

# **BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA**

**2.00pm 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

**ESSEX PLACE, COMMUNITY ROOM, MONTAGUE ST, BRIGHTON, BN2 1LB**

### **MINUTES**

**Councillors:** McLeay (Co-Chair), Shanks, Mackey

**Residents:** Lee Catt (Co-Chair), Joe, Tony Earnshaw, Chris Vine, Emma Salcombe, Jason Williams, Michael Smith, Eileen Stewart, Pippin Boardman, Wendy, Angela Goodman.

**Officers:** Martin Reid, Sam Nolan, Geoff Gage, Justine Harris, Mikila Beck, Emma Gilbert, John Evans, Sam Crick, Tom Trigwell, Marie Button

**Press:** Sarah Booker-Lewis

#### **1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES**

1.1 Apologies were received from Linda King, Martin Cunningham, Bob Tomlinson, Heidi Walker, Philip Faithful, Beth Mothersole, Rosemary Johnson, Julia Whitfield and Paul Lexley.

#### **2 MINUTES & ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

2.2 For action OCA1, regarding arranging a residents meeting on windows, Geoff Gage advised he would catch up with Eileen Stewart.

2.3 For action OCA2, regarding the use of residents' car parks by builders, Emma Salcombe advised they are still speaking to Ben and it is all going well.

2.4 For action CA1, regarding the terms of reference for resident elections, Sam Nolan gave an update and it was confirmed that proposals were going to Housing Leadership Team on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025 for sign-off.

2.5 For action CA2, regarding parking issues on Highways land, Emma Salcombe advised this is in progress but Highways are still not willing to commit to a meeting. Councillor Shanks suggested getting in contact with Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport.

2.6 For action CA3, regarding the provision of information on Universal Credit migration, Sam Nolan advised they would check if this had been sent out and asked Emma Gilbert to resend the email to Community Engagement.

- 2.7 For action CA4, regarding malfunctioning communal doors, it was confirmed that the push button in block 19-24 was still not working. Mikila Beck advised they would speak to Michael Smith for further details.
- 2.8 For action CA5, regarding painted pipes at Somerset Point, Eileen Stewart advised they have not heard back from Martin Reid yet.
- 2.9 For action CA6, regarding over-50s lets, John Evans advised that Simon Bannister will pick up resident concerns about the south side lawns at Ardingly Court being inaccessible for wheelchair users. John Evans confirmed they would keep ward councillors updated on this.
- 2.10 For action CA7, regarding an ASB incident at Hampshire Court, this was confirmed as ongoing and Emma Salcombe advised that they would find out if the residents are happy with the response at the next resident only meeting.

### **3 RESIDENT QUESTIONS, 2- & 3- STAR**

#### C2.1

- 3.1 With regards to resident question C2.1, Martin Reid gave an update on the position on e-scooters and e-bikes in LPS blocks, advising that both are not allowed inside the blocks and alternative storage provision has been put in place outside.
- 3.2 Martin Reid noted that work is underway to improve information sharing about safe storage and added that LPS blocks are currently the only locations where a clear ban is in place. They confirmed that information can be provided for residents associations and the fire service are also doing work around this.
- 3.3 Emma Salcombe discussed that similar measures should be considered for other blocks and that members of the public don't necessarily realise they are breaking the law by using e-bikes and scooters on public land.
- 3.4 Martin Reid confirmed that LPS blocks are the only locations where a ban has been necessary so far but if there are concerns, discussions can take place with residents and the fire service. They explained that the priority is ensuring safe usage and storage rather than extending a ban to other blocks.
- 3.5 Emma Gilbert discussed issues occurring around charging of e-bikes and e-scooters, including charging overnight and use of poor quality chargers.
- 3.6 John Evans added that there are logistical challenges to implementing a wider ban and that one reason it is possible in LPS blocks is because they have the resources to support and enforce it, including monitored CCTV.
- 3.7 Chris Vine suggested that during estate walk-arounds, officers could look for alternative storage locations. Martin Reid agreed that the service can explore options and hold further conversations about potential solutions.

#### C3.1

3.8 Regarding resident question C3.1, concerning replacement of fire doors, Martin Reid discussed that there is a process to go through and they are looking at door replacement programmes.

3.9 In response to Eileen Stewart raising that the gaps around the doors seem to be larger than they are meant to be, Martin Reid advised they would take details and make arrangements to go and look at the doors.

### C3.2

3.10 Regarding resident question C3.2, concerning repairs not being completed and requiring multiple visits, Emma Salcombe raised that issues with the walkway at Essex Place were first reported in 2019 and remain unresolved. They discussed that the recommendations being made by officers are not being listened to or actioned.

3.11 Martin Reid discussed the work they have been doing on diagnosis of problems, clearing the repairs backlog and improving customer satisfaction.

3.12 Co-Chair Councillor McLeay suggested this be bought back for a follow-up response.

3.13 In response to Eileen Stewart's question about lifts at Somerset Point, Martin Reid confirmed that a lift replacement programme is in place. They advised that they would check where Somerset Point sits within the programme and look into whether the lifts can be repaired or if the issues are more fundamental.

3.14 In response to Pippin Boardman raising concerns about the lifts at Warwick Mount, Martin Reid advised they would look at this and provide an update.

### C3.3

3.15 Officers discussed the response provided to question C3.3, regarding staff training and anti-social behaviour, outlining the recruitment of new complex case and tenancy sustainment teams, the introduction of neighbourhood officers, providing more presence and early intervention on estates, the holistic approach to staff training to capture different elements of anti-social behaviour, staff supervision and the specialist domestic abuse training being rolled out since the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

3.16 In response to Emma Salcombe's question regarding recruitment of an additional neighbourhood officer in central area, John Evans advised that the person recruited should be starting in January 2026.

3.17 In response to Emma Salcombe's question regarding bringing residents' groups into training, officers discussed the importance of raising awareness and Jan Dowdell's ASB presentation offer.

3.18 In response to the Resident Co-Chair raising that the question was meant to be aimed towards training to support the victims of ASB rather than perpetrators, John Evans discussed the need to look at individual cases, trauma informed practice and support for victims.

3.19 Tony Earnshaw discussed ongoing anti-social behaviour.

- 3.20 Co-Chair Councillor McLeay raised that there is a task and finish group in motion at the moment which is looking at how housing associations and councils work with victims.
- 3.21 In response to Councillors Mackey raising the Harm Reduction Strategy, John Evans discussed that only judges have the power to evict, and that they would need to demonstrate all the intervention work done, including interventions with the perpetrator.
- 3.22 Residents discussed experiences of perpetrators being treated as victims.
- 3.23 In response to a question from Councillor Shanks, John Evans explained the role of the complex case officers.
- 3.24 Emma Salcombe discussed her positive experience of the response of the Housing team in ASB cases and discussed the thresholds that have to be met for the council to be able to take action.
- 3.25 In response to a question from Chris Vine, Justine Harris confirmed that ASB workshops are for residents to attend. Chris Vine advised they had sent an email about Jan Dowdell speaking at their AGM.

#### C3.4

- 3.26 In response to a question from Emma Salcombe regarding sensitive lets and access to information about needs of residents currently living in blocks, Emma Gilbert clarified that the sensitive let requests come from the housing manager so they would already have that information, and they would inform the allocations team.
- 3.27 Emma Salcombe raised the need for residents to let the council know about changes in circumstances which may make them vulnerable.
- 3.28 Emma Gilbert discussed improvements in information since the new neighbourhood officers have been in post. Emma Gilbert advised that their team would put something together to send to residents to encourage them to contact housing regarding changes and if they may need support to evacuate in case of fire.
- 3.29 Emma Gilbert advised that they are calling everyone in high rise blocks regarding support to evacuate following the legislation change in July which requires residential personal evacuation plans to be in place for all households in high-rise blocks.
- 3.30 In response to concerns raised by Emma Salcombe about residents being cautious about phone-calls due to recent fraud, Emma Gilbert advised that they are doing letters, phone calls and follow-up visits.
- 3.31 In response to a resident question regarding whether the policy is still 'stay in place', Emma Gilbert advised that personal evacuation plans must be offered to every tenant in high-rise blocks and medium-rise blocks that are on a simultaneous evacuation strategy by April.

- 3.32 Emma Gilbert confirmed that not all blocks operate under a stay-in-place policy, although most do. They added that, for senior housing, a person-centred fire risk assessment is carried out, with information stored in the premises information box.

**C3.5**

- 3.33 In relation to question C3.5 regarding poor communication between surveyors and those who attend to complete repairs, Mikila Beck advised that she would follow up with Pippin Boardman about the case referred to in the question. They explained that they would try to trace the job to determine when it was raised, who it was allocated to, and why the information was not passed on.
- 3.34 In response to comments from Emma Salcombe, Mikila Beck advised they would look into why Thomas Doors & Windows were still attending Essex Place to service doors after the block has had new systems installed.

**4 BREAK****5 ESTATE INSPECTION UPDATE/NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICERS**

- 5.1 Justine Harris gave a verbal update, advising that they have started the programme of planned inspections led by uniformed neighbourhood officers and all tenant reps and ward councillors will be invited.
- 5.2 In response to Emma Salcombe's question, Justine Harris confirmed that residents would be given a year's notice of inspections taking place in their areas.
- 5.3 Justine advised that it is just neighbourhood officers at the moment, but they will be bringing in the repairs service, city environment, housing and community engagement officers.
- 5.4 In response to Emma Salcombe's question, Justine Harris confirmed they would be inviting people from local groups and they are liaising with the community engagement team about invites.
- 5.5 Emma Gilbert and Justine Harris discussed that the response has been positive so far and they will be promoting the work they're doing in response to inspections.
- 5.6 In response to a resident's question, John Evans confirmed neighbourhood officers will have a uniform of a blue polo shirt, navy jacket and will have ID.
- 5.7 Justine Harris advised that copies of the programme are available.

**6 DAMP & MOULD FOR RESIDENT AWARENESS AND FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 Mikila Beck introduced the item and invited residents to engage with the development of the policies, noting that feedback would be welcomed from anyone who has previously experienced issues with mould.
- 6.2 Residents who would like to be involved were encouraged to contact Mikila or the Community Engagement Team. The Resident Co-Chair and Emma Salcombe confirmed that they would like to take part.

6.3 Sam Crick highlighted that this is a good opportunity for residents to engage with the repairs service as this is able to be very tenant-centric.

6.4 Mikila Beck confirmed the updates are due to recent changes in the law.

## **7 RENTS UPDATE**

7.1 Emma Gilbert introduced the item and outlined the impact of migration to Universal Credit, emphasising the importance of residents seeking support early, as there is a lot that the team can do to assist.

7.2 Officers encouraged residents to notify the council as soon as they receive confirmation that they are being migrated so support can be put in place.

7.3 Emma Gilbert advised that the team is undertaking additional training and will resend information so it can be shared through WhatsApp groups and Residents' Associations.

7.4 Justine Harris discussed that the council has been experiencing very high numbers of residents moving to Universal Credit, highlighting that it automatically places rent accounts into arrears, which is causing worry for tenants, and advised that the team is keen to support them through this.

7.5 In response to Resident Co-Chair Lee Cattt raising that emails regarding rent have not been replied to, Justine Harris advised that they would look into this.

7.6 Emma Gilbert advised that residents who are registered online are able to check their rent account themselves but acknowledged that not everyone may be able to do this.

7.7 In response to Resident Co-Chair Lee Catt raising issues with postcodes and the online service, Emma Gilbert advised this would be looked into.

7.8 Justine Harris stated that the team is currently working on a new leaflet with information about the support available.

## **8 LPS CONSULTATION UPDATE**

8.1 Emma Gilbert introduced item and gave a verbal update, explaining that a Section 105 consultation has begun, running for 12 weeks from 13 October 2025 and advising that the consultation has been targeted at all residents affected in the blocks, including Seaside Homes tenants and leaseholders.

8.2 Emma Gilbert discussed that a draft Local Lettings Plan has been prepared, along with draft processes to be used for moving residents out of the affected buildings and there has been engagement work around this.

8.3 It was raised that anyone on the housing register has also been notified, as the proposals may impact their waiting times due to priority changes linked to the LPS moves.

- 8.4 Emma Gilbert advised that all feedback from the consultation will be collated into a final draft report, scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in March 2026. The report will include proposals for reallocations and details on what will happen to the buildings.

## **9 HEALTH & SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATE**

- 9.1 Martin Reid introduced the item and gave a verbal update.
- 9.2 In response to Chris Vine's question regarding inspections and the responsibilities of leaseholders in high-rise buildings, Martin Reid outlined the need to improve engagement with leaseholders, particularly in relation to main areas and commonways. He noted that the issue of smoke detectors had been discussed previously and emphasised the importance of leaseholder involvement to ensure the safety of the whole block.
- 9.3 Emma Gilbert added that work relating to support to evacuate requires an across-tenure approach and noted that the council is responsible for the block.
- 9.4 In response to Chris Vine raising that leaseholders should come under the same regulation as council tenants, Emma Gilbert advised that the fire safety legislation applies regardless of tenure.
- 9.5 Martin Reid confirmed that Resident Associations could have copies of the fire safety report and that they could meet to go through them.
- 9.6 In response to Chris Vine's question regarding leaseholders being charged for communal doors, Martin Reid confirmed that there is a government scheme the council is applying to and they would check whether the remediation scheme covers communal doors. Martin advised they would link in with Chris directly on this.
- 9.7 In response to Emma Salcombe raising that doors are banging shut and are unable to be fixed, Martin Reid advised they would arrange a walk around for Essex Place.

## **10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 10.1 Emma Salcombe reminded the panel that the resident-only meeting is scheduled for Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm in the Essex Place Community Room and advised that this leads into the next round of Housing Area Panel meetings.
- 10.2 Sam Nolan asked that residents to allow officers time to action the things raised in this meeting as residents will be quickly going on to discuss the next meetings.
- 10.3 Emma Salcombe discussed what happens at the resident-only meetings and that they keep in contact with relevant officers on items raised.
- 10.4 In response to Councillor Mackey's question around timetabling, Sam Nolan confirmed that the timetable is tight but they are looking into this.
- 10.5 In response to Chris Vine's question regarding sourcing parts for the lifts, Martin Reid confirmed this would depend on the situation and some lifts may need parts making or sourcing from overseas.

- 10.6 Resident Co-Chair Lee Catt advised that another area’s co-chair is looking at setting up a meeting with all the co-chairs and emphasised the importance of the residents’-only meetings for getting questions in.
- 10.7 In response to a question from Joe, officers discussed the use of AI and Justine Harris advised they could seek further information on whether the council would be required to let residents know if AI has been used to assist with responses to resident questions even if it is just for re-writing purposes etc.

The meeting concluded at 4.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of