

Residents Questions, 2- star North Area

N2.1 - Anti-social behaviour and Housing Allocations Policy

Area in city	North
Star rating	2 star/ Local area issue
Date question raised	27 November 25
Week of Area Panel	9 March 26
Deadline for officer response	05 February 2026
Name of officer responding	Michael Raywood
Officer job title	Housing Manager
Contact Details	Michael.raywood@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N2.1 Question

Issue	A resident said that the Police and the Council need to work together better on ASB issues.
Background	Residents said they felt let down by the Police's lack of action when ASB is report to them. The meeting agreed that it would be useful to have representatives from both the Police and Allocations present at the next Area Panel meeting.
Request or Question	Residents would like a chance to address some of their concerns directly with a representative from the Police and representative from Allocations at the next Area Panel.

N2.1 Response

Response

Tenancy Services area teams meet with the police monthly (at cluster meetings) to discuss and review cases concerning antisocial behaviour, exchange necessary information and devise an action plan to address the issues pertaining to each individual antisocial behaviour case in the area. Each meeting averages 12 – 15 cases which are led by housing officers and jointly worked where necessary with the police.

When antisocial behaviour is also a criminal offence, then enforcement action is determined by the police in obtaining evidence to the criminal standard. In such instances the Housing teams follow the police lead whilst implementing risk management strategies to minimise risks to the victim.

In addition, there are numerous multi agency meetings that the police attend across the city such as the Hate and Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference (HASBRAC) and, Joint Action Group meetings (JAG).

To address the questions and concerns raised by representatives of the north area, a member of Sussex Police has been invited to attend the next area meeting.

The allocation of property is determined in accordance with the council's choice-based lettings policy, where individuals' bid on properties of their choice as opposed to being allocated a property that becomes available across the city that meets their needs.

Where there happens to be a history of antisocial behaviour in a particular area or, a prospective tenant is susceptible to being a victim of antisocial behaviour, the council may apply a temporary sensitive let protocol to that area or for that specific person. This means that the consideration will be given to the impact that an incoming tenant may have on the wider community.

To address the questions and concerns raised by representatives of the north area, a council officer from the allocations team will attend the next area meeting.

N2.2 - Schedule of works (Highcroft Lodge)

Area in city	North
Star rating	2 star/ Local area issue
Date question raised	27 th November 25
Week of Area Panel	9 th March 26
Deadline for officer response	{Housing completes}
Name of officer responding	{Housing completes}
Officer job title	{Housing completes}
Contact Details	{Housing completes} @brighton-hove.gov.uk

N2.2 Question

Issue	A resident said that Highcroft Lodge reported that there are various problems with the windows in their block – some don't open and some don't close.
Background	Resident said they don't know when the windows are due for replacement.
Request or Question	Highcroft Lodge residents request copies of the schedule of works.

N2.2 Response

Response
<p>I am sorry to hear of the window problems reported at Highcroft Lodge. We are in the process of obtaining fee proposals from consultants to prepare specifications of works and cost analysis to allow us to consider major works at Highcroft Lodge which will include replacement of roofs, windows, external repointing and decorations. We anticipate the reports and specifications to be ready for June 2026 we will then seek budget approval for the project and undertake a tendering exercise with approved contractors. We will be writing to residents mid 2026 with a programme and our proposals once we have the specifications completed and a budget indication.</p> <p>Geof Gage, Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management - Projects</p>

N2.3 - Schedule of regular maintenance

Area in city	North
Star rating	2 star/ Local area issue
Date question raised	27 th November 25
Week of Area Panel	9 th March 26
Deadline for officer response	{Housing completes}
Name of officer responding	{Housing completes}
Officer job title	{Housing completes}

Contact Details	{Housing completes} @brighton-hove.gov.uk
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N2.3 Question

Issue	Residents felt there should be a schedule of regular maintenance, such as cleaning out gutters or checking the condition of mortar, and that the Council should adopt a preventative rather than reactive approach to repairs.
Background	
Request or Question	<p>Residents would like to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Council have a regular maintenance schedule or a schedule of inspection of their properties? • If not, would the Council consider taking this suggestion on board?

N2.3 Response

Response
<p>The council’s Housing Repairs & Maintenance service introduced a gutter clearance programme in April 2024/25- the contractor has a list of all our properties in our housing stock including blocks to attend and clear and identify and repair any gutter related issues during the visit. The programme has continued for 2025/26 and has been successful in reducing the volume of repairs reported relating to issues with blocked or broken guttering. This in turn has reduced demand on the roofing team, freeing them up to focus on more essential roofing repairs.</p> <p>Following the success of this proactive programme of maintenance, the service is also reviewing the creation of new programme for the clearance of drainage. This would be limited to areas where we know that we have a seasonal issue where leaves block rainwater drainage and cause issues with blockages and overflowing. The service is currently in the process of identifying the problem areas from historic repairs data and once this has been compiled it will be reviewed to assess what level of resource will be required. The intention is to have this live by Autumn 2026 in line with the seasonal requirement for this kind of proactive drainage clearance.</p> <p>Our Housing Investment and Asset Management Service is expanding the breadth and accuracy of our stock condition information, this will start June 2026. This will increase the number of surveys carried out across our housing portfolio, including assessments of external walls, roofs, and the overall condition of properties. The data gathered through these surveys will support the planning of future preventative maintenance works, such as those delivered through our Planned programmes of works.</p>

Residents Questions, 3-star North Area

N3.1 - Communication

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	27 th November 25
Week of Area Panel	9 th March 26
Deadline for officer response	{Housing completes}
Name of officer responding	{Housing completes}
Officer job title	{Housing completes}
Contact Details	{Housing completes} @brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.1 Question

Issue	<p>A resident said that across Council departments and services, communication with residents is poor – residents either don't hear back in a timely fashion (waiting months for responses and having to follow up on issues multiple times), don't receive updates as promised or are given stock responses about what 'should' happen, rather than what 'will' happen. Inter-departmental communication and coordination also seems to be poor.</p>
Background	<p>Examples of communication issues given a resident:</p> <p>Sylvan Hall RA requested information regarding major and planned works for their blocks. However they did not get a response for months, then suddenly got a mass of information, which was then too much to go through in time for their residents' meeting.</p> <p>ASB: residents being promised regular updates on ASB cases in their area but not getting this in a timely manner. It was pointed out that, in some cases, it is crucial for those affected by ASB to receive updates, as changes in the perpetrator's circumstances can cause them to act out and residents need to be forewarned.</p>

	<p>Cllr Trevor Muten promised residents that he would come out and visit neighbourhoods affected by anti-social parking and other highways-related issues in August/September. Residents still have not heard back. At the September North Area RO meeting, a Hollingdean resident reported how lack of communication between Council departments resulted in a heavy-handed approach to getting access to a resident's flat.</p>
<p>Request or Question</p>	<p>Action: 1 stars (H) <i>North residents should email Barney with examples of communication issues with the Council: hbarneymiller@icloud.com</i></p> <p>Action: 3 stars (HHH) Residents would like the opportunity to discuss issues of communication at the next Area Panel and to talk about what the problems are and what the remedies might be. The North RO meeting agreed that Barney (Sylvan Hall) would represent North residents and be the spokesperson for this issue.</p>

N3.1 Response

<p>Response</p>
<p>– With regard to communication on major works at Sylvan Hall, we have apologised to residents for the delay in our replies to major works queries and our communication regarding the proposed works at the Sylvan Hall Estate. . We do strive to advise residents of our major and planned works in advance and generally this may start 12+ months before start on site and will include advance pre-engagement including FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) information which is followed up as prestart the project (tendering etc) proceeds. Our engagement is with the residents directly involved with the proposed works i.e. on a block-by-block basis. In addition to sharing the information requested from the Sylvan Hall Resident Association concerning proposed works to their homes and other matters, officers also attended the Resident Association AGM. We would be happy to discuss this issue ahead of the next Area Panel and attend a future Resident Association meeting if this would be useful. Geof Gage, Head of Housing Investment & Asset Management - Projects</p>

N3.2 - Bins, street furniture & cars obstructing pavements

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	27 th November 25
Week of Area Panel	9 th March 26
Deadline for officer response	4 th February 2026
Name of officer responding	Max Smith
Officer job title	Operations Manager
Contact Details	Max.smith@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.2 Question

Issue	A resident said that pavements are frequently obstructed by bins, cars and other street furniture, preventing pedestrian access, in particular those with mobility issues or those with prams or in wheelchairs.
Background	<p>A Moulsecoomb resident reported that both individual household and communal wheelie bins were being left on narrow pavements, which meant blocked access to people with mobility issues and prams, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road and putting their lives in danger. Cars are also frequently parked across pavements.</p> <p>Residents in other areas reported similar issues.</p> <p>Theresa informed the meeting that the Older People's Council was picking up on this problem as a city-wide equalities issue.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that policy and reinforcement were needed on a city-wide scale and across services to address this issue as much as possible.</p>
Request or Question	<p>Residents would like to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do Environmental Services have a policy for their staff which requires communal bins to be placed and re-placed in areas that won't obstruct pedestrian access (e.g. not on pavements)? If there is such a policy, why is this not being reinforced?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the Council send out letters to residents to remind them to remove their wheelie bins and recycling bins from the pavement as soon as possible as this blocks access?
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N3.2 Response

Response
<p>Brighton & Hove City Council manages issues relating to household wheelie bins and recycling boxes left on pavements through its Environmental Enforcement Framework. The framework sets out the standards and enforcement tools available, such as advice, warning letters and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to address environmental issues affecting accessibility and public spaces.</p> <p>In relation to residential bins left obstructing the highway, the Council has already adopted a proportionate three stage enforcement process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial Visit: Environmental Enforcement Officers visit the reported property to assess whether a bin left on the pavement is causing an obstruction or nuisance and whether there is suitable off street storage space available. 2. First Letter: If an obstruction is identified, residents are sent a letter explaining how bins should be stored and requesting that they are moved off the pavement between collections. 3. Second Warning Letter & Potential FPN: If the request is ignored, a second warning letter is issued. Continued non-compliance may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) being issued. FPNs are only used where earlier stages fail to resolve the problem, in line with the Environmental Enforcement Framework’s proportionate approach. <p>The Council can and does send letters as part of this established process when bins are reported as causing obstruction.</p> <p>Reporting Issues If you wish to report bins left on pavements, please submit the details to: EnvironmentalEnforcement@brighton-hove.gov.uk This will allow the Environmental Enforcement Team to initiate the formal assessment and, where appropriate, issue reminder or warning letters to residents.</p>

Residents Questions – 3-star, Central, East and West Areas

C3.1 - Fire Safety in Sheltered Schemes

Area in city	Central
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Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	4 th December 25
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 26
Deadline for officer response	{Housing completes}
Name of officer responding	{Housing completes}
Officer job title	{Housing completes}
Contact Details	{Housing completes} @brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.1 Question

Issue	There were concerns about fire safety in Sheltered Schemes.
Background	
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to ask for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fire safety policies for Sheltered Schemes • Information on what is done to ensure these policies are carried out and to reassure residents that their homes are safe. <p>☆☆☆ to Agenda Setting meeting and for inclusion on all Area Panel agendas</p>

C3.1 Response

Response
<p>All council seniors' schemes have a Fire Risk Assessment, fire door checks are ongoing, and relevant surveys have been completed. There has also been a significant amount of fire safety works completed on our homes, and this is ongoing. We would require more specifics about the concerns being raised to be able to offer a specific response. We would be happy to engage directly with seniors housing scheme residents and their Residents Associations around any general or specific fire safety concerns arising in their homes.</p>

C3.2 -Independent handling of discrimination complaints

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	4 th December 25
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 26
Deadline for officer response	05.02.26
Name of officer responding	Victoria Paling
Officer job title	Customer Experience Lead
Contact Details	Victoria.paling@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.2 Question

Issue	A resident said that all complaints about discrimination and victimisation should always be handled by an independent and impartial officer.
Background	Residents raised about officers continuing to be involved in cases when a resident has made a complaint about discrimination or victimisation against that officer.
Request or Question	Concerns were raised about officers continuing to be involved in cases when a resident has made a complaint about discrimination or victimisation against that officer.

C3.2 Response

Response
<p>Complaints (including those about specific named officers, and allegations of discrimination) are investigated in line with the council's complaint procedure, which is aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code and the best practice guidance provided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.</p> <p>Complaints at Stage 1 (initial stage) are handled by the department being complained about, giving the opportunity for any errors to be identified and rectified and for a full explanation to be given.</p>

Should a customer remain dissatisfied following their Stage 1 response, they can escalate their complaint to Stage 2 of the process, where the complaint will be considered by the council's customer feedback team who are independent of service areas. If the customer wishes to escalate their complaint further, then their next step is to contact the relevant independent Ombudsman who may decide to investigate the complaint further.

C3.3 -Preservation and integrity of records

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	4 th December 25
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 26
Deadline for officer response	05.02.26
Name of officer responding	Karen Hooper; Victoria Palling
Officer job title	Information Governance Advisor; Customer Experience Lead
Contact Details	Customerfeedback@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.3 Question

Issue	Residents said that they believe systems for keeping secure records relevant to complaints, information requests, and internal investigations do not appear to be working.
Background	Residents have had the experience of information and reports they've given to housing officers not being available and no longer on Council records.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What systems are in place to ensure that records from residents are kept secure? How can they be improved? • Can the Council confirm that all original records relevant to complaints, information requests, and internal investigations are preserved in their original form and are not destroyed, altered, or withheld, in line with statutory requirements for public authorities?

C3.3 Response

Response

Security of records is maintained via password protection, single sign-on/ multi-factor authentication, access audit trails, patch updates, penetration testing and user audits, etc. Staff are trained on data protection and cyber security.

We continually monitor and consider how to make improvements to security of records, learning from breaches and complaints.

Records are usually preserved in their original form. If an amendment is requested by the data subject (resident), this change will be clearly noted. If a staff member wishes to add comment to data they will make their clear it is their opinion, or that there is additional/ alternative information noted.

The published [Housing service area privacy notice](#) provides a range of information on data processing and includes retention. The internal BHCC Records Retention Schedule states retention timescales for Housing data is six years regarding homelessness services, housing applications, housing enforcement, housing repairs, selective licensing and houses in multiple occupation. Right to Buy data is held for 12 yrs. Each Housing Service has local arrangements for retention periods of specific data sets.

Records from residents are stored on the applicable client records management database (for each service), with paper documents saved in our document archive, or electronic documents held in the electronic document storage location.

It may be that certain information is restricted to specific members of staff if it is sensitive/ confidential.

The General Data Protection Regulations states data subjects (ie residents) have certain rights to access their own information, but it also allows the Council exemptions to disclosing data for particular reasons ie right to be informed or right of access may not apply if relates to crime prevention, legal proceedings, regulatory functions or legal obligations.

Information requests submitted to the Information Rights Team are coordinated by them but answered by local teams who have specific knowledge. Some information requests are received and responded to by local teams, without Info Rights oversight.

Internal Investigations are managed by the service managers.

Complaints records are retained in full and in accordance with the [published Customer feedback privacy notice](#). These are held on a central database accessible by the councils' customer feedback team who are responsible for management of the complaint function across all council services. Any information gathered or received in relation to a formal complaint are held on this system which has a full audit trail function, including views as well as edits, so any amendments to records (including deletion) are held within that system.

W3.1 - Maintenance of rubbish collection vehicles

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2026
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 2026
Deadline for officer response	4 th February 2026
Name of officer responding	Kumbirai Mukombe
Officer job title	Head of Fleet Management
Contact Details	Kumbirai.mukombe@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.1 Question

Issue	A resident said that avoidable delays to rubbish and recycling collections happen because lorries are off the road waiting for repair. In the first week in January there were 14 lorries out of action.
Background	A resident said that a lack of forward planning and insufficient resources are making the rubbish and recycling collections inefficient and inadequate. Collection vehicles are often out of action, waiting for parts and repairs. Recently, staff at St Richards have had a constant stream of local residents complaining about their bin collections. There is a good refuse collection team in the area who work hard but are at the sharp end of complaints from residents. This isn't fair on the refuse workers, when the problem is due to poor management and forward planning.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done to make forward planning and management of the collection vehicles more effective? • Why are more spare parts not kept in stock? • Why is there not regular maintenance of the collection vehicles? • Are new vehicles being purchased and the stock modernised?

W3.1 Response

Response
<p>Thank you for your enquiry. Residents can be reassured that a lot of forward planning and management goes into the maintenance of our vehicles. Servicing and maintenance intervals are scheduled using our electronic maintenance system, Blue Crystal.</p> <p>We have an on-site store that holds a large number of spare parts. Sometime parts have to be ordered in when required. We have a number of different vehicles, each with hundreds of different parts and holding every part is not economically viable. The supply chain for parts can be complex and when we order parts from vehicle manufacturers, it may take days or weeks because the parts maybe on back order with their own suppliers.</p> <p>We are legally required to ensure that all our vehicles are regularly maintained. Each vehicle is inspected in the workshop every six weeks and get serviced as per manufacturer's requirements. There is also a legal requirement for our drivers to check their vehicles daily for any defects which they report to the workshop for repairs.</p> <p>The council has allocated £2.5M annually for vehicle procurement and we currently have vehicles on order. We however need to understand that the vehicles we operate have a lead time of 50 to 54 weeks. We understand that our fleet average age is higher that we would like and we are working hard to remedy this, but it will take some time.</p>

W3.2 - Problems with out of hours repairs service

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2026
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 2026
Deadline for officer response	{Housing completes}
Name of officer responding	{Housing completes}
Officer job title	{Housing completes}
Contact Details	{Housing completes} @brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.2 Question

Issue	Residents said that they believe they are being refused repairs to heating and hot water by the out-of-hours service. This appears to be a problem with the system, not an individual incident.
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<p>Background</p>	<p>(REDACTED) was without heat and hot water for many days over the Xmas period. When he reported this to the out-of-hours repairs service he was told they would only come out if it was a dire emergency, and that lack of heating and hot water was not a priority, even in very cold weather conditions. He had to wait until the next working day to report the repair. The person he spoke to would not give their name or say who they were working for. (REDACTED) is putting in a complaint about his individual repair.</p> <p>(REDACTED) had a similar problem earlier in the year. She was assured that this was a mistake by the operator, that training had been improved and that it would not happen again. Another resident had also been told to wait and ring the daytime team when reporting a heating problem. It was agreed that this is not just a one-off and that there are questions about the overall running of the out-of-hours service.</p>
<p>Request or Question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who runs the out-of-hours repairs service? Is this the Council, or is it contracted out? • Why is lack of heat and hot water not counted as an emergency repair? What counts as an emergency repair? • Are individual circumstances taken into account – e.g. disability, age, vulnerability? If not, why not? • Why has this not been improved following previous complaints?

W3.2 Response

<p>Response</p>
<p>I am sorry to hear of the issue our resident has experienced with the heating and hot water out of hours service. Our out-of-hours service for heating and hot water is managed by our heating & hot Water contractor, PH Jones. Emergency repairs are those that present an immediate risk to residents or significant damage to the home, and we aim to attend within 24 hours. This includes loss of heating or hot water, though outside the peak winter period (November to April) these may be prioritised differently. Where this happens, we will always provide temporary heating to ensure residents remain safe and comfortable.</p> <p>Our priority system is based on the level of risk, but we recognise that individual vulnerability matters. When residents tell us about health conditions, age- related needs, or other circumstances, we do our best to adjust our response accordingly. In Seniors Housing, scheme managers actively support residents and escalate repairs where needed, including if they remain unresolved within four hours.</p>

We know the current process can feel too standardised. That is why we are working closely with our contractor's helpdesk to strengthen how vulnerabilities are identified and acted upon. Our commitment is to deliver a service that is fair, consistent, and responsive—particularly for residents who need additional support.

W3.3 - Feeding wildlife

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2026
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 2026
Deadline for officer response	05.02.2026
Name of officer responding	Maria Chatzikou
Officer job title	Maria Chatzikou
Contact Details	maria.chatzikou@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.3 Question

Issue	A resident raised an issue with food put out by residents for animals attracts vermin.
Background	<p>Some residents at (REDACTED) are putting large quantities of food out in the gardens and on pavements around the building. This has included liver, rice, whole loaves of bread. It encourages vermin and also rots and creates a general health and safety hazard.</p> <p>It was recognised that this is an issue city-wide and that while lots of residents do like to feed wildlife it can create problems.</p>
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Council policy on this? • What action can the Council take to encourage residents not to do this?

W3.3 Response

Response
<p>Thank you for raising this issue.</p> <p>Although we do not have a standalone policy specifically about feeding wildlife, the tenancy agreement is very clear on this matter. It states:</p> <p><i>“You or anyone living with you or visiting you must not do anything to encourage pests, vermin or animals that may cause a nuisance or damage at your home or in the shared areas. Examples of this include but are not limited to feeding wild pigeons and seagulls and not disposing of rubbish properly.”</i></p> <p>Placing large quantities of food in the gardens or on the pavements encourages vermin and therefore constitutes a breach of the tenancy agreement.</p>

W3.3 Action

Action	Our Neighbourhood Officers attended the area on the 3 February and carried out a letter drop. This was to remind residents of their responsibilities and reinforce that feeding wildlife in this way is not permitted. We will continue to monitor the situation and follow up where necessary.
Start date	20/01/2026
End date	Ongoing

W3.4 - Digital discrimination

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2026
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 2026
Deadline for officer response	30 th January
Name of officer responding	Hannah Barker
Officer job title	Senior Community Engagement Officer
Contact Details	Hannah.Barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.4 Question

Issue	A resident said that the Council is not doing enough to ensure that residents who do not have access to the internet are not discriminated against.
Background	West residents have consistently raised this as an issue, but as the Council moves more and more towards online communication and reporting, it has increased, rather than decreased, as a problem. Communication from the Council about resident engagement meetings and activities is mainly through email. Residents who don't have email or internet access have requested but are often not receiving paper copies of documents and information about meetings.
Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are there ongoing problems with residents who have requested paper copies not receiving them? • What is the Council doing to ensure that they communicate with all residents without any digital discrimination?

W3.4 Response

Response and Actions
<p>We are very sorry about this experience of residents. We take accessibility seriously and apologise for when the standards have slipped. We have been taking steps to address this issue:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We have been calling people on our area panel mailing list to check and update who needs the Agenda Pack on paper. We are making individual calls because we appreciate that there are residents who cannot, for lots of different reasons, access online. They will receive the pack through the post. We must carefully balance the need to achieve value for money and make best use of council resources and where residents are able to access that information online, we will send through in this format. This work will be completed before the next round of area panels in May. 2) The Community Engagement Team is in the process of updating how we store and access residents' information for when we circulate invitations to meetings and activities. We will be able to utilise the same customer relationship management system as Housing, which includes where residents register their access needs. We are aware our previous systems have been a cause of some problems. This work should be completed in the next 2 to 4 months, with Hannah Barker leading on this. 3) Community Engagement Officers, Simon Bannister and Richard Wheeler are attending the Digital Inclusion Network run by Ability Net. This network brings together expertise and knowledge around different tools and strategies for promoting digital inclusion. We will be bringing such tools into the teams' practices. This work is ongoing and will be going on over the next 12 months.

- 4) We are conducting review of noticeboards across the city, to get best value to get out of them; noticeboards can be a tool in the suite of engagement and information and how they are used. This is a live piece of work, Sam Nolan will convene a meeting with various players to look at resources, including Neighbourhood officers and Community engagement officers. An audit of noticeboards is ongoing. We very much understand these can be improved. This work will be ongoing
- 5) The Community Engagement Officers team have been successful in referring residents to Digital inclusion sessions to support residents if they wish to improve their skills accessing resources on online.

W3.5 - Concerns about Community engagement

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 Star/ City wide issue
Date question raised	9 th January 2026
Week of Area Panel	16 th March 2026
Deadline for officer response	05.02.2026
Name of officer responding	Sam Nolan
Officer job title	Community Engagement Manager
Contact Details	Sam.nolan@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.5 Question

Issue	West residents raised a number of concerns about the current operation of the Community Engagement Structure.
Background	<p>a) <i>Stopping the Special Interest Groups.</i></p> <p>A number of West residents have invested a lot of time working with the Community Engagement Team in various Special Interest Groups. These have been a useful way of tenants contributing to policy and development and have been interesting and informative for the residents involved. They also provide a city-wide focus not available elsewhere. There is disappointment amongst West residents that these groups no longer operate. This wasn't a planned and discussed process - they just ceased to be invited to meetings. These include the Tenant Disability Network, the Senior Housing Action Group, Resident Inspectors, Business and Value Group and the Home Improvement Group.</p>

	<p>a) <i>Cancellation of meetings</i> West residents experience has been that meetings with the Community Engagement Team are often cancelled, sometimes at short notice and without attendees being properly informed. These are not always rescheduled and crucial discussions are missed out on.</p> <p>c) <i>New structures put forward without consultation with current members</i> West residents are concerned that a new Disability Panel has been formed, without involving or consulting with members of the Tenant Disability Network. There was criticism of this panel for being top-heavy, with representatives from Councillors, Council officers, organisations like Mind and Possibility People. Very few tenants are involved.</p>
<p>Question</p>	<p>West residents think it is important that residents are at the centre of any Community Engagement structure. They are concerned that it is becoming increasingly based around Council, rather than resident, concerns.</p> <p>It was agreed to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Council doing to ensure that residents’ concerns are taken onboard and that residents are fully involved in any changes and developments at a city-wide level?

W3.5 Response

<p>Response</p>
<p>Thank you for raising these concerns about the Community Engagement Structure. We understand the frustration and disappointment that some residents feel about changes, and we want to address this openly.</p> <p>First, we acknowledge that the way some changes happened — including Service Improvement Groups not meeting was not communicated clearly enough. We’re sorry for that, and we are improving how we schedule, notify, and update residents about engagement activity.</p> <p>We also want to be clear that we have not set up a new disability group. We are preparing a city-wide disability tenant survey and mapping of needs to inform future involvement—any proposals for panels or groups will be co-designed with tenants.</p>

Why We Changed

- Regulatory expectations now require us to reach a much wider and more diverse range of tenants across our 13,000+ households, and to demonstrate how those voices influence decisions.
- We explored changes with involved residents, but there was a strong preference among some members to keep the previous model. That meant we could not co-design a new approach collectively at that time.
- To meet standards of inclusion and fairness, we have moved to a broader engagement model. We do not have the capacity to expand our reach and continue running officer-led groups in the same way as before.
- Importantly, we have offered to support tenants to set up and run their own groups, and we can provide practical help (e.g., templates, light-touch facilitation, access to rooms, publicity via Your Voice).

Service Improvement Groups worked well for those involved, but they reached only a small proportion of tenants. Many voices, including younger tenants, disabled residents, and people from diverse communities were not being heard. Our aim is to keep what works for current members while opening more, easier ways for others to take part.

What We Are Doing Now

We are building a stronger, more inclusive model that:

- Keeps existing engaged residents involved in meaningful ways.
- Creates more opportunities for residents who aren't currently involved.
- Links local engagement to city-wide decisions.
- Shows clearly how input shapes what we do ("You Said, We Did").

Recent progress (Q4 2025–Q1 2026):

- 142 engagement activities delivered in the last quarter (estate-based events, door-knocking, seasonal activities).
- Around 1,000 residents reached through the Tenant Handbook and Large Panel Blocks surveys—bringing in many new voices.
- Targeted outreach progressing with Black and minoritised tenants, and disabled tenants.
- Building the Your Voice digital hub to make participation easier and more transparent.
- Co-production example: a Bedbug Policy and leaflet written with residents to improve clarity and accessibility.
- A new tenant-led group emerging from the Tenant Celebration Day, growing its role in city-wide tenant oversight.

- Active support to tenant associations: continuing officer advice, governance guidance, funding routes (EDB/EIB), and help with constitutions, AGMs, and inclusive practice so local groups stay strong and open to new members.
- New Area Panel pre-meetings: piloting short, structured pre-meets for tenant reps and associations to build a collective tenant voice, agree shared priorities, and strengthen representation at the formal Panel.

What's Next

- Co-develop the Tenant Engagement Strategy (2026–2029) with residents and the Housing Leadership Team.
- Embed “You Said, We Did” updates at Area Panels and online.
- Run service reviews triggered by residents such as the Sensitive Lets and Allocations that will run over the course of 2026.
- Deliver workshops, focus groups to improve services and culture that are based on lived experience.
- Create routes for resident involvement in contracting and procurement.
- Sustain tenant associations with reliable officer support, training offers, and recruitment drives to widen participation.
- Area Panel pre-meetings to support residents to have a clear understanding of the issues and agree on shared priorities, so they can speak with one clear voice at the formal Panel.

Commitments

- Keep meaningful routes for current involved residents and open accessible options for new voices.
- Codesign engagement with tenants
- Actively involve residents who have not previously engaged.
- Publish clear feedback loops so tenants can see how their input influences decisions.
- Provide practical assistance for tenant-run groups and associations and strengthen collective tenant voice through Area Panel pre-meetings.

W3.5 Action

Action	<p>Keep residents informed Make sure meeting dates and any changes are shared promptly. If a meeting is cancelled, give plenty of notice and set a new date.</p> <p>Support tenant-led groups Offer help with meeting spaces, templates, and publicity so residents can run their own groups if they want to.</p>
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	<p>Work together on new plans Involve residents in shaping the Tenant Engagement Strategy and any new panels or groups.</p> <p>Hold Area Panel pre-meetings Run short sessions before Panels so residents can agree priorities and speak with one clear voice.</p> <p>Reach more tenants Continue outreach to tenants who don't usually take part, including disabled tenants and those from diverse communities.</p> <p>Show how feedback is used Share "You Said, We Did" updates at Panels and online so residents can see the impact of their input.</p>
Start date	Ongoing
End date	

