibility and safety issues caused for residents by the removal of the ambulance bay and clarified that they are asking for either the reinstatement of the ambulance bay or for one of the parking spaces to be removed.
- 4.15 Justine Harris advised they would pick this up with Geof Gage afterwards.

5 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT ANNUAL ROUND UP 2024/25

- 5.1 Martin Reid presented the report on Housing Performance.
- 5.2 Justine Harris answered a question regarding why some helpdesk calls are not answered, advising that the main reason is that some people call and hang up before the call can be answered potentially due to hearing the message covering what can be done online.
- 5.3 In response to comments regarding solar panels working well, Martin Reid advised that they are looking at ways they can further increase home efficiency.
- 5.4 Natasha Burney raised concerns about the same repairs needing to be done multiple times. Natasha discussed safety concerns with a recent repair, including glass being left at their property and the cost implications of multiple visits being needed.
- 5.5 Martin Reid advised that they are looking at how they can engage better with tenants to avoid repeat calls and looking at working with leaseholders to track repairs and get ahead of what may come up in each block.
- 5.6 Martin advised he would ask Geof Gage to pick up on the items left in Natasha's roof.
- 5.7 Residents discussed charges for repeated repairs and reimbursements for leaseholders.
- 5.8 In response to Martin Cunningham raising that they have a repair that has been outstanding for 5 years, Mikila Beck and Lee Catt advised they would get the details of this after the meeting.
- 5.9 Martin Reid discussed that the residents are the council's eyes and ears and if things are being repeated, they need to know. Martin confirmed that if they are made aware of repeat charges to leaseholders, they will reimburse the whole block if they accept that a mistake has been made.
- 5.10 In response to Natasha Burney's question regarding reimbursement or compensation for council tenants for services they are not getting, Martin Reid advised that this is dealt with differently as leaseholders are billed directly.
- 5.11 Rosemary Johnson asked if any leaseholders would like to volunteer to be the first to trial going through the spreadsheet to spot errors, to let Simon Plotkins know.
- 5.12 In response to a resident question regarding plans to bring solar panels to Craven Vale, Geof Gage confirmed they would check on this and Martin Reid advised that they are targeting solar panels in locations where energy efficiency is not good.
- 5.13 In response to Rosemary Johnson's question, Martin Reid confirmed that there are 21 new council homes at St Aubyns and overall there have been 95 new council homes bought this year.

6 HEALTH & SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATE

- 6.1 Martin Reid gave a Health & Safety Compliance update.

6.2 In response to residents' questions, Martin confirmed that all commonway electricals are being re-tested, prioritising high-rise blocks, conversions and seniors. Martin also clarified that the water safety element of the report relates to the shared water systems.

6.3 There were no further questions.

7 RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY - HIGH RISE

7.1 Geof Gage gave a verbal update on the resident engagement strategy.

7.2 There were no questions.

8 ASB REPORTING AND SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS AND RESIDENT ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES FOLLOW-UP

8.1 The Chair confirmed this was covered in the update provided earlier.

9 BREAK

10 RESIDENT QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 STARS

10.1 The Chair confirmed that question C2, regarding fencing at Essex Place, has been completed.

10.2 The Chair introduced question C3.1 regarding the use of the residents' car parks by builders.

10.3 Residents and officers discussed the commercialising of spaces, the abuse of visitors permits, getting parking tickets when they cannot access their own parking spaces and the need for bringing back the free half an hour parking session.

10.4 Geof Gage advised they would look into setting up a meeting with Benjamin Tedder and One Parking Solutions.

10.5 The Chair introduced question C3.2 regarding support around mental health issues.

10.6 Residents discussed the lack of at-home support available for individuals leaving hospital following treatment for their mental health.

10.7 Justine Harris raised that the new neighbourhood officers will help in giving the council a presence in the estates and encouraged residents to raise issues with them.

10.8 Hannah Barker advised that if there is any training the Residents' Associations would like to do, they can talk to Community Engagement as they can help with arranging it.

10.9 Barry Winchester discussed the tenant celebration day in Hangleton in September and suggested they could email Emma Salcombe to plan a number of training and listening sessions so they can further understand what tenants need in their homes.

- 10.10 The Chair introduced question C3.3 regarding communication and delays when lifts are broken.
- 10.11 Residents discussed that the response provided does not accurately reflect what happened.
- 10.12 Justine Harris apologised and advised that the response given is what should have happened in this circumstance rather than what did happen and suggested that a clarified response is brought back to the next meeting.
- 10.13 Pippin Boardman discussed the issues caused by having lifts that only serve every other floor or that are out of action and the impact that this has on residents lives.
- 10.14 In response to Emma Salcombe's question concerning when Warwick Mount will have two lifts that serve every floor, Geof Gage advised that this is being tendered at the moment and they will provide an update.
- 10.15 Emma Salcombe raised that they would like to discuss question E3.1 from the East area regarding citywide and service improvement groups being halted. Emma asked when residents would get their Senior Housing, Home Move and Resident Inspector groups back.
- 10.16 Hannah Barker advised that they don't believe they are going to bring the groups back, discussing the low attendance at meetings and the need to provide a broader range of ways for tenants to interact with the landlord.
- 10.17 Residents discussed their concerns regarding the stopping of these groups and Emma asked why residents are not being listened to in relation to this.
- 10.18 In response to Lee Catt's question regarding a hybrid solution, Hannah Barker suggested this can be contained in the new structure, and they need to provide other ways for residents to engage within their capacity and resources.
- 10.19 Justine Harris advised that the next steps laid out in the response include an engagement workshop in June and they will need to come back with an update on this.
- 10.20 Barry Winchester discussed expectations and participation from different communities. Barry raised the idea of residents setting up their own groups with support from officers.
- 10.21 In response to the Chair's question regarding whether resident-led groups would be recognised by the Council, Barry advised that this is something that would need to be looked into.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 In response to Emma Salcombe's question regarding where they are with the laundry review, Geof Gage advised they would find out and come back with an answer.
- 11.2 Grant Ritchie announced he is retiring and introduced Mikila Beck as the new interim Head of repairs.

11.3 Pippin Boardman welcomed Lee Catt as co-Chair and thanked Emma Salcombe for their work over the last few years.

11.4 The Chair echoed Pippin's thanks to Emma.

The meeting concluded at 4.13pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of