

Antisocial Behaviour in Social Housing Task and Finish Group
Appendix to the report – Minutes of evidence gathering

Antisocial Behaviour in Social Housing Task and Finish Group Evidence Session
One

20th August 2025 16:30

Present: Cllrs O'Quinn, Gauge, Cattell, Mcleay, Fishleigh. Angela Stretton (OPC).

Witnesses: Harry Williams (Director of Housing People Services), Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), and Janet Dowdell (Tenancy Services Operations Manager) all from Brighton & Hove City Council.

JOQ: Welcome everyone to this first evidence gathering session of this Task & Finish Group. Today we are hearing from our own council officers to find out about the current policies and procedures in place to tackle antisocial behaviour in council homes.

Joining us are Harry Williams (Director of Housing People Services), Justine Harris (Head of Tenancy Services), and Janet Dowdell (Tenancy Services Operations Manager). They have prepared a presentation for us and will then take questions. Although this meeting is in private, it is being recorded and minutes taken. These minutes may be used as part of our final report, which will go to committee and be sent to cabinet.

JH introduced the presentation and said that they had carried out a review of their policy in 2022 and a new policy was introduced in 2023. This was done with resident focus groups. She said that a lot of this had been implemented but some of it is still being embedded. She said that they were constantly learning and training particularly around their work with other agencies. One example of this given was multi agency meetings that were taking place in each area facilitated by area housing managers that involved PCSOs, housing officers, and mental health services may attend. She said that one thing identified that needed to be improved as the outward communication to keep residents informed and that this a resources issue. She said that they had spent a lot of time on training plans and becoming a trauma informed service to support victims.

JD presented to the group and said that as a social landlord they used a harms based approach considering the impacts on the victims and the community, putting people at the heart of what they do. She said that they recognised that individuals reacted differently to ASB depending on lived experience and vulnerabilities.

HW said that this was a change in approach as it was previously based on what a reasonable person would find acceptable but now we are considering the individual and considering the impact on them.

JD said that the team offered every victim or witness a risk assessment to establish the degree of risk based on what they are experience and to tailor the response. She said that the risk levels were low risk, medium risk or high risk and that this was regularly reviewed throughout the life of the case and could change. She said that this helped to identify vulnerable individuals who were at higher risk because of personal circumstances and allowed the team to put great support in for them. She said that cases can take many months to resolve and that victims were kept informed during this time and given a Single Point Of Contact (SPOC).

JOQ asked about victims wanting to move but not into emergency accommodation. JD said that they could sometimes offer placements outside of the city and that moving perpetrators required a lot of evidence.

JC asked how long court action would take. JD replied that good casework took a long time even without the backlog in courts, and could take 12 to 18 months.

HW said that part of their learning was how to communicate this and keep the community informed.

JD said that they worked closely with the police to deal with cuckooing using a red, amber, green system which saw people categorised as red being checked on daily. She said that this will lead to the closure of the property.

CG asked to see statistics on cuckooing and said that a Bill was currently going through Parliament which might lead to a change in approach to dealing with the issue. CG liked the idea of a victim lead approach. She also asked for equalities data on both victims and perpetrators.

JD said that they would look at perpetrator to understand that underlying issues to their behaviour and try to link them up with appropriate services such as mental health, drug or alcohol services. She said that some do not engage but it can be really successful. She said that some people in the community did not understand the support given to perpetrators, partly because they could not share the reasons with the community.

AS asked if there were any interventions in place for victims. JD said that they did offer them mediation and conflict resolution. JH added that they could also carry out practical measures like garden fencing or sound proofing to alleviate problems.

JD said that the majority of cases can be solved without court action. She said that courts expected certain things to be done or tried before they could take any action. She said that all tenants were protected under the Equalities Act and that an equalities checklist would be carried out. JD said that all actions need to be proportionate and therefore expectations were set at the start of the process to the victims outlining realistically what could and could not be done. The priority of the team was to stop the ASB and tackle its root causes. She said that they were not avoiding legal action but had to take a deliberate and measured approach to get there. She said that 75% of cases were dealt with without having to go to court, but if it were necessary then they would do so. Regarding domestic violence she said that managers attending a weekly MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meeting with the police to discuss domestic abuse cases. She said that they also worked closely with environmental health on noise nuisance issues. JD said that a new Hate Incidents Policy was coming to the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee in October.

JD said that the team was currently seeing an increase in vulnerability and complexity of need, alongside reduced budgets and increased pressure on courts.

Following the presentation members asked questions of the witnesses.

JOQ asked why they thought that the satisfaction scores for dealing with ASB were so low. JD replied that it took too long to resolve cases and included issues around how often the council are in contact with victims, how much information can be shared with them, and that they do not publicise when they have taken someone to court and had them evicted. JH said that it was also about how people were left feeling afterwards. Once a case is resolved they are just left and not supported going forwards. JD clarified that closure of a property was different to eviction. Closure was the sealing of a property for 3 months (extendable by 3 months) meaning that no one could go in and that the council could take possession of it after. JH said that they had surveyed 1300 tenants. JD said that more resources in the tenancy team may help as officers may have 40 cases, with half of them being ASB cases that needed contacting regularly.

MG asked for stats on how long cases take to complete and if there were any targets. She asked for a break down in what was done in the 25% of cases that needed more formal intervention. She asked about hate incidents including gender. JH said that the draft Hate Incident Policy was coming to the committee in October and that could be explored there. She said that some councils do include 'lifestyle' in their hate incident policies but that as this did not align with the Home Office Brighton & Hove had not done so.

BF asked if the profile of individuals mattered as verbal abuse was verbal abuse regardless. JD said that it was important to know the demographics as they can see if particular communities are being targeted. She said that they do keep statistics on long cases and that the Ombudsman require a formal review of cases over 200 days old or those with no action for eight weeks to come up with ideas to resolve them. She said that there was no target time for resolving cases but that there were measures in place to stop case drift including case reviews with managers. She added that the 25% of cases needing more formal action do not take up all of the time but it is the ones that rumble on.

MG asked if they tell people that they can ask for a case review. JD replied that it was on the council's website and explained that it was carried out by officers from other authorities with the victim coming in to explain the impact on them. She added that people did use the option of a case review quite well.

JOQ asked where they could do better. JH replied that personal contact was where they felt they could do better.

JOQ asked if they worked with the community and voluntary sector. JH said that not they did not do so in a broad sense but might do on a case-by-case basis. JD added that they had worked with GPs on social prescribing. JH said that they had put in place a trauma service for the community.

JC asked if the team looked at councils with a much larger housing stock than us. HW said that they were aware of councils that they were bench marked against and really welcomed the idea of going out and seeing what else could be done.

JOQ thanked officers for attending and the enormous amount of work going into tackling antisocial behaviour.

Present: Cllrs Jackie O'Quinn, Mila Gauge, Julie Cattell, Ellen Mcleay, Bridget Fishleigh. Angela Stretten (Older People's Council), Richard Jordan-Penswick (Housing Manager).

Witnesses: Rochelle Largan – ASB Service Manager Westminster City Council, Nick Bale – Anti-Social Behaviour Manager North Derby Homes, Lee Hickman ASB Manager Portsmouth City Council.

JOQ opened the meeting and invited Rochelle Largan from Westminster City Council to speak to the group.

RL said that Westminster has a stock of around 24,000 homes across Westminster Borough and that is mixed tenure of leasehold to social housing tenants. She said that there were housing officers who deal more with tenancy management as opposed to the more complex cases that her team would deal with. Although currently recruiting she said that they had eight direct antisocial behaviour case officers, who each have a patch and at any given time have anything between 130 all the way up to about 180 antisocial behaviour cases between all of the case officers. She said that Westminster has a policy of looking at prevention and intervention as a first port of call, looking to be proactive rather than reactive.

RL said that they had over the last year they have been using quarterly reports to highlight what is coming in and where it is coming from. This will allow them to see comparisons as time goes on. They are wanting to use data in a better way, alongside other services, to be more proactive rather than reactive.

RL said that alongside the prevention and intervention they had a zero tolerance approach in terms of enforcement. She said that the most common tool used was injunctions as a way of prevention before more serious proceedings such as possession.

JOQ asked what a complex case would involve. RL said that these were cases where there are other factors that are impacting the people that are involved and that's both the complainant and perpetrator or alleged perpetrator including mental health, social care, domestic abuse, or involving children services. She said that officers needed to be curious about the causes of behaviour and what could be triggering it.

JOQ said that many victims can feel that the perpetrator is treated better than themselves and asked how she handled that kind of situation. RL said that it's a really horrible position for most victims in cases and typically that is quite a common feeling and response that Westminster also get. She thought it really important in all

cases, and particularly ones of a more complex nature, that when having those conversations with victims right at the beginning of the case, it is so important to manage their expectations. But also give them knowledge and awareness of what it is that officers do and how they do it. She said it can seem to victims that you're perhaps supporting their alleged perpetrator more than you're supporting them. There are ways around that and ways of explaining that. She thought it so important from the beginning that officers explain that they treat everyone fairly and there are some things that they need to consider that could help this person stop their behaviour. RL said that from the beginning it was important to tell victims that there would be certain things that couldn't be shared with them but that the main aim was to stop the behaviour, that the victim is not alone and should receive regular contact, but also that the alleged perpetrator would receive help and support to change their behaviour.

BF asked what enforcement measures Westminster used, how many people they evicted last year, and about work to ensure housing associations follow the same rules. RL responded that the most commonly used tools were injunctions with or without notice depending on the seriousness. She said they would look at without notice injunctions where there was a risk of physical harm or violence. She said that they utilise closure orders, the premises closure orders quite frequently actually where there is perhaps harm in a property being caused to the Community or where we've had somebody that's vulnerable, that's their property's been taken over and cuckooed we work with other services, particularly the police, in terms of community protection, warnings and notices. She said they would use possession as a last option, as the aim is never to evict somebody. RL said that their number of evictions was 11 possessions and some of those were ongoing as they were waiting for bailiff warrants, as these can take between five and 12 months to come through. RL said that they worked closely with the public protection and licensing team who deal with ASB outside of the housing stock. RL said that they recently started a housing compact where they were getting together all of the registered providers in the borough and nominating a lead for each of those specific areas. So for housing, for antisocial behaviour to make sure that those relationships are really strong. How they approach certain topics such as noise, cuckoo in hotspot areas in Westminster, and looking at sort of our procedures towards that.

JC asked about the use of injunctions, how quickly they can get them, how much it costs, how often they work. RL replied that last year they had got around 16 injunctions, some specific to people and a couple of estate wide injunctions where large areas were experiencing ASB but they could not identify individuals responsible. There were two types of injunction, with power of arrest and without, depending on the evidence that is put before the judge. She said that councils would need the support of the local police if getting a with power of arrest injunction as if the police didn't have the resources to carry out arrests it didn't work. In terms of cost

RL said that estate wide could be £9,000-£11,000 and individual could be £3,000 upwards. RL said that someone could still be taken to civil court for breaching an injunction, but this can take months to get to court.

AS asked if there was support for older people. RL said that Westminster had some sheltered schemes for over 50s and more elderly and vulnerable which had scheme managers who they regularly communicate with. She said that age and accessibility need was considered right from the beginning. She said they would also agree with people if they would prefer face to face visits or phone calls over things like email, taking into account the team's resources.

JOQ asked about the team's numbers and training. RL said that they have two managers and eight officers. She said that they were recruiting as it was a high turn over area. RL said that training ASB officers was difficult as people could be taught how to do things or the legislation but it was very different to actually doing it. She said Westminster were developing a new training programme and going back to the basics of case management principles. She said that they also looked at other training such as on dementia and that dementia could cause behaviour that might be perceived as ASB.

JOQ thanks Rochelle for her time and asked Nick Bale to present to the group.

NB said that he was one of two ASB managers at Derby Homes and that they were an arms length management organisation appointed by Derby City Council in 2002. He said that they had 12,500 properties. He said that Rochelle's experiences mirrored what in his view is happening across the country. He said that in 2014 they decided to establish a specialist ASB team, which he said was the only efficient and effective way to deliver the service in his over 20 years of experience. NB said that his team consisted of seven full time senior ASB officers, a full time ASB officer apprentice, and two admin staff. He said that the team average 150-180 cases at any time, which increases between June and September, peaking again in October and November. He said officers are each dealing with 30 to possibly 40 cases at any time. NB spoke of the close working relationship with areas of Derby City Council including the public protection team, community safety partnership, and also the police. NB said that the work had not got easier since the ASP crime and Policing Act 2014 came into force and agreed with Rochelle on the difficulties caused by delays in getting court hearings.

JOQ asked what recommendations he would make in terms of changes to legislation. NB said that Derby Homes was a member of Resolve, a national body representing local authorities, housing providers etcetera and police across the entire country providing a link to the Home Office. He said that he sits on one of their policy groups and has been advocating for a designated housing court to deal with

the issue of delays in getting court hearings. He said that they had a good working relationship with the local police but that they needed more resources to be able to increase neighbourhood teams.

BF asked about his work with Resolve. NB said that he couldn't share much of the work but could put the group in contact with the Chief Executive.

AS asked about support for victims. NB said that every case would be different but they were lucky to have access to a Police & Crime Commissioner funded victim support service which operates across the whole country. He said that they would offer this service to victims who could use it for as long as they needed it.

JOQ asked about the high number of cases per 1,000 properties alongside the high satisfaction rating, and how this was achieved. NB said that he did not see the relevance of the cases per 1000 statistic. He said that they survey when a case has concluded but said that the return rate will impact on the level as they wouldn't get a return for each concluded case. He said that the surveys were carried out in telephone call carried out by an independent person within Derby Homes.

EM spoke about communication and expectation setting being key. NB replied that it goes back to his point at the beginning of having a dedicated ASB team rather than housing officers dealing with ASB alongside their other work as although it costs more but in his experience was more effective. He said that all of his team were trained to BTEC level 5 in ASB case management.

JOQ thanked Nick and asked Lee Hickman to speak to the group.

LH said that Portsmouth have 17,500 properties within Portsmouth and Havant as well as in Fareham, Gosport and Winchester. He said that they had three housing offices to cover these. He said that they had 44 housing officers, which were generic roles including rental, income exchanges, voids, tenancy management and antisocial behaviour. LH said that tenants can report out social behaviour in person over the phone, by e-mail, by letter or online and that all contact was passed through the housing officer to manage this in a consistent approach. Similarly to Westminster and Derby Homes he said that the first instance was that a risk assessment was carried out to understand the impact. He said that a risk assessment may also be carried out on the accused to understand the level of support needed for them as well. He said that an action plan would be completed to give the complainant a clear plan and set expectations. LH said that Portsmouth had three ASB advisors, a private sector coordinator and a domestic abuse advisor. He said that they would be providing additional training in dealing with domestic abuse cases. He said that they are not carrying out regular case reviews to continuously learn and feed back to the teams. LH said that they were trying to develop a more consistent approach across

the service. He said that they carried out training including showing how resident engagement, scrutiny panels and customer satisfaction impacts.

JOQ asked about the private sector coordinator. LH replied that they looked at ASB in public areas but only in private accommodation if it was having an impact on the wider community.

JOQ asked about Portsmouth's satisfaction levels compared to the level of cases. Similarly to Nick, LH said that the figures can be misleading. He said that they generally managed between 480 to 540 cases actively at any one time. He said that officers had between 10 to 15 cases and the specialist ASB advisors managed between 20 to 25 cases.

JC asked about scrutiny panels and if they were linked to scrutiny committees. LH said that they have scrutiny panels, focus groups, and resident engagement that link in with how they manage anti social behaviour. They are currently reviewing the policies because they are rewriting the hate crime policy, hate crime, hate, instant domestic abuse and ASB policy, so the scrutiny panels look at that to identify from that side in line with the customers as well.

BF asked about big council owned blocks having a live in caretaker as they often used to. NB answered that in Derby they had 1 high rise block with a concierge who was a presence on site for much of the day and into the early evening. He wasn't sure if such a scheme would work in somewhere, like a London borough, that might have many high rise blocks.

EM asked about the domestic violence focus and how that had changed. LH said that they looked at all types of domestic abuse not just between partners. He said that the recently appointed domestic abuse advisor has so far worked really well and is currently rewriting the policy. He said that she was also upskilling the housing officers. He said that Portsmouth had 47 ongoing domestic abuse cases and that the advisor was now reviewing these to provide feedback to the housing officers. EM said that Brighton & Hove's housing team did have a complex case team in place.

SS (Cllr Sue Shanks who had entered the room during the last exchange) raised the issue of councils who do have live in caretakers. NB responded that rather than staff in blocks they were empowering residents to deal with issues by giving them the power to hold meetings and put the focus on the right areas. JOQ said that it was always difficult to reach some people and that in some cases these types of meetings could end up dominated by a small minority.

JOQ thanks witnesses for their time in coming to speak to the group and closed the meeting.

Antisocial behaviour in Social Housing Task & Finish Group Evidence Session Three
18th November 2025

Present: Cllrs Julie Cattell, Milla Gauge, Ellen Mcleay, Bridget Fishleigh. Angela Stretton (OPC). Richard Jordan-Penswick (BHCC Housing Manager), Graham Davies (BHCC Housing Manager)
Apologies: Cllr Jackie O'Quinn

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

Guinness Partnership – Vicky Weir, Safe Neighbourhoods Manager- South Region

VW began by speaking about Guinness' antisocial behaviour policy, which is a national policy covering all of their 150,000 residents. All the desk work for ASB is done by a support team in Oldham, such as phone calls, letter writing, legal paperwork. VW said that there was a Safer Neighbourhood team dealing with ASB in the North of the country and the South (which VW manages). The team in the south has nine safe neighbourhood officers, with one covering the Brighton area. Across the country they manage around 1000 cases a month. The officers will do everything and follow a case through from the initial call to legal action.

BF asked a question about improving communications and contacting neighbours about ASB.

VW said that if a report is of a kind that is likely to affect more than one person, such as noise, drugs, nuisance gatherings, that they would automatically send out either by post or door knocking, a survey to neighbours that they can fill in at leisure. VW said that some people were reluctant to report ASB but this would give them the opportunity to share their concerns. VW said that they send out surveys twice a year and that on larger schemes they hold twice yearly community events with the police to give customers the chance to speak with them. VW said that they ensure that Guinness gives a range of methods for residents to contact them and were producing a new online system so customers can raise cases to themselves directly from an app on their phone.

MG said that she was impressed with the domestic abuse booklet produced by Guinness and asked a question about the interplay between domestic abuse and antisocial behaviour.

VW said Guinness had a separate domestic abuse and safeguarding team, which has enhanced DAHA accreditation. However, VW recognised that domestic abuse and antisocial behaviour often go hand in hand as for example, what is reported as noise nuisance could be domestic abuse. VW said that all staff were trained to know the signs of domestic abuse, including call centre staff and repair operatives who may be seeing repeat repairs for things like door handles or holes in walls. VW said that staff were always very careful when talking with residents to never put them at risk if there were signs of domestic abuse. VW said that if there were concerns or

questions that staff are trained to refer it to the domestic abuse and safeguarding team.

MG asked about the statistics of prevalence of referrals from the Antisocial behaviour teams to the domestic abuse and safeguarding team.

VW said that she did not have figures to hand but asked if the team could email with the ask and she would ask the domestic abuse and safeguarding team for information.¹

JC asked if training was done internally or externally and if it was trauma informed.

VW said that the domestic abuse and safeguarding manager carries out the training and is very experienced and an ex-social worker. VW said that they did occasionally send staff out for external training when the opportunity arose, but most was done internally. VW said that the training was trauma informed and that staff were also trained on mental health awareness and suicide awareness.

BF asked a question on the number of closure orders.

VW said that they had done 8 across the country, with most of them being in the North. This was because they found it more challenging to get the police and local authorities on board in the South. Despite always trying the response was often that the police or local authorities did not have the time to do put together the closure order and complete the legal paperwork. VW said that they were looking forward to

¹ Following the meeting information was provided by Guinness Partnership's Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Manager:

- The ASB transferred 5 cases for Domestic abuse support and 15 cases for safeguarding support during this time from 1st April to present date as it was deemed a DA or SG concern - please note this is not including cases we work alongside the ASB team as there are often a cross over of cases and we can also work in unison as there are safeguarding/ domestic abuse concerns as well as ASB complaints.
- The Domestic abuse and safeguarding team have transferred 42 cases to the ASB team as the resident's complaint were more appropriate to be dealt with by the ASB team.
- Our Guinness property operatives receive eLearning training on safeguarding and domestic abuse, they also receive toolbox talks on topics around safeguarding and domestic abuse. The domestic abuse training includes what domestic abuse is, types of domestic abuse, why people may remain in relationships, barriers of leaving, spotting the signs of domestic abuse in a housing context, scenarios colleagues may come across, what to do in an emergency, what the domestic abuse team do and how to refer to the team.
- We have also developed a domestic abuse booklet to support with people's understanding of domestic abuse. During our 16 days of activism communication campaign/ safeguarding adult's week we also publish awareness raising communications in Guinness properties newsletter which is distributed to operatives as well as on the internal intranet for all colleagues to access.

new powers being given to housing associations to use closure orders themselves without the need to request them from the police or local authorities.²

RJP said that in Brighton & Hove they held regular closure planning meetings where housing associations would bring their cases to the council and that these were often approved. RJP said that the housing association would be tasked to carry out the legal activities, prepare the witness statement, prepare the case for court, and it will then be put into court by the council's community safety team.

JC asked how many had been done over the last five years.

RJP said that it was in the region of 20-25 in the last five years and that it is the only intervention that they can get into court in good time. RJP said that they can be used for all types of property.

BF asked if VW thought that a dedicated housing court would help resolve antisocial behaviour cases.

VW agreed and said that it takes a huge amount of work to get cases to court but then if the court date is not for another 12 months, then the residents would continue to suffer. VW 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." VW said that if there was a dedicated housing court then they would know that they would be going before specialist housing judges, not judges who rarely dealt with housing cases. VW gave an example of judges not knowing that housing associations can represent themselves in court and sending them away to hire a barrister, causing more delays.

EM asked what happened during the wait for court dates particularly what on going support was offered to residents.

VW said that it was standard practice to contact complainants every two weeks as a minimum in their preferred method of contact. VW said that they may also make a referral to victim support, and encouraging victims to engage with other agencies such as reporting to the police. VW said that they also offer support to the perpetrator to get the help that they need, including maximising benefits, offering drug and alcohol support services, or help getting food. VW said that although support was not always accepted offers were always made. VW said that if they had concerns about a perpetrator's wellbeing, they would contact their GP to raise them.

² Schedule 2 of the [Crime and Policing Bill](#) (currently in the House of Lords) amends Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 so as to enable registered social housing providers to close premises that they own or manage which are associated with nuisance and disorder.

This could be done under best interests without the person's consent if necessary. VW said that they would rarely hear back from the GP.

AS asked about support for the complainant.

VW said that support was offered to the complainant, and they would be asked if they were managing to keep up with their rent and food payments and could be referred to customer support. VW said that they could refer them to more specialist services like Age UK for elderly residents. VW said that they could not do everything for residents but would be able to give them support and guidance.

BF asked if there were any powers that they would want from councils to help them do their job better.

VW said that Guinness had an agreement with Cheshire East council to work closely together on noise cases, so that Guinness would do the groundwork and when they have exhausted all that they can do it will be passed on to environmental health at Cheshire East, but rather than asking the resident to start again recording diary sheets they will accept the evidence already gathered by Guinness, rather than making the resident start the process again. VW said that housing associations do not have the powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 that the local authority does to deal with noise so they can't issue noise abatement notices or community protection warnings and so having that kind of seamless approach with the council's environmental health team would be very useful.

BHT Sussex - David Chaffey, Chief Executive and Paul Fagen, Head of Housing

PF said that BHT Sussex's entire housing stock was 400 with 250 in Brighton, and that his team was made up of seven staff.

There was a discussion around specific issues at South Downs Court in Rottingdean.

PF said that they were not a pure housing association in the traditional sense because they are made up of more than 20 different homeless projects. PF explained that they get 50% of their residents from general needs via home move and blocks such as South Downs Court and Richard's Yard on New England Road that are taken on with an agreement from the private rented sector and let on short term basis to tenants from their projects.

BF asked about contacting neighbours. PF said that they could always do more and that they contacted complainants at least every two weeks to check in, but that some people needed more contact and others less. PF said that as a smaller organisation

they could learn a lot from larger organisations and that they too did community engagement events involving the police in different areas.

BF asked if PF agreed with VW about working closer together on noise complaints. PF said that residents not having to do witness statements twice would be very helpful.

MG asked about their approach to domestic abuse. PF said that they did not have a separate team but that the team did have external domestic abuse training. PF said that smaller organisations who lack specialists like larger organisations could be left more vulnerable.

AS asked what the main challenge was in resolving cases. PF said that court delays were a massive challenge as it can take nine to 11 months to get a case to the point of applying to the court and the delays can add the same time on again. This creates challenges for the complaint having to live with the issue for so long.

JC asked about dealing with issues via mediation. PF said that they had recently commissioned Brighton & Hove Independent Mediation Service in a 12-month partnership to take on up to 20 cases. PF said that this sort of early intervention was key.

JC asked RJP if this was something that the council did. RJP said that it was integral to the council's casework and that in dealing with the early stages of antisocial behaviour cases involving mediation can really have a transformative effect. JC asked if there were statistics available from the council to show how many cases were dealt with by mediation. RJP said that those statistics could be drawn out from the database.

DC said that BHT had previously worked in an organisation that had moved away from patch-based housing officers to a system where who every was available took the case. DC said that they had decided to have dedicated housing officers who work specific patches, meaning that they can get to know people in their area. DC said that a Tenancy Sustainability Officer had been brought in to work more intensely with people. DC said that their staff to tenant ratio was low because of the way the organisation was set up, but also because they need to operate that way because half of the tenancies come from their own projects where they may have experience of homelessness, drugs, alcohol, or mental health problems. DC said that they worked very differently to larger housing associations and worked closely with many more of their tenants. DC said that they have brought in starter tenancies, which means potentially a tenancy could be ended under certain grounds without having to go through the full court process. DC said that they have done this for eight years and have never had to evict anyone. DC said that they do a good job in setting out expectations, rights, and responsibilities, as well as supporting them intensively

through the first year to ensure that they are getting their benefit entitlement, paying their rent, and being a good neighbour.

DF asked about the use of closure orders and court delays.

PF said that they don't make use of closure orders but would be looking at the new powers planned to be given to housing associations with interest. PF said that their first use of CPN since BHCC devolved the power ultimately ended up with the perpetrator being evicted but that this had taken more than six months.

AS asked what happened after eviction.

PF said that the tenant would report to the local authority who would assess their homeless need. PF said that they would let the local authority know to expect the contact.

RJP said that everyone had the right to approach the local authority under the homeless legislation, and the local authority would have to look at whether they were homeless, whether they were vulnerable, and the circumstances whether they were homeless intentionally or unintentionally. RJP said that this is where the information from BHT would help, as if they were evicted for perpetrating ASB they could be intentionally homeless and the local authority would have no long-term duty to house them, and they would be given advice and assistance to find their own accommodation.

Hyde - Craig Kendall, ASB Service Manager

CK said that they were responsible for around 120,000 properties across the South including Hampshire, Sussex, Surrey, London. CK said that they managed 16 ASB officers, and a four-person administrative team who take receipt of the inquiries that come in and allocate them to ASB officers. CK said that in Brighton and Hove there were two ASB officers if needed for casework. CK said that the service had recently undergone significant changes as there were previously at least five ways to report ASB and these streams were managed by different people creating duplication and delay. Now there are only two ways to report ASB, by phone or on an app where the customer can create their own ASB case which goes directly on to the case management portal. On this portal residents can directly contact the ASB officer and upload evidence. It also creates reports and a timeline of events. CK said that they will always look at early intervention including warning letters and an external mediation service run by Crime Concern. CK said that Hyde use a professional witness service where their staff will go to a property and gather evidence in an objective manner. CK said that they also use the Noise App to allow residents to provide real time recordable audio evidence of noise nuisance. CK said that Hyde

were really keen on, and they have found quite effective, was to serve a notice for breach of tenancy if they believed there was a body of evidence that there was a significant breach of tenancy. But that this was not done with the objective to evict but as a warning that the behaviour is a breach of tenancy and could result in eviction. CK said that it was a sobering reminder to people that their behaviours can put tenancies at risk.

MG asked about recognising domestic abuse and dealing with it sensitively. CK said that domestic abuse was managed by Hyde's tenancy team as it happens within the home not so much to others outside of the home. CK said that they work closely with the tenancy team and that there were proposals to merge the two teams. CK said that Hyde was looking at DAHA accreditation. CK said that all frontline officers have training on domestic abuse and regular safeguarding training updated every three years. CK said that repairs operatives were also trained to recognise the signs of domestic abuse within the property.

BF asked how placements worked so that vulnerable residents ended up placed in properties that were not suitable for them, with neighbours who would not accept their behaviour. CK said that allocations were not his area of expertise, but that gender would not be a factor in where to place someone, but if the property was suitable. CK said that if taking possession of property, they would look at the reason for previous eviction and be sensitive when placing a new tenant there.

BF asked about the portal and if there was a private side that the resident could not see. CK confirmed that there was and that the victim would not be able to see details of the perpetrator.

BF asked about communication with victims as some feel that they do not get enough. CK said that the new system had really helped them to manage KPIs effectively. CK said that category A, which is target violence, arson, sexual offences, gun or knife crime, would get a response in 1 working day. Category B, non-targeted such as noise nuisance, drug use, group disorder, would get a response within 5 working days. CK said that there were monthly case reviews and contact with the customer as appropriate with more serious cases receiving more contact. This contact was always by the resident's preferred method.

JC asked if they kept in contact with the perpetrator. CK said that they did.

JC asked about examples of cuckooing. CK said that they did and that cuckooing was really interesting as it often presents as ASB being carried out by the resident who is a victim of cuckooing and it's only when investigations are carried out that this is found out.

BF asked how many cases were taken to court in Brighton. CK said that while he didn't have figures to hand it certainly was done and was maybe around half a dozen.

BF asked if a specialist housing court would help. CK said that if one of those could be in every area it would help as the court system was buckling at the knees and the delays have such a detrimental impact on the victims on ASB. CK said that court delays meant that ASB officers were holding on to cases that could have been resolved if they had gone to court and that the 16 ASB officers had 809 cases across all of their housing stock.

Antisocial behaviour in Social Housing Task & Finish Group Evidence Session Four
21st November 2025

Present: Cllrs Jackie O'Quinn, Ellen Mcleay, Bridget Fishleigh. Angela Stretton (OPC). Graham Davies (BHCC Housing Manager)
Apologies: Cllrs Julie Cattell, Milla Gauge

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

Moat - Kerrie Jenkins, Tenancy Specialist Manager

KJ said that Moat covered Essex, Kent, London, Sussex and had larger city centre developments that were mainly flats. KJ said that they had a specialist team of traditional ASB officers made up of six tenancy specialist officers and a domestic abuse specialist. KJ said that they operated a patch-based system where possible but the team are dynamic and do go where the work is. This patch-based approach allows the team to get to know the areas, stakeholders & local partners, and to be visible to customers.

BF asked if all the tenants in Brighton & Hove came through the Homemove system. KJ said that she would need to check with colleagues but imagined that most would come via the local authority.

EM asked about work with local authorities and other local partners. KJ said that they work closely with local police forces and attend regular HASBRAC [Hate & Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference] multi-agency meetings. KJ said that they work very closely with officers from the community safety units and regularly go on walkabouts with police community support officers.

EM asked about preventative measures. KJ said that they have launched a new ASB policy and procedures as well as a new separate hate crime and hate incidents policy. KJ said that Moat use the ASB app and have an out of hours services for all customers so that they can get hold of someone when the office is closed for immediate assistance. KJ said that Moat participates in national ASB awareness campaigns and ASB Awareness Week. KJ spoke about ASB Awareness Week 2024 where they went to a large development near Brighton Railway Station with local policing teams to meet with residents. This was done on a Sunday to ensure higher levels of engagements to catch people who would not be available in the week.

AS asked about service level agreements around contacting complainants. KJ said that within the new policies and procedures they had refined the offer for customers. This included that any case where there is a threat of harm to the customer, a serious threat of harm, or an immediate threat of harm, such as physical violence, any threatening or intimidating behaviour, harassment, hate crime and hate incidents included in that they will contact and speak with customers within one working day. That will include completing risk assessments, completing action plans and carrying out any immediate safety works for the home, such as lock changes. KJ said that any kind of nuisance, environmental type of antisocial behaviour, Moat will contact customers and complete those works within 5 working days.

JOQ asked for more information about the ASB app. KJ said that the ASB app was through an external provider and is nationally used by a range of housing providers. The app is free and can be used by non-Moat customers reporting ASB in Moat

properties. KJ explained that using the app customers can fill in diary sheets, or use a microphone to verbally record diary sheets, customers can also use it to upload audio, photo or video files as evidence of their reports. KJ said that the app also asked customers to provide the impact that the behaviour is having on them. When incidents are submitted on the app case officers will automatically get a notification enabling them to carry out any required action. KJ said that customers are still able to fill in paper diary sheets and speak to staff if they are unable to use the app, but that most residents are able to use the app.

JOQ asked a question about using the app to create timelines of incidents and contact to enable residents to understand what is going on. KJ said that although the app could be used as a case management system, Moat did not use it for this purpose as they have their own case management system, to ensure that other departments can still access the data. KJ said that their case management system had mandatory fields for preferred method of contact and frequency of contact, which would be set out in the action plan with the customer.

JOQ asked about the reasons for residents not being satisfied. KJ said that satisfaction was broken down into two key areas: satisfaction with the way the case was handled by the officer or organisation and satisfaction with the outcome, and that these can be two very distinct things. KJ said that Moat are focused on case handling, ensuring that they are following their own policies and procedures, adopting best practice, and putting customers at the heart. KJ said that they try to manage expectations on what they can and can't deliver, which some customers don't understand because they don't work in the sector. Particularly around eviction which will only be used as a last resort if everything else hasn't worked. KJ said that dissatisfaction tends to come from things such as not being kept informed, and that residents see that the ones causing the issues are getting a lot of support, but because of GDPR we can't share exactly what might be going on with their neighbour.

BF asked a question on the use of community protection warnings/notices in Brighton & Hove. KJ said that they had not used these powers as it was difficult due to the size of Moat and the number of authorities it works in. KJ said that they still worked with local authorities and the police.

BF asked about the use of closure orders in Brighton & Hove. KJ said that they have not done so in Brighton & Hove but have in other parts of Sussex.

BF asked if KJ would support a dedicated housing court. KJ said that they would and that they feel the frustration, which must be worse for the customer.

AS asked a question about satisfaction scores. KJ said that they joined about two and a half years ago and had worked to develop a specialist offer and had recruited and expanded a specialist team. KJ had implemented in house training for all departments including training up neighbourhood response officers. KJ said that they also had a customer scrutiny panel, and that their next project would be looking at antisocial behaviour. KJ said that these were really useful to look at areas or gaps in services. They were also using feedback from housing ombudsman determinations to change their approach.

JOQ asked a question about recruitment and retention, following on from previously speaking with Westminster City Council who should have had a large team to deal with ASB but were struggling with recruitment issues. KJ said that having done the job that it is important to emphasise with the team and internally support colleagues. KJ said that they had weekly team days in the office enabling them to collaborate and to offload when needed. KJ said that having recently tried to recruit for maternity cover in Sussex it was so difficult that they ended up using agency staff. KJ said that having spoken to others working in the industry they were finding the same issues in recruiting staff. KJ said that a way around this, that they were doing, was to upskill internal colleagues from areas such as customer services who had an interest in becoming case officers.

BF asked if there was anything that might improve how they work with councils. KJ said generally speaking that housing associations tended to get a second-rate service as opposed to working in an ASB team within a local authority. This was because it was easier for ASB or community safety teams within local authorities to know who to speak to about issues and have easier access to them.

BF asked about the situation that can see residents asked to fill in noise diaries for their housing associations and then made to start the process over again when the matter is referred to the local authority. KJ said that they were drafting a new policy and procedure for dealing with noise complaints and management of customer expectations as that by issuing paper diary sheets it is setting up an expectation of enforcement. KJ said that the ASB app allows the sharing of digital diary sheets and audio recordings of noise with the local authority if necessary.

Southdown - Jim Aspdin, Director of Housing & Assets

JA said that they were a small specialist supported housing provider and a relatively large regional care and support provider working with 12,000 clients a year with 480 homes, which are predominately supported living provided for the council. JA said that they offered very different types of tenancies to general needs including 120 or so properties with no staff on site, people getting 130 hours of support a week, people who are formerly homeless, dispersed refuge accommodation in a

partnership with Rise where people may be getting only one or two hours of support a week. JA said that they had a small caseload and didn't have a dedicated antisocial behaviour team because of the nature of the housing and the intensive support that is provided. JA said that often the antisocial behaviour that they have is complicated by mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, vulnerabilities, acquired brain injuries, learning disabilities, and undiagnosed issues. JA said that they provided a supportive approach to ASB with a lot of communication needed.

BF asked a question about satisfaction scores. JA said that they were a small organisation and that their aim is to be local, visible and very responsive.

BF asked about higher numbers of ASB cases per 1000 compared to other housing associations and if this was the nature of the type of people they are supporting. JA said that if their clients weren't exhibiting some sort of challenge in managing or sustaining their tenancy then they might have offered the tenancy to the wrong person. JA said that people were offered a tenancy with Southdown because they needed something more supportive than general needs housing and that they had people who are moving on from place like homeless hostels or psychiatric inpatient units, and that they would expect a higher level of antisocial behaviour.

JOQ asked about ASB satisfaction scores going up and number of hate incidents going up. JA urged caution when looked at the figures because of the small sample size, as they had no hate incidents last year and one this year. So although statistically very different in the way the data is presented, in terms of numbers it is not very different. JA said that they were consistently improving management of antisocial behaviour and had refined that and through communication reworked their approach to antisocial behaviour. JA said that they were stressing to residents that they were accessible, and used WhatsApp to allow people to report antisocial behaviour.

JOQ asked about the demographics of residents. JA said that it tended to be working age adults, 70% male 30% female.

JOQ asked about the kinds of mental health issues that residents had. JA said that they have people with severe and enduring mental health issues, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, disorders of personality, severe and enduring recurring cyclical illnesses. They also had people with anxiety, acquired brain injuries through substance misuse or problematic drinking, depression.

AS asked about how complainants are supported. JA said that they were working on explaining what antisocial behaviour is, explaining the boundaries of what they can do, about evidential standards, and what is a natural part of living in close proximity to other people such as babies crying or footsteps. JA said that because of the

vulnerable nature of their clients they can on occasions be the victims of antisocial behaviour and not be aware as the behaviour becomes normalised.

BF asked about feedback on improving the council's interactions and processes with Southdown. JA said that he may not be close enough to the coalface to know exactly. JA said that they worked closely with community safety teams and the police. JA said that the level of responsiveness and an awareness of what housing associations need would be something.

JOQ asked about how many cases go to court. JA said that they do take cases to court but that these were often complicated by mental health issues and that because they were offering supported tenancies that they were sometimes using section 21 notices. JA said that often they were working to get people into more suitable accommodation and possible back into hospital accommodation.

JOQ asked about the feelings that victims have that the perpetrators get better treatment because of the length of time things take to be resolved. JA said that there was frustration particularly with the amount of time things can take due to delays and inefficiencies in courts. JA said that a lot of work was put into expectation management. JA said that he did not necessarily feel that as a rule victims felt that the perpetrator was treated better but said that they were often acting more quickly or in a different way. JOQ said that may be because they would probably be less likely to move a victim of antisocial behaviour due to the nature of the support needed. JA said that was right, but it is not unknown for them to move victims of antisocial behaviour and had recently moved a victim. JA said that it was a balancing act between providing people with the support needed and ensuring that residents have a quiet, comfortable and undisturbed home where they can recover from their issues.

AS asked about service level agreements around communicating with complainants. JA said that they would get back to emergency issues within 24 hours and other issues within seven days. JA said that they would communicate with complainants on an ongoing basis throughout the complaint and that this would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The meeting ended at 14:35.

ASB in Social Housing Task & Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session Five
17th December 2025

Present: Cllrs Jackie O'Quinn, Milla Gauge, Ellen Mcleay, Bridget Fishleigh. Angela Stretton.

Apologies: Cllr Julie Cattell

Witnesses: Sussex Police - Inspector Emma Gee (Neighbourhood Policing Team) & Steve Parker (ASB and Hate Crime Coordinator). Office of Peter Kyle MP - Domino Moore & Matilda Crawley.

EG began by explaining the data held by the police for antisocial behaviour and that reports of ASB would come in and be labelled as either environmental, personal, or nuisance. There is not a tag for social housing, so it was not possible to give figures such as victims or accused being social housing tenants. The work included attending fortnightly HASBRAC meetings and PCSO ward updates. EG said that the neighbourhood police guarantee meant that they needed to be available for residents and residents can look up the ward updates to know what is going on. EG explained that they have two ASB and Hate Crime Co-ordinators and that their role is key in identifying ASB. EG talked about the risk assessments that were carried out

when antisocial behaviour was reported, taking in the overall context and history of the issue as well as how it is impacting on the victim. Each report is scored as standard, medium, or high risk. If medium or high then it could be referred to the HASBRAC meetings to work collaboratively with partners on the issue.

EG said that a lot of their work involved problem solving and reviewing reports and data early to be able to get in and resolve issues before they escalate. EG said that they worked with victim support and community engagement advisors to support victims. EG spoke about the new engagement app that Sussex Police are using which means that residents can see the patrol hours of their local PCSOs and what they are doing. EG said that they are able to pull data from this to tell people how many patrol hours were conducted in their ward over a period of time.

EG said that they had a good relationship with partners, particularly Brighton & Hove City Council. EG said that as statutory bodies the police and council have more powers in relation to closure orders and civil powers than other landlords and would need to take the lead on these. EG said that they met regularly for case reviews, HASBRACs, closure order consultations, and planning meetings. EG said that PCSOs do regularly meet with housing officers in their areas, in East Brighton they have monthly meetings. EG spoke about the Hub Intelligence meetings, attended by police and partners, where they discuss repeat victims of ASB, as well as locations and suspects. This work is around reducing harm to communities.

EG said that they could improve on early intervention and communication & information sharing. EG said that a lot of Steve's role involved DPA requests asking for information relating to cases that partners are working on. EG said that this allowed them to get involved or see if they were addresses that they were also aware of. This allowed them to provide a joined up approach such as a joint letter or joint visit. EG said that it was important that everyone knew their powers and used them as quickly as possible.

EG suggested a monthly partnership meeting, with tight terms of reference, where the police, housing officers from the council and other social landlords could come together and talk about their top cases and emerging issues to work collaboratively to solve issues. EG also said that having an up to date contact list of those at a strategic level where she could raise problems, for example where a PCSO is trying to make contact but not getting an answer.

BF asked how this might differ from HASBRAC meetings. EG said that HASBRAC was for medium and high risk cases, but this could be more for emerging issues so that they can look to resolve the issues before they become serious.

MG asked a question about partners data systems working better together and on the overlap between antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse. EG spoke of the data tags used by the police and explained that they did not record the housing. MG asked GR and LP if the council used the same ASB tags. GR said that they would find out. EG said that there was the 'Winter of Action' currently going on involving the police and partners that focused on VAWG, as well as ASB, street crime, retail crime. EG said that they had a public protections team that focused on domestics. EG said that when dealing with antisocial behaviour that if there was a domestic side to it that it was highlighted with the bluestone team and they would make sure that the victim was safeguarded. They also made sure that if response teams are attending addresses or people that they are aware of markers for antisocial behaviour or domestics. MG asked if that information would be shared with the council and others. EG said that it would depend on who was involved and who needed to know.

EM asked if police resources were being drained by antisocial behaviour call outs and how the council could help the police. EG said that it was not a drain as it was what they were there to do, but that a lot of people in social housing where there because they had vulnerabilities, possibly such as drug and alcohol dependencies, unemployment, or mental health issues, which do increase demand. However this is a social issue and not something that the police could change.

EM asked if the PCSOs had to do a lot of the groundwork to create and improve relationships with housing officers and if it would be helpful for a more proactive approach from the council. EG said that having a list of both council contacts and for other social housing providers would be helpful as contacting some housing associations they only had the customer service email address and weren't getting responses.

BF asked about an incident involving a police call out in Rottingdean to a council owned property and if the council would be informed of the police attendance at the property. EG said that the response team wouldn't be thinking about that but focusing on reducing harm. But that if it was a significant incident and the person arrested then the PCSOs would make contact with the housing provider. EG said that the person may also have bail conditions to not return to the property or to prevent them from causing further harm.

AS asked about the number of repeat cases. EG said that Denman Place had eight repeat incidents, which was a neighbour dispute involving cannabis smell in some of the flats. Kingston Close in Hangleton had eight reports, which was a neighbour dispute between two council tenants. Both had been issued with community protection warnings to leave the other alone and there had been no reports since 25th Oct. Hampshire Court had seven incidents, which were several neighbour disputes mostly over the communal garden and rough sleepers in the car park.

Montpelier Road had six incidents, which was a Southern Housing tenant with mental health issues who was shouting from the property distressing neighbours. EG said that the police were working with Southern and the mental health team to provide support to them.

Witness two: Office of Peter Kyle MP - Domino Moore & Matilda Crawley

DM said that they had noticed a significant increase in the number and complexity of ASB cases in the Hove & Portslade constituency. DM said that people tended to contact the MP at a late stage when they have exhausted every other option. They are often frustrated with every other organisation they have been trying to get an answer from. DM said that they had difficulties in finding out where people were in the systems of different organisations. Sometimes this was due to a lack of response following the MPs office making contact with an organisation. MC highlighted the struggles they encounter trying to get responses from the council's housing team.

BF asked if they were raising the cases with Genette Laws (Corporate Director for Housing and Adult social Care) or Jess Gibbons (Chief Executive). DM said that they used a mailbox with a staff member on the other end who triages the emails and distributes them, but he did not have the answers and even when chasing cases he could only pass it on again. DM said that if they did not get a response for months they may talk to the local ward councillors to try and get an answer.

BF suggested that the MPs' Offices be introduced to the complex case team enabling them when appropriate to bypass the normal mailbox.

JOQ said that this is something that could possibly be done before the report is published.

BF asked about the process of what happens when they get a complaint. DM said that a constituent would contact them directly, having already gone through a process with another organisation such as the council and not got anywhere. The MPs office would then contact the organisation and possibly the councillors. JOQ gave an example of a case that she had referred to Peter Kyle's office.

JOQ spoke about instances where a lack of building repairs had lead to anti-social behaviour such as the Sanctuary Housing building in Davigdor Road in Hove, where repairs to the car park were not carried out which lead to people parking stolen cars in there. The electrical plant room was also broken into and people were sleeping in there. JOQ said that residents had contacted local councillors but that they were not getting responses from the housing association, and it made a big difference to have the MP contact the housing association which helped to get the repairs done.

EM said that an MP's office contacting the council was another opportunity for contact with the resident. EM asked about their contacts to raise an issue after not getting a response and if they were referring residents to the Housing Ombudsman. DM said that they did not refer people to the Housing Ombudsman as to go there a resident would need to have complained to the council and gone through the full complaints process. DM said that the person monitoring the mailbox that they used was very good but that they did not have other contacts to use if cases needed chasing, they would in such instances go to ward councillors.

AS said that, having previously gone to Peter Kyle for help with a housing association issue, she knew that people only did so when at the end of their tether.

BF asked if they knew about being able to make a DPA request to the police. DM said that they never have.

BF asked EG if this would be the best way for the MP's Offices to request information. If, for example, someone contacted them about a problem neighbour and they want to see what the police are doing, is this the most efficient way. EG added the ASB and hate crime email address to the meeting chat asb&hatebrighton@sussex.police.uk and said that they can fill out the DPA request form and send it to the email address and it would be actioned. EG clarified that there would need to be a policing purpose to the request as they are sharing personal information. EG said that they could email the inbox for more general inquiries if there was something that they wanted the police to look into.

AS asked how many cases they had live at any point in time. DM said that there were some that come in and can be dealt with quickly but also more complex long term cases of which they had about 12.

BF suggested that a possible recommendation could be that the MP's Offices are included in some of the councillor briefings on appropriate topics. DM said that was a good idea and suggested that if the police or councillors are struggling to find direct contact details for organisations such as housing associations then they could possibly help as MPs often have access to contact details other than publicly available general inquiries inboxes.

JOQ spoke about the importance of communication being an issue that has come up through the Task & Finish Group and that even if there was no particular update for a resident that being told so after a period of time at least made them feel that people were doing something and that they hadn't been forgotten about. DM agreed that if the council came back to them and said 'nothing has changed, we are waiting for this or that' then that would be much better for everyone than having to tell a resident that they still hadn't received a response from the council.

The meeting ended at 16:46.

ASB in Social Housing Task & Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session Six
20th February 2026

Present: Cllrs Cllr Julie Cattell, Ellen Mcleay, Bridget Fishleigh. Angela Stretton (OPC).

Apologies: Cllr Milla Gauge

Witnesses: Brighton & Hove City Council: Harry Williams - Director of Housing People Services, Justine Harris - Head of Tenancy Services, John Evans - Housing Manager

BF asked if they would support a housing court to reduce delays. JH said that they would welcome the recommendation.

JE explained the areas that the city is broken up into: North, West, East, and Central.

BF asked the problems moving problem residents because it often just moves the problem somewhere else rather than solving it. This was the view that came out of the public engagement. BF also asked about problem tenants being moved into properties, particularly where there has been experiences of ASB in the past, and if consideration is given to the residents living nearby. HW said that they wanted neighbourhoods and communities where people felt safe, where they can thrive and that are inclusive. He said that the city had about 5800 people waiting for a council home and around 2200 people living in temporary accommodation. HW said that there was an increasing vulnerability in people seeking council homes and that there was a balancing act of consideration of their needs and the community. He said that the allocations policy did take into consideration past criminal or ASB but that it did

not exclude people from accessing social housing. HW explained that once a person was a tenant that there were different powers, but those often involved the courts, where there were delays. HW said that they were setting up a working group with the Chairs of the Area Panels and the head of homelessness to review the practice of reviewing people's offending history or antisocial behaviour to make sure that they have got the right checks and balances, and making the best use of sensitive lets. HW explained about sensitive lets, which is where checks and balances are in place to ensure that communities impacted by ASB are thought of when a property is allocated to a new tenant there.

JC asked about support for tenants in their first year. HW said that they did provide support and were looking to provide it earlier on to people before they become council tenants, thinking about them as pre-tenants. JH spoke about community cohesion and making sure that new people feel part of their new community.

JC asked about the new temporary policy of placing people into voids rather than TA. HW spoke about people coming out of really unsettled accommodation and into more stable temporary homes and integrating them into the community.

EM asked about the use of additional support of other organisations, charities or voluntary groups. JE said that when a sensitive let application is made the housing officer or housing manager would know the area and the block and know if the property was suitable for that person and would refuse it if not. For example, if an area was known for drug use, then someone with a history of drug use would not be placed there. JE said that it was not always foolproof and that they don't always know what will happen once someone completes, but that most of the time they work. JE said that they had to have conversations with tenants to find out what support they have, if any, and what they need. However, not everyone wanted to engage or tell them about such things. JE spoke about introductory tenancies, comparing them to a probationary period. He said that in theory this period should make it easier to take action against tenants causing ASB as it should be an internal decision unless there has been a mistake or a human rights issue. He said that the first action would be to extend their introductory period by another six months. During the first year they are meant to have three formal visits and then two further visits as a minimum but most tenants are fine and don't need any additional support.

AS asked about the focus on complainants and their mental or physical health needs or substance abuse. JE said that there were reasons why they supported perpetrators as it helped in the long run, but the first thing that a caseworker would carry out in a case is a risk assessment and that they would get bespoke support based on that risk assessment. JE said that this might include practical things like a fireproof letter box or it could be linking them with a social worker or additional

opportunities to talk. In this assessment they would agree the mode and frequency of contact.

JC asked about domestic violence markers. JE said that they worked closely with the police to see if markers were there.

EM spoke about instances where victims have become frustrated with the situation and felt that they weren't being communicated with and moved from victims to perpetrators themselves. HW said that there were often complicated situations where dynamics can change quite rapidly with victims could become perpetrators and perpetrators become victims but that there shouldn't be any justification for a victim carrying out antisocial behaviour. JH said that Richard Jordan-Penswick had begun work on strengthening witness standards. JE said that errors do happen and communication with residents can lead to complaints but that generally there was a good relationship with those reporting ASB. JE spoke about the importance of expectation management and properly explaining the processes and timescales because it was easy to forget that it's not second knowledge to everybody. JE spoke about the possibility of an FAQ sheet in opening letters to explain some of the issues that frequently come up in council inquiries or stage one complaints.

BF spoke about a recent incident in Rottingdean and her use of a DPA following the evidence session with Sussex Police to find out what had happened so that she could share it with the residents.

BF asked about the use of app such as the ASB App to report incidents and keep logs of cases. EM said that it collated all of the contacts in one place so that nothing was lost. AS mentioned digital exclusion and that not everyone could use apps. HW said that they would like to use technology. HW explained about the ECINS system that is used for case management and report writing by the housing team, saying that it had been around for a long time. JE explained that it was a national database used by lots of councils, that it had previously been used by Sussex Police, and that it had profiles on victims, perpetrators, and witnesses. HW said that it was a very good system.

AS asked about data sharing. HW spoke about the importance of data sharing to their work and that it is a challenge for all services. He said that some areas had held citizens juries to ask whether or not residents would be happy for certain information to be shared with other organisations in order to provide better services.

EM asked about what they found frustrating and what they felt they didn't have the resources or funds to do better. HW spoke about the investment in the complex case team, and the new tenants sustainment team, a lot of expertise dedicate to improving practices, and a lot of work on complying with the social housing regulator.

HW thought that it was important to think about embedding that practice and continuing to improve the way that they work including with exercise like the TFG. HW said that he thought something about how best they could communicate with their communities and making sure that those messages were right to provide reassurance. EM said that so much was to do with communication and where residents feel some level of satisfaction in an issue it was because they had that communication and understood what was happening with their case. HW said that comms differed on a case-by-case and resident by resident basis. Also about how communicating more broadly with communities and what information could be shared with them. JE said that caseworkers should be updating reporters on the outcome of a case. He said that complaints of his previous work as a housing officer were because of not updating the victim rather than the work itself, which made him learn quickly to be sure to update people. He said that he asks housing officers to send summary letters to residents updating them on what has happened so far in a case as well as following up phone calls with an email of what was discussed and agreed.

AS asked if they were able to catch those cases that where communication had dropped off. JE said that the frequency of contact should be agreed and that any case over 200 days old would be reviewed. This could be because that it hadn't been closed properly or that there is a big problem. He spoke of internal and external reviews. EM said that some residents weren't always happy with internal reviews as they saw it as the council marking its own homework.

BF asked at what stage would they serve notice to a perpetrator. JE said that it was very case dependent and that they might not serve a tenant notice as it may not be proportionate to do so. He spoke about other steps leading up to that point such as injunction or community protection warnings that can lead to a fine if the behaviour continues. But again court delays had to be taken into account. BF spoke of some housing associations who issue a breach of tenancy notice very early on to stop the behaviour.[1] JE said that he was apprehensive to work like that because as a social landlord we should be looking more at behavioural change and supporting people to keep their property.

AS asked about the agreement that Guinness Partnership had with East Cheshire Council whereby the council would accept noise diary sheets from the housing association rather than asking residents to start the process again. JE said that it was different being one organisation rather than separate ones but that he felt that there was room for improvement in the working with environmental health as they might not know that a noise complaint had been made about a council property and was being looking at by environmental health. JE said that once they started joint working it was good. He said that some of the frustration may come from a statute of limitation if the evidence gathered is old.

EM spoke about residents saying that reports had gone missing. JE said that it shouldn't be possible if reported to the housing customer services team because everything was recorded pretty much straight away. However, some reports are not made through the proper channels to reach housing officers such as to a councillor, the police, or to a cleaner in the block, and so they might think something has been reported. JC gave the example of residents not using the contact your councillor form but sending an email direct or even using social media to report issues. HW said that there are now so many ways for someone to report something to different organisations that it might be possible for them to slip through.

JH spoke about the role of neighbourhood officers saying that there were eight across the city with two in area. They carry out estate inspections twice a week, being in an area each time. The neighbourhood officers are a visual presence on estates and have uniform sweatshirts. They are able to gather evidence where there are reports of antisocial behaviour that is impacting the community, they can do leaflet drops. JE said that the neighbourhood officers came out of the social housing regulation act saying that the council needed more presence on estates and as housing officers are caseworkers they cannot always be out on the estates as often as they would like. He said that they were now able to pick things up that weren't being picked up and that residents were getting to know their neighbourhood officers and that trust was being built. JE said that they were carrying out pro-active work to deter ASB such as securing laundry rooms that drug users had been getting into, finding graffiti and fly tipping.

BF asked if they were meeting people one to one or leaving this to housing officers. JE said that they worked closely together with the neighbourhood officers able to do things like deliver or collect noise diary sheets or provide face to face contact if a resident requires this frequently and the housing officer isn't available. Going out to see residents often requires going out in pairs so this would take two housing officers away from their casework, whereas neighbourhood officers are already out in pairs on the estate. JE said that they had a really high level of candidates applying for the roles, with varied skills that all added something to the role, citing one who was previously a premises manager and handyman and another who was a support worker for the YMCA.

AS asked about domestic violence training. JE said that all staff were trained on recognising domestic violence.

BF asked about caretakers living in blocks who can be the eyes and ears of the community. JE said that those caretakers became community wardens and have now been brought back as neighbourhood officers. JE did not think that live in caretakers would necessarily work in the modern world and previously there had

been issues of them having residents knock on their door in the middle of the night reporting issues.

HW spoke about cluster meetings with each area having its own groups involving a range of stakeholders such as police, neighbourhood officers, and an open invitation to others. The idea is to be an early intervention on ASB issues. He said that police were generally the only external invitee but that there was no formula saying who could or could not attend. JE said that they had started again last year.

EM said that she was seeing the benefit of neighbourhood officers, even just through email. She said that they were getting to know the issues in blocks and the people living there and had been able to ascertain if an issue was the usual suspect or someone else. EM asked about mediation as being an effective way to find a solution to ASB reports rather than more formal channels. HW said that mediation had to be consensual and was a tool that they did use but that both parties had to agree to it. JE said that if someone did not want to do mediation that there was conflict coaching that coaches someone into living within close proximity to someone that is causing them distress and learning techniques to deal with it. JE said that it did have a high success rate.

Members expressed thanks to the officers for attending and giving evidence to them. JH said that they dealt with around 750 cases a year and that only some of them would come to the attention of councillors, and that would generally be the ones that hadn't gone right.

BF asked if someone contacted their MP about an ASB case if they would get a different answer. HW said not at all. JE said that actually MP inquiries gave a good opportunity to audit cases as he would look through the case before responding.

JH updated members on the survey that had gone out to ask residents who had reported ASB for their views on how their cases were handled.

The meeting finished at 16:00

[1] Extract of Meeting Three minutes: "Hyde were really keen on, and they have found quite effective, was to serve a notice for breach of tenancy if they believed there was a body of evidence that there was a significant breach of tenancy. But that this was not done with the objective to evict but as a warning that the behaviour is a breach of tenancy and could result in eviction. CK said that it was a sobering reminder to people that their behaviours can put tenancies at risk."

ASB Task & Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session Minutes
30th April 13:00-14:30

Present: Cllr Julie Cattell, Cllr Sam Parrott, Cllr Ellen Mcleay, Cllr Bridget Fishleigh, Angela Stretton (OPC),

Witnesses: Victoria Paling, BHCC Customer Experience Lead, Richard Tuset, BHCC Director of Commissioning and Communities, Siobhan Bowstock, BHCC Senior Community Safety Caseworker, Brent Schwarz, BHCC Head of Health & Safety Wellbeing.

Witness 1: Victoria Paling, BHCC Customer Experience Lead

VP said that the term complaints could be confusing as saying that you are complaining is not the same as the formal complaints process. For example a call about ASB is a service request for housing colleagues to deal with the ASB issue, not a complaint. If the resident were unhappy with the response to their request, then it becomes a complaint. Because the formal complaint has to be about the action or inaction of the council service. VP said that it's only relatively recently that the Housing Opportunity has clarified that any expression of dissatisfaction about what we've done or haven't done must be logged as a formal complaint, and that in practise is not yet completely embedded across all landlords.

VP said that briefings were given to staff to understand this and that this has seen an increase the number of complaints.

JC asked how the staff were coping with the increase. VP said that it was a struggle, which was reflected in the response times. She said that stage 1 complaints are dealt with by service managers and stage two complaints go to her team. VP said that if residents were still unhappy they could then go to the Ombudsman. VP said that Housing were funding additional capacity within her team to deal with the additional complaints.

JC asked about timeframes. VP said that one of the Ombudsman's findings was on timeframes as there is no set timeframes within housing policy and so where the staff may think a week is a reasonable timeframe the resident may not.

JC asked if there was a hierarchy of complaints. VP said that there was not a urgency or complexity rating for complaints and that they were dealt with according to the Housing Ombudsman's framework. She said that the complaints process was not an emergency service. Service complaints could be decided to be time critical and acted upon by housing staff.

BF asked what percentage of stage 1 complaints were ASB related in housing. VP said that about 280 stage one complaints had been made in Housing, with around 20 specifically about ASB, however this may not cover all of the complaints about ASB as there are other categories such as unhappy with outcome, which may include ASB. VP said that ASB was one of the higher areas for escalation because people wanted the complaint to deal with the issue, whereas it only checks that the council have done things correctly. VP said that it was therefore good to compare with other local authorities and said that last year's performance specifically around ASB complaints was that the council performed 4% better than other local authorities and 6% better for the average of other landlords with the same number of properties. VP said that 67% of the ASB issues that were brought to the Ombudsman, they agreed that the council had not done things perfectly. Whereas that compared to the national average of 70% or similar sized landlords or 71% for other local authorities.

SP asked if there was a breakdown of the 67%. VP said that they were broadly about timeliness of responses or that the council's assessment of what was a reasonable response timeframe was too long. VP said that they would welcome greater guidance from the Ombudsman.

SP asked about resources for complaints. VP said that Stage 1 would be dealt with by the service manager who should have some knowledge of the case and staff, but once the complaint escalates to Stage 2 and the Ombudsman it becomes very resource intensive. VP said that her team was around 2 FTE.

BF said everybody knows that there are nightmare tenants, but the problem is like they don't respond and won't moderate their behaviour and there's little the council can do and there's a backlog in the courts, etc and if this is something that VP recognised as well. VP said that there are often scenarios where both parties have vulnerabilities and perhaps the person who is perceived as the perpetrator is more significantly vulnerable. And we would very rarely have the evidence to support formal tenancy action against that individual. VP said it was a really challenging balancing act as the council had a duty of care to all tenants.

AS asked about expectation management. VP said that communication was key, even if they were not able to resolve issues but to make sure people feel listened to.

EM asked if the council supported victims enough, with them often feeling that more support goes to perpetrators. She asked what more could be done? VP said that she could not answer that as it would need to come from housing colleagues, as her team looked at if the council has followed the process and not looking after people. VP said that they had to use words like 'upheld' or 'not upheld' in correspondence, but this felt impersonal and upsetting. She said that they were working on empathy within the framework of having to use such words.

EM asked about communication with the housing team after complaints. VP said that they would send them a copy of the response and if the complaint is upheld that they should be looking for any learning or service improvements or actions that can put in place to mitigate the faults that were found. Sometimes it is just an action because sometimes it is just human error.

JC asked if these were reviewed. VP said that Genette [Laws, Corporate Director for Housing and Adult Social Care] chaired the quarterly Better Landlord Board and bring those priority service improvements that have been identified through complaints at all stages. These are then prioritised and they're then tracked with action owners and dates to take forward.

JC asked if a report went to Audit & Standards Committee. VP said that it did not, because of the timings of the meetings and lead in times for committee reports, but that an annual report goes to Cabinet.

AS asked about improvements to actually making a complaint, particularly offline. VP said that there was a phone number that could be used to make complaints and that the number was available both online and in the quarterly housing magazine. AS asked about ongoing contact with a complainant. VP said that it was generally done by email, or it can be done by post. She said that if there are reasons that people are unable to read or compute, then they would look to find other ways of giving updates or responses.

EM was keen to see reports on the service improvements going to either Audit and Standards or to a scrutiny committee, and thought that there was potentially a recommendation there. She also spoke about the possibility of letting residents know of any service improvements that come about from their complaints. VP said that she would think about the possibility of direct feedback to residents. She said that They had thought seriously about going to Audit and Standards committee but the lead in times for the committee and the work of the reports never worked out. She said that if they did it would be for information after the fact rather than anything that could be changed.

Witness 2: Richard Tuset, BHCC Director of Commissioning and Communities,
Siobhan Bowstock, BHCC Senior Community Safety Caseworker

RT introduced himself and SB, saying that they were a small team covering the city dealing with ASB in private settings.

SB said that in a mixed tenancy situation the housing team would lead on it with the community safety team providing consultative input or in exceptional circumstances a coordination role if multiple agencies were involved.

SB said that it was a small team of five caseworkers who lead the local authority's input into multi-agency responses to public place disorder and that between them they had around 70% of the city's housing stock as well as the public place ASB and so had to work smarter.

SB said that the service came about following legislation in the early 2000s and before that there was not a statutory service. SB said that budget cuts over recent years have left some places in the country without the equivalent of the community safety team, with only maybe a community safety coordinator.

SB said that should a private sector tenant contact the service reporting ASB from a council tenant they are given the option either of remaining with her team as their point of contact, if that's what they would like, or the whole case being dealt with by Council Housing. The joint working agreement in place is that if there is any Council Housing involvement at all, Council Housing will lead on enforcement action because they have much larger service, larger income because of the kind of protective housing revenue account.

SB said that they do not use language of victim or perpetrator other than for public materials where it is a kind of shorthand for people to understand. Instead they talk about people whose behaviour is causing harm, people who are being harmed by other people's behaviour. This is because they aim to work as restoratively as possible.

SB spoke of the importance of consistent and direct communication, telling her team that if they are asked a direct question they should answer it directly not try to come up with a lengthy answer that ends up feeling like a fudge or like the question is being dodged. SB said that sometimes this meant having to explain legislation to people and what can legally be done or not done for them.

SB said that new legislation was on the way but being tweaked a lot so it was hard to say what actual changes it would mean. She said that if people were unhappy with

council policy applying legislation they should speak to their councillors, or if they are unhappy with the legislation they should speak to their MP.

SB said that proactive communication is really important including helping people to be able to communicate in a way that is best for them, not making them fit into set boxes. SB said that it was also important to maintain contact with people even if there is no update to give them. Checking in with people including after the conclusion of the case for up to six months.

BF asked if they provided mediation. SB said they would sometimes organise mediation sessions and would also sometimes provide restorative interventions themselves. She said that the team were all restoratively trained. She said it was important to carry out assessments of the support needs for all parties to find out the reasons for the behaviour.

SB said that it is extremely rare that some experiences the hate incident when they've never experienced one before. It's generally, even if that incident is technically not connected to the previous incidents that they have done, but then it is 100% part of the experience that they have. And so that one standalone experience connects way back to things that people of visible difference would have experienced throughout their life, unfortunately, in this country. SB said that being mindful of that in the way that they approach things by not using terms like it's a one-off incident, if actually for that person it's not, is really important.

BF asked if the complex case team in housing ever contacted her team for their expertise. SB said that they wouldn't ask them to come in and solve cases for them as the complex case team have a similar role with expanded housing management functions. SB said that it can be really useful just to kind of talk things through with someone else who has a similar role but maybe a slightly different perspective and bounce things off. We obviously have structures like the HASBAC and the JAGC where they can take things for multi-agency discussion, the advantage of that is the additional input from different perspectives.

EM thought it was very good that the community safety team were supporting victims for so long after the case had been closed as she believed that this was not happening for a lot of victims in social housing and wanted to see more of that brought into the housing side. EM said that this could possibly form a recommendation for the group. SB said that would be something for housing to comment on but that they had a lot of constraints on their resources that her team did not as their remit was not just ASB.

SB said that it was important to apologise when things went wrong and explain how things would be done differently in the future. This can make people feel quite relieved that they are getting transparency and accountability.

SP asked about opportunities for housing colleagues to work through case studies and workshop ideas of different ways to do things. SB said that there were a lot of new housing staff and that there may be gaps in terms of in depth knowledge of ASB tools and powers as well as practice. She said that they had done something similar in licencing which had been useful.

Witness 3: Brent Schwarz, BHCC Head of Health & Safety Wellbeing

EM said that there had been at least two instances where people were put on the clients of concern register out of frustration through their communication with officers. There was an incident where someone wasn't told that they were put on the list and after a formal complaint they were told they shouldn't have been put on it. She said it would be good to understand what the process should be.

BS said that the current process was under a review that had been recently initiated. He said that they were looking at the whole process and that links and ties in to nicely around the incident and accident reporting throughout the council for staff as well. The reason why that they were reviewing both of those is because at the moment they are intrinsically linked. When a staff member has an incident within the council, they report it through on the incident reporting form. And the same applies for clients of concern in terms of the register. So they would report the incident and they are given an option in terms of whether that individual should be considered for the register or not. Once an incident has been reported it would go to the head of service to review the request to add someone to the client of concern register.

BS said that they give guidance to these gatekeepers around the protocols of the client of concern register. Standard protocol and procedure around the policy is that every single client is notified of their inclusion if it comes to their inclusion. There is a standard letter template that should go out. There is an exception to that, which is where they feel that by informing that individual of their inclusion on the register, that it may cause more harm and increase the risk.

BS said that as the senior officer for the register he did not believe that the process was correct at the moment as they have identified things that shouldn't be happening, which is why it is being reviewed.

BS said that they are looking at rather than having heads of service as gatekeepers they could have a steering group who review inclusions, another would be that it is held in the central hub. Engagement is being undertaking with staff to find out their needs and concerns.

BS said that there were concerns that staff were not accessing the register when they should be.

BS said that gatekeepers are meant to be reviewing ongoing inclusion on the register so as not to keep people on it longer than they needed to be.

AS asked if there was any right of reply to allegations that lead to inclusion. BS said that the person would not be spoken to about it, and it is about risk management. He said that in some cases like he had done in previous local authorities, that the clients and customers should be engaged with saying, 'look, this is not going to be tolerated' or whatever the case might be. And therefore, we're reviewing this to see the appropriate action and so on. AS asked if any evidence was gathered or if they only took into account the report of the staff member. BS it was only the council side of the story, which was reviewed by the gatekeeper.

BF asked if the complex case team had been in contact with him. BS said that they had not.

BF asked about residents in Rottingdean with a problem neighbour and if they should report them to BS. BS said that the client of concern register was internal to look after the health and safety of council staff at work and that such things should be reported to community safety.

JC asked how many people where on the register. BS said he could not give an accurate number, which is another reason for the review, but said he believed it was in the hundreds.

SP said that there were hundreds of people on the register who had not been informed. BS said that the majority would have been informed but due to risk management some may not have been informed and that would be determined by a director or corporate director. He said that he and his team did regularly prompt gatekeepers to carry out reviews to ensure people are not on the register longer than needed.

AS asked if there was any criteria for removal. BS said that there was not as every case was different and it was up to the gatekeepers to make that decision, which is why they were senior officers.

GR explained that the client of concern register was a risk tool for operational council staff so that they knew, for example, not to go to someone's house alone, it did not mean that people go no service from the council.

SP said that there were concerns about the way the register was used may not be the way it should. BS said that that was one of the reasons that a review is being carried out.

EM welcomed the review and having more eyes on the register not just individual gatekeepers who could be subject to bias. EM said that she wondered if the council should be asking questions about why someone has communicated in an aggressive way, have emails been read more aggressively than they were intended. That maybe their aggression is out of frustration and being fed up. EM said that the possible changes sounded good.