

Cabinet

Agenda Item

Subject: Progress update on delivering our housing strategy

Date of meeting: 16 July 2026

Report of: Director of Governance and Law

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Action Required of Council:

- 1.1 That the Minutes Extract of the People O&S Committee meeting held on 14 July 2026 be noted.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.00PM 14 JULY 2026

HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Parrott (Chair) Miller (Deputy Chair), Cattell, Mackey, McLeay, McNair, Shanks, Winder and Guilmant

Co-Optees present: Maria Cowler (Catholic Church diocesan representative), Adam Muirhead (Community Works Rep), Fiona England (PaCC), Dr Anusree Biswas (Community Works), Kendrick Tugwell (Parent Governor Rep), and Ilona Bradley Reijonen (Youth Council Rep)

PART ONE

5 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

5.1 (a) Cllr Guilmant for Cllr Czolak. Apologies received from Lesley Hurst and Sara Fulford.

7 PROGRESS UPDATE ON DELIVERING OUR HOUSING STRATEGY

7.1 Cllr Williams, Cabinet member for Housing, presented the report to the committee. Her main points were:

- Thanking Dinae Hughes, Head of Strategy and Supply, and her team for their work.
- The significant challenges faced, but the progress made
- Investment in council homes rising from £44m to £54m
- Campaigning to eradicate damp and mould
- Sustainability in council homes
- Delivering affordable homes
- Buying back over 500 homes
- Helping over 500 families with early intervention
- Improving resident engagement and becoming a more resident focused landlord
- 313 empty homes brought back into use
- 8694 homes in the new licensing scheme
- Looking closely at EIAs to reduce inequalities

7.2 Cllr Mcleay commented that the expansion of the buy back of homes was great. She said that the figures did not include the 69 lost to right to buy or from the LPS blocks and how these would be reported going forward. Diane Hughes said that they report annually to government to see the positive or negative figures. She also said that area panels report on housing stock and these would be reflected in those reports.

- 7.3 Cllr Mcleay asked a question about EPCs with 89.2% leaving 1320 homes with an EPC of D or worse and how this would impact the council's net zero by 2030 target. Diane Hughes said that they were retrofitting homes to meet standards and would continue this work over the next few years.
- 7.4 Cllr Miller ask about the council's relationship with tenants and leaseholders, saying that there was a persistent thread of insufficient hearing of concerns. She recognised that there was a real desire to change in the department but wondered if it was reaching all staff who interact with tenants and leaseholders. Diane Hughes said that she was sorry to hear that and that the council wanted to be the best landlord possible. She added that they were doing work through the regulator of social housing's requirements around professional standards for staff that is c-produced with tenants and leaseholders and that here was also training on customer care.
- 7.5 Adam Muirhead asked about Andy Burnham's promise to build lots more homes when he becomes Prime Minister and if the strategy had the flexibility to change with national priorities. Cllr Williams said that if Andy Burnham gave them the cash to build then they would.
- 7.6 Cllr Cattell welcomed the report and asked how important commuted sums made by developers was. Cllr Williams said that it helped them to be able to build more homes or buy back more homes. Diane Hughes said that they had been buying back since 2019 and that commuted sums had been used very well. She said that they would prefer on site affordable housing but that this wasn't always possible.
- 7.7 Cllr McNair asked about the repairs backlog asking what they wanted to reduce it to and by when. He also asked about downsizing saying that for some residents who had lived in a three bedroom house for many years it may end up more expensive for them to downsize to a one bedroom flat, and how would issues like this be mitigated. He also asked about when the Hollingbury Library site would be finished and welcoming residents. Diane Hughes said that the backlog was a major part of their work, with various reasons why it had increased. She said that they were putting in more resources and using prioritisation. She said that she would come back to the committee with the timeline. On Downsizing she said that it was difficult for residents, not necessarily because of the cost but that they needed handhold and supporting. On the Hollingbury she said that it was due this year and would get back to the committee with a date. Cllr Williams said that she was coming to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee next week to discuss the housing regulator compliance update and would provide more details about the backlog there.
- 7.8 Cllr McLeay said that 63% of tenants believe that the council listen to them and what was being done to address the other third. She also asked about water safety and when the remaining actions would be completed. Cllr Williams said she would give more detail on water safety next week. Diane Hughes said that there had been a movement on residents' feelings which was great. She said that they had a programme of work called 'creating great homes together' to deliver on resident priorities including complaints handling, and that hopefully through the action plan things would improve for residents.
- 7.9 Cllr Guilmant said that the increase in funding from £44m to £54m was brilliant. He said that there was a trend of improvements in the backlogs and asked what was the highest risk they were dealing with at the moment. Cllr Williams said that water safety was really important and that she would not be happy until it was 100%.

- 7.10 Cllr Mackey asked how far along the council was with developing its supported housing strategy. She also asked about a licensing scheme for support housing. Diane Hughes said that they had been at a supported housing summit today and that it was in the development stage with plans to take it to cabinet before March. She said that they were watching plans for a licensing scheme closely.
- 7.11 Cllr Shanks spoke about communication with residents and asked what was being done about heat in council homes given the recent heatwaves. She also asked if the council were purchasing empty homes and about sub letting. Diane Hughes said that 313 properties bought were from the private sector and that they looked to intervene in properties empty for a year, asking owners if they wanted to let properties, offering them incentives to do so. She said that they worked closely with the corporate fraud team and said that residents should report any suspicions. She said that this summer had shown that action on heat was something that they should approach going forward.
- 7.12 Cllr Winder asked about community cohesion and making residents feel safe and welcome when moving between temporary and permanent accommodation. Cllr Williams said that residents received a welcome pack including information about the local area and safety information. She said that it was really difficult to keep people close to children's schools given the lack of accommodation but that they would try where possible. Diane Hughes said that within the 8 LPS blocks there was a lot of change but that the resident engagement team were working hard to support residents.
- 7.13 The Chair asked if co-production in terms of customer service included disability groups. Diane Hughes said that it did.
- 7.14 The Chair asked if in terms of VAWG the priority was to move perpetrators out of homes rather than victims. Diane Hughes said that it was if victims wished to remain in their home. She also said that staff were working to a victim centred approach and had trauma informed training.
- 7.15 Cllr Mackey asked about support for refugees given the city of sanctuary status the city holds. Diane Hughes spoke about government's Local Authority Housing Fund to buy homes to

Brighton & Hove City Council

resettle Afghan families and said that they were working with the communities team to make sure that they are settled.

7.16 RESOLVED People Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the report.

