



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# **HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE ADDENDUM**

**4.00PM, WEDNESDAY, 14 MARCH 2018**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**



# ADDENDUM

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**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for questions submitted by members of the public who either live or work in the area of the authority.

**i) The following written question has been received from Jim Deans.**

**New Homes Bonus (NHB)**

“This grant is awarded only if the Local Authority housing stock increases by at least 0.4% per year.

How many properties would have had to be built last year (2017/18) to reach the threshold and what plans are in hand to make up for the loss of £1.62m for 2018/19 and an expected loss of £1.66m in 2019/20 as a result of missing the threshold?”

**ii) The following question has been received from David Thomas**

**Severe Weather Emergency Protocol**

“I understand that the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is to be recommissioned this year. What is the timetable for this?

I assume the Protocol document, which has been slightly amended already this winter, will be fully re-written before that to comply with the National Guidance. Can the new Protocol be published on the Council website as soon as possible?

Could you also say how many women have accessed shelters under the SWEPE and what women only facilities have been provided?”

**iii) The following written question has been received from Kenny Lloyd.**

**Land banking & increasing value through planning permission for residential properties**

“Has the Committee made any approach to, or cooperated with, the Planning Committee to combat ‘land banking’ and particularly looked at ways in which planning permission can be withdrawn if building work is not completed within a specific period of time? If there has not been joint work on this issue in the past will the Committee consider proposals for the future?”

**iv) The following written question has been received from Maria Garret-Gotch.**

**Malnutrition among residents in temporary and emergency accommodation**

“Is the Committee aware of cases of malnutrition of residents in temporary and emergency accommodation provided by B&HCC or agencies contracted by the Council? What is being done about these residents to whom the Council has a Duty of Care?”

- v) **The following written question has been received from Nichole Brennan.**

**Weekend Services**

“Could the Committee please provide details of Council or Council contracted services, including the number of personnel, available from 1700 on a Friday Evening until 0800 on a Monday morning for those who are homeless including those in temporary and emergency accommodation?”

- vi) **The following written question has been received from Barry Hughes.**

**Oxford street**

“Given that the former Oxford Street former housing office was “decommissioned” in November 2014, in January 2017 the Housing Committee requested officers to bring forward options to convert the building into Temporary Accommodation, and that a formal planning application is due this spring, could the Committee provide an up to date report on progress made?”

- vii) **The following written question has been received from Clare Hudson.**

**The administration of the Discretionary Housing Payments and the Council Tax Reduction Discretionary Scheme**

The budget papers for 2018/19 state that “It is proposed to reduce the commitment to this fund over the next 3 years as it is not fully utilised.” Could the Committee explain their support for this proposal given that payments of DHPs have been refused on the basis of lack of funds?”

- viii) **The following written question has been received from Kiah Garrett-Gotch**

➤ **Equalities Impact Assessment**

“Could the Committee explain why an Assessment was not carried out on the HRA budget for 2018/19?”

- ix) **The following written question has been received from Tom Jobbins.**

**Temporary Accommodation**

“Could the Committee provide evidence to show that “External benchmarking shows that the costs are low” and explain their support for a “Procurement approach being sought to access accommodation outside the city and the South East in areas where costs are lower?”

Could the number of evictions from emergency and temporary accommodation be provided for the past 6 months on a month by month basis?”

- x) **The following written question has been received from Daniel Harris**

**Housing Options and Homemove**

“Under a budget heading of homelessness there was a sum for 2017/18 for supporting vulnerable households £1,298,000.

Could the Committee provide some indication of how this was spent?”

Does the Committee know how many households have been culled from the housing waiting list and how many appeals have been dealt with or are awaiting hearings?"

**xi) The following written question has been received from Kelly Hayes**

**6 week limit on B&B for children**

"Bed and Breakfast (B&B) is defined in the Homelessness Suitability Order 2003 as a form of privately owned accommodation in which residents share facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and/or toilets, and is usually paid for on a nightly basis.

Housing authorities must not use B&B to accommodate families with children or pregnant women except where there is no alternative available, and then for a maximum period not exceeding 6 weeks. Can you now please provide a more detailed response to the question asked at the previous committee please?"

**xii) The following written question has been received from Sophie**

**Residents in Emergency Accommodation – Council Duty to provide Accommodation**

"I've been living in emergency accommodation for over a year, I am now in my 3rd different room. To my surprise the council decided after over a year to conclude the homelessness assessment and decided I didn't meet the criteria to be considered 'considerably more vulnerable than the average person becoming homeless'.

I've received little to no support since I moved into emergency accommodation. I feel this process is one sided and biased against us, the people in need. Can you please tell me how many other vulnerable people in emergency accommodation in the last 6 months have also had the Council's duty assessed and rejected? How many of these appealed the decision and were successful in securing a duty please?"





**DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Committee for the hearing of depositions from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the Council, nominated by the Mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the Mayor and voted on without discussion that the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**(1) Deputation concerning Stanmer Heights****Spokesperson Mr. Paul Dwyer**

Supported by:

Ray Harvey  
Kirsty Thomas  
Jodie Clue  
Lee Mack  
Dennis Reddick  
Julie Hussey

**Ward affected: Patcham**

**(2) Deputation concerning Community-Led Housing****Spokesperson Andrea Jones**

Supported by:

Nicola Thomas  
Peter Clarke  
Jonny Anstead  
Rita Garner

**Wards Affected: All**

**(3) Deputation relating to Item 82 – Community Led Housing Update****Spokesperson Ian Bailey**

Supported by:

Steve Horne  
Kristie Scarle

Alison Wells  
Lucy Chilvers  
Helen Atherall  
Paul Sutton  
Robin Berry  
Julia Ritson  
Sam Fearn

**Wards Affected: Hollingdean & Stanmer**

**(i) Deputation concerning Stanmer Heights  
Spokesperson Mr.P Dwyer**

On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018, water pipes in three different blocks in Bramble Way burst in the roof space flooding through at least nine flats making most, if not all, uninhabitable. Tenants were made homeless with some going into emergency housing and now temporary accommodation and some “self-helped” by going to their friends and families.

It is regretful that this happened but the blocks of flats in Bramble Rise, Orchid View and Chelwood Close have fallen into a state of disrepair. The lack of adequate insulation to water services causing the floods being just a small example.

Other parts of the fabric and common parts of the buildings in disrepair include:-

1. Damaged and missing roof tiles let water and cold air into the roof spaces.
2. Defective windows that do not shut and operate properly and poorly insulate our flats.
3. Recent installations of front security doors have left internal common part wall and ceiling plaster and render ripped off without any making good and redecoration making where we live look neglected.
4. Gutters are blocked, broken and overflow.
5. The outside of the buildings, including windows, are black and dirty making where we live depressing.
6. Cables and other external installations are loose and trailing causing further damage and creating health and safety hazards.
7. Outbuildings are dilapidated and in disrepair preventing them from being used and encouraging anti-social behaviour.

We respectfully request the Housing & New Homes Committee to please help us and ask officers to organise a comprehensive plan of works:

- that ensures the uninhabitable flats are repaired and refurbished quickly,
- that the causes of the flooding are rectified,
- that the external fabric of the building including all the roof defects and defective windows are repaired, making them weather and water tight and
- that the common parts damaged by the security door installations are made good.

We also respectfully request that due to the significant works required that will necessitate the use of scaffolding and other contract preliminaries, the Council uses the opportunity to replace all the windows and decorate the exterior and common parts to improve economies of scale and achieve best value for money from the various Housing budgets that we all pay into.

**(ii) Deputation concerning Community Led Housing  
Spokesperson Andrea Jones**

Brighton and Hove Community Land Trust (BHCLT) welcomes the Council's update on community-led housing (CLH), and the reaffirmation of supportive policy commitments. We particularly welcome the promise of a pathway and transparency about council-owned sites with potential for affordable housing and the collaborative approach suggested around future MHCLG funding. We share the view that community-led housing can help solve the profound crisis of housing in the city.

Community-led housing has a specific role to play that is distinct from any other housing providers: it works directly with local communities and groups to deliver affordable, innovative homes and neighbourhoods. Members and officers attending the launch of the Community Housing Programme on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2018 witnessed the energy and enthusiasm for community-led housing, and we are mobilising this energy to deliver creative housing solutions. The MHCLG (DCLG) funding awarded to us by BHCC to support the CLH programme is significantly increasing our capacity to realise this potential.

Our programme is committed to overcoming some of the misconceptions about community-led housing and ensuring that community groups understand the challenges and commercial realities:

1. We understand that the council will not be gifting land, we support the council's own social housing priorities and we understand 'best consideration' imperatives;
2. New community-led housing must be built at sufficient densities, making the best possible use of the scarce land in the city
3. Our priority is to increase housing affordability for local people, key workers and vulnerable groups on low incomes. The schemes we support will meet or surpass local statutory affordability requirements (whether for rent or through shared or mutual ownership).

The proven benefits of community-led housing are:

- ✓ locking in affordability in perpetuity (protected by an asset lock and not subject to right-to-buy)
- ✓ supporting people on low incomes or in vulnerable communities who are not currently well-served by existing housing provision. For example, people who want to remain independent, but also live in mutually supportive groups (such as older LGBT cohousing)
- ✓ Housing costs can be lowered by people playing an active role in the process, such as self-build or housing cooperatives
- ✓ We can harness the enormous creative potential in the city for environmental sustainability in housing and expand the diversity of housing design
- ✓ Community builders can engage with sites that would provide challenges to the traditional housebuilder market – challenges of scale or local opposition

We can support the council to meet their obligations in relation to self-build and custom housebuilding, by supporting groups in housing need to benefit. Not all self-build and custom build is community-led, but almost all community-led housing meets the government's definition of self-build and custom building.

We recognise the importance of the New Homes for Neighbourhoods Programme and the Joint Venture with Hyde Housing Association. There is good potential for collaboration with the Council, but there is also urgency. A collaborative framework *with clarity on timescales* would allow us to realise the advantages of these different approaches for the benefit of local people in urgent housing need in the city.

**(iii) Deputation relating to Item 82 – Community Led Housing Update  
Spokesperson Ian Bailey**

In September of last year I brought a deputation to the Housing and New Homes committee meeting about Site 21 in Coldean and the LWJV. One of the outcomes of that committee was an amendment which sought to clarify some of the commitments that BHCC was making in the support of Community Led Housing, part of which specifically related to Coldean and access through Site 21 to Site 21a. Alongside this was the request that a report into Community Led Housing be presented in six months to the committee which would clarify the goals set out in the decision list accompanying item 82 on this month's agenda. I am pleased to see that the presented report clarifies much of what was requested of it.

However, upon reading the report I am concerned that under section 3.10 the allocation of land for Community Led Development across the city is likely to be considered as a secondary 'requirement', with the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme being prioritised rather than both options being considered on their merits. As already noted the Urban Fringe section of the City plan commits to "*consider how best to ensure that opportunities are brought forward and safeguarded in order to **maximise** housing opportunities that meet local housing needs.*" Only providing access to smaller sites will reduce the impact of Community Led Development and not enable BHCC to truly meet local needs.

Community Led Housing developed in conjunction with Community Land Trusts is one of the most viable vehicles for providing long term, affordable and secure (in perpetuity) housing which can genuinely deliver "*housing to meet local needs, as set out in the city plan*". It should again be noted that the Brighton and Hove Fairness Commission recommended that BHCC should; "*Offer council-owned (and other publicly owned) land, including sites on the city fringes, brown field sites, to cooperative, self build groups and community land trusts to develop affordable social housing with a guarantee it will go to local people.*" The pathway described within the report suggests that the process will be obfuscatory through its approach to site disposal (lease or sale) and the attachment of conditions, rather than facilitatory through enabling communities to establish their own local needs.

It was noted at the recent Community Led Housing launch event on 21st February 2018 that BHCC suggested that for land to be considered for asset transfer or disposal to community organisations they would have to bring forward a fully costed and prepared proposal. Given the nature of preparing such proposals, many community groups struggle in this stage of work, without any guarantee that when they have completed the process for a viable project they will actually be given access to the site they require. To demonstrate BHCC's commitment to enabling Community Led Development, transferring identified sites into the Brighton & Hove Community Land Trust would give communities across the city confidence in engaging professional support to ensure their proposals are both viable and successful. This would in no way negate the need or option for thorough analysis of any proposals against predetermined criteria. Providing a clear process for groups to follow, perhaps in addition to offering guidance on how to develop proposals would also be helpful.

In addition to the details set out above it was requested that the report specifically requested that the LWJV development of site 21 in Coldean would ensure "*that the joint venture development of site 21 facilitates access and not limit the prospects for development of sites 21a and 21c as community led housing*". The report makes no mention of how BHCC plan to ensure this and to date I am not aware that Hyde Housing or BHCC have attempted to engage with the Coldean Community to begin consultations regarding the principles of the site's development.

Please can the committee re-affirm its commitment to providing communities around the city

access to appropriate development sites for community Led Housing, not just the 'smaller S106' sites which are left over from all other programmes as indicated in section 3.10.

Will the committee give assurance that, following the completion of a mutual site allocation process, sites allocated for community led development would be pro-actively transferred into the Brighton & Hove Community Land Trust to demonstrate BHCC's commitment to facilitate Community Led Development.

In relation to Coldean, please can the committee describe when and how the LWJV intends to engage with the Coldean community relating to the development of site 21 and how access to site 21a will be developed. If BHCC are able to provide details of the liaison personnel for Hyde Housing this would be appreciated.