

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: EAST AREA

6.00pm 10 JUNE 2026

ROBERT LODGE MEETING ROOM, BRIGHTON & HOVE, BN2 5FG

MINUTES

Councillors: Williams (co-chair), Allen & Simon

Residents: Chris El Shabba, Anne Glow, Katie Mercer, Dee Simpson, Val Steadman, Ben D'Montigny & Janet Gearing.

Officers: Chloe McLaughlin, Justine Harris, Mikila Beck, Sam Crick, Harry Williams, Stephan Scheiner, Martin Reid, Tom Trigwell, Gabriel Tiranti, Melissa Francis & Marie Button

Press: Sarah Booker-Lewis

1 CO-CHAIR ELECTION

- 1.1 **RESOLVED:** Chris El Shabba was elected as resident co-chair for the year 2026-27.
- 1.2 **RESOLVED:** Councillor Williams was elected councillor co-chair for the year 2026-27.

2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

- 2.1 There were no apologies.

3 MINUTES & ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 March 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

4 RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS, 2 & 3 STAR

- 4.1 The co-chairs agreed that the responses to the residents' questions as included in the agenda would be taken as read.
- 4.2 In relation to question E2.3 regarding housing allocations, Janet Gearing queried why homes are being assigned as temporary accommodation rather than permanent and whether the council checks whether tenants in temporary accommodation are looking after the properties they are assigned.
- 4.3 Harry Williams advised that some council properties are being used temporarily to help address homelessness and reduce the number of households placed outside the city. He noted that the approach had been considered by Cabinet and is intended as a temporary measure, while recognising the impact on households waiting for permanent housing.

- 4.4 Martin Reid advised that the council is continuing to increase housing supply through buybacks, acquisitions and new developments, while reducing reliance on private landlords. Harry Williams added that concerns relating to tenants or property standards are investigated on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.5 In response to Dee Simpson's question regarding council homes being used for temporary rather than permanent tenancies, Harry Williams advised that the reasons for this approach are set out in the Cabinet report on temporary accommodation and that the Allocations Scheme sets out how social housing is allocated across the city. Harry noted that demand continues to exceed supply in relation to housing.

ACTION: Harry Williams to share the report presented to cabinet on the options available to the council to reduce homelessness pressures across the city.

ACTION: Harry Williams to share the Home Allocations Policy.

- 4.6 In response to Katie Mercer's query about private landlords selling properties and the impact on tenants facing eviction, Harry Williams advised that anyone threatened with homelessness should contact the council, which can provide advice and support to help prevent or relieve homelessness.
- 4.7 Harry Williams noted that wider issues in the private rented sector continue to affect housing demand and that the council has invested in frontline homelessness and housing advice services in response.
- 4.8 Councillor Williams added that, where possible, the council is buying back former council homes being sold by private landlords to increase the supply of affordable housing and bring more properties back into council ownership.

5 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT ANNUAL ROUND-UP, 2025-26

- 5.1 Harry Williams gave an update on housing service performance, highlighting improvements in customer contact, safety compliance, resident engagement and complaints handling, while noting that an annual report will be presented to Cabinet in September.
- 5.2 Harry Williams advised that rent collection performance is improving following challenges relating to Universal Credit migration and the cost-of-living crisis. He also noted that 444 council homes were let during the year and that work is ongoing to improve responses to anti-social behaviour.
- 5.3 Martin Reid highlighted ongoing investment in council homes, improvements in repairs performance and customer satisfaction, and continued work to respond to increased demand resulting from Awaab's Law while improving housing quality and increasing housing supply.
- 5.4 In response to Ben D'Montigny's question about anti-social behaviour reporting, Harry Williams advised that work is underway to improve responses and that feedback has been gathered from residents whose cases have been closed.

ACTION: Harry Williams to provide further information/data on ASB case closures referenced in the Housing Performance Report (suggested areas: at what point cases are closed; which interventions are most effective).

6 HEALTH & SAFETY COMPLIANCE UPDATE & STOCK CONDITION UPDATE

- 6.1 Martin Reid reported significant improvements in health and safety compliance since August 2024, including nearly 97% electrical safety compliance, water safety compliance above 95%, ongoing smoke alarm improvements, and up-to-date fire risk assessments for all 639 blocks. Actions arising from fire risk assessments have reduced to just over 1,500 and continue to decrease.

ACTION: Martin Reid to share the reports submitted to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny on the Health and Safety Compliance Update.

- 6.2 Martin Reid advised that the repairs backlog built up during and after the pandemic has reduced significantly, although Awaab's Law has led to a surge in reports of damp, mould and condensation, resulting in increased repair demand. Additional resources and subcontractors have been brought in to manage this increase, and the service is moving from a reactive approach towards more planned maintenance programmes.
- 6.3 Martin Reid added that the service is working towards a return to business as usual and is keen to strengthen resident engagement, particularly around health and safety matters.
- 6.4 Councillor Williams thanked the team for their work in reducing the repairs backlog and encouraged residents to continue reporting damp and mould issues so that they can be addressed.

7 HOARDING REPORT UPDATE

- 7.1 Stephen Wraige presented the report.
- 7.2 In response to Councillor Allen raising questions regarding the Sussex-wide approach to hoarding support and how neighbours are kept informed when hoarding affects surrounding residents, Stephen Wraige advised that the work is focused on identifying gaps in support and improving pathways for residents, particularly those with mental health needs, while recognising that local issues require local responses. He added that resident confidentiality can make it difficult to keep neighbours informed, although this is an issue that could be explored further with partners and residents.

8 ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE

- 8.1 Mikila Beck provided an update on the Repairs Steering Group and encouraged residents to get involved, noting that the group is seeking honest tenant feedback to help improve the repairs service.
- 8.2 Chantal Barker, Director of Estate Renewal, provided an update on LPS engagement work and advised that engagement is ongoing with the North Whitehawk community to understand local needs and explore future redevelopment opportunities.

ACTION: Chantal Barker to give an update at the next meeting on Estate Renewals' work for the next quarter and their plans for future community engagement.

- 8.3 Martin Reid advised that a report to Cabinet sets out £54 million of investment in council housing stock and that work is underway to develop a new Asset Management Strategy, supported by a full stock condition survey to provide a detailed understanding of the condition of every home.
- 8.4 Martin explained that this information will help the council plan future investment, maintain compliance, improve standards for contractors working in residents' homes, and move towards a more planned approach to maintenance rather than relying on responsive repairs.
- 8.5 In response to Ben D'Montigny's question, Martin Reid confirmed that community spaces will be considered as part of the Asset Management Strategy. He advised that while some spaces may have different uses in future to support housing delivery, the primary focus is on improving the quality of existing homes, and any decisions will require resident engagement rather than being made by officers alone.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Melissa Francis from Environmental Services asked for questions from the panel in relation to waste and recycling services in their area.
- 9.2 The Chair advised that refuse collections in her area had generally improved, although there had occasionally been delays to recycling collections, adding that food waste collections had been operating well and were consistently collected on Tuesdays.
- 9.3 In response to concerns raised by Janet Gearing regarding continuing missed refuse and food waste collections in Woodingdean, Melissa Francis apologised for the recent disruption and advised that vehicle breakdowns and staffing shortages had affected collections over the previous two weeks, although crews had been deployed to collect outstanding waste.

ACTION: Melissa Francis to look into ongoing waste and recycling collection issues in South Woodingdean.

- 9.4 In response to a question from Dee Simpson, Melissa Francis confirmed that regular refuse collections would continue as scheduled and advised that the council is exploring options for making food waste bags more accessible, particularly for residents on low incomes.
- 9.5 In response to concerns raised about foxes accessing food waste bins, and Melissa Francis advised that she would raise the issue with the relevant team.

ACTION: Melissa Francis to raise the issue of food bins not being fox-proof with the Environmental Services team.

- 9.6 Ben D'Montigny discussed the reduction in the cost of bulky waste collections and raised concerns about residents who are unable to move bulky items from upper

floors in low-rise blocks without lifts. He asked whether the service could be reviewed to better support residents who are unable to move items to ground level.

ACTION: Chloe McLaughlin to ask Environmental Services how residents in first- or second-floor flats (or higher) without lift access can use the bulky waste collection service.

- 9.7 In response to concerns raised by the Chair and residents regarding fly-tipping in communal areas, including items being left at Robert Lodge and the identification of bulky waste awaiting collection, Chloe McLaughlin advised that there is currently no marking system for bulky waste collections but agreed that anti-fly-tipping signage could be installed at Robert Lodge.

ACTION: Chloe McLaughlin to request that signs are put up at Robert Lodge to discourage fly-tipping from outside the area.

- 9.8 In response to concerns raised by residents that communal garden areas were being used by members of the public, despite residents having worked hard to maintain and improve the spaces, Chloe McLaughlin agreed to visit the site with Robert Woodbridge to explore options for gates and signage.

ACTION: Chloe McLaughlin and Robert Woodbridge to look into installing gates around Robert Lodge gardens to prevent use by non-residents.

- 9.9 In response to Katie Mercer's concerns regarding overgrown areas at Kite Place and the risk of rat infestations, Chloe McLaughlin advised that vegetation clearance works are underway and that longer-term solutions, including grassing over some areas, would be considered as part of any future review.

- 9.10 In response to residents advising that they had not yet met their Neighbourhood Officer, Justine Harris explained that only one Neighbourhood Officer is currently covering the East Area while recruitment to a second post is underway. She added that a Neighbourhood Officer could be invited to a future Area Panel meeting

ACTION: Community Engagement to share dates of upcoming estate inspections at the next panel.

- 9.11 In response to the Chair's suggestion that a community clean-up day or waste amnesty event could help residents dispose of bulky items, Chloe McLaughlin advised that the waste amnesty pilot is currently underway. She added that the results and resident feedback will be reviewed once the pilot is complete, with the intention of exploring whether the scheme can be extended to more estates across the city.

The meeting concluded at 7.36pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of