

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: NORTH AREA

2.00pm 18 NOVEMBER 2025

MOULSECOOMB HALL, MOULSECOOMB PLACE, LEWES ROAD, BN2 4GA

MINUTES

Councillors: Asaduzzaman, Fowler and Mackey.

Residents: Donna James (Chair), Ian Beck, Des Jones, Heather Hayes, Jenny Simmons, Emily James, Ian Knowles, Michael Creedy and Mitch Watkinson.

Officers: Hannah Barker, Sam Nolan, Chloe McLaughlin, Sarah Barclay, Mikila Beck, Justine Harris, Tom Trigwell and Marie Button.

Press: Sarah Booker-Lewis

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

2 MINUTES & ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Barney Miller advised his name had been spelt incorrectly on p7, p8 under items 4.2, 7.10 and in action NA2.

2.2 Ian Beck raised that paper copies of the meeting papers were not received. The Chair confirmed this had been noted and Sam Nolan apologised for the delay.

2.3 **RESOLVED:** That subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 September 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

3 RESIDENT QUESTIONS, 2- & 3-STAR

3.1 In relation to question N2.1, regarding the Discretionary Gardening Scheme, Justine Harris confirmed they have picked this up with Community Engagement will work with residents to take forward the idea of mobilising volunteers.

3.2 In relation to question N2.2, regarding poor communication in council services, Ian Beck advised that no one has contacted them about this so it remains outstanding. Justine Harris advised they would pick this up after the meeting.

3.3 Mitch Watkinson introduced question N3.1, regarding anti-social behaviour and the Housing Allocations Policy and the Chair read the response provided in the agenda.

3.4 Residents on the panel discussed the impact of the issues raised in the question and experiences of anti-social behaviour in their areas.

- 3.5 Mitch Watkinson raised that residents know the council has a duty to house, but that resident groups want to be part of the sensitive let process.
- 3.6 Alice Morel discussed the checks, risk and support assessments the allocations team carry out when they add someone to the housing register and the reasons why someone may be deemed not ready to live in general needs accommodation. They advised that there are occasions where they have been unable to establish any issues and that issues sometimes only arise after an individual has been housed.
- 3.7 Alice Morel discussed sensitive-lets and the nominations process around this.
- 3.8 In response to questions from Barney Miller in relation to individuals with a history of anti-social behaviour remaining on the housing register, Alice Morel advised that the allocations team considers the nature and timing of incidents, any current support in place, and whether behaviour is linked to a disability.
- 3.9 The Chair raised that they hope that tenant reps can be involved in the process to talk about the needs of their areas and discussed shorter secure tenancies.
- 3.10 Alice Morel confirmed that a Task & Finish group would be established and that although the policy cannot be tweaked easily, they do want to hear what residents have to say.
- 3.11 In response to a question from Heather Hayes about moving victims rather than perpetrators, Justine Harris discussed issues caused by court and advised that they do take a victim centred approach but this is one of the actions they may consider as sometimes it is the only resolution.
- 3.12 Justine Harris discussed successful outcomes where individuals have not had to move and the work they do with perpetrators to change behaviour.
- 3.13 In response to a question from Des Jones regarding whether the council has to consult with medical professionals before rehousing an individual who's mental health issues led to their eviction, Alice Morel advised that if the individual is homeless then they would link in with their support team and they wouldn't look to move someone back into general needs tenancy if they were in need of support.
- 3.14 Justine Harris discussed that before they seek repossession of a property, they look at all the support they can put in place for the individual and the judge will look at this as part of the decision if it is taken to court.
- 3.15 In response to a question from Barney Miller, Alice Morel and Sam Nolan confirmed they could talk through allocations and sensitive lets procedures at the task and finish group.

4 COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION OF AREA PANELS - RESIDENT-LED DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Justine Harris introduced the item and asked what residents would like to see done around the promotion of area panels.

- 4.2 Sam Nolan discussed the idea of pre-meets to go through the papers in advance and help residents be clear about what they want to say in the meeting.
- 4.3 The Chair spoke about having collective meetings with all four areas every six months.
- 4.4 The Chair and Sam Nolan discussed awareness and advertising of area panels.
- 4.5 In response to Barney Miller raising the timings of resident-only meetings, Sam Nolan advised that they need to look at the timeline with Housing and the Resource Centre.
- 4.6 Ian Beck raised that it is a good idea to use community spaces but they do need to use microphones.

5 BREAK

6 HEALTH & SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATE

- 6.1 Martin Reid introduced the item and gave a verbal update.
- 6.2 Mikila Beck advised that letters have been sent to all residents whose electrical test is out of date, encouraging them to contact the helpdesk. They emphasised that where electrical issues are identified, it is the council's responsibility to undertake repairs.
- 6.3 Ian Beck flagged the importance of residents checking relevant IDs before allowing people into their homes.
- 6.4 In response to a question from a resident, Martin Reid confirmed that electrical testing is not PAT testing but checking the electrical supply in homes.
- 6.5 Mikila Beck advised that visual inspections are carried out and that the repairs team aims to complete testing and any required works in a single visit to minimise disruption for residents.

7 DAMP & MOULD FOR RESIDENT AWARENESS & FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Mikila Beck introduced the item and discussed the new team, technicians and technology being used to complete surveys.
- 7.2 Mikila Beck outlined the information included in the new handout, which covers how residents can obtain updates on repairs, what steps to take if they are unhappy with the repairs carried out, and the options around disrepairs.
- 7.3 In response to a question from Ian Beck regarding returning mould, Mikila Beck advised that, in the first instance, technicians would attend and look at the root cause so it doesn't reoccur. They explained that there would also be a follow-up after six months, a flag put on the address so the help desk can see recurring issues and that supervisor would attend on the next visit.

8 RENTS UPDATE

- 8.1 Sarah Barclay introduced the item and gave a verbal update on the challenges associated with Universal Credit migration, particularly the final cohort relating to Employment Support Allowance. They highlighted the resulting increase in demand on the service, along with the impact the migration is having on individuals' ability to pay their rent and the council's ability to collect rents.
- 8.2 Sarah Barclay outlined the support currently offered, including a dedicated officer targeting on residents moving onto Universal Credit and proactively contacting those identified as at risk of falling into rent arrears. They asked that any individuals concerned about paying their rent be encouraged to contact the team for assistance.
- 8.3 In response to a question from Michael Creedy, Sarah Barclay advised that individuals on housing benefits would be required to claim Universal Credit and that the position for those of state pension age is not yet clear, but the hope is that this will remain with housing benefits teams to be locally administered.
- 8.4 Justine Harris highlighted that if anything does change, there will be support available, and encouraged anyone experiencing difficulties to contact the team.
- 8.5 The Chair advised that the residents can ask that any future updates and reports be brought back to the panel so they can be kept up to date on what is happening.
- 8.6 In response to a question from Barney Miller regarding entitlement to discretionary money from the council, Sarah Barclay advised that individuals can apply for advanced payments through Universal Credit. They noted that residents often do not realise advance payments must be repaid, and encouraged anyone concerned to discuss this with the team.
- 8.7 In response to Ian Beck's question regarding bedroom tax, Sarah Barclay advised that this should be the same and that if individuals are subject to an under-occupancy charge, this would be deducted on a monthly, rather than weekly, basis and that people can apply for help with this in certain circumstances.

9 ESTATE INSPECTION UPDATE/NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICERS

- 9.1 Justine Harris introduced the item and provided an update on the roll-out of neighbourhood inspections, noting that while residents may not have schedules yet, initial information is being shared and details will be published on the website.
- 9.2 Justine Harris advised that inspections would be led by uniformed neighbourhood officers, with involvement from the repairs service and ward councillors, and would focus on managing community and green spaces.
- 9.3 Residents wishing to take part were encouraged to contact Housing Customer Services.
- 9.4 The Chair highlighted that further information is available on p43 of the agenda, including the contact number for participation.

10 LPS CONSULTATION UPDATE

- 10.1 Sam Nolan introduced the item and advised that for anyone living in LPS blocks, the consultation is open on YourVoice until 12 January 2026 and information on how to take part can be found in the agenda.
- 10.2 In response to a question from the Chair, Sam Nolan confirmed that Community Engagement will be doing door knocking and there are also QR codes in the blocks.
- 10.3 Alice Morel advised that the consultation is also open to anyone on the housing register, and those who are eligible should have received two emails so they can take part.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 In response to Barney Miller's question regarding whether the number of council homes is expected to improve, Martin Reid discussed that increasing housing supply is a priority for the service and highlighted the council's buy-back programme which was discussed at cabinet last month.
- 11.2 Martin Reid outlined that the council is purchasing homes from developers, as well as individual properties, with the focus being on meeting housing needs and increasing the council's housing stock.
- 11.3 In response to Ian Beck raising that the phone number for Housing Repairs on the magnets is different, Mikila Beck advised that the new number is free to contact from mobile phones and can be used for out of hours as well. Mikila confirmed that the other number still works.

The meeting concluded at 3.59pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

