

Antisocial Behaviour in Social Housing Task & Finish Group Report
Reporting to Brighton & Hove City Council's People Overview & Scrutiny
Committee

Contents

Chair's Foreword	1
Aims	3
Introduction	3
Executive Summary	4
Key take-outs from TFG investigation	6
Recommendations	6
Evidence Gathering Sessions	13
Conclusions.....	17

Chair's Foreword

Antisocial behaviour in social housing can have a profound and lasting impact on residents' wellbeing, feelings of safety, and sense of belonging within their communities. For many people, their home should be a place of refuge; when antisocial behaviour occurs nearby or within shared spaces, that sense of security can be deeply undermined. It was in recognition of this impact, and the concerns consistently raised by residents and councillors alike, that the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee established this Task & Finish Group.

Over the past months, the Task & Finish Group has undertaken a detailed and thorough examination of how antisocial behaviour in social housing is addressed across Brighton & Hove. We have drawn on a wide range of evidence, hearing directly from council officers, housing associations, the police, community safety teams, other local authorities, Members of Parliament's offices, and—most importantly—residents with lived experience of antisocial behaviour. I would like to thank everyone who gave their time to contribute openly and constructively to this work.

What quickly became clear is that while antisocial behaviour presents complex challenges, many of the frustrations experienced by residents stem not only from the behaviour itself, but from how cases are communicated, progressed, and resolved. Recurrent themes across our evidence included the importance of clear and regular communication, effective expectation setting, timely use of enforcement tools, and better partnership working between agencies. We also heard powerful and deeply troubling accounts of racism related antisocial behaviour, underscoring the need for a clearer, more proactive, and explicitly zero tolerance approach to racially motivated harassment within housing environments.

This report recognises that no single intervention will eliminate antisocial behaviour altogether. However, the recommendations set out here are practical, evidence based, and informed by best practice from across the sector. If implemented, they have the potential to significantly improve residents' experiences—ensuring people feel listened to, supported, and confident that concerns are being taken seriously, even when cases are complex or lengthy.

I am particularly grateful to the residents who shared their experiences with the group. Their testimony grounded our work in reality and served as a constant reminder that behind every case file is a person, family, or community affected day-to-day by these issues.

I'd like to thank Jackie O'Quinn for her work on this Task & Finish Group as its original Chair. I'd also like to thank the members of the group for their hard work over many months to gather the evidence for this report.

I commend this report and its recommendations to the Council, partnerships, and housing providers across the city. I hope it will act as a catalyst for continued improvement, stronger collaboration, and a renewed focus on putting residents at the heart of our collective response to antisocial behaviour.

Cllr Julie Cattell

Chair Antisocial Behaviour in Social Housing Task & Finish Group

Aims

This Task & Finish Group (TFG) was set up by the People Overview & Scrutiny committee to investigate how Brighton & Hove City Council and local housing associations deal with reports of antisocial behaviour. The aim of the TFG was to find best practice and recommend changes that can be made to improve the lives of city social housing residents who are affected by antisocial behaviour.

Introduction

The TFG was made up of Cllrs Jackie O'Quinn (Chair meetings one-five),¹ Julie Cattell (Chair from meeting six onwards), Milla Gauge, Ellen Mcleay and Bridget Fishleigh, and Angela Stretton (Older Peoples Council). Following Cllr O'Quinn leaving the TFG, Cllr Sam Parrott joined the group.

Antisocial behaviour is defined as 'behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person' (Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 and Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011).

There are three main categories for antisocial behaviour, depending on how many people are affected:

1. Personal antisocial behaviour is when a person targets a specific individual or group.
2. Nuisance antisocial behaviour is when a person causes trouble, annoyance or suffering to a community.
3. Environmental antisocial behaviour is when a person's actions affect the wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings.

Under these headings antisocial behaviour falls into 13 different types:

- Vehicle abandoned

¹ Following Cllr O'Quinn's resignation from the Labour Group on BHCC on 13th February 2026, she ceased to be a member of the Task & Finish Group.

- Vehicle nuisance or inappropriate use
- Rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour
- Rowdy or nuisance neighbours
- Littering or drugs paraphernalia
- Animal problems
- Trespassing
- Nuisance calls
- Street drinking
- Activity relating to sex workers or sex working
- Nuisance calls
- Begging
- Misuse of fireworks

Council housing is housing that is owned by the local authority and is intended for those with the highest need. Councils have a duty to house those in need under housing law.

There are criteria that need to be met for those who are accepted for council housing. Each individual council will have its own allocation scheme with categories which people will need to fall into to be able to rent a council property. Brighton & Hove City Council makes clear that any council tenant committing antisocial behaviour is putting their tenancy at risk.

A Housing Association is a not-for-profit company which provides housing for those on low income or who need extra support. These will also have their own allocation criteria. Housing Associations also offer other types of housing options including shared ownership and low-cost ownership. Council houses tend to be cheaper to rent than Housing Association properties on average as housing associations tend to set their rents at either social or affordable rates.

Executive Summary

Causes of ASB in Social Housing

1. Typically, the most serious cases of ASB are caused by tenants with
 - Family issues/parenting
 - Alcohol and drug misuse including drug dealers
 - Mental/physical health issues
 - Lack of social skills and boundaries/chaotic behaviour.

Within BHCC's housing stock there is an increasing number of vulnerable and marginalised individuals who have personal issues which affect their conduct at home.

BHCC has a duty of care to these individuals regardless of their behaviour. Its goal is to seek to end ASB as quickly as possible, tackle the underlying issues, change their behaviour for the long-term and maintain the tenancy. Eviction or a closure order is the last, and least desirable, outcome.

2. There are also tenants who are not concerned about how their ASB or criminal activities negatively affects their neighbours, who are well aware of their rights and know that eviction is a last resort for BHCC/Housing Association.

Challenges

Antisocial behaviour in social housing can have significant impacts on the lives of other residents, even if the behaviour is not directed at them. Particularly in blocks of flats the problem is increased by shared access to properties and communal areas such as corridors, car parks or gardens.

When residents are having to deal with antisocial behaviour, as described above, at or around their home, they often feel that they cannot escape from it as the person whose behaviour is causing harm is a neighbour who they see regularly and who knows where they live. This may cause anxiety about reporting issues for fear of making the issue worse.

Anecdotally, councillors have reported being regularly contacted by residents about antisocial behaviour caused by their neighbours in housing association or council properties.

Residents reporting these issues are not just concerned about the antisocial behaviour itself but the way it is dealt with and the timeframe in which it is resolved. Residents are also concerned that the lettings team do not thoroughly check whether a new tenant is a suitable fit for the property, its location and neighbourhood. Examples were given of residents with ongoing drug and alcohol issues being placed near each other. "If you know that there is a drug problem in a block you don't put an addict in that block".

Residents also requested that where ASB has been an issue in a neighbouring property, that when tenants whose behaviour had been harming others leave, the homes are re-allocated to tenants with no history of ASB to prevent problems starting up again.

It is important to acknowledge that behaviour and the perceived and real level of threat is affected by the resident's life experience as well as by other characteristics, age, gender, sexuality, race and disability will all have a bearing on how ASB is perceived. A victim centred approach is essential when assessing what is and isn't ASB.

Key take-outs from TFG investigation

Neighbours of properties where ASB is ongoing and disruptive often feel like they are not heard and their welfare is not prioritised over the welfare of the person whose behaviour is causing them harm.

BHCC has a Complex Case team and has adopted a victim-first approach but effecting behavioural change by/in a tenant is often a time and labour-intensive process.

Actions taken by housing officers such as one-to-one visits, warning letters, and mediation prove to be successful in over 75% of reported ASB cases.

Less than 25% of cases managed by social landlords require more formal interventions or enforcement, likely because of the complexity of the case or the failure of actions mentioned above.

It is important to note that the role of BHCC is to provide housing to residents and incidents of ASB and criminal activity do not preclude someone from a home, under law. This can feel unfair to other residents.

The ability to evict residents is inhibited by the backlog at Court and the burden of evidence required. Good case work takes time; to get a case to court can take 12-18 months, including the time the housing provider can wait for a space in court for the case to be heard.

BHCC's Housing team, Lettings team, Environmental Services and the police sometimes work in silos with information about problem tenants often not shared in a single place. For example, when investigating a complaint about a resident Environmental Health do not necessarily check if the property is Social Housing and then report the outcome of investigations to BHCC or the Social Housing Provider.

Residents who are frustrated with BHCC's perceived lack of action often contact their Member of Parliament. However, this rarely results in a different outcome.

The developer of a site with social housing will choose the Housing Association with homes allocated to those on BHCC's waiting list. BHCC has little influence with how a Housing Association manages its tenants causing ASB.

Recommendations

Following the conclusion of evidence gathering the TFG agreed the following recommendations:

- Lettings Team and Allocations Policy
 - A review of the allocations policy to consider the availability of tenant history to the allocations team, people's future needs before they are tenants, addressing issues of people moving in with no community

connections by working with existing community groups to help with integration. This should also include considerations for properties where most recent tenants have disrupted neighbours to consider history of incoming tenants to ensure existing tenants are less likely to suffer ASB again. Tenants convicted of criminal activity related to drugs and theft to immediately have their tenancy reviewed. **Evidence:**

Testimony of tenants in the public engagement session included:

- Those who said that they were concerned about unsuitable tenants being placed in areas that would worsen their problems, for example those with drug addiction issues being moved into blocks or areas where drug dealing was common.
- Tenants also spoke about the number of new tenants moved into blocks with similar issues such as mental health or addiction problems, saying that they could rally round to support an individual or a small number of people, but not lots of people at once lead to a lack of community support for individuals.
- Another allocations issue raised by the tenants was that if a tenant whose behaviour was causing harm to others was moved on they found themselves with a similar person replacing them, meaning their issues began again.

- Improving communication with complainants
 - The importance of communication has come up repeatedly through the evidence gathering sessions of the TFG. If residents who report ASB are left with insufficient contact from BHCC/Housing Association, then they naturally assume nothing is happening and that they are being ignored. As the TFG have seen it can take many months to get a case ready for court and then many more to get it to court. It is essential that residents are updated regularly on their case at the agreed frequency and with the agreed method, even if little has happened, to show that they have not been forgotten. Suggestions to improve communications include: a flow chart provided to residents to explain processes and typical timeframes; following police attendance at tenant's home to address ASB, BHCC should distribute written letters to neighbouring properties within two days so neighbours know that BHCC is aware and addressing issues; BHCC's limited ability to effect change clearly outlined in all comms. **Evidence:** In the first meeting with Brighton & Hove City Council staff, Justine Harris, Head of Tenancy Services, said that she felt that personal contact with complainants was an area they felt that they could do better. In the same meeting Janet Dowdell, Tenancy Service Operations Manager, said that there had been issues around how often the council were in contact with people harmed by the behaviour of others.
- Improving expectation management setting with complainants

- Many residents will not know what can and cannot be done by their council or housing association landlord when dealing with ASB cases. It is therefore not unreasonable for those raising ASB cases to believe that certain things can be done easily, such as moving or evicting a person whose behaviour is causing harm, or for the case to progress quickly. It is therefore important during the initial contact for expectation management to set out what can and cannot be done, and the possible time constraints. This may help stop frustration building and complaints being made if complainants have a clear understanding of what to expect and when. **Evidence:** Rochelle Largan of Westminster City Council said that it was important at the beginning of a case to manage expectations and to give harmed people the knowledge and awareness of what officers do and how they do it, and to also make sure that they knew there was certain information about the person whose behaviour was causing harm that could not be shared.² Likewise, Lee Hickman of Portsmouth City Council said that at the beginning a complainant would be given an action plan with a clear plan and expectation.³ John Evans, Housing Manager of Brighton & Hove City Council, said that although they were getting better at it, that they could improve on expectation management and said that sometimes it is easy to forget that the processes of dealing with a case are not second nature to everyone like they are to a housing officer. He suggested a frequently asked question sheet could be included in the opening letter of a case to help set expectations and improve understanding.⁴
- Publicising work to show successes in dealing with ASB
 - Many councils, including some spoken to and others found via desktop research, publicise their successes in dealing with their residents who are found to have been committing antisocial behaviour and are evicted or convicted of a crime. This is done to both warn people whose behaviour is causing harm of the ultimate consequences of their actions and to show residents that reports of antisocial behaviour will be taken seriously and could lead to serious consequences. There is a need to be sensitive around such communications to ensure that areas are not used frequently or stereotyped. **Evidence:** Justine Harris said that they had identified outward communication to keep residents informed as something they want to improve.⁵

² Meeting two

³ Meeting two

⁴ Meeting six

⁵ Meeting one

- Improve process for sharing information about tenant ASB across all relevant departments including the police.
 - Timely information sharing between relevant council departments and agencies, such as the police, can lead to early interventions and better outcomes for all as it enables problems to be resolved before they escalate. **Evidence:** Inspector Emma Gee of Sussex Police said that early intervention and communication and information sharing could be improved and suggested a monthly meeting between police, Brighton & Hove City Council, and other social landlords, with tightly defined terms of reference, to discuss emerging issues and ways of working collaboratively to solve them quickly.⁶
- Increased investment and improved training
 - More resources to be allocated to the tenancy team; officers are overloaded with ASB cases which require regular communication with those suffering harm from the behaviour of others and those enacting the behaviour. Additional staffing resources would allow fewer cases to be held by each member of staff, allowing greater time to be spent on each case. This should be hand in hand with a review of the training provided for housing officers. With an increase in the vulnerability of tenants, it is important to know that officers are equipped with the correct training and knowledge to support tenants. It was also felt that officers should be trained to understand that discriminatory micro-aggressions that build up over time have severe impacts on those experiencing them.
- Introduction of live-in caretakers/concierge in high-rise blocks
 - Pilot project in which one property in a high-rise block with a history of tenants with ASB is allocated to a caretaker/concierge who is BHCC's permanent eyes and ears on the ground. This could be a current tenant of the block who has the necessary experience potentially provided with a discounted rate of rent as part of their pay. This could also follow the 'Timpson' model of employment to allow those who may have had a troubled past gain employment and experience.
- Review of deployment and use of CCTV in BHCC-owned Housing Blocks
 - CCTV often acts as a deterrent for some ASB. A pilot project to deploy, and actively monitor, CCTV to be implemented in an area of high ASB.

⁶ Meeting five

- Write to Brighton & Hove's Members of Parliament, the Secretary of State for Justice & Lord Chancellor, and the Local Government Association to lobby for the introduction of a specialised housing court
 - The witnesses that were spoken to were overwhelmingly in favour of having a specialised court to deal with housing issues, along the lines of the family court. Not only would this reduce the time to take those whose behaviour causes harm to court for antisocial behaviour, but it would also ensure that the judges presiding over the cases are experts in housing law. **Evidence:** Janet Dowdell said that casework can take between 12-18 months and that there was increased pressure on courts.⁷ Rochelle Largan, ASB Service Manager Westminster City Council, spoke of cases taking months to get to court, and Nick Bale, Anti-Social Behaviour Manager North Derby Homes, agreed with Rochelle and spoke of Resolve's campaign for a dedicated housing court to deal with delays.⁸ Vicky Weir, Safe Neighbourhoods Manager-South Region at Guinness Partnership, said "We need a dedicated court that will significantly shorten those time frames. It would be great if that time frame was closer to one to two months as opposed to nine to 11 months."⁹ Kerrie Jenkins, Tenancy Specialist Manager at Moat; Paul Fagen, Head of Housing at BHT Sussex; and Craig Kendall, ASB Service Manager at Hyde, all agreed with the need for a dedicated housing court.¹⁰
- Explore use of technology to record evidence such as the Noise App/ASB App
 - These include the Noise App¹¹ and the ASB App¹² provided by Case Management Solutions Ltd. The Noise App can be used to record audio evidence to be submitted to BHCC allowing a better understanding of the level of noise residents are experiencing as opposed to a written record on a paper diary sheet. Similarly, the ASB App allows quick reporting of ASB and the uploading of evidence such as photos, audio, and videos. The ASB App does also have a case management function, but Moat was one such landlord who chose not to use this function to allow greater compatibility with other areas of their organisation. Even if such technology was introduced, there must still be a way for tenants to reports ASB and communicate with housing officers without the need for apps or smart phones, such as telephone, email, or face-to-face. **Evidence:** Craig Kendall, ASB Service Manager at Hyde, and Kerrie Jenkins, Tenancy Specialist Manager at Moat, said

⁷ Meeting one

⁸ Meeting Two

⁹ Meeting three

¹⁰ Meeting four

¹¹ <https://thenoiseapp.com/features>

¹² <https://cmsg.uk.com/solutions/asb-app>

that they and others were making use of technology to aid the reporting of ASB, the recording of evidence, and case management using apps.¹³

- Explore use of Expert Witness Service
 - The Expert Witness Service by Case Management Solutions Ltd is used to provide an impartial and expert witness to ASB cases. These experts will go to a resident's home and sit with them at times of expected ASB to record evidence. These experts are impartial and see for themselves the level of ASB being experienced and will record evidence to be used by the landlord if needed. **Evidence:** Craig Kendall, ASB Service Manager at Hyde, told the TFG that they only use the service when they feel it is necessary, whilst this has a cost attached it is felt to be worth the cost.¹⁴
- Ensure local Housing Associations are aware of information required for noise diaries, to avoid duplication
 - Ensure that when residents are asked to complete noise diaries every housing provider in the city is using a standardised form this will ensure that residents are not being asked to complete diaries multiple times. It is clear that some housing associations are not ensuring that data collected is up to an evidential standard. BHCC Environmental Health have confirmed that they will accept noise diaries from housing associations provided they contain the detailed information required for a statutory investigation. There is currently no formal framework between local housing associations and BHCC on this issue, which could be set up to improve collaborative working. **Evidence:** Vicky Weir, Safe Neighbourhoods Manager- South Region at Guinness Partnership, spoke about an agreement that they have made with Cheshire East Council whereby the local authority will accept noise diaries from Guinness residents.¹⁵ This will speed up the process for residents and provide a better and streamlined service for them.
- Strengthening the Response to Racism-Related ASB in Housing
 - Resident accounts¹⁶ indicate a pattern of increasingly overt and persistent racist behaviour within some housing blocks. These include coordinated harassment by small groups, intertwined with racial abuse, and repeated intimidation of both residents and frontline staff (security guard placed in one tower block). The examples shared illustrate how

¹³ Meetings three and four

¹⁴ Meeting three

¹⁵ Meeting three

¹⁶ Public engagement written submission from a resident invited to the session but unable to attend.

racist perpetrators adapt their behaviour, exploit cultural nuances, and use sustained low-level actions that are difficult to evidence but over time are deeply harmful (micro aggressions that build up in severity). By adopting a structured and culturally informed approach, BHCC can prevent further escalation of racist behaviours, protect minority residents and frontline staff, and begin rebuilding trust and cohesion within affected communities. Concerning themes include:

- **Cumulative, nuanced racist behaviours** that build over time, making victims feel isolated, unsafe, and “terrible,” while also eroding trust in the council’s ability to protect them.
 - **Targeted harassment of minority residents and staff**, including racial slurs, intimidation, and behaviour severe enough to reduce staff members to tears.
 - **Breakdown of social cohesion** in tower blocks, where bystanders avoid intervening out of fear or fatigue.
 - **Escalation when racism goes unchallenged**, emboldening perpetrators – mirroring broader social patterns where unchecked racism grows more visible and aggressive.
 - **Displacement of victims**, including residents forced to move due to racist neighbours or threats of violence.
 - **Complications linked with criminal activity**, including residents engaged in drug dealing who return to the same behaviours immediately after enforcement action, creating fear and undermining confidence in reporting.
- BHCC should adopt and communicate a clear, proactive, and zero tolerance approach to discrimination within ASB casework.
 - Should this approach already be taken then a review should be undertaken of how it is upheld and a consideration if the procedures for dealing with discrimination in ASB casework is fit for purpose.
 - Review of the Client of Concern Register
 - Members were pleased to hear from Brent Schwarz, Head of Health & Safety at Brighton and Hove City Council, that the use of the Client of Concern Register is being reviewed and support this review.
 - Improving the use of language in complaints communications
 - Having spoken to Victoria Paling, Customer Experience Lead at Brighton & Hove City Council, members understand that complaints at all stages need to follow certain guidelines and use specific phrases when communicating with tenants. However, this language is often impersonal and leaves complainants feeling unheard. The TFG would recommend that as well as using the necessary wording in responding to complaints

that more personal language is used to show that complaints are being listened to and the impact of the issue, and how it has been dealt with, on them is acknowledged.

Evidence Gathering Sessions

Meeting One: BHCC

The first meeting of the TFG was with housing staff from Brighton & Hove City Council to enable the group to have a baseline to understand the current aims and policies of the council. This enabled the group to compare what BHCC are doing with the work of other councils.

In this meeting the TFG met with:

- Harry Williams, Director of Housing People Services
- Justine Harris, Head of Tenancy Services
- Janet Dowdell, Tenancy Service Operations Manager

Evidence gathered in this meeting included Justine Harris saying that that they had identified outward communication to keep residents informed was something they wanted to improve. This has been incorporated into a recommendation to increase the council's work in publicising success stories in dealing with ASB. The TFG also heard Janet Dowdell speaking about the length of time that it takes to get cases to court, which has been incorporated into a recommendation to lobby for the creation of a specialist housing court to deal with the backlog of cases.

Meeting Two: Other councils

During this meeting the TFG met with other local authorities who were chosen for their high Tenancy Satisfaction Measures scorings for both overall tenant satisfaction and tenant satisfaction in dealing with antisocial behaviour. The councils were also filtered down to ensure that they had a similar sized housing stock to Brighton & Hove City Council, as it was felt the issues faced by councils with a much smaller or a much larger housing stock would be too different to be comparable. The TFG met with:

- Cities of Westminster Council. Rochelle Largan – ASB Service Manager
- Portsmouth City Council. Lee Hickman ASB Manager
- Derby Homes (ALMO of Derby City Council). Nick Bale – Anti-Social Behaviour Manager North

In this meeting the TFG heard of the ways that other local authorities deal with ASB, including the structure of their teams and their policies. The TFG also heard that local authorities across the country are experiencing the same problems and delays in trying to get cases to court, which provided further evidence to support calls for a specialist housing court.

Meetings Three & Four: Housing Associations

The TFG held two meetings with Housing Associations. All the housing associations in these meetings had a presence in Brighton & Hove, with most of them having large numbers of properties across the country. In these meetings the TFG spoke with:

Meeting Three

- Guinness Partnership. Vicky Weir - Safe Neighbourhoods Manager- South Region
- BHT Sussex. David Chaffey – Chief Executive and Paul Fagen - Head of Housing
- Hyde Housing. Craig Kendall – ASB Service Manager

Meeting Four

- Moat. Kerrie Jenkins - Tenancy Specialist Manager
- Southdown. Jim Aspdin - Director of Housing & Assets

The TFG heard about the different approaches that are taken by housing associations when dealing with ASB compared to local authorities. The TFG learnt of the use of technology by housing associations to allow residents to report, monitor and record ASB, which have formed recommendations to explore the costs and potential benefits of the use of these services. A piece of evidence that emerged, which could help housing association residents, is that Guinness Partnership have an agreement with East Cheshire Council in which the council will accept the noise diary sheets from Guinness when noise complaints are referred to the council, rather than asking residents to begin the process again. This has formed a recommendation to consider such agreements with local housing associations in Brighton & Hove.

Meeting Five: Other Agencies

It is not just housing officers at local authorities or housing associations who are dealing with antisocial behaviour in their properties. A proportion of the issues reported will be escalated to local authorities' community safety or environmental health teams, or to the police. Residents who feel that they are not getting progress

with their case, or a desired outcome may also feel the need to contact their Member of Parliament for assistance.

In previous meetings the TFG had heard about the work that is done by council staff and housing association staff involving these other council departments or the police. The TFG therefore felt it important to hear from them about the challenges that they are facing in dealing with antisocial behaviour. A meeting of the TFG was held with:

- Sussex Police. T/Inspector Emma Gee, ASB lead Brighton Neighbourhood Police Team and Steve Parker ASB & Hate Crime coordinator.
- Office of Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP. Domino Moore and Matilda Crawley.

During this meeting the TFG heard about how Sussex Police are working to tackle ASB and how they work alongside housing associations and the council.

Staff from the office of local Member of Parliament, Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP (Hove & Portslade), told the group about their experiences of residents contacting them to seek advice and assistance from their MP to resolve their ongoing issues with ASB. This not only gave an insight into the effect that ASB can have on residents but also showed the barriers that residents are facing in being heard by their landlords and getting their issues resolved.

The police were keen to work with others from across the city to understand local issues and to resolve problems such as ASB quickly before they become too much of an issue.

Public Engagement

Members were clear from the beginning of the process that public engagement was going to be a key part of the TFG's work. The way that a council or housing association deals with antisocial behaviour will have a tangible impact on tenants that are suffering from antisocial behaviour.

The TFG therefore wanted to hear from residents who had suffered with antisocial behaviour, reported it to the council, and the case concluded. A decision was taken early on to not take any ongoing cases as evidence. The TFG did not have any power to involve itself in ongoing cases and it was felt that to take evidence from people with ongoing cases would unfairly raise resident expectations for a resolution and make the work of housing officers more difficult.

Residents were not sought to act as witnesses from Housing Associations, due to the complexities in finding appropriate witnesses.

The TFG spoke in person to four witnesses, all of whom were council tenants, from across the city. They each came in person to a meeting at Hove Town Hall where they individually gave evidence to and answered questions from the TFG members for around 25 minutes each. Due to the desire to keep these witnesses anonymous specific details of who they are and where they are from will not be included in this report, nor will the minutes of the meeting with them.

The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to hear from residents with lived experience of the issues being investigated. They were also able to speak about issues within their communities. Members took the opportunity to ask questions that had arisen from previous sessions.

Additional public engagement was carried out by the Housing team. A questionnaire was sent to all tenants who had a closed ASB case from within the last two years. They were asked a series of questions around their experiences of reporting and resolving the issues.

These two approaches provided a broad public engagement exercise collecting data via two methods and allowing participation from a wide range of residents.

Meeting Six: BHCC

A meeting was held to speak with officers from Brighton & Hove City Council to discuss issues that had arisen during the previous evidence gathering sessions. Witnesses included:

- Harry Williams, Director of Housing People Services
- Justine Harris, Head of Tenancy Services
- John Evans, Housing Manager

In this meeting members heard from John Evans about the work of neighbourhood officers in dealing with ASB and other issues within local communities, as well as being able to question Harry Williams and Justine Harris on some of the evidence that the TFG had gathered from previous meetings.

Meeting Seven: BHCC

Members wished to hold a final meeting to gather evidence from officers not directly in housing at BHCC but whose work was linked to that covered by the TFG. This included Richard Tusset, Director of Commissioning & Communities, and Siobhan Bostock, Senior Community Safety Caseworker. The aim speaking to them was to discuss how the Community Cohesion and the Community Safety team deal with ASB in private settings to see what could be learnt from them. The TFG also spoke

to Victoria Paling, Customer Experience Lead, regarding the council's complaints process, and Brent Schwarz, BHCC Head of Health & Safety and Building Services, regarding the council's Client of Concern Register. Witnesses included:

- Victoria Paling, BHCC Customer Experience Lead.
- Richard Tuset, Director of Commissioning & Communities, Siobhan Bostock Senior Community Safety Caseworker.
- Brent Schwarz, BHCC Head of Health & Safety and Building Services

During this meeting members heard about the council's complaint service and how they deal with cases that come from the housing team. The TFG heard from the community safety team about how they deal with ASB in the private sector and how they work alongside the complex case team dealing with ASB in council housing. Member were also told about how the Client of Concern Register is used and that it is being reviewed to ensure that it is used appropriately with the necessary safeguards in place.

Conclusions

Antisocial behaviour has a huge impact on those who suffer from it, particularly when it is persistent, targeted, or happening at their home which should be a place of safety. The TFG have heard details of how residents have been affected during the public engagement aspect of its inquiries, including people openly taking drugs, defecating, and urinating in communal areas of a block of flats; residents having to move house to get away from problem neighbours; and people using scaffolding to climb the sides of a block of flats.

Whilst no recommendations that the TFG can make could stop antisocial behaviour from happening, the TFG feel that the recommendations that have been made, if implemented, will be able to improve the service that is offered to residents at their time of need, ensuring that they feel supported and that they have an expectation of what can, and what cannot, be done to resolve their case.

Appendix

- Meeting Minutes (Public engagement excluded)

