





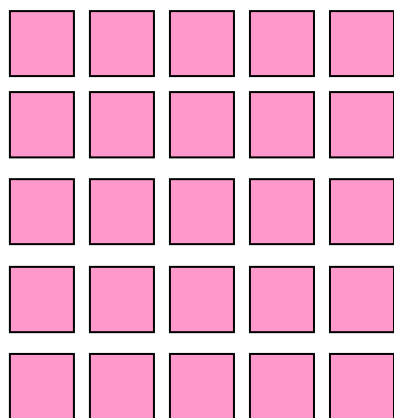
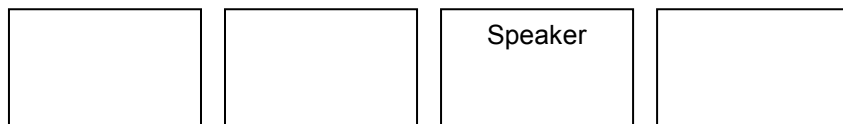
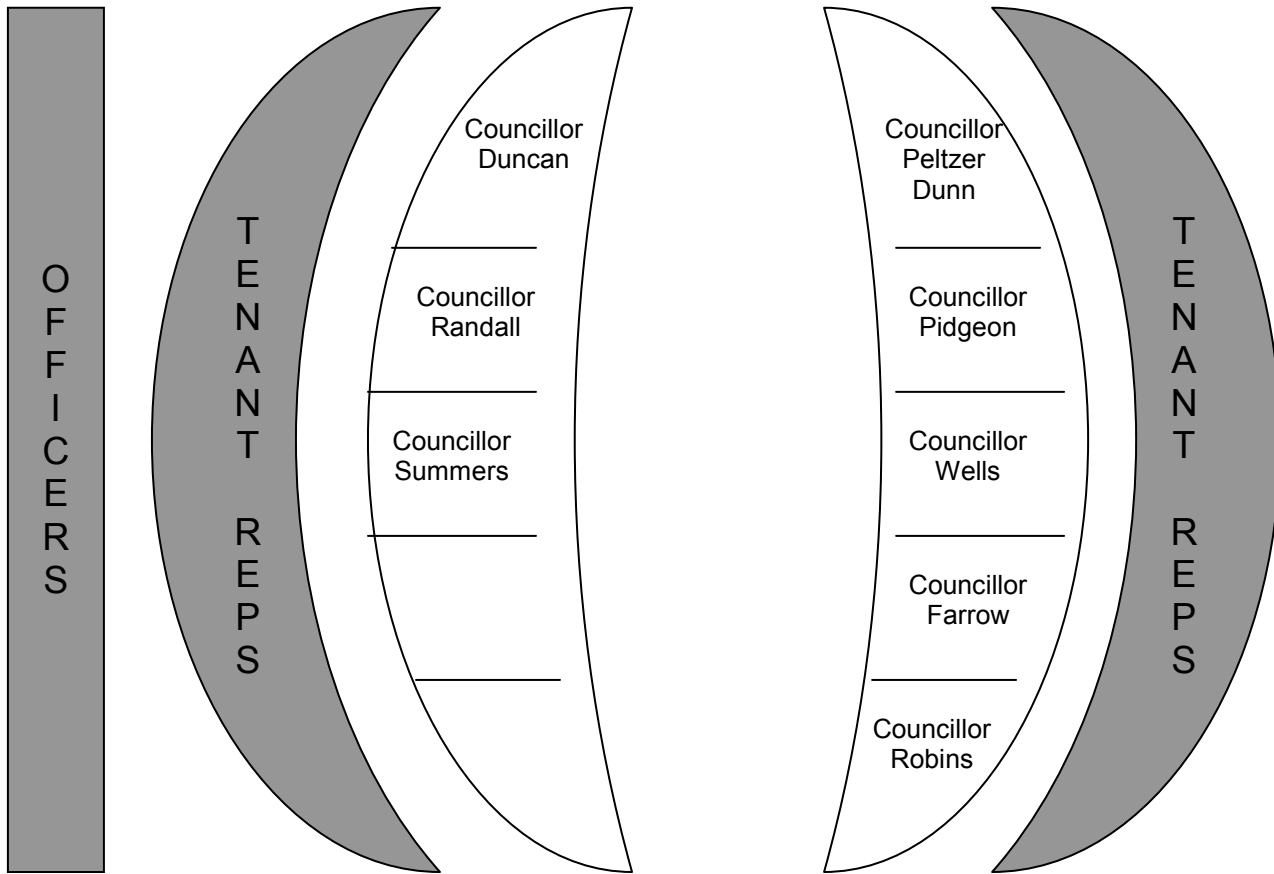
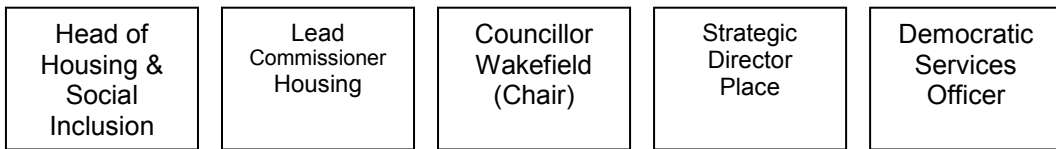
**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# Housing Management Consultative Committee

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Title:   | <b>Housing Management Consultative Committee</b>  |
| Date:    | <b>19 March 2012</b>  |
| Time:    | <b>3.00pm</b>   |
| Venue:   | <b>Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall</b>  |
| Members: | <b>Councillors:</b><br>Wakefield (Chair), Duncan, Farrow, Peltzer Dunn, Pidgeon, Randall, Robins, Summers and Wells |
| Contact: | <b>Caroline De Marco</b><br>Democratic Services Officer<br>01273 291063<br>caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk    |

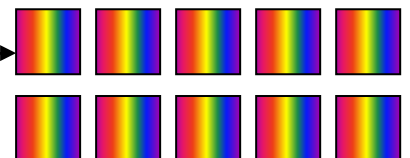
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|---|--|
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|  | An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter and infra red hearing aids are available for use during the meeting. If you require any further information or assistance, please contact the receptionist on arrival.   |
|   | <b>FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE</b><br><br>If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;</li><li>• Do not stop to collect personal belongings;</li><li>• Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move some distance away and await further instructions; and</li><li>• Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.</li></ul> |

# Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



Public Seating

Members in Attendance



Press



**Tenant Representatives:**

Ted Harman, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

David Murtagh, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Trish Barnard, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Jean Davis, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Stewart Gover, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Heather Hayes, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Tina Urquhart, West Hove & Portslade Area Area Housing Management Panel

Beverley Weaver, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

John Melson, Hi Rise Action Group

Tony Worsfold, Leaseholder Action Group

Colin Carden, Older People's Council

Tom Whiting, Sheltered Housing Action Group

Barry Kent, Tenant Disability Network

# AGENDA

## 82. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declaration of Substitutes - Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) Declarations of Interest by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (c) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

*NOTE: Any item appearing in Part 2 of the Agenda states in its heading either that it is confidential or the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.*

*A list and description of the categories of exempt information is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.*

## 83. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 10

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2012 (copy attached).

## 84. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

## 85. CALLOVER

## 86. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received by the date of publication.

## 87. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 12 March 2012)

No public questions have been received by the date of publication.

## 88. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 12 March 2012)

No deputations have been received by the date of publication.

**89. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

No letters have been received.

**90. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

No written questions have been received.

**91. HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW**

**11 - 38**

Report of Strategic Director Place & Strategic Director People (copy attached).

*Contact Officer:* Jugal Sharma, James      *Tel:* 29-3101, *Tel:* 295511  
Dogan

*Ward Affected:* All Wards

**92. 2011 SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS (STAR)**

**39 - 64**

Report of the Head of Housing & Social Inclusion (copy attached).

*Contact Officer:* Ododo Dafe      *Tel:* 29-3201

*Ward Affected:* All Wards

**93. PROMOTING FINANCIAL INCLUSION AMONGST COUNCIL HOUSING RESIDENTS**

**65 - 72**

Report of Head of Housing & Social Inclusion (copy attached).

*Contact Officer:* Nick Hibberd      *Tel:* 29-3756

*Ward Affected:* All Wards

**94. EXTENDING PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL LEASEHOLDERS**

**73 - 86**

Report of Head of Housing and Social Inclusion (copy attached).

*Contact Officer:* Dave Arthur      *Tel:* 29-3072

*Ward Affected:* All Wards

**95. REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS HANDBOOK**

**87 - 124**

Report of Director of Place & Head of Housing & Social Inclusion (copy attached).

*Contact Officer:* Tom Gillham      *Tel:* 01273 293857

*Ward Affected:* All Wards

**96. HOUSING & SOCIAL INCLUSION PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 3)**

**125 - 136**

Report of Head of Housing & Social Inclusion (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Ododo Dafe  
Ward Affected: All Wards

Tel: 29-3201

## 97. MOBILITY SCOOTER STORAGE AND OTHER FIRE SAFETY WORK

Presentation by Rachel Chasseaud, Head of Tenancy Services.

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

The closing date for receipt of public questions and deputations for the next meeting is 12 noon on the fifth working day before the meeting.

Agendas and minutes are published on the council's website [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk). Agendas are available to view five working days prior to the meeting date.

Meeting papers can be provided, on request, in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on disc, or translated into any other language as requested.

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Caroline De Marco, (01273 291063, email [caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) or email [democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Date of Publication - Friday, 9 March 2012

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**3.00pm 6 FEBRUARY 2012**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Wakefield (Chair); Duncan, Farrow, Hamilton, Mears, Peltzer Dunn, Pidgeon, Randall and Summers

**Tenant Representatives:** Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), David Murtagh (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Trish Barnard (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Jean Davis (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Stewart Gover (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Tina Urquhart (West Hove & Portslade Area Area Housing Management Panel), Beverley Weaver (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), John Melson (Hi Rise Action Group), Muriel Briault (Leaseholder Action Group), Colin Carden (Older People's Council), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group) and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network)

**PART ONE**

**65. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**65A Declarations of Substitute Members**

65.1 Councillor Mears declared that she was attending as a substitute for Councillor Wells. Councillor Hamilton declared that he was attending as a substitute for Councillor Robins.

**65B Declarations of Interests**

65.2 Councillor Randall, Councillor Summers, Heather Hayes and Ted Harman declared a personal interest in any discussion on the LDV as they are Board Members of Brighton and Hove Seaside Community Homes (the Local Delivery Vehicle).

**65C Exclusion of the Press and Public**

65.3 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of

the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

65.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

## 66. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

### Amendments to the minutes

66.1 *Tenant Satisfaction with repairs – Paragraph 63.5* – John Melson asked for the last line of this paragraph to be amended to read “Mr Melson noted the improvement in the percentage for decent homes and *asked if this was the criteria* for kitchens and bathrooms.

66.2 *Communal Repairs – Paragraph 63.19* – John Melson asked for the 4<sup>th</sup> line to read “Mr Melson wondered if the stock being transferred to the LDV was the least expensive to *repair....*”

### Comments on the minutes

66.3 *Matters Arising* - The Chair had asked members to comment on the accuracy of the minutes rather than raise matters arising. She stressed that there was a very full agenda and wanted to ensure there was time to consider all items on the agenda.

66.4 Tom Whiting questioned whether it was right to deny members the right of raising matters arising. He asked for a legal view.

66.5 The Senior Lawyer informed members that there was a legal requirement to consider the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting. However, there was no legal right to consider matters arising from the minutes. This matter would fall under the remit of the Chair.

66.6 Members agreed that as it had been the custom and practice to consider matters arising from the minutes, they would like this to continue. This was agreed by the Chair.

66.7 *Dams in Bevendean – Paragraph 55.3* - Tom Whiting queried why the minute did not go into more detail as to whether the problem was caused by dam breakage or flooding by precipitation. Councillor Farrow explained that he had raised this matter at several meetings when more detail had been given. An officer had sent him a report on the subject. The Chair stated that details could be sent to Mr Whiting.

66.8 *Closure of Public Toilets – Paragraph 56.9* – Stewart Gover asked Councillor Randall if any action had been taken about this matter. Councillor Randall explained that there had been changes made to the proposals. He would send the report to Mr Gover.



**67. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS****Innovation Group**

- 67.1 The Chair reported that the Innovation Group had started meeting in November 2011. This hard working group consisted of long standing involved and newly involved residents. The aim of the Group was to explore ways of involving more residents in housing & social inclusion. A presentation on the work of the Group had been made to two housing area panels so far and initial findings had been well received. All the housing area panels would receive the presentation. The final report would be presented on Friday 21 March. All HMCC members would be invited.
- 67.2 The Chair reported that a written report would be presented to the HMCC meeting in April and the City Assembly in May. All HMCC members would receive a copy. Members of the Innovation Group were all tenants or council leaseholders.

**68. CALLOVER**

- 68.1 The Chair asked the Committee to consider which items listed on the agenda it wished to debate and determine in full.
- 68.2 **RESOLVED** - That all items be reserved for debate and determination.

**69. PETITIONS**

- 69.1 There were none.

**70. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

- 70.1 There were none.

**71. DEPUTATIONS**

- 71.1 There were no deputations.
- 71.2 Stuart Gover expressed concern about the late report on the Housing Allocation Policy Review (Item 81). The last day for submitting a deputation on this subject was 30 January 2012 by 12 noon. He had only received the report two days earlier and had not had the time to study it.
- 71.3 The Chair explained that there was a 12 week consultation period, and the paper on the agenda was an interim report. A deputation could be brought to Cabinet or full Council when the report was submitted to those meetings.
- 71.4 Councillor Farrow proposed deferring consideration of the report to the next meeting of HMCC on 19 March. This would enable tenants to consult with residents.
- 71.5 The Chair stressed that if the paper were not considered today, it would not be submitted to full council until May. The Lead Commissioner Housing reminded members that the HMCC had agreed a timetable for consideration of the report. The

paper submitted today was an interim paper. It outlined responses to date and gave members a number of options to consider.

71.6 Committee members expressed concern that the paper did not state that it was an interim report, and was asking for a specific recommendation to Cabinet. It was stressed that the consultation period did not end until 19 February. It was agreed that an indicative vote from the tenants followed by a vote from councillors should be taken on whether to consider the report at the meeting today.

71.7 **RESOLVED** – That Item 81 – Housing Allocation Policy Review be withdrawn from the agenda.

## **72. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

72.1 There were none.

## **73. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

73.1 There were none.

## **74. DECENT HOMES - BRIGHTON & HOVE STANDARD**

74.1 The Committee received a presentation from Tom Gillham, Head of Property & Investment. Slides of the presentation were circulated to members.

74.2 The presentation informed members that the Government had decided that by 2010 every council home should reach “Decent Homes” standard. That meant that every property must be fit to live in, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services, and be warm and weatherproof. The Government had given Brighton & Hove an extension to 2013.

74.3 The presentation provided a history to developing a Brighton & Hove Standard. Members were given details of the four tests for decency, 1. Meets statutory standards. 2. Reasonable state of repairs. 3. Reasonably modern facilities. 4. Warm and weatherproof.

74.4 The presentation gave details of how surveys were carried out and reviewed, and showed progress to date.

74.5 Councillor Farrow expressed concern about the Brighton & Hove Standard. He believed that people with disabilities were being discriminated against. He stated that the policy was not clear and the people with disabilities believed that if their bathrooms were adapted, they might not be eligible to have their kitchens adapted.

74.6 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion explained that the Decent Homes Standard was about a property. The Tenants’ Handbook had information that stated that if a person improved their home, or if it had received adaptations, that property might meet decent homes standards and may no longer be entitled to further adaptations.

- 74.7 Councillor Farrow considered that the policy needed to be set out in simple terms. He wanted a fair policy for all. The Chair suggested that it would be helpful if officers prepared an A4 paper clearly setting out the main points of the policy.
- 74.8 John Melson considered that if tenants spent money to improve their homes, it should not debar them from having further work carried out.
- 74.9 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion explained that decent homes standard work was being completed on a needs basis. It was difficult to change the process during the programme. When work was completed there could be a discussion with tenants. He drew attention to the four tests outlined in the presentation and explained how the tests were applied.
- 74.10 Councillor Hamilton stressed that people whose kitchens and bathrooms did not meet the standards would be better off asking to have a new kitchen fitted. People who asked for a new bathroom first, would not be eligible for a new kitchen. There was general agreement that this anomaly needed to be addressed.

74.11 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted.

**75. UPDATE ON LEASING TO BRIGHTON & HOVE SEASIDE COMMUNITY HOMES (SEASIDE)**

75.1 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be deferred until the next meeting of the HMCC on 19 March 2012.

**76. MOBILITY SCOOTER STORAGE AND OTHER FIRE SAFETY WORK**

76.1 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be deferred until the next meeting of the HMCC on 19 March 2012.

**77. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2012/13**

77.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Place and the Director of Finance that presented the Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn for 2011/12 as at month 7 and the proposed Budget for 2012/13 as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Members were required to consider the budget proposals including changes to rents, fees and charges as well as savings and service pressures. Appendix 1 set out the budget for 2011/12. Appendix 2 provided a summary of self financing. Since the report had been written the government had reduced the costs to 18.1 million.

77.2 The Chair welcomed the report. She informed members that the report outlined how tenants' rents would be spent next year on managing council homes and the contribution that council housing would make to addressing wider housing need. The Chair was particularly pleased to see that through these proposals the council would bring its long term empty homes back into use; improve its existing housing to bring all properties up to the Brighton & Hove standard by the end of 2013; make its services more accessible for residents; provide new targeted support services for people in financial difficulty; and build more new council homes for those who don't have them.

- 77.3 The report also outlined how the council would move to a self-financing housing revenue account from the 1 April. The council would no longer be subject to the outdated subsidy system which tenants campaigned to end. Self financing would allow the council to take a longer term view when planning how it invested in the housing stock, as it would no longer have to respond to an annual budget determination to government. However, as part of the settlement the council also had to make a one off payment to government of £18m this year.
- 77.4 Councillor Mears welcomed the move to self financing and noted the reduction in costs. She referred to paragraph 27 of Appendix 2 (Disposals). Councillor Mears stated that if consent for disposal of council housing assets was no longer required, there would be a need for a vote from tenants before any action was taken. Councillor Randall assured Councillor Mears that there were no plans to transfer stock.
- 77.5 Councillor Mears stated that the money coming in from the LDV was a new innovative way for raising money for housing. She felt that the LDV should be shown as a separate figure and not shown as part of a lump sum. Councillor Randall agreed that this should be made clearer.
- 77.6 The Head of Finance – Business Engagement stated that LDV capital receipts were shown in the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme report.
- 77.7 Councillor Mears stressed that LDV money should be identified for housing and not the general fund. It needed to be clearly shown. The Chair referred to paragraph 4.3 of the capital programme report where there was a specific reference to the leasing of properties to Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes.
- 77.8 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That it is noted that the report proposes that Cabinet:
- (a) approves the budget for 2011/12 as shown in Appendix 1
  - (b) approves individual rent increases and decreases in line with rent restructuring principles as determined by the Government.
  - (c) approves the changes to fees and charges as detailed in paragraph 3.17 to 3.26 of the report.

## **78. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012-15**

- 78.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Place and the Director of Finance that sought approval for the 2012/13 capital programme and provided a provisional capital programme for the following two years, 2013/14 and 2014/15, for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The report took into consideration the latest resources available and commissioning investment priorities. The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) related to the council's landlord duties in respect of approximately 12,250 properties and 2,250 leasehold properties.

- 78.2 The Chair informed the Committee that the report outlined proposals for £74million investment in the city's housing over the next 3 years. As well as some of the areas such as building new homes and bringing all council empty properties back into use, the Chair was pleased to see that the report reflected the discussions that took place with tenants at the city assembly budget workshop last November through:
- increased investment in the lift replacement programme
  - increased investment in adaptations
  - a new approach to Estate Development budget, with Mears working on a not-for-profit model which would increase the money available for tenant projects
  - money prioritised for making the city's homes and blocks more energy efficient, through over-cladding, new energy efficient lighting, and new efficient boiler systems.
- 78.3 Stewart Gover referred to paragraph 5.22 of the report which related to building new council homes. He thought it a good idea to demolish some vacant garage sites to enable new housing units to be built. He suggested maisonettes would be popular.
- 78.4 Stewart Gover referred to Appendix 1 of the report, which set out the HRA Capital Programme 2012-15 expenditure. No mention had been made of Ainsworth House. The Head of Finance – Business Engagement explained that Ainsworth House had been included in the 2011/12 Capital Programme. Appendix 1 set out the new budget for new schemes. Councillor Mears mentioned that one of the reasons for the delay in work on Ainsworth House had been due to asbestos and she thanked the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion for the report on asbestos.
- 78.5 Councillor Mears asked for an update on how much money would be available from 31 March. She referred to paragraph 5.20 of the report relating to solar panels. She considered this was a disappointing story. The Government had been successfully challenged in court and the consultation did not end until March.
- 78.6 Councillor Mears made the point that sensor lighting would be inappropriate in high rise flats where people would have to negotiate pitch black landings.
- 78.7 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion explained that there was presently a process to upgrade the efficiency of lighting. Officers were looking specifically on the efficiency of sensor lighting.
- 78.8 John Melson also regretted the loss of the solar panel offer. Councillor Randall stated that there had been a lot of uncertainty about the contract and many firms had gone out of business. The Strategic Director Place hoped that there would be a solution to this problem in six months time.
- 78.9 Barry Kent mentioned that LEDs were like a normal light bulb but only used 10% of the electricity. The Chair agreed that LEDs were very energy efficient. Officers would investigate the most suitable lighting to install. The Chair stated that she did not want tenants to have to negotiate dark landings.
- 78.10 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee recommend that Cabinet approves the capital programme budget of £27,229 million and financing for 2012/13 as set out in paragraph 4.1.

**79. CONSULTATION ON REVISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGULATING THE COUNCIL'S LANDLORD SERVICES**

- 79.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Place which outlined the revised regulatory framework for social housing in England from 1 April 2012, on which the Tenant Services Authority was currently consulting. The consultation period ended on 10 February 2012.
- 79.2 The Housing Stock Review Manager explained that the Tenant Services Authority was to be abolished in April 2012 and responsibility for regulating council landlords, housing associations and other registered providers transferred to a new independent regulation committee within the Homes and Communities Agency. There were proposed changes to the standards registered providers were required to meet and the circumstances in which the regulator would be able to use its monitoring and enforcement powers. The main changes were set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.
- 79.3 The required outcomes of the four consumer standards which would be applied to the council were set out in Appendix 1. Landlords would still be required to meet all the standards that applied and councillors and boards who governed landlords' service delivery would remain responsible for ensuring that they did meet standards.
- 79.4 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the proposed new regulatory framework for social housing in England from 1 April 2012 be noted.

**80. UPDATE ON ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS 2011 AND PLAN FOR RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012**

- 80.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Place which updated members on progress in implementing the improvement plans set out in the annual report to all council tenants and leaseholders for the year ended 31 March 2011. It reported the proposed revised requirements for registered providers of social housing to produce an annual report to their tenants set out in the Tenant Services Authority's consultation on a revised regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2012. The report also proposed an outline plan and timetable for involving residents in producing and scrutinising the council's annual report to tenants and leaseholders in the year ending 31 March 2012.
- 80.2 The Housing Stock Review Manager reported that Appendix 1 to the report highlighted some examples of how the Council was meeting the commitments which it had made in the annual report and the progress already made.
- 82.3 The Housing Stock Review Manager reported that it was proposed to seek the views of the Tenant Editorial Board of Hoving In on the 2012 Annual Report. Residents would be asked to contribute quotes and pictures for inclusion in the report which would be published in September. Next year's Annual Report would be discussed by the City Assembly.
- 82.4 Councillor Randall considered the Annual Report to be exceptionally good. There had been better feedback than ever at this year's City Assembly. Meanwhile, it was

proposed to continue with the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Randall suggested that there should be a training session for tenants to help them write contributions for the Annual Report.

- 82.5 Ted Harman and Barry Kent mentioned that they were dyslexic and would find the training helpful.
- 82.6 Tom Whiting stressed the need to contact people at the grass routes. He thought that surveys and questionnaires were often not helpful or representative and asked "loaded" questions. Meanwhile mystery shopping always seemed to have good results.
- 82.7 John Melson drew attention to the small numbers of tenants involved in the tenant's movement. He was concerned that an editorial board was being consulted and felt more should be done to achieve better representation.
- 82.8 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the progress in implementing improvement plans included in the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2010 highlighted in Appendix 1 to this report be noted.
- (2) That the proposed reduced regulatory requirements for producing annual reports to tenants with effect from April 2012, be noted.
- (3) That the proposed plan and timetable set out in paragraphs 3.6 to 3.7 of the report for involving residents in producing the annual report to tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2012, be noted.

**81. HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW**

- 81.1 The Committee agreed that the report should be withdrawn from the agenda. See minute 71.

The meeting concluded at 5.46pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of





# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 91

Brighton & Hove City Council

|                             |  |  |                                 |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>             | <b>Housing Allocation Policy Review</b>  |  |                                 |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>     | <b>15 March 2012 – Cabinet<br/>19 March 2012 – Housing Management Consultative Committee</b>           |  |                                 |
| <b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b> | <b>Strategic Director for Place,<br/>Strategic Director for People,<br/>Cabinet Member for Housing</b> |  |                                 |
| <b>Contact Officers:</b>    | <b>Name:</b>   | <b>Jugal Sharma<br/>James Dougan</b>   | <b>Tel: 29-3101<br/>29-5511</b> |
|                             | <b>Email:</b>  | <a href="mailto:jugal.sharma@brighton-hove.gov.uk">jugal.sharma@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a><br><a href="mailto:james.dougan@brighton-hove.gov.uk">james.dougan@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a> |                                 |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>        | <b>Yes</b>   | <b>Forward Plan No: CAB27244</b>   |                                 |
| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b>    | <b>All</b>   |  |                                 |

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The current Housing Register Allocations Policy was approved by Housing Cabinet 22 March 2011. Under the current policy young people leaving care (care leavers) are not automatically awarded Band A priority for social housing (Council & Registered Provider), but are assessed for housing depending on their housing need in the same way as other applicants. The current Allocation policy, however, does give the Lead Commissioner for Housing discretion to award priority in exceptional circumstances. There is also a quota system in place for Children's Services to grant up to 15 cases Band A status per annum as decided by Children's Services. This is normally used for re-housing young people from local families.
- 1.2 Care leavers and their representatives have raised concerns with the Council regarding the current policy and have suggested that automatic Band A status should be reinstated for young people leaving care.
- 1.3 To ensure we are reflecting both the need to make best use of limited housing resources and fulfil our corporate parent role to young people leaving care, a review of the policy has been undertaken including public consultation over 12 weeks (7 November 2011 - 29 January 2012). A list of consultees is attached in Appendix 1.
- 1.4 Consequently, this report sets out recommendations for revising the Allocations policy and its operation reflecting a stronger consideration of the Council's role as corporate parent to young people leaving care.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That HMCC note and comment on the recommendations to Cabinet & Council.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends to Council that:
- (i) the proposals set out in paragraph 3.22, 3.24 and 3.25 and also Appendix 3 be approved;
  - (ii) the Strategic Director, Place, be authorised to amend the Council's Housing Allocations policy to reflect the above changes;
  - (iii) the Strategic Director Place and the Strategic Director People, be authorised to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of the proposals in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.25.

## **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 The Housing Register Allocations policy has and will continue to be subject to periodic review reflecting legislation, local demographic changes and policy preferences. Where changes are made the Council strives to ensure that the policy remains legal, reasonable, effective and efficient.
- 3.2 Under the previous Housing Allocation policy 2005 care leavers who were assessed as not requiring supported accommodation were awarded Band A priority. This entailed a joint assessment process as part of a Joint Protocol agreed between Children's Services and Housing. This process did not necessarily consider all of the housing tenure options available and how accommodation offers might be accompanied by on-going support packages to ensure accommodation offers and tenancy arrangements were successful.
- 3.3 The policy was reviewed and a report brought to Housing Cabinet 22 March 2011. Based on the consultation, automatic Band A status for care leavers was removed. As such, for care leavers who did not need supported accommodation, it was possible to offer and oblige private rented accommodation as a first option. In part this reflected a concern that housing potentially vulnerable people onto housing estates with relatively high concentrations of deprivation might not be the most appropriate solution.
- 3.4 Subsequently, however, care leavers and their representatives have raised concerns with the Council regarding this decision. They have suggested that automatic Band A status should be reinstated for young people leaving care as a first choice. In response the Council has undertaken a further review of the policy including public consultation over 12 weeks (7 November 2011 - 29 January 2012).

### **Legal & Policy Considerations**

- 3.5 In considering the how best to resolve matters and proceed, officers have had regard to the legislation and policy relating to care leavers and the obligations on local authorities in meeting their housing needs. The Council has 3 key considerations: it's obligations as Housing Authority; as a Children's Services Authority; and, as a Corporate Parent to care leavers.

- 3.6 The current Allocations policy, looked at on its own, complies with legal requirements under the Housing Act 1996 and Code of Guidance. The list of people we are required to give reasonable preference to is set out in Appendix 4, there is no requirement to award priority to young people leaving care looking at the council's duty as a Housing Authority (as opposed to a Children's Social Services Authority).
- 3.7 In terms of the Children Act 1989, the council has used the Allocations policy as a way of discharging its housing duties to care leavers. S17(6) and S20 of the Act established a duty to provide accommodation for a Child in Need. S23 (b)(8) also refers to the need to provide "suitable" accommodation, where a care leaver seeks it, defined under the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010. (Suitable is defined as accommodation which, in so far as reasonably practicable, is suitable for the child in light of his needs, including his health needs see Appendix 5). This requires the council to look at the needs and wishes of the care leaver and facilities. For those aged 18, s23(a)(2) states there should be a care plan that can include accommodation. To be clear, however, none of these requirements stipulate that the offer of "suitable" accommodation must include a Council tenancy or the award of Band A priority for council housing.
- 3.8 Hence, the current Allocations policy, taken by itself, is lawful. As long as the council complies with its duties under the Children Act regarding the provision of "suitable" accommodation, there is no requirement or inference that this should necessarily be via the Housing Allocations policy and the council is at liberty to discharge that function by other means if it so wishes.

### **Options for moving forward**

- 3.9 Care leavers and their representatives have signalled that they may seek a judicial review of the current policy and their opportunity to be consulted and make representations on changes. Whilst the view of the Council's legal officer is that the Council's position is legally safe and robust, there are policy options open to the Council. If the Council considers that a council or other social housing tenancy would be best as a general rule to meet care leaver's needs, then we would need to give the care leaver sufficient priority within the Allocations policy.
- 3.10 In considering this your officers have reviewed the key operational issues. There is a risk of tenancy breakdown when a young person becomes a tenant for the first time and this may impose some costs in reinstating the property and also dealing with the personal care aspects of the breakdown. Experience to date has been mixed but there is agreement amongst housing and social service professionals that systems need to be in place to ensure that young people are prepared and that their assessment clearly demonstrates they are ready to live independently. Support may be appropriate to help young people in sustaining their tenancy and to develop the practical, financial and emotional skills and resilience to live independently.
- 3.11 Housing and social service professionals are also in agreement that care leavers should be involved, in so far as is reasonable, in all decisions relating to their care. As a corporate parent, we may want to give particular weight to the wishes and feelings of care leavers in determining their housing options. At present, responsibility for care leavers housing allocations falls primarily on the Lead Commissioner, Housing following consultation with Children's Services

professionals. Where professional differences of opinion on an appropriate housing option cannot be reconciled, protocols are currently in place to refer the matter to the Strategic Director People to arbitrate. To support the Lead Commissioner, Housing and the Strategic Director People, it may be helpful establish a board to review the impact of care leaver housing allocations and where necessary advise on potential service improvements. Such a board is often a feature of other local authorities' care leaving arrangements and could involve feedback from care leavers and/or their representatives.

- 3.12 In light of the review and the response to recent consultation on the policy, there is an option for the Council to give greater weight to its role as a Corporate Parent to care leavers and thus offering Band A housing priority to care leavers. This reflects paragraphs 7.13 and 7.32 of The Children Act 1989 whereby the responsible authority has to satisfy itself as to the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider complying with health and safety requirements related to rented accommodation. The Act also requires the responsible authority, in so far as reasonably practicable, to take into account the child's wishes and feelings and also education, training or employment needs.
- 3.13 Consequently in undertaking formal assessments, officers would have regard to both a professional view as to whether the care leaver is ready for independent living as well as the wishes of the individual. Officers would have particular regard to the significance of security of tenure, affordability and emotional well being, particularly in the early years of adult life where young people leaving care may be at a critical stage in full time education, employment and/or training and would benefit from stability of tenure.
- 3.14 Where Council accommodation is not readily available or might be considered otherwise inappropriate, the council may also consider offers to care leavers of accommodation in relation to private sector landlords where these can also be assured as offering security of tenure, affordability and emotional well being.
- 3.15 In all cases, the judgement of the professional parent and the views of the care leaver child would need to be carefully considered in deciding upon a housing option. Where necessary, the council may also seek to provide supplementary packages of support (see Appendix 5 Schedule 2) to enable a care leaver to make a successful transition to independent living irrespective of the Band A status.
- 3.16 To ensure that the policy and its operation is achieving the desired impact and is not generating any adverse and unintended consequences, it may also be prudent for a joint annual report from Children's Services and Housing to be submitted to an appropriate (sub) Committee regarding the impact on social housing management and the well being of care leavers.

### **Implications for housing supply & housing waiting lists**

- 3.17 Care leavers generally need studios or 1 bed properties. In the last year the number of studios and 1 bed properties becoming available was 584. In terms of demand, there were a total of 7,495 households waiting for this size property, which comprise: 142 in Band A, 519 in Band B, 5164 in Band C and 1670 in Band D (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Council Housing Availability & Waiting List Priorities**

| Size                  | Number of properties available | Waiting households | Banding Priority |     |       |       |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----|-------|-------|
|                       |                                |                    | A                | B   | C     | D     |
| Studios and 1 bedroom | 584                            | 7,495              | 142              | 519 | 5,164 | 1,670 |
| 2 bedroom             | 231                            | 3,181              | 105              | 263 | 1861  | 952   |
| 3 bedroom             | 82                             | 1,386              | 48               | 220 | 816   | 302   |
| 4+ bedroom            | 10                             | 203                | 17               | 59  | 98    | 29    |

**Care Leaver Housing Requirements**

3.18 Children's Services provide close monitoring of young people leaving care. Table 2 below shows where they go.

**Table 2: Housing Accommodation for Young (18 year old) People Living Care**

|   | 2006      | 2007      | 2008      | 2009      | 2010      |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Supported Lodgings                          | 4         | 8         | 14        | 7         | 2         |
| With Parents Or Relatives                   | 5         | 8         | 7         | 12        | 7         |
| Foyers And Similar Supported Lodging        | 2         | 0         | 2         | 4         | 11        |
| Community Home Or Other Residential Care    | 0         | 5         | 3         | 2         | 2         |
| <b>Independent Living *</b>                 | <b>15</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>18</b> |
| SSD Not In Touch With Young Person          | 0         | 0         | 2         | 0         | 0         |
| Semi-Independent Transitional Accommodation | 2         | 3         | 1         | 0         | 0         |
| Other Accommodation                         | 1         | 0         | 1         | 0         | 0         |
| Ordinary lodgings without formal support    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| In Custody                                  | 2         | 0         | 0         | 3         | 1         |
| Bed And Breakfast                           | 0         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 0         |
| Emergency Accommodation                     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1         |

**Note:** About five young people outside of the 18 year old age bracket are also likely to be assessed as ready for independent living.

\*independent living – this group goes to a mixture of local authority housing both in the city (80%) and beyond, as well as private rented accommodation.

3.19 The number of young people leaving care and entering council enabled accommodation is recorded at between 14 to 18 per year. Looking forward, based on young people currently in care and due to reach their eighteenth birthday, the number seeking and able to sustain independent living is forecasted in Table 3.

**Table 3: Forecast of Young People Leaving Care Seeking & Able to Sustain Independent Living**

|                                | 2011      | 2012      | 2013      | 2014      | 2015      |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Independent Living only</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>19</b> |

3.20 As such the forecast pressure on annually available suitable council housing accommodation is relatively modest and would not unduly distort the allocation of council housing across all recognised needs groups in the city.

### **Recommended Option**

3.21 In light of the review and the results of consultation, the options are:

- a) Status quo. Although this complies with Housing law it leaves the council open to challenge under the Children Act.
- b) Amend the current arrangements to reflect the Council's corporate parent role by giving care leavers an appropriate priority subject to formal assessment.
  - i) Band A. There are a finite number of properties that become available and so there are implications for other client groups by increasing the priority of one group.
  - ii) Band B. This would give a high priority but may not be the best option to give sufficient priority to enable the Council to discharge it's duties under the Children Act.

If option b) is chosen it is also recommended that it be accompanied by a robust assessment of the needs of the care leaver and a support package as set out in Appendix 5, Schedule 2.

- 3.22 Given the reasons set out in this report, officers recommend option b) i) such that young people leaving care are awarded Band A as a first choice option unless a formal assessment concludes otherwise.
- 3.23 Where a care leaver seeks to appeal an assessment decision and/or agreement cannot be reached by professional assessors, the matter is to be referred to the Strategic Director People to arbitrate as the delegated corporate parent for the Council.
- 3.24 In addition, the Strategic Director People and the Strategic Director Place, will provide an annual report to the Council through a proposed Corporate Parent (Sub) Committee on the impact of housing allocations on the management of council housing stock and the well being of care leavers.
- 3.25 With regard to other issues raised as part of the consultation as set out in Appendix 3, officers recommend that these changes are also accepted by Cabinet and subsequently recommended by Cabinet to Full Council for approval 22 March 2012.

### 3.26 **Timetable**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 29 January 2012  | End of Consultation with the City  |
| 19 February 2012 | End of Consultation with Tenants   |
| 8 March 2012     | Adult Social Care and Housing O&S Committee to consider proposals and make recommendations to Cabinet  |
| 15 March 2012    | Cabinet to consider the proposals and make recommendations to Full Council in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework procedure rules. |
| 19 March 2012    | Housing Management Consultative Committee  |
| 22 March 2012    | Full Council for final approval.   |

## **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 A minimum 12 week consultation process with city stakeholders over the proposed changes has now been completed and extended until 19 February for council tenants so that feedback from all area panels are taken into account when considering final recommendations. Stakeholders include our Communities of Interest, our partner agencies, Age Concern, support agencies, people on the Housing Register, CYPT, and support providers (a full list is provided in Appendix 2). The Community Engagement Framework and standards have been used in undertaking this consultation. Feedback is set out in Appendix 2.
- 4.2 Cabinet should note that the Housing Management Consultative Committee declined to consider a report (See Appendix 8) on this matter at its meeting 6 February 2012. This updated report will be submitted for comment to the HMCC meeting 19 March prior to Full Council.

## **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The 2011/2 budget for the Home Move team is £0.337m which mainly consists of staffing costs (£0.284m) and the Home Move Magazine (£0.052m).
- 5.2 The recommendations of this report will not directly impact the cost of housing services provided by the Council. The impact on the children's services budget is likely to be cost neutral given that the appropriate pathway is already provided based on assessment.
- 5.3 It is proposed to closely monitor the progress of such tenancies and ensure that any subsequent additional costs or loss of income, such as non payment of rent, are reported in due course. It is intended that any Officer time required for additional reporting requirements, attendance at panel etc would be met from existing resources.

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As stated in the body of the report, the Council has legal duties both as a local housing authority and as a children's social services authority. The proposed arrangements, taken together, should be such as to enable the Council to discharge both duties, including the Council's obligations to provide "suitable accommodation" to care leavers. If the option of giving care leavers priority B is adopted, then there may be a need to retain residual discretion to the Lead Commissioner for Housing to award priority A if the result of the joint housing and social services assessment is that council housing is the most appropriate accommodation for a particular individual care leaver and there are no other means of securing that outcome.

*Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis Date: 1 February 2012*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for the proposed options to change the Policy (Appendix 6).

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The proposals will ensure that better use is made of the housing stock and will contribute to sustainable housing solutions

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There is no risk of legal challenge under Housing law but there is a risk of challenge under the duties toward young people leaving care under the Children Act if the local authority are relying on the Allocation policy to discharge it's duties to care leavers. The local authority's duty to care leavers is to provide suitable accommodation and it is open to the local authority to determine what and how this is achieved. (Appendix 5)

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 The report, by addressing the issues of accommodation for care leavers will effectively contribute positively to their health and wellbeing. However, as there is a finite supply of available housing, there may be adverse implications for other client groups.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 Limited social housing stock will be used in the best and most efficient way possible and that the city will benefit from clearer communication and updated Local Lettings Plans



## **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The alternative to the amendments would be for the policy to remain as per the current policy however this would not fully address the concerns raised by care leavers and their representatives.
- 6.2 We looked at the other councils in East and West Sussex in addition to some London Authorities Croydon, Westminster and Southwark. There is a mixture of prioritisation awarded to care leavers, between Band A (or equivalent) and Band B (or equivalent). Full details are in Appendix 7.

## **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The recommendations reflect the outcome of consultation on the housing Allocations policy and officer review whereby the council give greater weight to its role as a Corporate Parent to care leavers and thus offer Band A housing priority to care leavers.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. List of people and organisations consulted
2. Feedback
3. Minor Amendments
4. Code of guidance for local housing authorities 2002 - Allocation of Accommodation CHAPTER 5 Allocation Scheme, Reasonable preference
5. Duties under the Children Act relating to accommodation
6. Equality Impact Assessment
7. Allocation Schemes and priority for care leavers in other Local Authorities
8. HMCC Allocations Review Report, March 2012

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

- Housing Act 1996 and Code of Guidance
- The Children Act 1989
- Housing Register Allocations Policy was approved by Housing Cabinet 22 March 2011
- Housing Allocation policy 2005



## **Appendix 1 List of people and organisations consulted.**

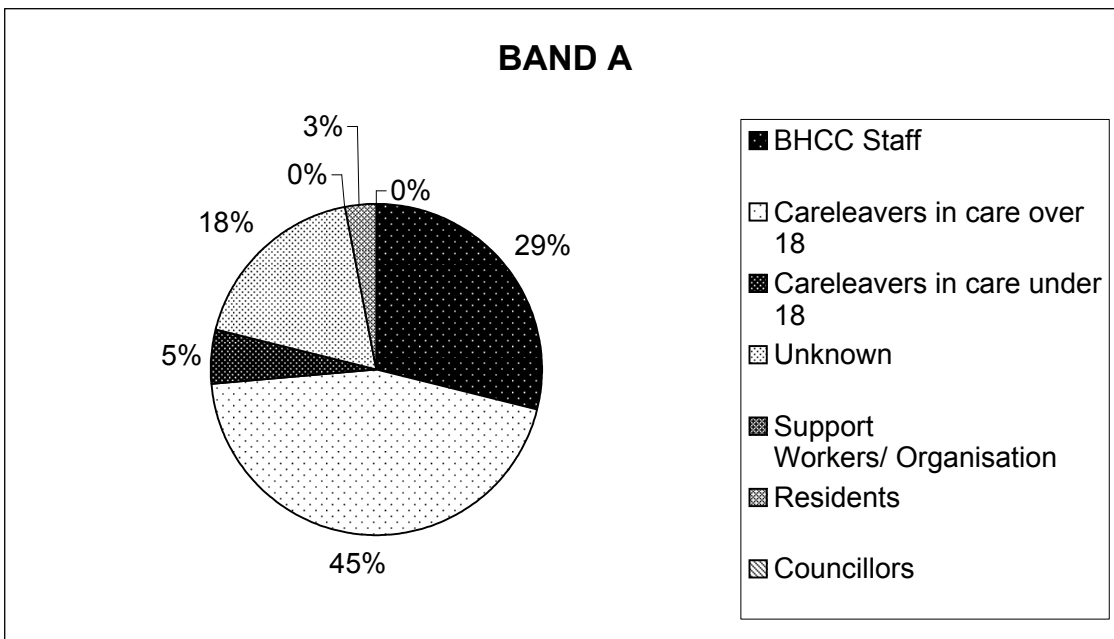
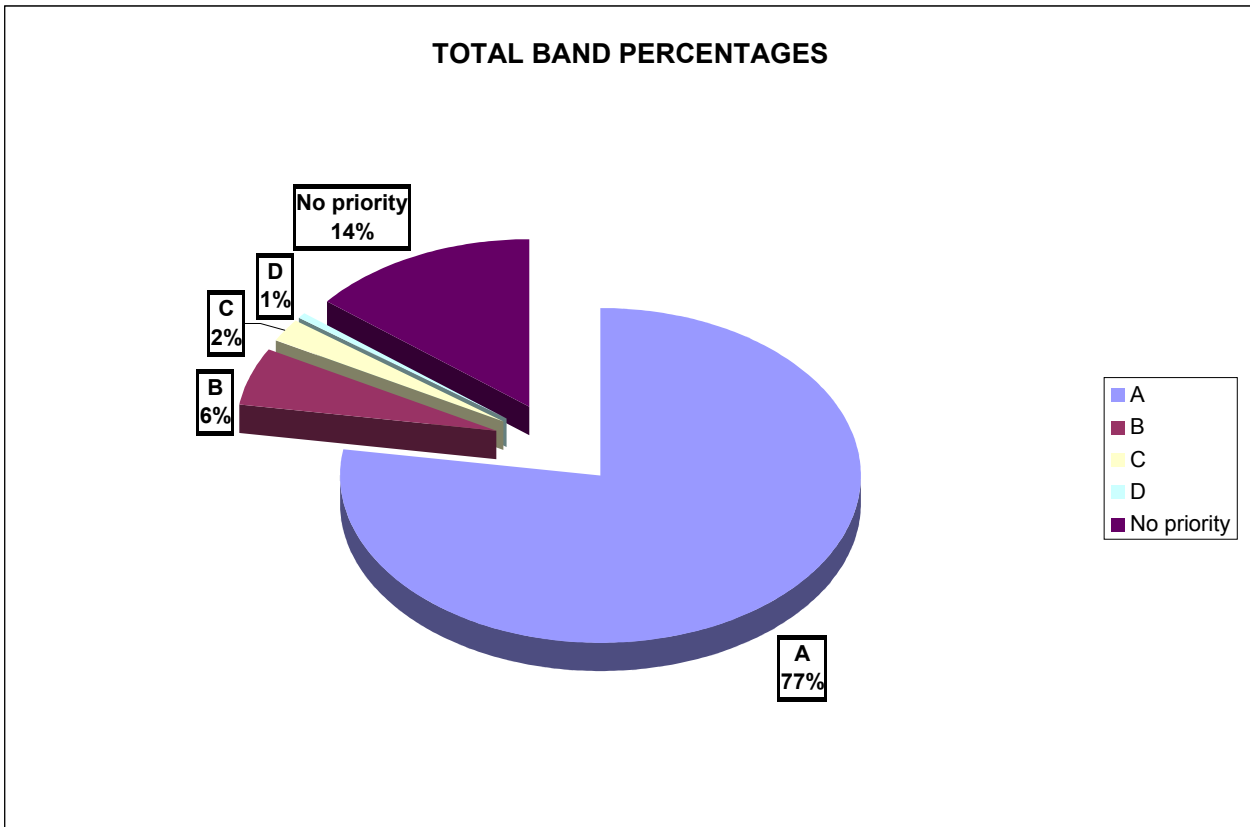
Who has been consulted and how:

| <b>Who we consulted with</b>  | <b>How we consulted</b>   | <b>When</b> |
|---|---|-------------|
| Housing Commission staff  | email   | 16.11.11    |
| Housing & Social Inclusion Staff  | email   | 16.11.11    |
| Sheltered Team  | email   | 16.11.11    |
| All Cllrs   | email and have met face to face with a few                              | 17.11.11    |
| All RSL partners  | via email and several telephone conversations                           | 17.11.11    |
| Local MPs   | email   | 17.11.11    |
| Choice Based Lettings tenant group  | Meeting   | 17.11.11    |
| (also meeting with Terry Parkin)  | Meeting   | 7.2.11      |
| Own work, BHCC and tenant involvement   | Twitter and Facebook pages  | 17.11.11    |
| DWF, BME & LGBT   | email and attended groups   | 17.11.11    |
| City Assembly   | attended myself   | 19.11.11    |
| Terry Parkin, John Barradell, Andy Whippy, Dermot Anktell, Kate Wiggett, Chris Brunstrom, Claire Blakemore, Barbara Bates, Nigel Hancock, Miranda Wareham, Sylvia Peckham, Simon Court, Jugal Sharma, Geoff Raw                             | Email   | 17.11.11    |
| Consultation portal   | Consultation portal   | 16.11.11    |
| Older peoples working group   | email and Jamie to attend next group as last one missed due to sickness | 17.11.11    |
| 612 households emails or sent consultation (408 Homeseekers and 204 Transfers) randomly taken from the housing register   | email & letter  | 21.11.11    |
| Terrance Higgins Trust, Disability Fed, Age UK, MIND, RNIB, RIND, Blind Association, BHT, Brighton and Sussex universities, Shelter, Emmaus, RISE and the DV working group, all YMCA's, Surveyors network, CMHT, Community Base, The Gender | email and telephone conversations                                       | 21.11.11    |

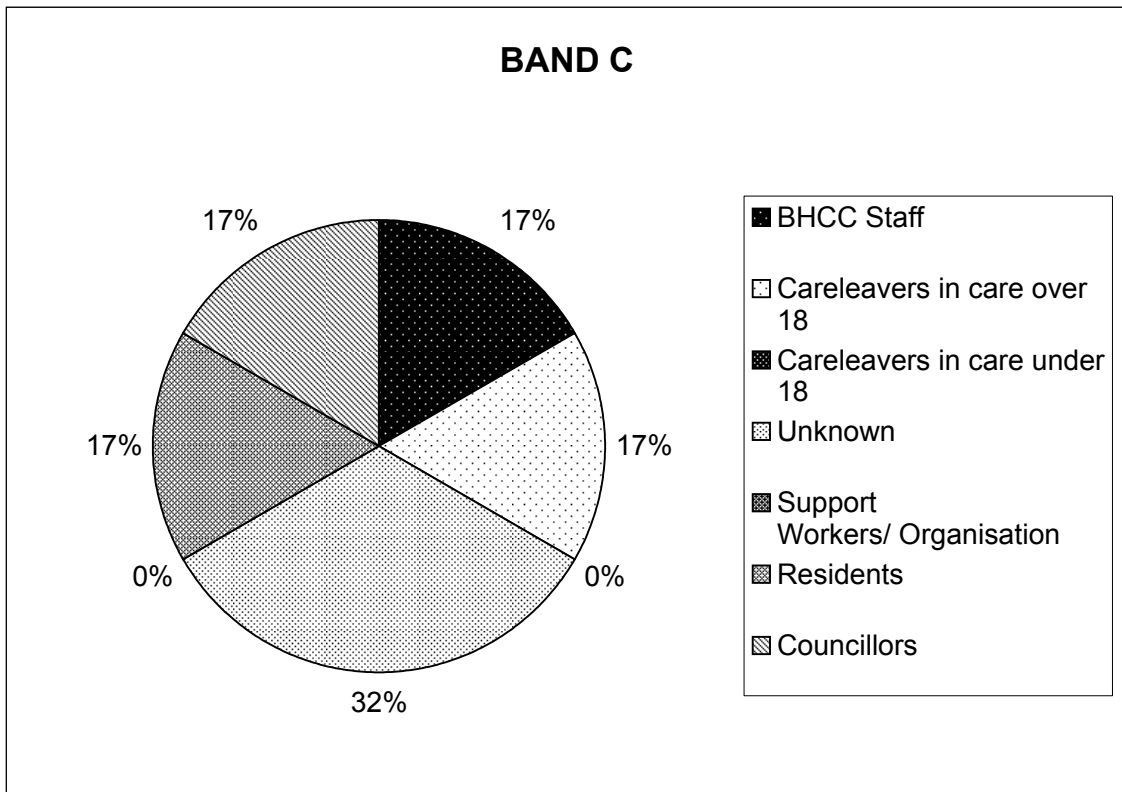
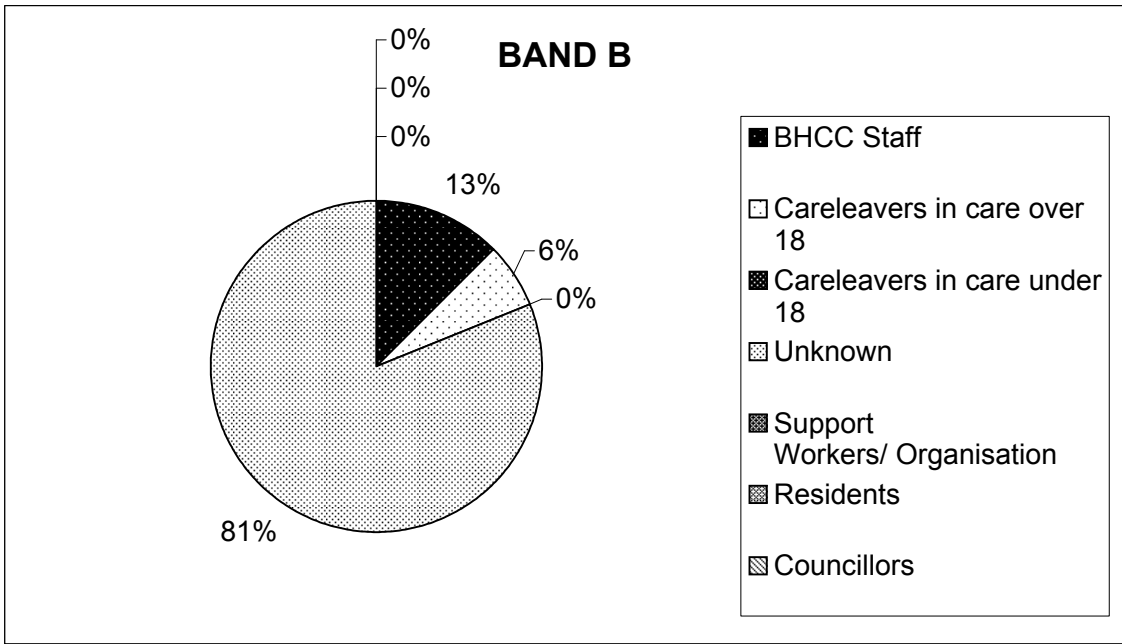
| <b>Who we consulted with</b>  | <b>How we consulted</b> | <b>When</b>   |
|---|-------------------------|---------------|
| Trust, Rainbow foundation, MOSIAC, Assert, Brighton women's centre, Autism Sussex Ltd, Clockwork Tower Sanctuary, Scope, Stop over outreach, Jobcentre, Brighton Deaf Centre, SDA for the Deaf, Mencap, PALS at Royal Sussex Hospital, Crisis, Grace Eyre, Oxfam, Samaritans, Martletts |                         |               |
| Sheltered Choice Based Lettings Group (Charles Penrose and Bryan Balchin) met with and will be taking to SHAG   | face to face            | 7.12.11       |
| All area panels will be attended up to and including 14.2.12 and the response from this will be taken into account even though it is after the official close date (this has been agreed by head of Law)  | meeting                 | Up to 14.2.12 |
| Was placed on the Wave for ALL council staff and will be again in the New Year.   | Wave                    | Ongoing       |
| It has also been asked that all staff and anyone who has received the consultation it is passed on to friends, family, colleagues etc so that it is spread as far as possible.  | Word of mouth           | Ongoing       |

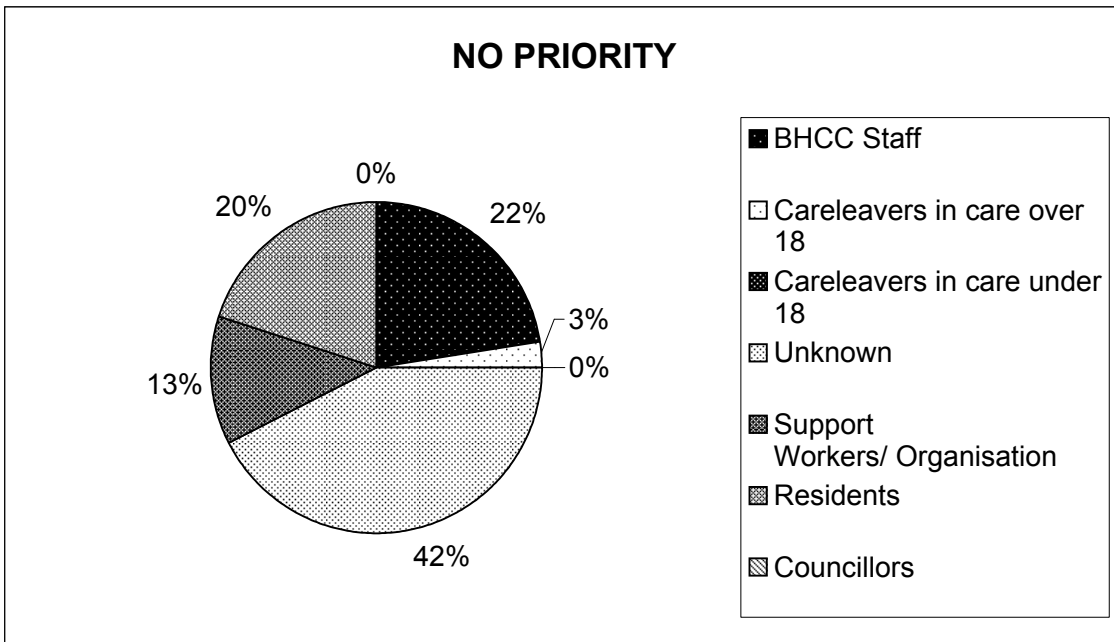
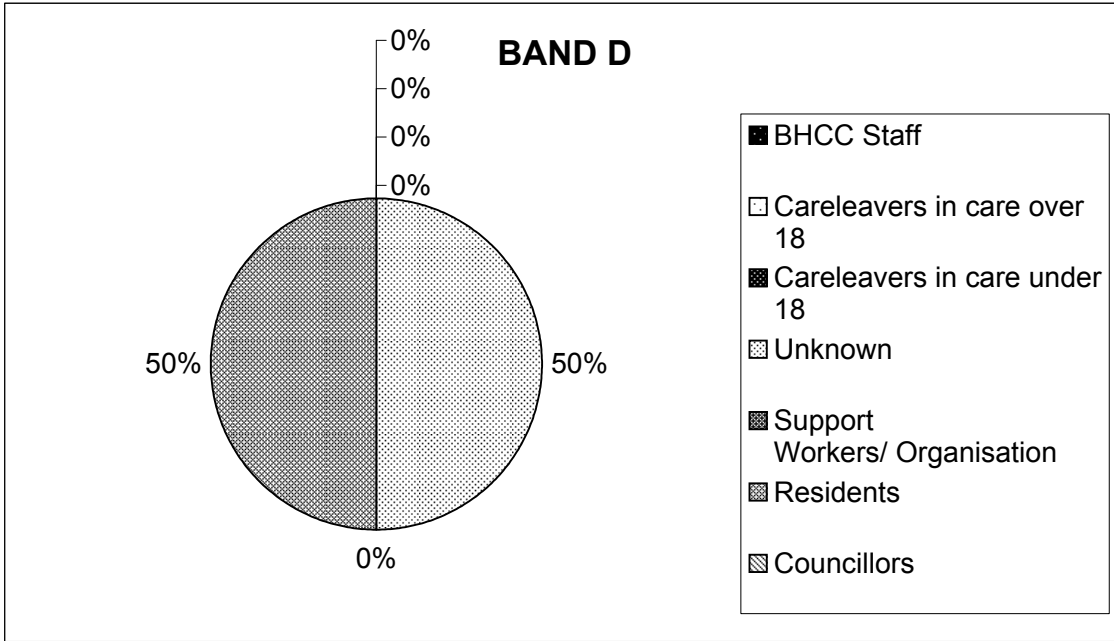
**ALLOCATIONS POLICY CONSULTATION**

| Band         | TOTALS     | %           | BHCC Staff | Careleavers in care over 18 | Careleavers in care under 18 | Unknown   | Support Workers/ Organisation | Residents | Councillors |
|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| A            | 220        | 77.5        | 59         | 91                          | 11                           | 37        | 0                             | 6         | 0           |
| B            | 16         | 5.6         | 2          | 1                           | 0                            | 13        | 0                             | 0         | 0           |
| C            | 6          | 2.1         | 1          | 1                           | 0                            | 2         | 0                             | 1         | 1           |
| D            | 2          | 0.7         | 0          | 0                           | 0                            | 1         | 0                             | 1         | 0           |
| No priority  | 40         | 14.1        | 9          | 1                           | 0                            | 17        | 5                             | 8         | 0           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>284</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>71</b>  | <b>94</b>                   | <b>11</b>                    | <b>70</b> | <b>21</b>                     | <b>16</b> | <b>1</b>    |











### **Appendix 3 Minor Amendments**

Wording change to:

From:

#### **Full Time Carers**

If the prime applicant(s) provide care in an area of the City, the priority may be applied for in the area in which they provide care. Carers must have been providing for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer.

To:

#### **Full Time Carers (outside of your current household)**

If the prime applicant(s) provide care to someone outside of their current household in an area of the City where they have placed a bid (with a 1 mile radius of the place of care), the priority may be applied for in the area in which they provide care. Carers must have been providing for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer.

From

#### **Income caps**

In order to ensure those households most in need benefit from the council's Working Priority, income caps will be applied according to the size of property needed.

For those who need a property of 2 or more bedrooms the cap will be £35,000pa gross income to include all forms of income to the household.

For households requiring studio or 1 bed property, the cap will be £17,000 pa gross to include all forms of income to the household.

To

#### **Income caps**

In order to ensure those households most in need benefit from the council's Working Priority, income caps will be applied according to the size of property needed.

For those who need a property of 2 or more bedrooms the cap will be £35,000pa gross income to include all forms of income to the household.

For households requiring studio or 1 bed property, the cap will be £17,000 pa gross to include all forms of income to the household.

Please note that any benefits received will not be taken into account on the above amounts, these figures are based on gross income only.

Remove the following paragraph so that there is no discretion but that each circumstance is covered by a criteria in the policy. This will ensure the policy is tighter.

**Lead Commissioner for Housing Discretion for other exceptional circumstances not covered by this scheme**

From time to time a situation may arise that is not adequately reflected in this Allocations Scheme but the needs or circumstances are exceptional and significant. Where a case is considered exceptional but the applicant does not meet any of the Banding criteria or it is felt that a higher Banding than the one awarded is more appropriate then the Lead Commissioner for Housing in Brighton & hove City Council reserves the right to override this scheme and allow an applicant to have a higher priority than they would be entitled to under the Scheme. These cases will be few in number and will be closely monitored and reported on to ensure that the duty to achieve Reasonable Preference overall is not compromised. Lead Commissioner for Housing Discretion can also be used to block an allocation or to make a direct allocation of a property in circumstances not predicted by this scheme but where the Council is satisfied someone has unfairly taken advantage of the scheme to the detriment of those in housing need. Again, these cases will be monitored and will be few in number.

All of the above cases will be taken to Housing Management Consultative Committee on a yearly basis to review the numbers submitted, the outcome of the cases and brief reason for the case being submitted via this route.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Code of guidance for local housing authorities 2002 - Allocation of Accommodation**

#### **CHAPTER 5**

#### **Allocation Scheme**

#### **Reasonable preference**

“5.8 In framing their allocation scheme so as to determine priorities in the allocation of housing, housing authorities must ensure that reasonable preference is given to the following categories of people, as set out in s167 (2) of the 1996 Act:

- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act); this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds; and
- (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

5.9 It is important that the priority for housing accommodation goes to those with greater housing need. In framing their allocation scheme to give effect to s.167(2), housing authorities must have regard to the following considerations –

- a) the scheme must include mechanisms for:
  - i) ensuring that the authority assess an applicant’s housing need, and for
  - ii) identifying applicants in the greatest housing need
  
- b) the scheme must be framed so as to give reasonable preference to applicants who fall within the categories set out in s.167(2), over those who do not;

c) the reasonable preference categories must not be treated in isolation from one another.

Since the categories can be cumulative, schemes must provide a clear mechanism for identifying applicants who qualify under more than one category, and for taking this into account in assessing their housing need;

d) there is no requirement to give equal weight to each of the reasonable preference categories. However, housing authorities will need to be able to demonstrate that, overall, reasonable preference for allocations has been given to applicants in all the reasonable preference categories. Accordingly it is recommended that housing authorities put in place appropriate mechanisms to monitor the outcome of allocations; and

e) a scheme may provide for other factors than those set out in s 167(2) to be taken into account in determining which applicants are to be given preference under a scheme, provided they do not dominate the scheme at the expense of those in s.167(2). (See para. 5.25 below)  
Otherwise, it is for housing authorities to decide how they give effect to the provisions of s.167(2) of the 1996 Act in their allocation scheme.

### **Allocation scheme flexibility**

5.25 While housing authorities will need to ensure that, overall, reasonable preference for allocations is given to applicants in the relevant categories in s167 (2), these should not be regarded as exclusive. A scheme should be flexible enough to incorporate other considerations. For example, housing authorities may wish to give sympathetic consideration to the housing needs of extended families. However, housing authorities must not allow their own secondary criteria to dominate schemes at the expense of the statutory preference categories. The latter must be reflected on the face of schemes and be evident when schemes are evaluated over a longer period.

## **Appendix 5: Duties under the Children Act relating to accommodation**

Children Act 1989 23 (b) (8)

“(8)The responsible local authority shall safeguard and promote the child’s welfare and, unless they are satisfied that his welfare does not require it, support him by—

(a)maintaining him;

(b)providing him with or maintaining him in suitable accommodation; and

(c)providing support of such other descriptions as may be prescribed.

(9)Support under subsection (8) may be in cash.

(10)The **[F4**“appropriate national authority**]** may by regulations make provision about the meaning of “**suitable accommodation**” and in particular about the suitability of landlords or other providers of accommodation

### **Careleavers (England) Regs 2010**

Part 4

(9) (2) For the purposes of section 23B(10), “**suitable accommodation**” means accommodation—

(a)which so far as reasonably practicable is suitable for the relevant child in the light of their needs, including any health needs and any needs arising from any disability,

(b)in respect of which the responsible authority have satisfied themselves as to the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider, and

(c)in respect of which the responsible authority have, so far as reasonably practicable, taken into account the relevant child’s—

(i)wishes and feelings, and

(ii)education, training or employment needs.

## **SCHEDULE 2 Regulation 9**

### **Matters to be considered in determining the suitability of accommodation**

- 1.** In respect of the accommodation, the—
  - (a) facilities and services provided,
  - (b) state of repair,
  - (c) safety,
  - (d) location,
  - (e) support,
  - (f) tenancy status, and
  - (g) the financial commitments involved for the relevant child and their affordability.
  
- 2.** In respect of the relevant child, their—
  - (a) views about the accommodation,
  - (b) understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the accommodation, and
  - (c) understanding of funding arrangements.”

**Appendix 6**  
Equalities Impact Assessment

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Aim of Policy / Scope of Service:</b></p> <p><b>Equality Impact Assessment for Careleavers – Review 2012</b><br/>Analysing what would be the impact of proposed changes to the Allocations policy for care leavers in particular and the different assessments combinations.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Different Groups included in scope</b><br/><b>Care leavers. Others on the Housing Register who would potentially be affected by a change.</b></p>  |  |

|  | Impact   | Potential actions to minimise negative impact and maximise positive impacts  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>1- if Care leavers were assessed as Band A</b></p> | <p>(+) Highest priority enables them to be re-housed promptly to a secure tenancy<br/>           (+) secure tenancy will provide stability (leaving care is challenging and confusing time for many young people).<br/>           (-) Don't always have the support, if needed, which will help them manage independent accommodation.<br/>           (-) There is a finite supply of housing.<br/>           (-) It will impact on other applicants in band A that need one bedroom property for reasons such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Overriding medical</li> <li>* TIS</li> <li>* Witness protection nominations</li> <li>* Accepted Homeless</li> <li>* Transfer needing a permanent decant</li> </ul> | <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* support package from Children's services coupled with that from housing officer should be provided to careleaver when they first move into social housing</li> <li>* Life-skills course provision</li> <li>* Monitor the impact on other groups to assess which groups adversely affected</li> <li>* For those careleavers that could benefit for other type of accommodation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with social worker to encourage careleaver to explore the housing options available in the City in the private rented sector which may include a house share with other young people or their own private</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>* Private sector nomination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Priority transfers</li> <li>* Lead Commissioner of Housing discretion</li> <li>* Non statutory successors</li> <li>* Retiring council and HA employees</li> </ul> <p>(-) Less dynamic housing list. More people in Band A will mean that people in lower bands have reduced opportunity to obtaining a property.</p> <p>(-) Some care leavers could benefit from other type of accommodation that is not Council o HA.</p> <p>(+) (-) To treat all the Groups in the same measure.</p> <p>(positive for careleaver and negative for other applicants which assessment is based on their housing need)</p>  | <p>rented flat. This could enable careleavers to remain in an area of the city they had been living in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage connections with other young people looking to privately rent so that complimentary groups can rent shared accommodation</li> <li>- Assistance with deposits, guarantors</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>2- if assessed as band B</b></p> | <p>(-) careleavers would have reduced opportunity in obtaining a property than if they were in Band A</p> <p>(-) They will compete with other applicants in band B needing one bedroom property for reasons such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* management transfers</li> <li>* major medical</li> <li>* Ex tenants returning from institutions</li> <li>* Multiple needs</li> <li>* Unsatisfactory Housing conditions (Category 1 hazard)</li> </ul> <p>(+) careleavers would have increased opportunity to obtaining a property than people in lower bands.</p> <p>(-) There is a finite supply of housing.</p> <p>(-) Don't always have the support, if needed, which will help them manage independent accommodation.</p> <p>(+) likely to be re-housed fairly quick under the</p> | <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* support package from Children's services coupled with that from housing officer should be provided to careleaver when they first move into social housing</li> <li>* Life-skills course provision</li> <li>* Monitor the impact on other groups to assess which groups adversely affected</li> <li>* For those careleavers that could benefit for other type of accommodation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with social worker to encourage careleaver to explore the housing options available in the City in the private rented sector which may include a house share with other young people or their own private rented flat. This could enable careleaver to remain in an area of the city they had been living in.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <p>scheme<br/> <b>(+)(-)</b> To treat all the Groups in the same measure</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage connections with other young people looking to privately rent so that complimentary groups can rent shared accommodation</li> <li>- Assistance with deposits, guarantors</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>3- if assessed as band C</b></p>                       | <p><b>(-)</b> careleavers would have reduced opportunity in obtaining a property than if they were in Band A or band B<br/> <b>(-)</b> They will compete with other applicants in band C needing one bedroom property for reasons such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Homeless on T.A, short hold tenancy</li> <li>* minor medical</li> <li>* unsanitary housing conditions</li> <li>* Multiple needs</li> <li>* To give or receive support</li> </ul> <p><b>(-)</b> unlikely to be re-housed promptly which could impact negatively on their health and wellbeing, unless they are working in which case up to 50% of all available properties<br/> <b>(-)</b> There is a finite supply of housing.<br/> <b>(+)</b> careleavers would have increased opportunity to obtaining a property than people in band D</p> | <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Work with social worker to encourage careleaver to explore the housing options available in the City in the private rented sector which may include a house share with other young people or their own private rented flat. This could enable careleavers to remain in an area of the city they had been living in.</li> <li>* Encourage connections with other young people looking to privately rent so that complimentary groups can rent shared accommodation</li> <li>* Assistance with deposits, guarantors</li> <li>* Life-skills course provision</li> <li>* Monitor the impact on care leavers</li> <li>* support from housing officer should be provided to careleaver when they first move into social housing</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>4- if assessed according to their housing need</b></p> | <p><b>(-)(+)</b> Treated as all other applicants in the same measure<br/> <b>(+)</b> Dynamic housing list<br/> <b>(-)</b> some careleavers will have not priority need and it will be very unlikely for them to be re-housed under Homemove.<br/> <b>(-)</b> the health and wellbeing of careleavers may be impacted if suitable accommodation can not</p>  | <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Work with social worker to encourage careleaver to explore the housing options available in the City in the private rented sector which may include a house share with other young people or their own private rented flat. This could enable careleavers to remain in an area of the city they had been</li> </ul>  |

|  |                     |   |
|--|---------------------|---|
|  | <p>be provided.</p> | <p>living in.<br/> * Encourage connections with other young people looking to privately rent so that complimentary groups can rent shared accommodation and help raise aspirations.<br/> * Assistance with deposits, guarantors<br/> * Life-skills course provision<br/> * Monitor the impact on care leavers</p> |
|--|---------------------|---|

Lead Equality Impact Assessment Officer: Elena Castells Date 25.01.2012  
Head of Service Sylvia Peckham Date  
Cabinet Member for Housing: Councillor Liz Wakefield Date

**Appendix 7: Allocation Schemes and priority for care leavers across Sussex and other Local Authorities.**

Of the schemes looked at most use banding either A-D or 1-4.

| <b>Name of Authority</b>    | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Comments</b>  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <u>Sussex Councils:</u>     |                 |  |
| Arun District Council       | B               | “as authorised by Housing Services manager   |
| Worthing District Council   | A               | “evidenced with relevant care plan, references where appropriate and plans in place to meet future care or support needs”  |
| Horsham District Council    | B               | Need agreed careplan that has been discussed and approved through young person panel.  |
| Mid Sussex District Council | A               | 12 weeks to bid successfully or Homemove bid on applicant’s behalf. If refuse offer, lose Band A status and banded according to housing need.  |
| Lewes District Council      | A               |  |
| Crawley Borough Council     | B               |  |
| Eastbourne Borough Council  | A               |  |
| <u>Unitary Authorities</u>  |                 |  |
| Southwark Council           | 2               |  |
| Croydon Council             | 2               | “is genuinely prepared for a move to indept living including life skills to manage a tenancy including a rent account. Careleaver is in need of either a long term or medium term tenancy support package, rather than short term which has been assessed and is in place. |
| Portsmouth City Council     | 2               | “nominated by head of safeguarding subject to pre-agreed quota of tenancies.”  |
| Medway council              | B               | Move on from care or leaving supported   |

| <b>Name of Authority</b> | <b>Priority</b>      | <b>Comments</b>   |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---|
|                          |                      | housing   |
| Shropshire Council       | B (Gold)             | Move on from supported – no mention of care leavers   |
| Barnet Council           | B                    | Careleavers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need to possess lifeskills to manage a tenancy including a rent account.</li> <li>- Support package is in place.</li> <li>- Careleaver is in need of either long term or medium term tenancy support</li> </ul> |
| Bedfordshire Council     | 3 (C)                |   |
| Northumberland Council   | A<br>(Priority Band) |   |
| Cornwall Council         |                      | Priority decided by a Welfare Panel   |

Westminster City Council - they award points rather than a banding system. They have a quota system in place and if agreed by the Children Act Accommodation Panel for a social housing tenancy they will be awarded 400 points. Only those needing to be decanted from a council tenancy and Cash Incentive scheme (ie.tenants wanting to downsize) are awarded higher points for studio and 1 bed accommodation.

Southampton Council – we couldn't find any reference to careleavers in their scheme.

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 92

Brighton & Hove City Council

|                          |  |  |                    |
|--------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>2011 Survey of Tenants &amp; Residents (STAR)</b> |  |                    |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | <b>19 March 2012</b>                                 |  |                    |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Head of Housing &amp; Social Inclusion</b>        |  |                    |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>  | <b>Name:</b>   | <b>Ododo Dafé</b>                      | <b>Tel: 293201</b> |
|                          | <b>Email:</b>  | <b>ododo.dafe@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b> |                    |
| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> | <b>All</b>   |  |                    |

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report provides feedback from a satisfaction survey of a sample of residents carried out by the Council's Policy, Performance & Analysis Team on behalf of Housing & Social Inclusion. It is called the STAR survey, is discretionary, and replaces the formerly obligatory STATUS survey.
- 1.2 The survey results provide an up-to-date and statistically significant indication of customer satisfaction on a range of housing services.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee note and comment on the contents of this report.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Housing & Social Inclusion last carried out a major survey of resident satisfaction in June 2008. The survey, STATUS, formed part of the regulatory requirement of social housing providers, and was in a prescribed format to ensure consistency of approach, standardised data, and easy comparison with other organisations. With the reduction in housing regulation and the move towards co-regulation, the STATUS survey has been stopped. However Housemark has consulted widely with social housing providers to produce a set of questions that organisations prefer and that enable comparison, but with the freedom for each organisation to add local questions as they wish. This new survey is called STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents), and is undertaken by landlords on a voluntary basis.
- 3.2 Housemark's recommended standard questions have been adopted, along with some of our own, and we will be in a position to compare ourselves against other housing providers as more of them undertake this survey and upload their results in the future.

3.3 The survey was undertaken in November and December last year, using a postal methodology with a randomly selected sample of residents – as recommended by Housemark. The survey achieved a response rate of 42%, with 1,251 completed questionnaires. The results have been analysed by the council's Policy, Performance & Analysis Team, and the report of the findings is attached as Appendix 1.

3.4 Some highlights from the attached findings report are:-

- 83% of respondents are satisfied overall with the service they receive from housing, and this is a significant 11% increase on the 2008 survey results.
- 81% of tenants who had a repair completed in the past year are satisfied with the repair, and 90% are satisfied with the attitude of the workers.
- 75% respondents think Housing & Social Inclusion is good at keeping them informed about things that affect them as residents
- More than half of tenants have access to the internet, and this figure rises to 98% of households with children, and reduces to 18% of residents over the age of 75.
- 14% of residents are members of a Tenants' and Residents' Association.

The table below shows the results of this survey compared with the STATUS survey in 2008, and the percentage improvement points.

| <b>Comparison between responses in 2011 with 2008</b> |                           |                           |                     |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
|   | <b>% satisfied (2011)</b> | <b>% satisfied (2008)</b> | <b>% difference</b> |
| Satisfied overall with the service from housing       | 83%                       | 72%                       | +11                 |
| The overall quality of your home                      | 81%                       | 75%                       | + 6                 |
| Your neighbourhood as a place to live                 | 83%                       | 74%                       | + 9                 |
| That your rent provides value for money               | 86%                       | 81%                       | + 5                 |

3.5 The survey asked respondents to rate the housing service from one to ten, where one is poor. 12% gave it a score of 4 or less, and 76% gave it a score of 6 or more. They were also asked to write down what would move their score to a 10 if it wasn't already. Over 400 respondents made over 500 comments and suggestions, and this feedback has provided a rich variety of areas for further consideration.

3.6 While it is too early to make precise statements about how the findings from this survey will specifically shape our work, several areas that need attention have been identified. They include:

- better understanding of the drivers for service improvement and satisfaction amongst younger tenants, particularly those with children
- widening resident involvement to reach beyond the 15% involved in local associations, and listening to people's views

- addressing some repairs and maintenance issues particularly for residents living in the Lavender St Housing Office area
- doing more to promote web based services for those who might prefer to use them, and supporting internet access for those who might want it and could take advantage of the benefits it affords.

3.7 Overall, the survey findings will help inform future discussions with residents around for example resident priorities, reviews of service pledges, service reviews and improvements, and our business planning priorities.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

4.1 The report feeds back on consultation with a representative sample of tenants, and is valuable in providing information about satisfaction levels on a range of housing services, communication preferences, involvement, and tenant profile data against which comparisons can be made. The work also provides a platform for further engagement of residents in service improvement.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

5.1 The costs of this survey have been met from the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2011/12.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks Date: 05/03/2012*

##### Legal Implications:

5.2 Although the council was not required to carry out the STAR survey, the powers of general management in the Housing Act 1985 provide sufficient authority for the same.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 05/03/2012*

##### Equalities Implications:

5.3 Equalities implications have been considered within the report and Appendix. Most groups within equalities strands are well represented within the survey respondent group, and there are variations to levels of satisfaction that we now need to consider how to address.

##### Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 There are no risk and opportunity management implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications:

5.7 There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

There are no corporate or citywide implications arising from this report.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Appendix 1. STAR survey findings report

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. None



# **STAR SURVEY**

## **December 2011**

### **Headline report**

**Contact**  
Policy Performance & Analysis  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
01273 29 1088

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## **1. Executive summary**

### **1.1 The survey**

The results represent the views of 1,251 Brighton & Hove council tenants who responded to a postal questionnaire sent to 2,995 randomly selected council properties during November / December 2011. The demographic and housing profiles are sufficiently representative of all council tenants such that it can be said that they represent the views of all tenants.

The questionnaire was intended to gather information on a wide range of subjects from satisfaction with the current service provision to setting priorities for possible service improvements.

### **1.2 Key findings**

- Taking everything into account more than four out of five tenants (83%) are very or fairly satisfied with the service provided by Brighton & Hove Council housing. Only one in ten (10%) are dissatisfied. The overall level of satisfaction shows a significant increase compared to 2008 where 72% of tenants were very or fairly satisfied.
- Satisfaction with housing services increases with age. 94% of tenants aged 65 and over are satisfied compared to only 71% of tenants aged under 45. Similarly, only 72% of households with children were satisfied compared to 85% of households without children.
- More than nine out of ten tenants (96%) living in sheltered housing are satisfied with housing services with more than a half (51%) very satisfied. Only 4 tenants out of 124 (3%) were dissatisfied.
- Proportionally more than 17 times more tenants were satisfied that their rent provided value for money than were dissatisfied.
- Over a quarter of households with children (29%) are very or fairly dissatisfied with the quality of their home, more than three times as many as all other households (9%).
- Similar to 2008, three quarters of tenants (76%) are very or fairly satisfied with the way Brighton & Hove City Council housing deal with repairs and maintenance. Just under one in five (17%) are dissatisfied.
- Among tenants who had a completed repair in the last 12 months, four out of five tenants (81%) were very or fairly satisfied with their last completed repair. 50% were very satisfied. Only 15% were very or fairly dissatisfied.
- Just under a two third of tenants (62%) were satisfied that housing listens to their views and/or the views of tenants and acts upon them. 15-16% were dissatisfied.

- Just under two thirds of tenants (64%) were satisfied that council housing gives them the opportunity to make their views known. Less than one in ten (9%) are dissatisfied.
- Three quarters of tenants (75%) feel that Housing are very good or fairly good at keeping them informed about things that affect them as residents. One in ten (11%) think they are fairly or very poor. This is a small but not significant improvement.
- Among all tenants, over 56% had access to the internet either at home or elsewhere. More than two out of five tenants (44%) had no access to the internet.
- While only one in five tenants (18%) aged over 74 and one in three tenants (37%) aged 65 to 74 had access to the internet, nine out of ten tenants (89%) aged 21 to 44 and household with children (93%) had internet access. Only a half of households (49%) without children had access to the internet.
- By telephone is the most mentioned form of communication that tenants are happy to use. This is consistent across all equality groups apart from tenants aged 35 to 44 and BME tenants where 'in writing' was the most mentioned.
- While overall only one in ten tenants (11%) are happy to use a website / internet, this rises to 32% for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) tenants and 22% for both households with children and tenants aged under 45. Similarly, while only 24% of all tenants are happy to use e-mail, 46% of LGBT tenants and 44% of both households with children and tenants aged under 45 are happy to use e-mail.
- Only just over a half of tenants (55%) with access to the internet were happy to communicate with Housing by e-mail and less than a quarter (23%) were happy to use a website / internet. Even among tenants who had internet access less than one in ten were happy to communicate with housing via Facebook (7%), Twitter (2%) or on-line forums (5%).

## 2. Introduction

Prior to the current government coming into office in May 2010 every local authority in England was required to carry out a Standardised Tenants Satisfaction Survey, every two or three years, to measure tenant's satisfaction with the provision of housing services. The new government scrapped this requirement. This questionnaire was designed to replicate some of the questions from the old survey while introducing new questions of more local relevance.

### **The aims of the questionnaire were to:**

- Test levels of satisfaction among tenants with the services they receive
- Test levels of satisfaction among tenants with their housing and neighbourhood
- Examine communications between the council and tenants
- Contribute to determining what tenants' priorities are for service improvements.

### 3. Methodology

Field work took place between mid November and mid December 2011. 2,995 tenants were randomly selected, from the OHMS database of council housing information, and sent a self completion questionnaire. All leaseholders and empty properties were excluded before the sample was selected. Envelopes were address to named tenants and joint tenants. The covering letter was signed by the council's Head of Housing & Social Inclusion. Tenants were given the option of completing the questionnaire on-line via the city's Consultation Portal or returning their completed paper questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope provided.

Initial returns were monitored and a reminder letter and questionnaire was sent to tenants who had not completed a questionnaire. In total 1,251 completed questionnaires were received representing a response rate of 42%.

The questionnaire consisted of questions taken from a standardised tenants satisfaction survey produced by Housemark and questions of more local relevance developed by Housing's Policy & Performance Team.

### 4. Respondents' profile

Part of the STAR questionnaire asked respondents about themselves and their household. To determine if respondents are representative of all people living in our local authority housing, responses to these questions were compared to tenant profiling data of all people living in local authority housing in Brighton & Hove.

When determining representativeness, best practice guidance indicates that if the factorial difference between the respondents profile and the comparative baseline profile (Tenant Profiling Data, January 2012) is between 0.8 and 1.2 then it can be said that the profile is representative of the wider tenant population. A factorial above 1.2 would indicate over representativeness and a factorial of under 0.8 indicates under representativeness.

#### 4.1 Gender

|        | <b>Respondents (%)</b> | <b>Tenant Profiling Data 2012 (%)</b> | <b>Factor</b> |
|--------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Male   | 46.8                   | 41.3                                  | 1.1           |
| Female | 53.2                   | 58.7                                  | 0.9           |

In respect of gender the respondents profile can be said to be representative of the council's wider tenant population.

## 4.2 Age

| Age Group   | Respondents (%) | Tenant Profiling Data 2012 (%) | Factor |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| 16 to 24    | 1.4             | 3.1                            | 0.6    |
| 25 to 34    | 6.7             | 12.0                           | 0.6    |
| 35 to 44    | 12.9            | 18.7                           | 0.7    |
| 45 to 54    | 17.6            | 21.9                           | 0.8    |
| 55 to 64    | 19.5            | 16.7                           | 1.2    |
| 65 to 74    | 20.4            | 13.6                           | 1.5    |
| 75 to 84    | 13.6            | 9.3                            | 1.5    |
| 85 and over | 7.9             | 4.7                            | 1.7    |

Respondents aged under 45 are under represented and those aged 65 and above are over represented.

## 4.3 Ethnicity

|               | Respondents (%) | Tenant Profiling Data 2012 (%) | Factor |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| White British | 88.9            | 89.4                           | 1.0    |
| White Irish   | 1.3             | 1.0                            | 1.3    |
| White 'other' | 2.5             | 2.9                            | 0.9    |
| BME           | 7.3             | 6.7                            | 1.1    |

In respect of ethnicity the respondents profile can be said to be representative of the wider council tenant population.

## 4.4 Sexuality

|              | Respondents (%) | Tenant Profiling Data 2012 (%) | Factor |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Heterosexual | 87.7            | 90.1                           | 1.0    |
| LGBT         | 7.3             | 8.3                            | 0.9    |
| Other        | 4.0             | 1.6                            | 2.5    |

#### **4.4 Management area**

Proportionate responses were received from all five housing areas. Respondents from sheltered housing were slightly under representative.

#### **4.5 Housing type**

Proportionate responses were received for the following:

- type of dwelling
- number of bed rooms
- lowest floor level.

#### **4.6 Overall representativeness**

The respondents profile is typical of profiles from self completion questionnaire undertaken in Brighton and Hove where there is a bias in favour of older respondents at the expense of the young. However, a responses rate of over 42% represents an excellent response. This, coupled with proportionate responses for housing type and housing area, means we can be confident that respondents are sufficiently representative of all tenants.

### **5. Results and findings**

These findings comprise the opinions of 1,251 Brighton & Hove Council tenants who were part of the random sample selected to participate in this consultation. This level of response gives a level of statistical confidence of approximately plus or minus 2.5%. This means that if 50% of tenants were satisfied with a service, then we can be 95% confident that between 47.5% and 52.5% of all tenants are satisfied with that service. However, where analysis has been undertaken with a smaller group of tenants the confidence interval will be higher.

#### **Data analysis**

Analysis of the results was undertaken using the following variables: (the figure in brackets represents the number of tenants in that group, and will not always total 1,251 in each variable as sometimes the question has been left unanswered)

#### **Age groups**

- 21 to 34 (93)
- 35 to 44 (148)
- 45 to 54 (203)
- 55 to 64 (225)
- 65 to 74 (235)
- 75 and over (247)

**Gender**

- Male (533)
- Female (606)

**Ethnicity**

- White British (1,115)
- White Irish (17)
- White 'other' (30)
- BME (89)

**Households where at least one household member's day to days activity is limited because of a health problem which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months**

- At least one person - limited a lot (394)
- At least one person – limited a little (339)
- No one with limited activity (481)

**Sexuality**

- Heterosexual or straight (847)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) (109)

**Management area**

- Lavender Street (249)
- Manor Place (161)
- Oxford Street (285)
- Selsfield Drive (185)
- Victoria Road (240)
- Sheltered Housing (121)

**Type of dwelling**

- Bedsit (84)
- Bungalow (31)
- Flat (719)
- House (390)

**Number of bedrooms**

- None (86)
- One (407)
- Two (484)
- Two or more (264)

**Lowest floor level**

- Ground / Basement (698)
- Low rise, 1 to 4 floors, (420)
- High rise, 5 floors or higher (123)

*In some cases analysis by these variables is not statistically robust, as the base number of tenants is below 100. Therefore care should be taken when interpreting these results.*

When analysing the results by age and gender an assumption has been made that the tenant had been the respondent. However, this may not always be the case as another member of the household could have responded. A question about who



completed the questionnaire was not asked and the respondent was asked to give the age and gender of tenants, their partner and other member of the household.

### **Comparable data**

Some questions can directly or indirectly be compared to a similar survey undertaken in 2008 (STATUS). Where this is possible a reference in the text will be made. The questions where comparable data is available are:

- The overall service provided by Brighton & Hove City Council housing
- The way Brighton & Hove City Council housing deals with repairs and maintenance
- The overall quality of your home
- Your neighbourhood as a place to live
- That your rent provides value for money
- Various questions about the repairs and maintenance service
- Being kept informed about things that might affect you as a tenant

Comparison with some other authorities will later be possible via the housing organisation Housemark. For further information please contact the Policy & Performance Team within Housing & Social Inclusion on 01273 29 1008

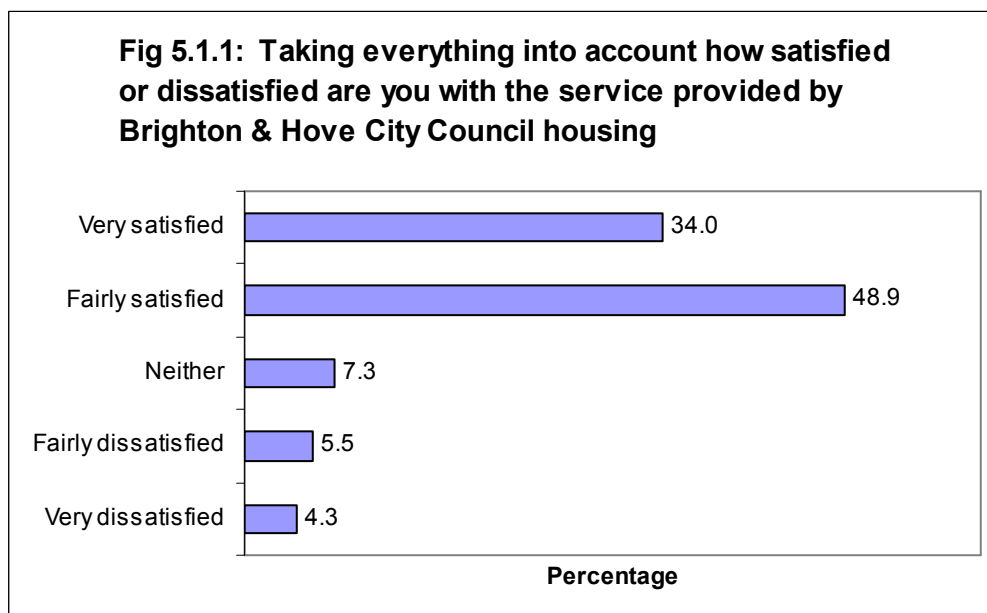
### **Further analysis**

*The data presented in this report is a high level analysis of responses. It is possible to analyse and report aspects of the survey in greater detail. For further information contact the city council's Policy, Performance & Analysis Team on 01273 29 - 1088 or e-mail [consultation@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@brighton-hove.gov.uk).*

## 5.1 Overall satisfaction with housing services and repairs and maintenance

Tenants were asked about their overall satisfaction with housing services and the repairs and maintenance service.

### 5.1.1 Housing services



**Base: All respondent's who answer the question (1,244)**

From fig 5.1.1 above, taking everything into account more than four out of five tenants (83%) are very or fairly satisfied with the service provided by Brighton & Hove Council housing. Only one in ten (10%) are dissatisfied. The overall level of satisfaction shows a significant increase compared to 2008 where 72% of tenants were very or fairly satisfied.

When asked to rate the service out of ten (where one is very poor and ten is excellent) more than a half of tenants (54%) scored the service eight out of ten or better, with one in five (20%) rating the service ten out of ten. Less than one in ten (8%) scored the service three out of ten or less with only 4% rating the service one out of ten.

When asked to then say what could be done to make the service ten out of ten, 440 tenants (35%) made 519 suggestions. More than a half of the comments (271) related to issues about repairs. Of these, the most significant issues were around updating homes (63) and getting things right first time and delays (57). Other areas mentioned included improvements to customer service and access to council officers (36), and issues around listening to tenants, helping, advocating and resolving complaints (31).

## Demographic differences

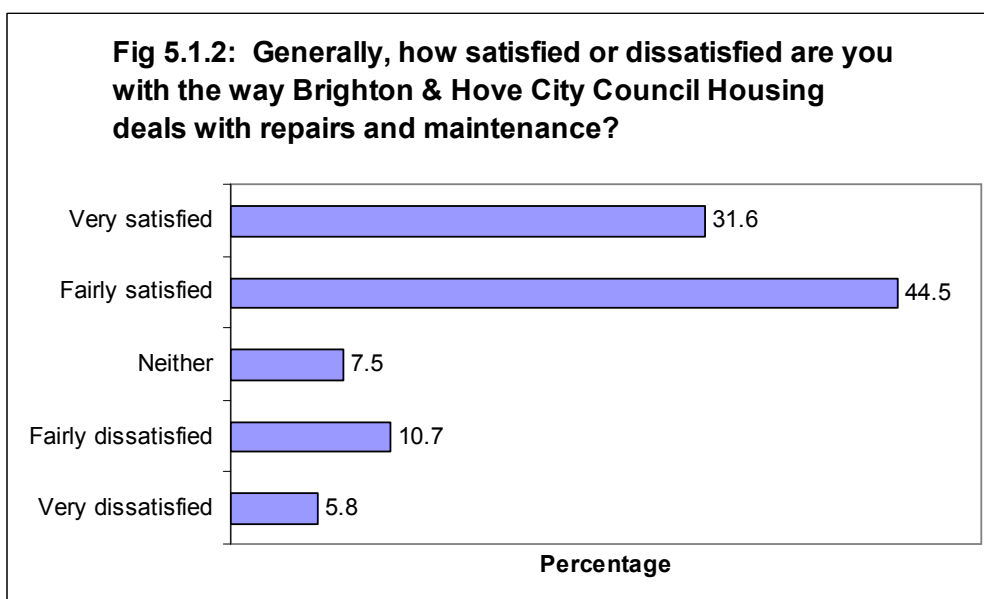
Satisfaction with housing services increase with age. 94% of tenants aged 65 and over are satisfied compared to only 71% of tenants aged under 45. Similarly, only 72% of households with children were satisfied compared to 85% of households without children.

### Difference by housing office and housing type

Tenants living in houses are significantly less satisfied with housing services with only 63% satisfied. This compares to 82% of tenants living in flats and 90% of tenants living in bedsits.

More than nine out of ten tenants (96%) living in sheltered housing are satisfied with housing services with more than a half (51%) very satisfied. Only 4 tenants out of 124 (3%) were dissatisfied.

### 5.1.2 Repairs and maintenance



**Base: all tenants who answered the question (1,251)**

From fig 5.1.2 above and similar to 2008, three quarters of tenants (76%) are very or fairly satisfied with the way Brighton & Hove City Council housing deal with repairs and maintenance. Just under one in five (17%) are dissatisfied.

## Demographic differences

Similar to housing services in general, satisfaction with the way repairs and maintenance is dealt with increases with a tenant's age. 84% of tenants aged 65 and over are satisfied compared to only 64% of tenants aged under 45. Again similarly,

only 62% of households with children are satisfied compared to 79% of households without children.

### Difference by housing office and housing type

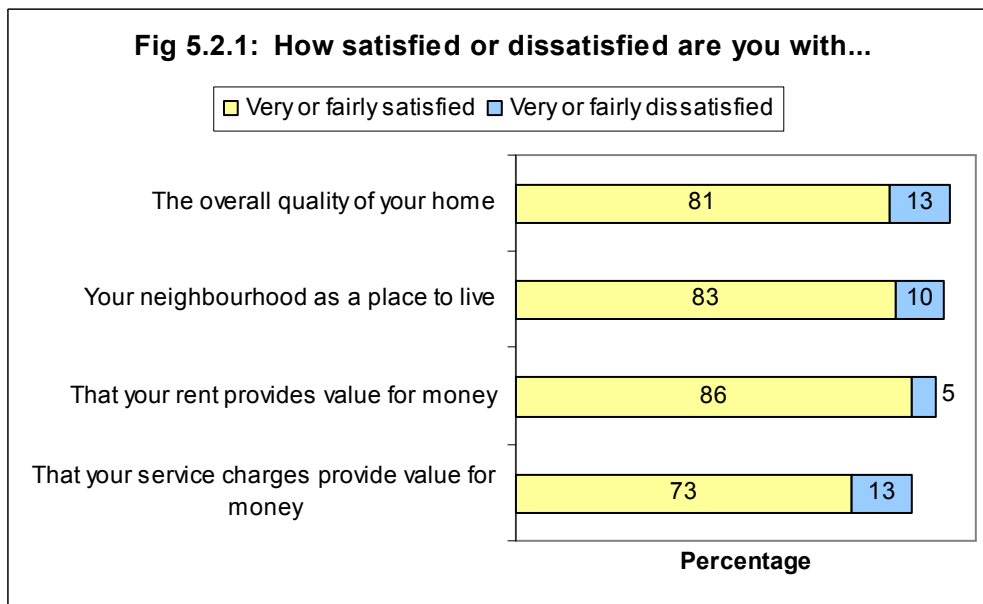
Nearly a quarter of tenants (24%) from Lavender Street HO are dissatisfied with the way repairs and maintenance is dealt with compared to 14% to 18% in all other housing areas.

More than nine out of ten tenants (92%) living in sheltered housing are satisfied with the way repairs and maintenance is dealt with. Only 6% are dissatisfied.

## 5.2 Aspects of the housing service

### 5.2.1 Satisfaction with council housing

Tenants were asked to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with different aspects of their council housing. Fig 5.2.1 below summarises their responses.



**Base: All tenants who answered the individual questions (1,181 to 1,251)**

From fig 5.2.1 above, across all measures, the proportion of tenants satisfied are at least five times greater than the proportion dissatisfied. More than 17 times more tenants were satisfied that their rent provided value for money than were dissatisfied.

Fig 5.2.1b below show where there is comparable data. Satisfaction levels show a significant increase when compared to 2008.

| <b>Fig 5.2.1b: Comparison between responses in 2011 with 2008</b> |                           |                           |                     |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
|   | <b>% satisfied (2011)</b> | <b>% satisfied (2008)</b> | <b>% difference</b> |
| The overall quality of your home                                  | 81                        | 75                        | + 6                 |
| Your neighbourhood as a place to live                             | 83                        | 74                        | + 9                 |
| That your rent provides value for money                           | 86                        | 81                        | + 5                 |

### **Demographic differences**

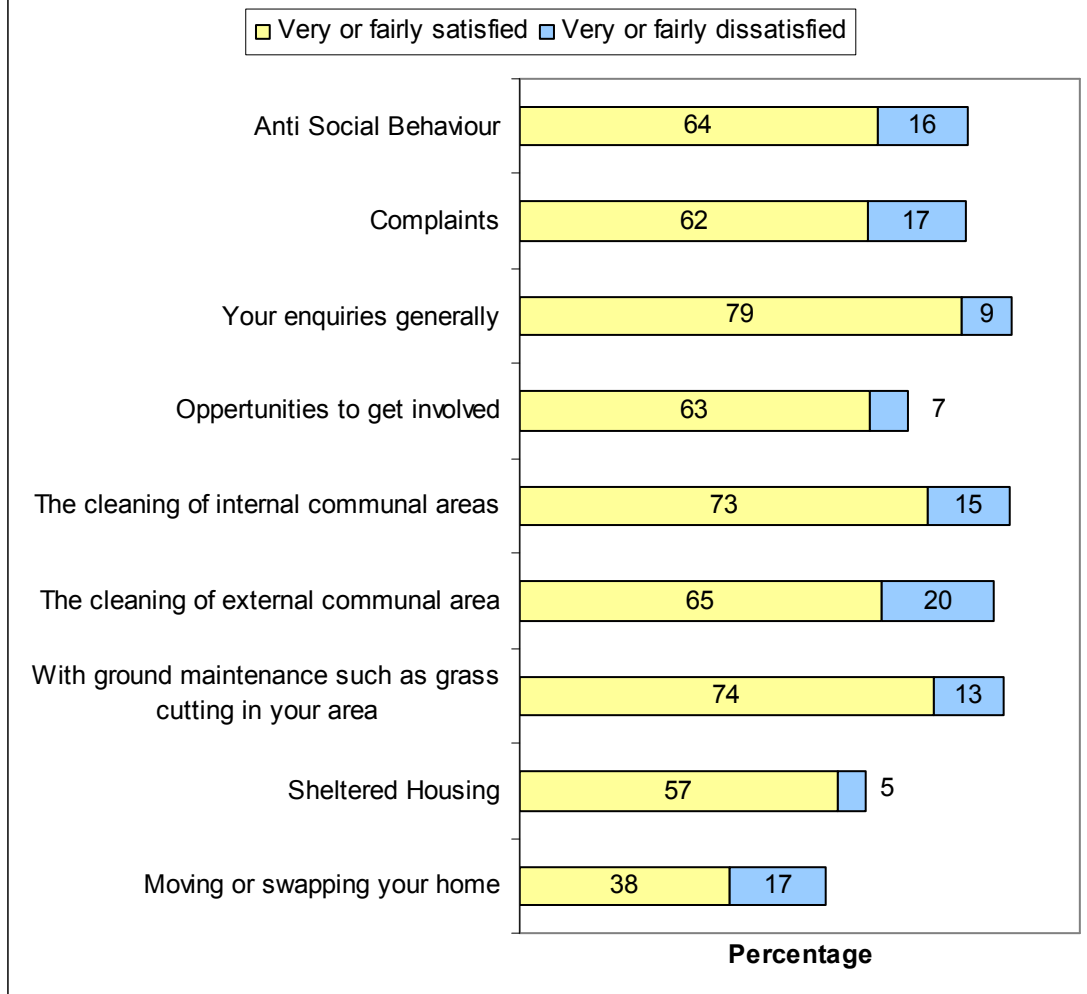
Only 61% of households with children are very or fairly satisfied with the quality of their homes compared to 86% of all other households. Over a quarter of households with children (29%) are very or fairly dissatisfied with the quality of their home, more than three times as many as all other households (9%). Similarly more than three times as many tenants aged 16 – 44 are very or fairly dissatisfied with the quality of their home (26%) compared to just 9% of all other tenants.

Among tenants living in sheltered housing, 93% are satisfied with the quality of their home, with only 5 out of 121 tenants (4%) being dissatisfied. Similar responses among sheltered housing tenants can also be seen for ‘your neighbourhood as a place to live’ and ‘that your service charges provide value for money’.

### **5.2.2 Satisfaction with the services provided by the council**

Tenants were asked to say how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with different housing services provided by Brighton & Hove City Council. Fig 5.2.2 below summarises their responses.

**Fig 5.2.2: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Brighton & Hove City Council Housing deals with...**



**Base: all tenants who answered the question excluding those stating 'not applicable' (505 to 1186)**

When looking at the ratio of residents who are satisfied and dissatisfied with the way the council deals with different housing services, for all services mentioned at least twice as many tenants are satisfied than are dissatisfied. For the cleaning internal communal areas and ground maintenance five times more tenants were satisfied than dissatisfied and for oppertunities to get involved and sheltered housing ten times more tenants were satisfied than dissatisfied.

### Demographic differences

With regards to age, for all services mentioned, except moving or swapping your home, tenants aged 65 and over were more satisfied with the way council deals with them than were all other age groups. In most cases this could be considered a significant difference.

For 'moving or swapping your home' only 30% of tenants aged 35 to 54 were satisfied compared to 40% of all other tenants.

With regards to households with children, for all service areas mentioned, they were less satisfied than households without children. Their satisfaction figures are: anti social behaviour (55%), opportunities to get involved (53%), cleaning of internal communal areas (63%) and external areas (54%). These differences can be considered as significant.

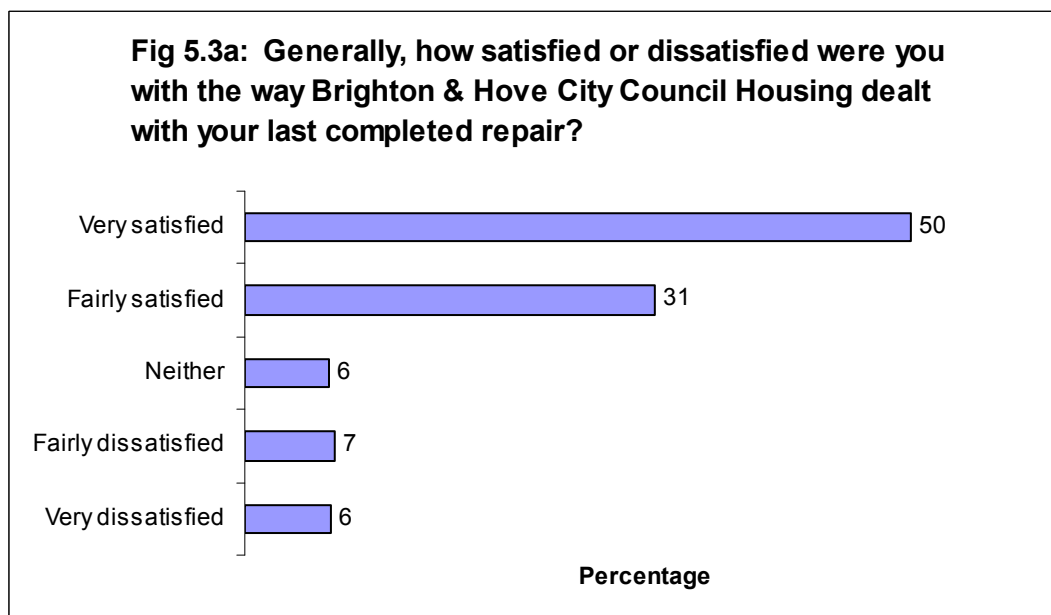
### Difference by housing office and housing type

Among those living in sheltered housing 95% were satisfied with the way the council deals with sheltered housing. For all the other services mentioned tenants from sheltered housing were more satisfied with the way the council deals with them than were other tenants. For cleaning internal communal areas (84%), the opportunity to get involved (77%) and moving or swapping your home (52%) these could be considered significant differences.

At 75%, tenants living in high rise homes were most satisfied with the way the council deals with anti social behaviour. This compares to 63% of tenants with a ground floor or basement and 64% for tenants in low rise housing.

### 5.3 Repairs and maintenance

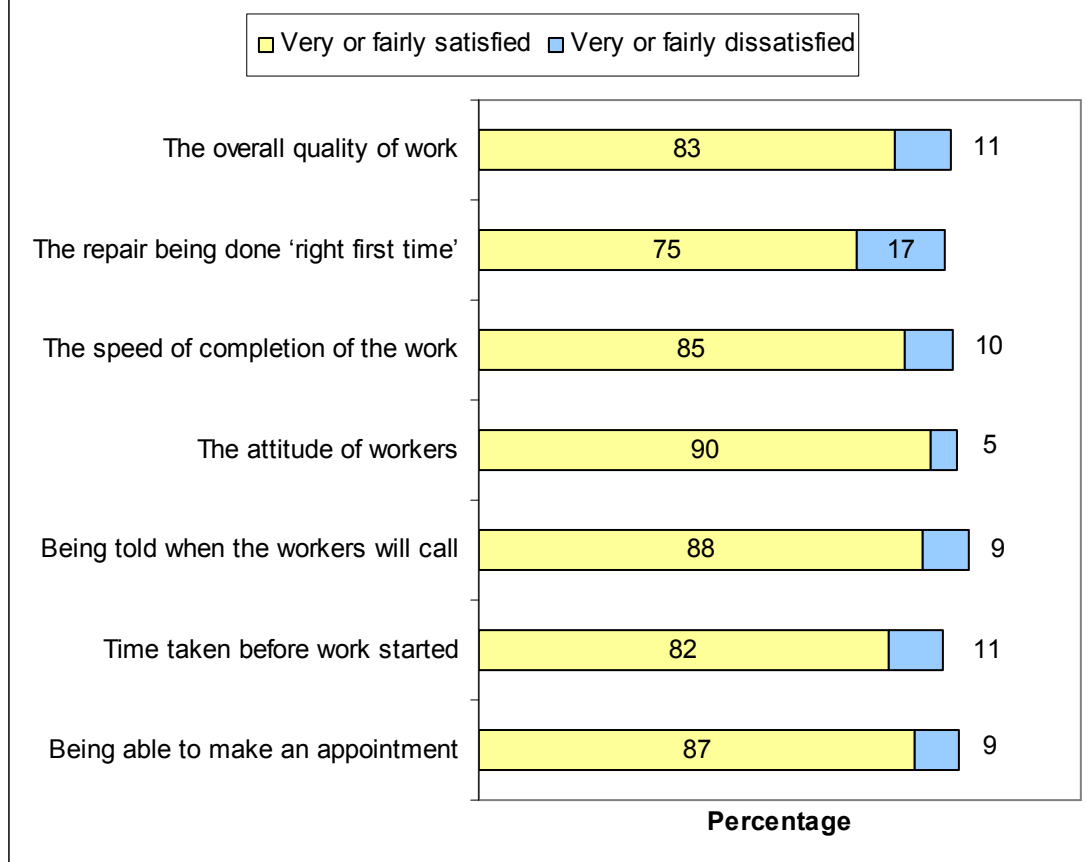
Three quarters of tenants (76%) had a repair completed in the last 12 months.



**Base: All tenants with a completed repair in the previous 12 months who responded to the question (906)**

From fig 5.3a above, four out of five tenants (81%) were very or fairly satisfied with their last completed repair. 50% were very satisfied, and only 15% were very or fairly dissatisfied.

**Fig 5.3b: Thinking about your last completed repair how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following...**



**Base: All tenants with a completed repair in the previous 12 months who responded to the individual questions (874 to 903)**

Tenants were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with different elements of the repairs and maintenance process. From fig 5.3b above, it can be seen that for all elements measured, satisfaction rates are high with at least three quarters of tenants being very or fairly satisfied and at least four times more tenants satisfied than dissatisfied. For the attitude of workers, 90% of tenants were satisfied, with 20 times more tenants satisfied than were dissatisfied.

**Fig 5.3c: Comparison between responses in 2011 with 2008**

|                                       | % satisfied (2011) | % satisfied (2008) | % difference |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| The overall quality of work           | 83                 | 82                 | + 1          |
| The speed of completion of the work   | 85                 | 86                 | - 1          |
| The attitude of workers               | 90                 | 92                 | - 2          |
| Being told when the workers will call | 88                 | 86                 | + 2          |
| Time taken before work started        | 82                 | 79                 | + 3          |



Where comparisons with the 2008 satisfaction survey are available it can be seen in Fig 5.3c above that there are no significant differences between the responses seen in 2008 and those found in 2011.

### **Demographic differences**

Nearly a third of households with children (30%) are dissatisfied with the 'repair being done right first time'. This compares to 14% of all other households and only 6% of tenants in sheltered housing.

Satisfaction with the elements of the repairs process mentioned increases with age. Most notably with 'repair done right first time'. 65% of tenants aged under 55 are satisfied and 23% dissatisfied. This compares to 83% satisfied and 11% dissatisfied among tenants aged 55 and over.

### **Difference by housing office and housing type**

In general, tenants from sheltered housing are more satisfied with all elements of the repairs process than are other households.

A quarter (26%) of tenants from Lavender Street Housing Office area are dissatisfied with repairs 'being done right first time' with 17% very dissatisfied. This compares to 16% and 9% respectively across the other housing areas.

### **Proof of identity**

Nine out of ten tenants (91%) were shown proof of identity by contractors. This increased to 96-97% for tenants aged 65 and over and for those living in sheltered housing and fell to around 81-84% for tenants under 35, households with children and LGBT tenants.

## **5.4 Communications and Information**

Just under two third of tenants (62%) were satisfied that housing listens to their views and or the views of tenants and acts upon them. 15-16% were dissatisfied. For households with children, 29% were dissatisfied with housing for listening and acting on their views compared to 14% of households without children. Although care needs to be taken due to the small numbers, 7 out of 17 White Irish tenants (41%) are dissatisfied with housing for listening and acting on their views.

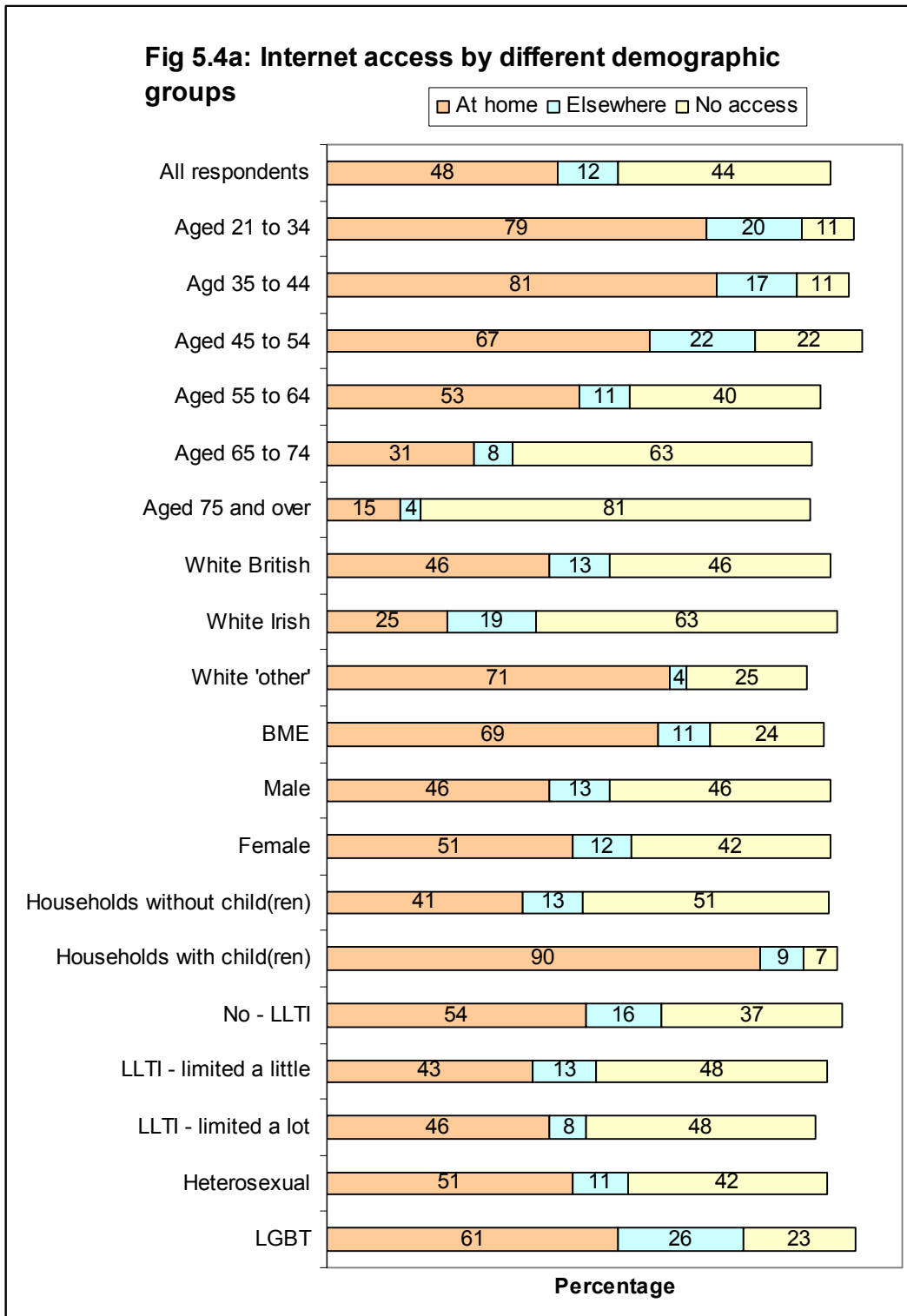
Just under two thirds of tenants (64%) were satisfied that council housing gives them the opportunity to make their views known. Less than one in ten (9%) are dissatisfied.

Three quarters of tenants (75%) feel that Housing are very good or fairly good at keeping them informed about things that affect them as residents. One in ten (11%) think they are fairly or very poor. This shows a slight improvement from 2008, when 71% thought Housing were good at keeping them informed, and 12% thought they were poor.

## Internet access

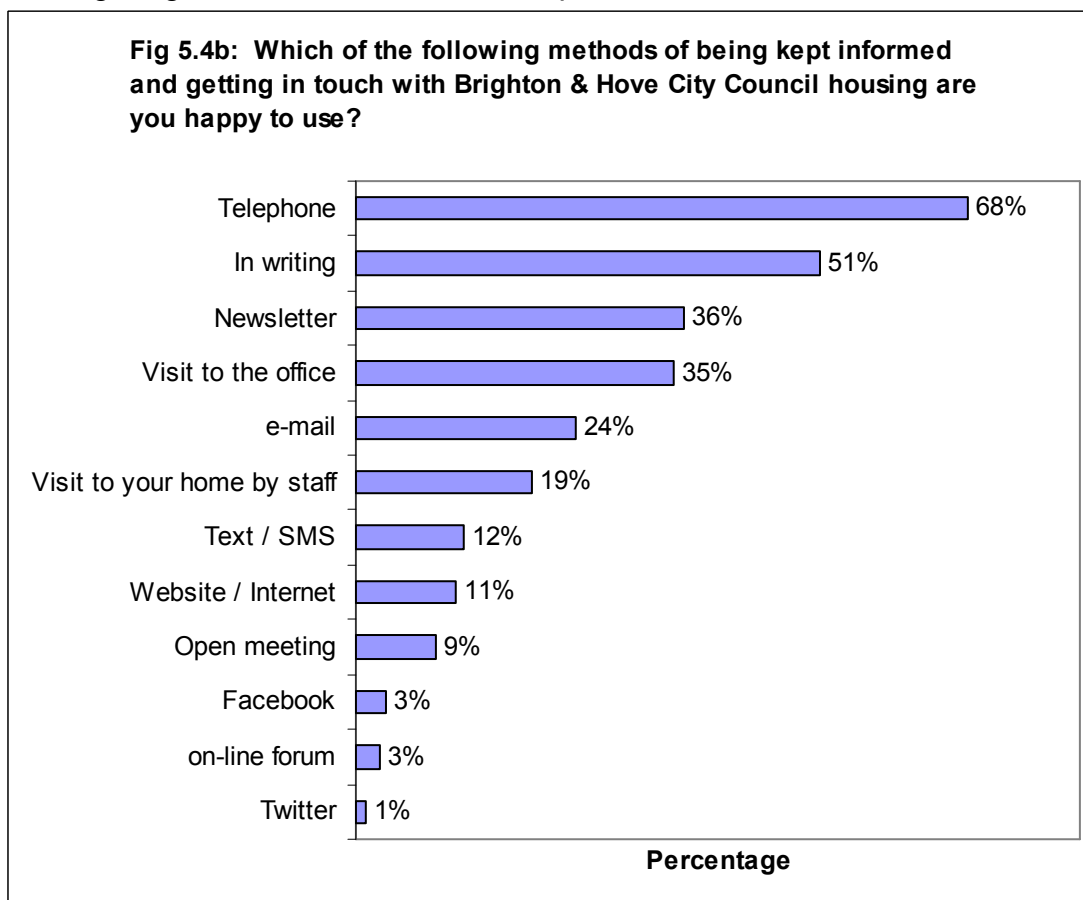
Among all tenants, over 56% had access to the internet either at home or elsewhere. More than two out of five tenants (44%) had no access to the internet. However, internet access varied considerable by demographic group (see fig 5.4a below).

While only one in five tenants aged 75 and over (18%) and one in three tenants aged 65 to 74 (37%) had access to the internet, nine out of ten tenants aged 21 to 44 (89%) and household with children (93%) had internet access. Only a half of households (49%) without children had access to the internet.



Base: All who responded to the question about internet Access and who answered the individual demographic questions (888 to 1,198)

From a given list, tenants were asked which methods of communication they were happy to use when getting in touch with and being kept informed by housing. Fig 5.4b summarises their responses.



**Base: All tenants who answered the question (1,198)**

By telephone is the most mentioned form of communication that tenants are happy to use. This is consistent across all equality groups apart from tenants aged 35 to 44 and BME tenants where 'in writing' was the most mentioned.

Fewer than one in twenty tenants are happy to use Facebook (3%), on-line forms (3%) or Twitter (1%). This is again consistent across all demographic groups apart from a small peak at 9% for 'on-line forums' among LGBT tenants.

While overall only one in ten tenants (11%) are happy to use a website / internet, this rises to 32% for LGBT tenants and 22% for both households with children and tenants aged under 45. Similarly, while only 24% of all tenants are happy to use e-mail, 46% of LGBT tenants and 44% of both household with children and tenant aged under 45 are happy to use e-mail.

## Tenants with and without access to the internet

Fig 5.4c below shows the methods of communication that tenants are happy to use broken down by their internet access.

| <b>Fig 5.4c: Method that tenants are happy to use to communicate with Housing.</b> |  |                  |                  |
|--|--|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Method of communication</b>   | <b>Do you have access to the internet?</b> |                  |                  |
|  | <b>At home</b>                             | <b>Elsewhere</b> | <b>No access</b> |
| e-mail   | 55%  | 41%              | 0%               |
| Telephone  | 60%  | 60%              | 73%              |
| Text / SMS   | 18%  | 27%              | 5%               |
| In writing   | 54%  | 68%              | 43%              |
| Visit to the office  | 31%  | 46%              | 36%              |
| Visit to your home by staff  | 19%  | 26%              | 19%              |
| Open meeting   | 10%  | 15%              | 8%               |
| Newsletter   | 38%  | 48%              | 33%              |
| Facebook   | 7%   | 8%               | 0%               |
| Twitter  | 2%   | 1%               | 0%               |
| on-line forum  | 5%   | 7%               | 0%               |
| Website / internet   | 23%  | 22%              | 0%               |

**Base: All tenants who answered the questions about access to the internet and the methods of communication they were happy to use (1,186)**

Only just over a half of tenants (55%) with access to the internet at home were happy to communicate with Housing by e-mail and less than a quarter (23%) were happy to use a website / internet. Even among tenants who had internet access less than one in ten were happy to communicate with housing via Facebook (7%), Twitter (2%) or on-line forums (5%).

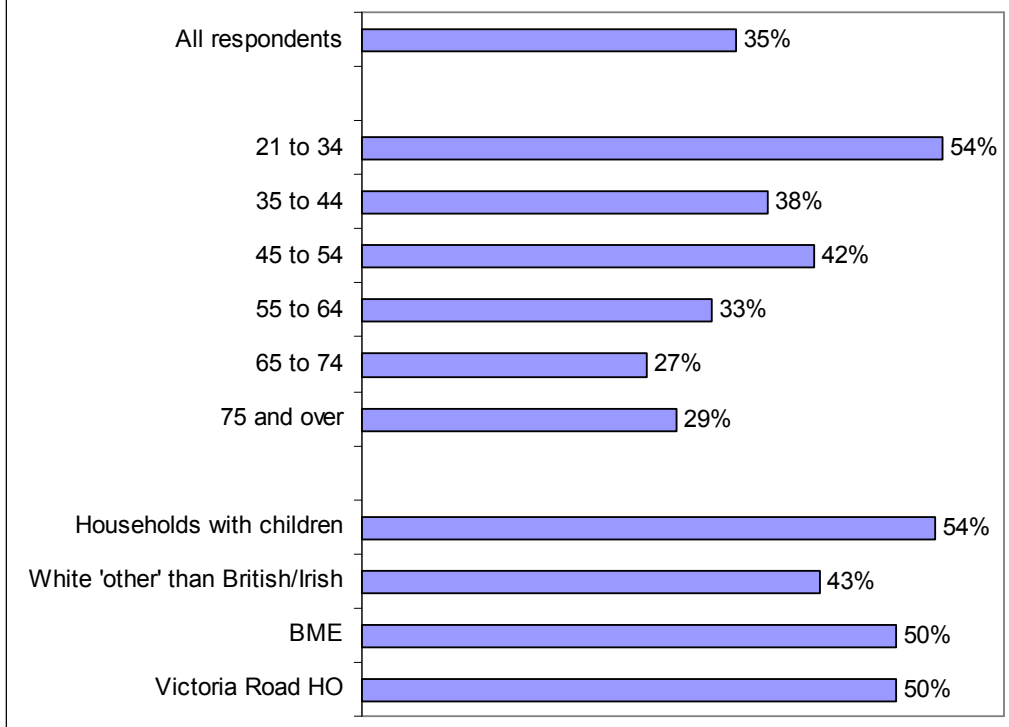
## 5.5 Tenants' and Residents' Associations

Three out of five tenants (59%) have a local tenants' or residents' association in their area, 6% said they have not and a third (35%) said that they did not know.

Of those tenants who were aware of a local association 102 tenants (14%) were members and 598 (86%) were not. Of those tenants who are a member of a local association, 86% are satisfied with the way the association communicates with them. Only 10% were dissatisfied.

While overall 35% of tenants don't know if they have a local tenants' and residents' association, this increase to 54% for both tenants age under 34 and tenants with children. Half of BME tenants and tenants in the Victoria Road Housing Office area are similarly unaware if they have a local tenants' and residents' association. (see fig 5.5a below)

**Fig 5.5a: Proportion of tenants who do not know if there is a tenants' and residents' association in their area**



**Base: All tenants who answered the question about local associations and who answered the individual demographic questions (1,107 to 1,201)**

## 5.6 Service Pledges

Last year Brighton & Hove City Council housing published Service Pledges - pledges that the council makes to tenants about the standards of service that they can expect. Over a half of all tenants (53%) are aware of Service Pledges.

Older tenants in general are more likely to be aware of Service Pledges with sheltered housing tenants (69%) most likely to be aware. Tenants aged 35 to 44 (35%) and household with children (41%) are least likely to be aware.

## 5.7 Overall observations

- For nearly all questions asked, satisfaction with the service increased with age, with those tenants in sheltered housing being most satisfied.
- Generally, households with children are less satisfied with housing and services than are household without children
- Male and female tenants are equally satisfied / dissatisfied.
- There are no significant differences in the satisfaction levels of respondents where there is someone in the household with a health problem that affect their day to day activity that is expected to last at least 12 months and households where there is not.

- Although not significant, in most cases, LGBT tenants were not as satisfied as heterosexual tenants.
- Generally there were no significant differences across the five housing office areas.

|                         |  |  |                     |
|-------------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>         | <b>Promoting Financial Inclusion amongst Council housing residents</b> |  |                     |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b> | <b>19<sup>th</sup> March 2011</b>                                      |  |                     |
| <b>Report of:</b>       | <b>Head of Housing &amp; Social Inclusion</b>                          |  |                     |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | <b>Name:</b>   | <b>Nick Hibberd</b>                      | <b>Tel:</b> 29-3756 |
|                         | <b>E-mail:</b>   | <b>nick.hibberd@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b> |                     |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>    | <b>No</b>  |  |                     |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | <b>All</b>   |  |                     |

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals for investment in services to promote financial inclusion amongst council housing residents. The report builds upon the successful financial inclusion work undertaken by the Housing & Social Inclusion delivery unit and outlines proposals for delivering a step change in the availability of services which promote financial inclusion amongst council housing residents.
- 1.2 Tackling inequality is a key priority for the city council as outlined in the Corporate Plan. One of the strategic commitments is a strong focus on tackling financial exclusion. It is also a key aspect of the city's Sustainable Community Strategy with its own chapter; 'Providing Quality Advice and Information Services' setting out a range of actions that the Advice Partnership has been tasked with delivering which contribute to promoting financial inclusion.
- 1.3 The Commissioning framework for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) aims to reduce management unit costs to enable re-investment in services to tackle inequality (support) and improvements to homes and neighbourhoods (investment). The HRA 2012/13 budget report outlined how identified savings would be reinvested in areas to tackle inequality and promote financial inclusion.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee endorse the approach proposed for the delivery of new services to promote financial inclusion in Council housing, as outlined in this report

### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The current working definition of Financial Inclusion, as developed by the Council and others through the city's Advice partnership, is *'having enough resources to meet basic need adequately and to be able to make choices*

*over a prolonged period to maintain physical and mental wellbeing and participate in community life*'. In practice, financial exclusion is generally indicated by:

- no bank account
- low household income
- debt, including rent arrears
- no access to money advice
- no savings
- no access to affordable credit
- no insurance
- fuel poverty
- limited financial awareness
- lack of confidence, aspiration, mobility

3.2 Those without bank accounts to pay bills pay more for goods and services. Low income cash payers are commonly on prepayment meters, which are normally the most expensive form of payment. Moneylenders and pawnbrokers are alternative sources of finance for cash payers but interest rates are significantly higher.

3.3 Key to eliminating financial exclusion is a financial inclusion strategy which has at its heart a focus on supporting residents who face financial difficulties. As the largest social landlord in the city, the Housing & Social Inclusion delivery unit is in a prime position to identify those council housing residents who are financially excluded and provide access to the necessary advice and support to help them towards financial inclusion. Through the Housing Management Financial Inclusion Action Plan 2009-2012, good progress has been made towards promoting financial inclusion for our residents through a number of services and initiatives. These include:

- Working with local specialist advice providers to refer tenants for money and debt advice
- Introduction of eBenefits, an on-line claims system which prevents rent arrears by reducing the time it takes to process claims to two days.
- Piloting the Housing Pre-action Advice Scheme in 2009/10, a project managed in partnership with Brighton County Court and BHT (Brighton Housing Trust) which aims to avoid possession action and prevent evictions and homelessness.
- Carrying out a Financial Health Check for all new tenants, covering advice and information on bank accounts, welfare benefits, affordable credit and savings; low-cost insurance; low-cost furniture; and energy efficiency.

3.4 There is now a need for a step change in the delivery of services which support residents who are in financial difficulty. The introduction of self-financing for the Housing Revenue Account from April 2012 makes it more important to ensure that income collection is maintained at the current high level. At the same time, the sharp downturn in the economy, unprecedented rises in household energy bills, rising unemployment and increasing debt levels are contributing to an increase in financial exclusion and fuel poverty, and impacting upon tenants' ability to pay rents and service charges.



- 3.5 This pressure upon tenants with low incomes is likely to be further exacerbated by the reforms proposed through the government's Welfare Reform Bill. The Bill aims to simplify and cap some welfare benefits. The following proposed reforms will have a particular impact upon council housing tenants:
- In April 2012 reduction in benefit called non-dependant deductions for other adults (normally adult children) who live in claimants households will be increased above inflation for the second year. These deductions can be up to £73 per week.
  - From April 2013, it's proposed that under-occupying social housing tenants of working age will be affected by a reduction in their housing benefit entitlement of up to 14 per cent if they have one spare room and up to 25 per cent for two spare rooms.
  - From April 2014, the proposed introduction of Universal Credit will result in benefit payments for housing costs being paid directly to tenants.
  - Changes to benefit eligibility and entitlement such as time limited claims for non-contributory ESA/JSA claims, benefit capping at a household level, mandatory engagement in work programmes/skills conditionality

A working group is currently investigating the impact of the proposed welfare reforms to ensure that any financial inclusion interventions are initially targeted at those who are most affected by the proposed changes.

#### 4. A PROPOSED INTEGRATED FINANCIAL INCLUSION DELIVERY MODEL

- 4.1 This report proposes the commissioning of a joined-up solution for financial inclusion, involving the co-delivery of 'one-stop' services for financially excluded Council housing residents.
- 4.2 The aim is to provide financially excluded households with a seamless service offer through a 'Community Banking Partnership'<sup>1</sup> model, which will integrate the 'ABCDEs' of Financial Inclusion:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Advice</b>    | specifically specialist advice casework to assist tenants to deal with problems related to debt, money and fuel poverty   |
| <b>Banking</b>   | access to basic banking, bill and debt repayment services   |
| <b>Credit</b>    | access to affordable loans  |
| <b>Deposits</b>  | access to savings facilities and incentives to save   |
| <b>Education</b> | Improving financial capability and budgeting skills, increased awareness of the dangers of loan sharks and illegal money lending, payday loans and loans with extortionate interest rates |

- 4.3 The commissioning process will aim to bring together a range of local partners and services through a local partnership structure to provide low income households with a range of services through a holistic approach. Preliminary discussions with representatives from the city's Advice Partnership indicate a willingness to utilise their Big Lottery Funded strategy project to support the development of such a partnership structure.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Community\\_Banking\\_Partnership.pdf](http://neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Community_Banking_Partnership.pdf)

4.4 Through this approach, it is proposed that the following specific services would be commissioned as separate elements which will co-ordinate together in a Community Banking Partnership model:

(a) Advice: *Specialist debt and money advice*

It is proposed that a specialist debt and money advice service is commissioned. Funding of £80,000 would provide 480 in depth specialist casework interventions during the year of the project and, depending on the delivery model, a range of other lower level interventions.

The commissioning of this element of the service will help mitigate the impact on tenants of the legal aid reforms and support tenants to develop personal strategies to mitigate the impact of welfare reform. Service provider(s) will be required to evidence tangible impacts related to tenancy sustainment and sustained rent account income.

We intend to commission this element of the work so that it is aligned with the Council's corporate commitment to work with the Advice Sector to reconfigure services into a sustainable 'hub and spoke' model of provision.

(b) Banking

It is proposed that funding of £20,000 for the development to improve access to affordable community finance products (such as basic bank accounts, savings and affordable loans). This may include enabling customer access points (such as housing offices and libraries) to become community finance information points, delivered by trained staff in partnership with a community finance provider.

(c) Credit and Deposits (Savings): *Affordable loans project*

It is proposed that £35,000 is allocated to work that will increase access to affordable credit and incentivise saving amongst tenants. It envisaged this will include funding to support the provision of low cost loans to tenants in particular circumstances.

(c) Education: *Financial Capability project*

It is proposed that a sustainable financial capability training model is developed which builds individual and community capacity through the development of trainers, mentors, and advocates. The approach will aim to maximise the use of free learning resources that are available from specialist organisations. The aim will be to raise awareness of frontline staff and residents through the delivery of targeted engagement initiatives, which will integrate with advice, information, and support services (the ABCD elements).

The financial capability element will build upon the Learning Cities Project, which has Interreg funding to provide an outreach resource (2x Learning and Participation Workers) to work alongside Housing staff and the Bridge Community Education Centre and Portslade Adult Learning to engage, support and promote progression into learning. The partnership with these two organisations and the other community hubs across the city such as the Whitehawk Inn, Friends Centre, and Hangleton and Knoll Project will provide a

seamless route into the other strands of the Financial Inclusion Project. The Learning Cities funding also provides a Basic skills tutor one day per week at the Housing Centre. It is proposed that funding of £10,000 is allocated for the financial capability offer to cover one to one support and group training initiatives.

- 4.5 The commissioning of a coordinated package of support would, in addition, offer real opportunities for intelligence gathering in relation to loan shark activity on the estates. We therefore envisage close working with the Trading Standards investigative team from the outset.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the new services will be commissioned during the first quarter of 2012/13, subject to Cabinet Member approval, with the aim of establishing the new services during the summer of 2012

## **5. PROPOSED BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES:**

- 5.1 Delivery of the integrated financial inclusion model will have the following impact for residents:
- easier access to bank accounts
  - access to specialist debt advice when they need it in the format that suits their needs
  - improved knowledge/understanding of available financial products/services
  - improved access to affordable credit and reduced reliance on doorstep or payday lenders
  - ability to maintain their tenancy by prioritising rent payments
  - increased confidence to access to use of financial products and services, including increased take up of the Council's low cost home insurance scheme
  - improved health and well being
- 5.2 Delivery of the integrated financial inclusion model will have the following benefits to the council:
- reduced rent arrears levels and sustained income collection for the Housing Revenue Account
  - reduced income collection costs
  - increased use of more efficient collection methods
  - reduced number of court actions/evictions due to rent arrears and the resulting cost of homelessness to the local authority

## **6. INTERGRATING WITH A BROADER STRATEGIC APPROACH TO FINANCIAL INCLUSION**

- 6.1 The proposals in this report compliment with the broader strategic approach to Financial Inclusion that is currently being developed by the council in partnership with The Advice Partnership (a sub-group of the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership). This work includes building a strategic and long term cross sector partners approach to finding solutions to financial inclusion that recognises, but goes beyond 'fixing problems now' and looks towards a sustainable and coherent approach to deep and systemic issues facing the city.

- 6.2 Targeting of resources through the new 'intelligent commissioning' process is necessary for the long term viability of social welfare advice and a new 'financial inclusion' commission has been prioritised within the council's new commissioning calendar for 2012-13.
- 6.3 The 15 March 2012 'Financial Inclusion' Cabinet report outlines the various corporate initiatives that are underway in relation to promoting financial inclusion, as part of the citywide financial inclusion commission.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Financial inclusion was a key theme of the council housing City Assembly in November 2011. A presentation was delivered to tenants on the services of East Sussex Credit Union and workshops were held on money matters.
- 7.2 Discussions with residents during consultation on the HRA Budget 2012/13 proposals at Area Panels and Housing Management Consultative Committee during January and February 2012 highlighted the need for targeted support for residents who may be experiencing financial difficulty as a result welfare reform, increases in energy costs and rent increases.
- 7.3 A presentation on the proposed delivery model was delivered on 09<sup>th</sup> March to residents of the Housing Income Management Monitoring Group. Residents will be involved in the design and delivery and monitoring of the service as part of an ongoing process to monitor commissioning, implementation, and review of the first year of the project.
- 7.4 The Advice Partnership facilitated a series Financial Inclusion themed consultative working groups, workshops and events throughout 2011 involving over 30 local agencies and services and over 300 local residents. The Advice Partnership Co-ordinator has been closely involved in preliminary discussions related to the development of these proposals from the outset and has agreed to facilitate further wider consultation as appropriate.

## **8. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 8.1 The HRA Budget 2012/13 approved at Cabinet on 9 February 2012 included the creation of an earmarked reserve of £0.400 million to fund commissioning priorities in tackling financial exclusion and inequality, promoting access to services and improving support for vulnerable families and adults on low incomes. This report provides spending plans for £0.145 million of the reserve which will be included in the 2012/13 Targeted Budget Management Report to Cabinet requesting approval for the release of this sum.
- 8.2 These projects currently require one off funding, however if any funding is required on an ongoing basis these pressures will need to be built into the HRA Budget Strategy for 2013/14.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman*

*Date: 01/03.12*

Legal Implications:

- 8.3 The council as local housing authority has wide powers to manage properties within the HRA, and to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its functions. The proposals in the report will assist the council to reduce rent arrears levels and improve income collection. They are therefore within the council's powers. Procurement of the advice services must comply with all relevant procurement legislation, including the council's own Contract Standing Orders.

*Legal Officer Consulted: Liz Woodley*

*Date: 01/03/12*

Equalities Implications:

- 8.4 The equalities impact assessment budget screening documents for the Housing Revenue Account identified the impact of rising fuels costs and rents upon council housing residents on low income. The development of services which promote financial inclusion amongst council housing residents aims to mitigate these impacts. A full equalities impact assessment of the new service will be developed as part of the service development process.

Sustainability Implications:

- 8.5 Advice on fuel poverty will link to wider work taking place within housing to improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of the housing stock

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 8.6 None in relation to this report

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 8.7 A risk register in relation to this project will be maintained by the project board as part of the project management arrangements.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 8.8 The Corporate Plan (2011/15) sets out 3 key priorities, one of which is to 'tackle inequality and work to create a fairer city', with a focus on tackling financial inclusion. This is also one of the priorities set out in the City's Sustainable Community Strategy through which the Advice Partnership (one of the family of partnerships of the Local Strategic Partnership) has been tasked with delivering on a range of actions to promote financial inclusion.

The proposals in this report compliment the broader strategic approach to Financial Inclusion that is currently being developed by the council in partnership with The Advice Partnership (a sub-group of the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership). This work includes building a strategic and long term cross sector partners approach to finding solutions to financial inclusion that recognises, but

goes beyond 'fixing problems now' and looks towards a sustainable and coherent approach to deep and systemic issues facing the city.

**9. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 9.1 The proposal is based on a mixed delivery model with some in-house and some externally funded services. A new financial inclusion co-ordinator within Housing & Social Inclusion will co-ordinate activities and report outcomes to residents, the Housing & Social Inclusion management team, and The Advice Partnership.

**10. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To seek Housing Management Consultative Committee's endorsement for the development of new services which promote financial inclusion amongst council housing residents through the commissioning of an integrated financial inclusion delivery model.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

None

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

**Background Documents**

Financial Inclusion, Report to Cabinet. 15 March 2012

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 94

Brighton & Hove City Council

|                          |   |   |                    |
|--------------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>Extending Payment Options for Council Leaseholders</b> |   |                    |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | <b>19 March 2012</b>                                      |   |                    |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Head of Housing &amp; Social Inclusion</b>             |   |                    |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>  | <b>Name:</b>  | <b>Dave Arthur</b>                      | <b>Tel:</b> 293072 |
|                          | <b>Email:</b>   | <b>dave.arthur@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b> |                    |
| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> | <b>All</b>  |   |                    |

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is responsible for keeping our residential blocks of flats in repair including, where necessary, carrying out high cost major works. The leasehold owners are responsible for meeting the costs of works so long as:

- The costs are reasonably incurred
- The works are carried out to a reasonable standard
- The consultation requirements have been complied with

1.2 Significant works of repair and improvement are currently planned for a number of blocks of flats and the potential charges for leaseholders are considerable.

1.3 This report sets out the financial assistance that is currently available to leaseholders and recommends that the council extends the payment options available, for high cost works where there are payment difficulties, to include:

- Equity loans
- Maturity loans
- Long-term interest bearing loans up to 25 years
- Extending the interest-free repayment option from 12 months to a sliding scale with a maximum of 5 years (see 3.14)

1.4 This will increase the options available to the council to help individual cases where there is financial difficulty or vulnerability when faced with high major works bills. These will be of particular benefit to resident leaseholders who have sufficient equity in their home but who are on low or fixed incomes.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee considers the following proposals and recommends that they are agreed by the Cabinet Member for Housing:

- (1) Brighton & Hove City Council offers additional payment options in the form of equity loans, maturity loans, monthly repayment loans over 25 years to leaseholders who are in financial difficulty and struggling to pay high major works bills as outlined in this report.
- (2) The council increases the interest-free repayment limit from 12 months to a sliding scale with a maximum of 5 years for resident leaseholders. (See table at 3.14).
- (3) The specific criteria to be met when offering these additional loans will be agreed by the Head of Housing & Social Inclusion and the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council manages around 2,250 leasehold flats across the city. Under the terms of their leases, leaseholders are responsible for paying the service charge which is a proportion of the costs incurred by the council for the works and services at their building. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Repairs to the exterior, structure or common parts
  - Major works and improvements, e.g. lift replacement, window replacement, refurbishment or over-cladding
  - Services to their building such as cleaning or grounds maintenance
  - Management
- 3.2 The term 'major works' normally refers to works that cost individual leaseholders more than £250. Where this applies the council is legally required to undertake a formal consultation process.
- 3.3 It is recognised that many leaseholders struggle to pay their contribution for large major works projects. In response to this the council adopted a Service Charge Collection Strategy in June 2010 which provides procedures that seek to identify leaseholders who are vulnerable or have payment or financial difficulties.
- 3.4 The options currently available to leaseholders in financial difficulty are:

From bodies external to the council:

- A mortgage lender (if any) may add the amount to an existing mortgage
- A loan from a private lending institution such as a bank or building society
- Leaseholders over 60 may be entitled to help from the Pension Centre
- Leaseholders of working age may be entitled to help from Income Support

From the council:

- An interest-bearing council loan to spread the cost for up to ten years for any major works bill over £1,000 or five years for over £500
- An interest-only loan from the council for those of pension age



- A formal agreement can be made to spread the payment over a maximum of 12 months
- 3.5 In cases of extreme hardship and where none of the above options can help, a financial assessment can be undertaken with a resident leaseholder, and a voluntary legal charge considered. Once secured, this would offset payment (and interest) until the property is sold or assigned. There must be sufficient equity in the property and any mortgagee must consent.
- 3.6 The Social Landlords Discretionary Reduction of Service Charges (England) Directions 1997 gives the council the discretion to reduce major works charges costing more than £10,000 in any five year period. This is again for cases of extreme hardship. The government has issued guidance on how to comply with these directions.
- 3.7 If a leaseholder makes an application under this discretion, the case needs to be considered on its merits, taking into account whether the dwelling is the leaseholder's only home, their financial resources, their ability to pay over a longer period of time, the impact on the value of their home and other matters.
- 3.8 A formal report in each case with supporting documentation goes to the Head of Service for a decision in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

### **The Impact of the Decent Homes Programme on Major Works Charges**

- 3.9 Because structural repair issues are being addressed at the same time as seeking to achieve the Brighton & Hove Decent Homes Standard by 2013, some blocks will be subject to a number of large scale works occurring either at the same time or in quick succession. For example, works may include lift replacement, over-cladding and common way re-wiring. In some cases charges in excess of £20,000 are liable to be incurred.
- 480 leaseholders in high rises have been consulted on contributions of between £3,000-£10,000 each for proposed lift replacements over the next decade
  - 20 leaseholders have been notified they are facing bills of between £23,000-£30,000 each for over-cladding, windows and roof renewal
  - 120 leaseholders are to contribute costs ranging from £2,000-£5,000 for external refurbishment
- 3.10 In the circumstances of high charges the existing financial assistance to a leaseholder may not always be helpful. This is emphatically the case when dealing with charges of more than £10,000 and potentially three or four times that figure. The table below shows the monthly repayments on a 10-year council loan at the current rate of interest. The rate for the 12 months from 1 April 2011 is 5.07%.

| <b>Amount</b> | <b>Monthly repayments:<br/>10 years</b> | <b>Monthly repayments: 10 years<br/>(interest only)</b> |
|---------------|---|---|
| £2,500        | £27                                     | £11   |
| £5,000        | £54                                     | £21   |
| £10,000       | £108                                    | £42   |
| £20,000       | £216                                    | £84   |
| £30,000       | £324                                    | £126  |

3.11 Even the interest-only option (for those of pensionable age) may be impossible for some leaseholders on a low fixed income.

### **Extending the Payment Options**

3.12 In recent years the government has introduced new powers to local authorities to add to the ways in which they could assist leaseholders in financial difficulties. The use of these powers is wholly at the discretion of the authority and also entirely at the discretion of the leaseholder whether to enter into any such agreement.

3.13 This report proposes that Brighton & Hove extends its range of payment options as a last resort for those leaseholders faced with large major works bills of £5,000 or more, by offering equity loans, maturity loans and 25-year interest-bearing loans to households meeting the following criteria:

- Where the leaseholder is resident in the property (and has been resident throughout the previous 12 months)
- There is sufficient equity in the property (if applicable)
- Where all other options to meet the cost of the works have failed, with evidence provided of refusal of a loan from at least two specialist mortgage lenders

Each case will be subject to an individual financial assessment at the time an application to make such an arrangement is received.

3.14 It is also proposed that Brighton & Hove extends the interest-free repayment period, for residential leaseholders only, from 12 months to the periods set out in the table below.

| <b>Amount</b>     | <b>Interest-free repayment period</b> |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Up to £2,000      | 12 months                             |
| £2,000 - £5,000   | 24 months                             |
| £5000 - £10,000   | 36 months                             |
| £10,000 - £15,000 | 48 months                             |
| £15,000 +         | 60 months                             |

3.15 The council will determine with the leaseholder the most appropriate type of loan or payment arrangement to offer. A risk appraisal of the four options is included at Appendix 1.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 A presentation and discussion on equity loans was well received by Housing Management Consultative Committee on 7 March 2011.
- 4.2 The proposals have been discussed and welcomed by the Leaseholders Action Group committee.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The Housing Revenue Account funds the Housing capital programme and an assumption is made that a share of these costs will be recouped from leaseholders as they have to pay for their share of capital works. In normal circumstances, the bills are paid within months of the demands being made. However, it is recognised that some leaseholders will have difficulty paying their share of these costs, given that some costs will be very high as investment increases to meet the Decent Homes standard. Therefore, there is a need to offer more innovative types of loans to ensure that the HRA maximises its recovery of costs. Without these measures there is a risk that large amounts will remain unpaid, leading to the costs being met from the HRA.

The financial implications associated with each loan type are set out in Appendix 1.

*Finance Officer Consulted:* Monica Brooks, Principal Accountant  
*Date:* 19 December 2011

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Local Housing Authorities have long been required to provide mandatory loans on terms which required them to charge interest. They also had powers to give discretionary loans – but it was unclear whether they had the flexibility to offer a discretionary loan on terms other than those requiring interest to be charged.

By virtue of section 308 of Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, and the Housing (Service Charge Loans) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009 local housing authorities were given express powers to make loans that do not require the payment of interest or that require the payment of interest on only part of the loan. The proposal to offer equity loans is therefore clearly within the council's powers. Under the 2009 Regulations, loans may be on such terms as the lender may determine. There is therefore no legal limit as to the period of any loan.

*Lawyer Consulted:* Liz Woodley

*Date:* 24 January 2012

##### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on introducing these options. The additional options will enable some leaseholders on low or fixed

incomes the chance to agree a payment option that will allow them to remain in their home should they wish to do so rather than selling on or facing problems in a market or location where selling may be extremely difficult. This is likely to benefit those on low incomes, for example older people on fixed pensions or those in receipt of state benefits.

The options are intended to secure some debts where the council would otherwise be in the position of issuing court proceedings for a money judgement and enforcement action in cases of resident lessees who are not well off, are disadvantaged or vulnerable.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Enabling people to remain in their homes prevents the possibility of homelessness arising and potential statutory duties to re-house.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are none.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are competing risks. There is a need to balance the risk to the council of not securing the money it is owed and the danger of default with the more controlled risk of ensuring there are enough options to secure these debts with payment along with maximising any interest due in the longer term. The risks associated with each option are set out at Appendix 1.

#### Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are none.

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The proposal aims to help those lessees on low incomes to remain in their homes and thus prevent the possibility of homelessness arising, along with giving the council enough options to resolve these high debt cases with the minimum recourse to unnecessary and distressing court actions.

### **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The alternative is to leave the payment options for leaseholders as they are. The council would be unable in some cases to secure a debt with consequent risk of default. Some leaseholders on fixed or low income who otherwise might be helped will face the prospect of court, money judgements and potential loss of their home.

### **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 To give the council more options to work with leaseholders to secure and collect debt which would otherwise be at risk of default. To give council leaseholders who reside in their own properties as many options as possible to meet high

major works costs without having to sell their home or face legal proceedings instigated by the council for debt.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Appendix 1 – Financial risk assessment of the four options

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

None



**APPENDIX 1 – Financial risk assessment of proposed payment options**

|                         | <b>Equity Loans</b>  | <b>Maturity Loans</b>   | <b>Interest Free Loan</b>   | <b>25 Year Loans</b>  |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| How does the loan work? | <p>The loan will be secured on the property to which the service charge relates and charged at the Land Registry.</p> <p>The charge on the property is expressed as a percentage of the value of the property.</p> <p>It will be paid either when the property is sold or by the leaseholder in situ in agreement with the council.</p> <p>The amount paid back is dependent upon the valuation at the time of sale of the property. The council will need to rely on expert advice from its Right to Buy valuer in order to determine the best consideration in the property.</p> <p>This percentage will depend on factors such as predicting the future value of the property and the</p> | <p>This is where a loan is taken out to fund the value of the works and a charge is placed on the property.</p> <p>The loan will attract interest which will be rolled up with the principal and when the property is sold the value of the loan plus interest is repaid to the Council.</p> <p>There is no maturity date for the loan so it can carry on indefinitely. It will be paid either when the property is sold or by the leaseholder in situ in agreement with the council.</p> <p>Each case will be considered on an individual basis and consideration will be given to any other loans secured against the property.</p> | <p>This is where the Council offers an interest free loan to the leaseholder.</p> <p>The leaseholder would be liable to repay the principal sum over the period outlined in paragraph 3.14.</p> | <p>These are interest bearing loans over 25 years offered by the council and work in the same way as any other commercial mortgage.</p> |

|   | <b>Equity Loans</b>   | <b>Maturity Loans</b>   | <b>Interest Free Loan</b>   | <b>25 Year Loans</b>   |
|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | <p>potential length of the loan. This is to ensure when the property is sold there is sufficient equity to cover both the original loan and the accumulated interest. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and consideration will be given to any other loans secured against the property.</p>  |   |   |  |
| <p>What are the annual costs to the leaseholder, assuming a £10,000 debt?</p> | <p>The leaseholder will not need to pay anything until the property is sold. At this time the agreed percentage equity share of the value of the property will be paid to the council. As an example, if a property is valued at £100,000 and the loan is £10,000 it might be assumed that the council would offer the loan in turn for 10% of the property value. Instead the council may decide to offer a loan at a higher % of the value to ensure that property market risks are covered</p> | <p>The leaseholder will not need to pay anything until the property is sold. The charge on the property will mean that the council will get first call on the sale proceeds. If the £10,000 loan lasted for 10 years, say, the charge on the property would be £15,981 at current interest rates.</p> | <p>For a £10,000 loan over 3 years, the annual cost to the leaseholder would be £3,333 per annum or £277.77 per month. Therefore, it is unlikely that this option would be taken up for large sums.</p> | <p>A £10,000 loan over 25 years would cost £57.95 per month at current interest rates.</p> |



|  | <b>Equity Loans</b>   | <b>Maturity Loans</b>   | <b>Interest Free Loan</b>   | <b>25 Year Loans</b>  |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| What are the Administration fees or set up costs chargeable to the Leaseholder | <p>and that the principal, interest and administration fee are repaid in full.</p> <p>Professional costs of conveyance including valuation, solicitors and Land Registry fees will be recharged to applicants by consolidation in the equity share.</p> <p>These fees could be substantial (in the region of £500) and would therefore need to be assessed prior to any decision to take up an equity loan.</p> | An administration fee of approximately £200 would be added to the loan.   | An administration fee of approximately £200 would be added to the loan. | An administration fee of approximately £200 would be added to the loan. |
| Transfer of property ownership (for non-repayment options)                     | <p>It is proposed that a property with such a loan on it may only be transferred once on the death of a leaseholder. This transfer would be to either a spouse or long term partner living in the property. In all other cases the property would have to be sold or the debt otherwise cleared prior to the property being inherited.</p> <p>Any instance of</p>   | <p>A property with a maturity loan secured on it may only be transferred once on the death of a leaseholder. This transfer would be to either a spouse or long term partner living in the property.</p> <p>In all other cases the property would have to be sold or the debt otherwise cleared prior to the property being inherited.</p> | Repayment arrangement   | Repayment loan  |

|                        | Equity Loans   | Maturity Loans   | Interest Free Loan   | 25 Year Loans   |
|------------------------|--|--|--|---|
|                        | <p>repurchase of the loan share or further granting of a loan will be at the current market value with all associated interest, fees and costs.</p>  |  |  |   |
| Risks to the council   | <p>There is a risk that due to the unpredictability of the social housing market over the longer term, the equity percentage applied will not fully recover the costs of principal, interest and administrative costs.</p> <p><b>An example is given in the footnote to this appendix.</b></p> | <p>There is a risk that, if the loan period is long, insufficient equity will exist in the property to pay back the loan sum and the interest accrued. This type of facility may be more suitable where the loan period is likely to be short.</p> | <p>This method is relatively low risk to the Council if the loan is considered affordable by the leaseholder.</p> <p>Although interest is foregone, there is a benefit of the whole principal sum being repaid in the agreed period.</p> | <p>Given that these leaseholders are likely to be on low or fixed incomes as they are unable to fund the major works in any other way, there will be a high risk of default on these loans.</p> <p>Careful assessment of the individual's ability to pay will be necessary prior to the offer of such a loan.</p> |
| Financial implications | <p>The percentage charge put on the property would have to ensure that the loan, interest and administration fees were paid back.</p> <p>Any shortfalls resulting from incorrect assessment of the equity share would have to be paid by the</p>   | <p>If the loan sum plus interest is paid back when the property is sold, there are no cost implications for the HRA over the term of the loan.</p> <p>However, the delay in receiving this income may lead to increased</p>                        | <p>The cost to the HRA is the interest foregone. For a £10,000 loan over 3 years, the interest foregone would be £771 at current interest rates. An average of £257 per annum for each £10,000 loan. A</p>                               | <p>If the principal and interest is paid back monthly there are no cost implications for the HRA.</p> <p>If the leaseholder does default on the loan there are other options open to the council to</p>   |

|   | <b>Equity Loans</b>  | <b>Maturity Loans</b>  | <b>Interest Free Loan</b>   | <b>25 Year Loans</b> |
|---|--|--|---|----------------------|
| <p>HRA and a provision for this risk would have to be made.</p> <p>However, it is also the case that the HRA could gain if the agreed equity share paid back more than the outstanding debt in a rising housing market.</p> <p>The delay in receiving this income may lead to increased temporary borrowing by the HRA. This may result in other projects being delayed due to the application of borrowing restrictions under the new self financing regime.</p> | <p>temporary borrowing by the HRA. This may result in other projects being delayed due to the application of borrowing restrictions under the new self financing regime.</p> <p>As mentioned above there is a risk that insufficient equity will exist in the property to pay back the loan sum and the interest accrued, especially if the loan period is long.</p> <p>Future budget and business plan assumptions will need to take account of this risk and provisions made for any potential shortfalls.</p> | <p>£5,000 loan interest free over 2 years would cost £249 in lost interest to the HRA.</p> | <p>pursue the debt, including legal action for recovery.</p> <p>However, given the risks mentioned above, provision for default will need to be made.</p> <p>The delay in receiving this income may lead to increased temporary borrowing by the HRA. This may result in other projects being delayed due to the application of borrowing restrictions under the new self financing regime.</p> |                      |

Footnote: Examples of equity share on £10,000 for property currently worth £100,000 showing changing market values

| <b>Change in value</b> | <b>Value after 10 yrs £</b> | <b>Admin Fee £</b> | <b>Total owed £</b> | <b>Equity share required</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| No change              | 100,000                     | 300                | 16,281              | 16.7%                        |
| +10%                   | 110,000                     | 300                | 16,281              | 15.2%                        |
| +20%                   | 120,000                     | 300                | 16,281              | 13.9%                        |
| +30%                   | 130,000                     | 300                | 16,281              | 12.8%                        |
| -10%                   | 90,000                      | 300                | 16,281              | 18.6%                        |
| -20%                   | 80,000                      | 300                | 16,281              | 20.9%                        |

# **HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

## **Agenda Item 95**

Brighton & Hove City Council

|                         |   |  |                         |
|-------------------------|---|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>         | <b>Repairs &amp; Improvements Handbook</b>                              |  |                         |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b> | <b>19<sup>th</sup> March 2011</b>                                       |  |                         |
| <b>Report of:</b>       | <b>Director of Place and<br/>Head of Housing &amp; Social Inclusion</b> |  |                         |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | <b>Name:</b>  | <b>Perrin Horne / Tom<br/>Gillham</b>    | <b>Tel: 294641/3857</b> |
|                         | <b>Email:</b>   | <b>Perrin.horne@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b> |                         |
| <b>Wards affected:</b>  | <b>All</b>  |  |                         |

### **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

#### **1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This report presents Housing Management Consultative Committee with an updated proposal for a new 'Repairs and Improvements Handbook'. This handbook gives details and advice to all tenants on repairs service and improvements to their homes and has been designed to complement the existing tenant handbook.
- 1.2 The Property & Investment team has involved residents in a number of different ways whilst developing, producing and agreeing the revised Repairs and Improvements Handbook. Further to recommendations made at previous HMCC (December 2011) the draft handbook was discussed at all Area Housing Panel meetings with residents and amendment agreed have been included in the final version.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee endorse the new updated version of the Repairs and Improvements Handbook attached (appendix 1).

#### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 The Repairs Handbook was last updated in March 2008. Following this, the ten year partnership agreement with Mears for repairs and maintenance was started in April 2010 managed by the council's new Property and Investment team. Since then, there have been changes and enhancements to the process of repairs and planned work carried out to tenant's homes. For example:

- One point of contact for all reported repairs
- Updated information on the decent homes and planned work
- New and updated information on damp and condensation
- Contractor Code of Conduct

It is now necessary to convey these changes to all residents through a new Repairs and Improvements Handbook.

3.2 In June 2011 a working group was set up with residents and officers to:

- Review the current version of the Repairs Handbook.
- Note and review any changes.
- Review best practise in examples of other local authority handbooks.
- Ensure the design and contents were clear and concise.

3.3 For continuity, the Repairs and Improvement Handbook has been designed and illustrated in a similar format to the Tenant Handbook using more pictures and colour. The group reviewed the contents of the previous handbook and included relevant information such as gas leaks, planned works process and a customer care section.

3.4 A draft of the Repairs and Improvement Handbook is attached at appendix 1, requiring approval from Housing Cabinet Member to publish and distribute. Amendments and alterations to the content were submitted via the web portal to tenants during September 2011 and again using inputs from both Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group and Area Housing Panels during January and February 2012.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

4.1 Extensive consultation has been carried out from the very first draft of the document. At the first stage of resident involvement it was immediately identified that it would also be useful to include and engage with individual residents that do not attend resident led groups and that their comments and suggestions could prove to be more diverse and varied. Twelve tenants were selected from the resident involvement database and the initial draft document was provided on the council's consultation portal for their edits and comments. Their suggestions proved invaluable and changes were made as follows:

- Right to repair legislation was checked and added
- One phone number as point of contact
- Examples of emergency, urgent and routine work
- Clearer bold headings for ease of reading

4.2 In October 2011 the draft was presented to other tenant groups including the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group where they discussed the draft document and gave positive feedback. They agreed that the inclusion of the planned work section was very informative and that the document gave clear information on the decent homes programme.

Following this the draft was presented to the Housing & Social Inclusion Group Management Team (GMT) and the Partnership Core Group. They were all very positive and found the document easy to read and clear. The members made some suggested edits and changes which were incorporated and it was agreed that this edition had the following information that the previous repairs handbook did not provide:

- Clearer wording and more descriptive pictures
- A clear tick box method for council and tenant responsibilities
- Planned work information
- Decent homes information
- Mears code of conduct
- The Brighton and Hove Standard
- Clear guidance on tenants responsibilities and council obligations

4.3 The latest feedback from recent Area Housing Panels has been very positive and it was agreed that policy was made clearer and easy to read. The handbook was amended to include information on special schemes, such as installing and maintenance of cookers provided by the council for sheltered tenants. It also now includes information on the council's discretionary decorating and gardening schemes for elderly and disabled tenants. The list of repair responsibilities was amended to clarify the most important information, as highlighted by tenants.

## **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

5.1 The costs related to the production of the Repairs and Improvements Handbook including design, print and distribution will be met from the HRA budget.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 5 Dec 2011*

### Legal Implications:

5.2.1 It is not a legal requirement to produce a "Repairs and Improvements Handbook", although the council considers that it is important that residents are informed of the council's responsibilities. Those responsibilities derive from not only the tenancy agreement but also from a number of legislative sources, including the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 as amended and the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1988. It is not considered that any individual's human rights are adversely affected by the issue of the handbook.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 5 Dec 2011*

### Equalities Implications:

5.3 During consultation with tenants due regard for equalities and diversity has been acknowledged and the handbook will be available in other formats such as audio and different languages. We have used feedback from residents and staff to draft

the Equality Impact Assessment on the Repairs and Improvements Handbook (included as appendix 2).

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The group looked at other methods of producing the handbook in order to minimise the printing of hard copies. As with the Homing In magazine it can be sent in an electronic format via email. Specific sustainability advice is contained with the Tenants Handbook.

Preventative measures such as advice to minimise condensation and other suggestions to avoid repairs and property damage are also included in the handbook so that tenants are made aware of who is responsible.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The revised Repairs and Improvements Handbook will positively contribute to preventing crime and the fear of possible crime by informing tenants where to report lost or stolen door keys and advice on lock changes.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The publication of the revised Repairs and Improvements Handbook should mitigate the potential long term effects of damage to property by enabling tenants to access clear contact information for council repairs.

#### Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 The information in the handbook covers all health and safety information under section headed 'Safety in your home' including: carbon monoxide, gas, Legionella and asbestos.

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The introduction of a revised Repairs and Improvements Handbook will have citywide implications for tenants. This document will inform them of their rights and responsibilities as a council tenant and what repairs the council are responsible for.

### **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 Do Nothing – This option was discussed and dismissed as the previous handbook is now over three years old and, following the new Repairs and Improvement contract, updated information needed to be provided to Tenants.

### **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee should welcome the new updated version of the Repairs and Improvements Handbook as it provides clear and concise information required by Residents. This will support the City's



objective to focus on tenancy by communicating and improving the customer experience to an excellent standard.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Draft Repairs and Improvements Handbook
2. Equality impact assessment

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

None



# Repairs and improvements handbook



Brighton & Hove  
City Council





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Call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140

## 1. Welcome

This is your repairs and improvements handbook. It has been put together by staff and tenants to give you information and guidance about Brighton & Hove City Council's repair service.

This handbook includes:

- how to order repairs for your home
- what to do in an emergency, eg if you smell gas
- an explanation of your rights and your responsibilities
- the council's responsibilities as your landlord
- information about the steps you must take when planning your own improvements

We would like to express our special thanks to the tenants involved for all the hard work they put into helping us develop this handbook. They spent many hours making it as clear and useful as possible for you.

Tenant involvement is at the heart of all the services that we provide. Our repairs partnership is made up of the council, contractors and tenants. From an individual tenant's comment to city-wide groups like City Assembly, residents have a say in shaping the repair service that we deliver. Tenants monitor the service that we provide and lead on making the improvements that are important to you. Your opinion is important to us so please contact your local association or Resident Involvement Officer to find out how you can influence the repair service that you receive.

### Estate Development Budget

Is there something you'd like improved in your neighbourhood?

The Estate Development Budget is a tenant choice budget of over half a million pounds a year that delivers resident-led improvements in their area. Each idea is considered by an elected panel of resident representatives and the work done can really make a positive difference to a neighbourhood.

If you have ideas on improvements for your area, contact your local resident association, email the Resident Involvement Team on [opr@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:opr@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or go to [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/edb](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/edb)

## 2. Reporting a repair

### To report all repairs just call:

**0800 052 6140**

24 hours a day, seven days a week

### You can also report a repair:

- by completing our online repairs reporting form at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/report-repairs](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/report-repairs)
- by emailing [RHC.C.repairs@haringroup.co.uk](mailto:RHC.C.repairs@haringroup.co.uk)
- by calling 01273 254409 from your mobile phone
- by writing a letter to the Repairs Helpdesk, Housing Centre, Unit 1, Fairway Trading Estate, Eastergate Road, Brighton, BN2 4QJ.

Before you report a repair, please gather as much information about the problem as you can, as this helps us to order the correct repair. Our helpdesk staff are trained to identify and order the correct repair for your home, and you can refer to the diagrams at the back of this book to help you.

### Gas leaks

If you smell gas, you must turn off all gas appliances, then leave the property and call the **National Grid** immediately on **0800 111 999**.

# 3. When will my repair be done?

## Emergency repairs

An emergency repair is one which needs to be carried out quickly to avoid danger to you or serious damage to the building. An emergency repair will be completed within 24 hours and wherever possible you will be given an estimated time of arrival.

### Examples include:

- serious water leak
- no power in property
- no heating or hot water from boiler (November to April only)
- overflowing drains
- collapsed ceiling or roof
- ground floor window not closing
- attending a lift breakdown
- a blocked toilet (if it's the only accessible one in your home)

If an emergency repair is needed due to deliberate damage, vandalism, neglect or botched DIY by any members of your household or visitors to your home, we will carry out your repair and recharge you.

## Urgent repairs

An urgent repair will be completed within three working days and you will be offered an appointment.

### Examples include:

- a containable water leak
- no heating or hot water from boiler (May to October)
- no hot water from shower unit
- a broken bathroom light (where there is no window)
- smashed glass in a window or front door
- a blocked toilet (where there is easy access to another one)

## Routine repairs

A routine repair will be complete within 20 working days and you will be offered an appointment.

### Examples include:

- anti-fungal wash down for mould on walls
- adjusting a communal door closer
- broken kitchen units
- broken paths and paving
- flashing light in communal area
- a dripping tap

## Out of hours (emergencies only)

Between 8pm and 8am, we provide a service for emergency repairs only. In these cases, we only carry out a temporary repair to stop the emergency situation or make it safe. We'll then order a further job and make an appointment with you, so that the repair can be completed.

Some jobs are larger than a simple repair. If this is the case with work needed in your home, we will write to let you know that you are included in the 'Planned Work' programme and tell you when the work is due to start.



# 4. Repair responsibilities

## What repairs are the council responsible for?

By law, the council has an obligation to look after the structure of your home. Repairs must be carried out to make sure that fixtures and fittings for water, sanitation, gas and electricity are safe and in working order. The council must also maintain any equipment it has installed to provide hot water and heating, and communal facilities, such as lifts and door entry phones.

We are responsible for checking for any repairs needed in the communal areas, and carry out quarterly estate inspections. However, if you see anything that needs repairing, please call the repairs helpdesk to report it. In sheltered housing, tell the scheme manager about communal repairs and they will report them.

## What repairs am I responsible for?

You are expected to make sure that your home, garden and balcony are kept safe, clean, free from rubbish, and are not neglected.

If we are told that a repair is needed due to misuse or wilful damage, you may be charged for it. This doesn't include usual wear and tear.

The table below gives examples of who is responsible for a repair. Please contact the repairs team if a repair is not listed, or if you're not sure who is responsible.

**Exceptions are made in individual cases for vulnerable tenants, including people over pensionable age, people who are registered disabled, and sheltered housing tenants.**

| Repair  | Comment  | Responsibility |        |
|---|--|----------------|--------|
|   |  | Council        | Tenant |
| Central heating   | Problems with boilers, storage heaters, radiators, hot water, etc  | •              |        |
| Chimneys  | Brickwork, replacement pots, etc   | •              |        |
| Clothes lines and rotary driers                             | Except communal areas  |                | •      |
| Cookers (general housing)                                   | Gas and electric, including connections<br><b>(gas cookers must be installed by a Gas Safe qualified engineer)</b> |                | •      |
| Cookers   | In sheltered accommodation   | •              |        |
| Internal decoration, including the inside of the front door | Except making good and preparing surfaces ready for decoration following repairs                                   |                | •      |
| Doors and locks (external)                                  | Except lost or stolen keys, door numbers and battery-operated door bells   | •              |        |
| Doors (internal)  | Except door frames   |                | •      |
| Drains  | Blocked drains and gullies   | •              |        |
| Electricity   | Except where tenants have installed their own fittings, appliances, plugs, fuses, light bulbs and meters           | •              |        |

| Repair   | Comment   | Responsibility |        |
|--|---|----------------|--------|
|  |   | Council        | Tenant |
| Fire places  | Except surrounds  | •              |        |
| Fire and smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors | Unless battery operated   | •              |        |
| Floors   | Concrete structure and floorboards only   | •              |        |
| Floor coverings                                      | Unless fitted by the council  |                | •      |
| Garages  | Structure and garage doors only   | •              |        |
| Gutters  | Clearance and repairs to gutters and fascia boards  | •              |        |
| Immersion heaters                                    | Repair or replacement   | •              |        |
| Keys   | Including garage keys   |                | •      |
| Lifts  |   | •              |        |
| Paths  | Leading to front or back doors but not patios   | •              |        |
| Pipes, water tanks and cylinders                     |   | •              |        |
| Plumbing and fittings                                | Replacement of toilets, sinks, baths, wash hand basins (including refixing brackets)                        | •              |        |
|  | Taps running continuously, tap replacement and other tap repairs  | •              |        |
|  | Blocked toilet, bath, sink or wash hand basin   | •              |        |
|  | Toilet not flushing properly  | •              |        |
|  | Replacement of WC seats and toilet chains   |                | •      |
|  | Replacement of kitchen and bathroom tiles (unless fitted by the council or following structural damage)     |                | •      |
|  | Replacement of plugs and plug chains  |                | •      |
| Roofs  | Loose or damaged tiles, rain penetration, flashings, etc  | •              |        |
| Stairs   |   | •              |        |
| Utilities (tenant to contact supplier)               | Tenant to contact supplier about gas and electrical meters (including key and card types), and water meters |                | •      |
| Walls  | Rendering, brickwork, pointing and internal plastering  | •              |        |
| Windows  | Glazing (except wilful damage, which requires a crime reference number)                                     | •              |        |
|  | Misted or fogged windows  | •              |        |
|  | Secure window frame   | •              |        |
|  | Window not opening and closing  | •              |        |
|  | Repair or replace window catches, handles, hinges and locks   | •              |        |
|  | New window frame sills  | •              |        |
|  | Rain penetration  | •              |        |
|  | Lost or stolen keys   |                | •      |

## What if I lose my keys or fob?

It is your responsibility to replace any lost or stolen keys. If you have lost a key or fob to a main entrance door, please contact us to purchase a replacement. We need two forms of identification before we can issue any replacements.

If you become locked out of your home, you are responsible for regaining entry. Exceptions are made in some cases for vulnerable tenants - please contact the repairs helpdesk for advice.

If you would like **additional** copies of a main entrance door key, you need written consent from us, which you then need to take to either of our approved locksmiths below:

- Dockerills Ltd, 3 Church Street, Brighton
- Thomas Locksmiths Ltd, 97 Portland Rd, Hove

## Home Contents Insurance

The council is responsible for insuring the building but not the contents in tenants' homes. You are responsible for insuring your furniture, belongings and decorations against theft, fire, vandalism and water damage.

We recommend tenants include insurance to cover lost or stolen keys.

You can insure your contents privately or through the council scheme. We have negotiated competitive rates with an insurance company and premiums can be paid weekly with your rent.

**For further information, please contact the Rent Accounting team on 01273 293303.**



# 5. Planned work

## What is planned work?

The planned work programme includes major project work throughout the city to improve the condition of our buildings internally and externally. This work includes communal area decorations, renewal of roofs and guttering, and lift replacements.

It also includes the work required to bring your home up to the Brighton & Hove Standard, such as replacement gas boilers, rewiring, external doors, kitchens and bathrooms.

### What is the Brighton & Hove Standard?

This is a quality standard for council homes developed in consultation with tenants. The standard is based on the government's Decent Homes Standard, with additional items above the minimum standard agreed with tenants to meet local priorities.

#### The Brighton & Hove Standard means that your home will:

- meet the current minimum standard for housing
- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have reasonably modern facilities
- be warm and comfortable
- include other items above the national standard which have been agreed in consultation with tenants

For more information on the standard:

- go to [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bh-standard](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bh-standard)
- get a leaflet from your housing office
- call the Property & Investment team on 01273 293346

## How will I know if work is due in my area?

A surveyor from our repairs partnership will visit and carry out a survey to decide whether your home meets the Brighton & Hove Standard. Work will only be done in homes that **do not** meet this standard.

To see when work is provisionally planned for your area, have a look at our planned work programme by:

- visiting [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-investment-programme](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-investment-programme)
- requesting a copy from the Property & Investment team on 01273 293346

## Do I get a say in the style of improvements?

Yes, you can choose the following:

- door - a choice over the style and finish
- bathroom - a choice of flooring
- kitchen - you are involved in the design and choice on the style of kitchen doors, worktops and flooring

You will be given details on the choices available before the work begins.

## What quality of work can I expect?

The council and its partners are committed to delivering quality work to your homes. We ensure that this is achieved by:

- involving tenants at every stage in all we do
- inspecting work and monitoring quality
- measuring and monitoring performance with tenant representatives
- asking you to complete a customer satisfaction survey once work is complete
- carrying out mystery shopping exercises to test quality

# 6. Customer care

We aim to deliver an excellent service by putting tenants at the centre of everything we do. In this section, we detail the customer care you can expect from our repairs service.

## Code of Conduct

To ensure that you and your home are treated with respect, tenant representatives worked with the council and its partners to develop a Code of Conduct for all staff to follow when working in your home. Here are our promises that make up the code:

### When visiting tenants, we promise to:

- drive and park courteously at all times
- introduce ourselves to you and show our identity cards
- explain the work we are there to do
- behave in a polite and courteous manner
- store all our materials and equipment in a safe manner
- always use dust sheets, unless it is unsafe to do so
- never smoke in or around your home
- never use any of your items, including phone, tea, coffee, etc
- clear and remove all waste or make arrangements to collect it
- show you the work we have done and get your signature on completion of the job

If you feel that a member of staff has not stuck to any of our promises, please call the Repairs Helpdesk immediately on 0800 052 6140.

### You can help us by:

- being at home for your appointment
- ensuring clear access to the repair area
- treating staff with respect
- giving feedback and reporting any areas where we might have fallen short, as this helps us deliver a high level of customer service

## Customer satisfaction surveys for repairs

To ensure that you are happy with the service received, we'll ask you to complete a customer satisfaction survey.

Your feedback is vital in helping us to provide excellent customer service, so please do take the time to respond.

Your responses are used to identify any service areas that need improving and to build our training programme for staff. We investigate any negative responses and make sure we put things right.

We use a more in-depth customer survey to measure your satisfaction with any planned work done in your home.

We may also invite you to jointly inspect the work with a member of staff to make sure that the work is finished to your satisfaction.

## What can I do if I'm not happy?

### Step 1: Who do I contact if I wish to raise an issue?

We always try to get things right first time but appreciate that this does not always happen. If you are not happy, your first step is to speak to a member of staff on the Repairs Helpdesk by calling 0800 052 6140. Trained repairs staff are there to help resolve your issues quickly and will refer your query on if necessary.

### Step 2: What do I do if I am still not happy?

If you are not satisfied with our first response, you can raise the issue with our repairs partnership team on 01273 574354.

The liaison staff will investigate your complaint thoroughly and may arrange for a member of



staff to visit your home in order to resolve your issue to your complete satisfaction.

### Step 3: What next?

If you are still unhappy, or think what you have been told will not help, you can make a formal complaint. Our 'Complaints, Comments & Compliments' booklet explains the process and includes a complaints form you can complete. You can hand it in at any council office or post it free of charge, or can:

visit: [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/complaints)

e-mail: [complaints@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

phone: **0500 291229 (freephone)**

fax: **01273 291535**

## Right to Repair Legislation

The Right to Repair scheme came into force in April 1994. The scheme covers small urgent repairs costing up to £250 which have to be completed within specified times.

If the repair is not completed within this time, you can ask the council to appoint a second contractor to complete the work.

If the repair is still not completed by the end of the second period, you will be entitled to

compensation of £10, plus £2 a day for every day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £50.

### The Right to Repair Scheme does not apply if:

- you have agreed an appointment for the repair to be carried out beyond the specified time
- you have told the council you no longer want the repair carried out
- you haven't allowed the contractor access to carry out the work

In some cases, the council may have to inspect the repair before work begins to make sure that it is covered by the Right to Repair Scheme.

If parts are required to complete the repair, the scheme allows for the specified time to be reasonably extended. All repairs should be reported to the council as normal. If you want further information about claiming compensations, please contact us.

For more information about the scheme, see the 'A Better Deal for Tenants: Your Right to Repair' booklet, which is only available online at [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/138340.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/138340.pdf)

# 7. Tenant alterations and improvements

## Can I carry out my own improvements?

The council allows you to make improvements to your home, but you must get written permission from us before starting. Only secure tenants can carry out improvements. If you are an introductory tenant, you need to wait until your tenancy is secure.

You do not need our permission to decorate the inside of your home, lay carpet or carry out minor improvements. You must contact us before starting all other work, including:

- laying laminate or tiled floors
- erecting a shed or greenhouse
- replacing a kitchen or bathroom
- installing a new aerial or satellite dish

It is vital that you get our permission, as there

may be health and safety issues concerning the area you plan to work on. Your home may contain asbestos which is dangerous when disturbed, so you need to contact us before doing any structural or maintenance work. Your home may have been tested for asbestos in the past and we will have that information. We may visit you to check for any risks.

We will always write to tell you whether you have permission for the work. We will normally give permission, unless the work is likely to affect the safety of the building, cause a future maintenance problem, or cause a nuisance to your neighbours. We may attach conditions to the permission, such as insisting that the work is carried out by a competent contractor and to a satisfactory standard.

**Some alterations and improvements may also require planning permission or building regulation permission. You must get this in advance, as it could cost you a lot to put things right afterwards.**

Please remember that any improvements that you do could affect your eligibility for planned work as part of the Brighton & Hove Standard. For example, if you replace your kitchen or bathroom to a high standard, your property may not then qualify for a replacement kitchen or bathroom under the standard.

## What happens when I move out?

If you move, you will be expected to leave your home in a good condition. You should leave any alterations that we have given permission for in place. If we have to do any work as a result of authorised or unauthorised alterations that you have done, the cost will be recharged to you.

If you have made improvements to your home with our permission, you may be able to apply for compensation. To make a claim, you need to give us details of the improvement when you give us notice to end your tenancy. We will need to see bills for the work or, if you don't have these, tell us the cost and when the work was done. Any payment will depend on when you made the improvement, how much you have benefited from it, the cost, and its quality and condition.



## Adaptations

If you or someone living with you has a disability there are a number of ways we can help you live more independently in your home. These include providing equipment to make daily tasks easier, adapting your home to improve access or helping you to use bathing facilities, etc.

Adaptations include providing ramp access, widening doors, raising electrical sockets, replacing a bath with a level access shower, or installing special equipment for people with hearing or visual difficulties. If you think that you need an adaptation please contact our Access Point team:

e-mail: [accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

phone: **01273 295555**

minicom: **01273 296388**

Some small adaptations such as grab rails, lever taps and window openers can be fitted by us without a referral from an Occupational Therapist. Call the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 0526140 and they will let you know if we can install the item you need.

The Repairs Helpdesk will also help if your adaptation needs to be repaired. If an adaptation needs repairing within 12 months of being installed, please tell us, as the item will still be under warranty.

## Internal Decorating & Gardening Schemes

If you are a tenant and in receipt of disability living allowance or of state pensionable age, you may be eligible for help with gardening and internal decorating.

For further details please contact Mears project team on: 0800 052 6140 or see website link [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/dgs](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/dgs)

# 8. Safety in your home

## Gas and carbon monoxide

By law, it is essential that we service all gas appliances installed by us once a year - this could save your life. If an appliance is in a poor condition, it can produce too much carbon monoxide gas. Carbon monoxide cannot be seen or tasted and does not smell, but it is poisonous if breathed in, even for a short time.

When your property is due for a service, one of our gas contractors will contact you directly to make an appointment. You must allow them to access your home to carry out the service. It is a condition of your tenancy agreement and, if you refuse, we will take legal action against you to gain access. If we do this, we will seek to recover any legal costs from you.

## Are there signs of carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is difficult to detect but there are a number of ways that you can see if an appliance is faulty. **These include:**

- the boiler pilot light continually going out
- an orange or yellow flame (pilot light and gas cooker)
- a black, brown or scorched area on the appliance
- a musty smell or signs of soot

## What can I do to reduce the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning?

- always allow engineers in to your home to carry out yearly checks of your gas appliances
- never cover the appliance, vents or flues as they provide the air the appliance needs to work properly
- do not let anyone sleep in a room with a gas fire – this is very dangerous
- buy a carbon monoxide detector and check it regularly

If you have doubts about the safety of gas appliances in your home, call the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 without delay.

## Fire

### What precautions can I take?

- never leave cigarettes burning
- never smoke in bed
- keep matches away from children
- never leave the room when a hob or grill is on
- regularly check electrical appliances and their leads and do not overload plug sockets
- make sure you know where your door and window keys are
- close all inside doors at night when you go to bed
- if you have battery-operated smoke alarms, check them every week

If you do not have any smoke alarms, please contact the Fire Brigade who may be able to install one for you.

**If a fire breaks out in your home, call 999 immediately and follow the advice they give you.**

## Legionella

### What is Legionella?

Legionella bacteria are common in natural sources of water. Under certain circumstances, Legionella can be a risk and infection can occur, but this is extremely rare.

### What can I do?

To reduce the risk, you can take the following precautions:

- if you have a shower, regularly descale and clean the shower head to protect against the risk of legionella
- if you are going on holiday or away for



longer than a week, take the shower head off and place it in a bowl of diluted disinfectant or a shower head cleaning agent

- when you return, run the shower without the shower head for a few minutes and then refit it

## Condensation

Condensation is dampness caused by water vapour and it can cause a lot of damage to your home. Condensation occurs when there is too much water vapour in the air or when warm moist air meets cold surfaces.

Condensation is worse in cold damp weather and when heating is poor, but it can be controlled by proper heating and ventilation.

### You can minimise condensation by:

- closing kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking and bathing to stop water vapour spreading through the home - it also helps to have a window open
- avoiding drying clothes indoors - if you have to, always dry clothes near an open window with the door to the room closed
- avoiding using bottled gas heaters as these give out a lot of water vapour
- keeping a constant level of heat throughout your home
- using air vents and opening windows slightly - never block air vents
- wiping your windows and sills regularly to prevent mould growth and other damage from standing water, which is quite common in winter

- washing off black mould growth with a weak solution of bleach - this is a common symptom of condensation but it will not usually become a serious problem if you remove it
- leaving a gap between your furniture and the wall to let air circulate

If you follow these tips but still have problems, report it to the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140.

## Asbestos

There may be asbestos in your home, but it is only dangerous when it is disturbed and fibres are released into the air. This can happen when it is cut, sanded or drilled, which is why it is important that you contact us for permission before starting any improvements. If the asbestos in your home is not likely to be disturbed, we may decide not to remove it.

### Asbestos could be found in:

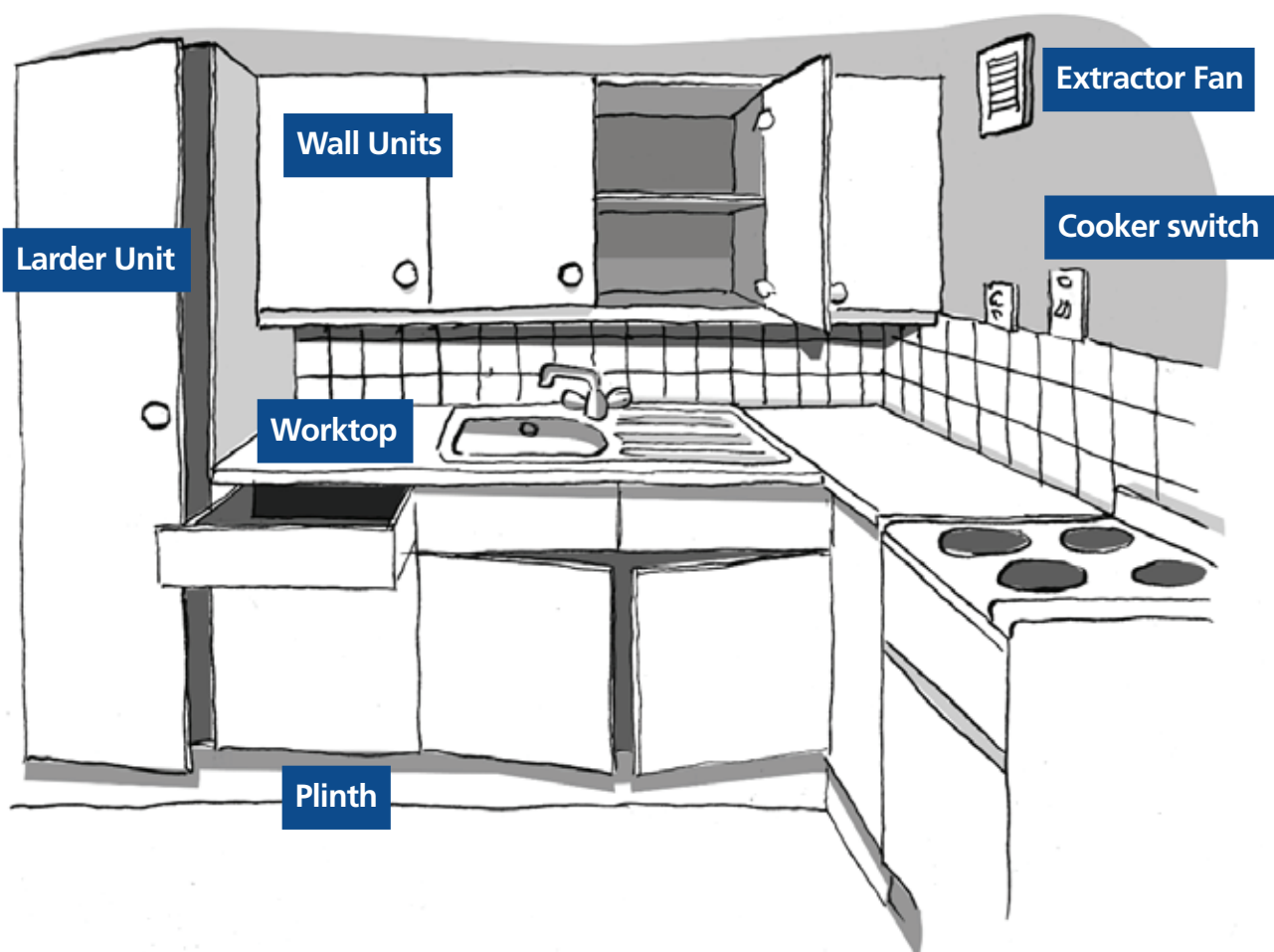
- corrugated or flat cement roofing and wall panels
- ceiling and floor tiles
- bath panels
- textured coatings such as Artex
- boilers and flue pipes
- drainpipes and gutters

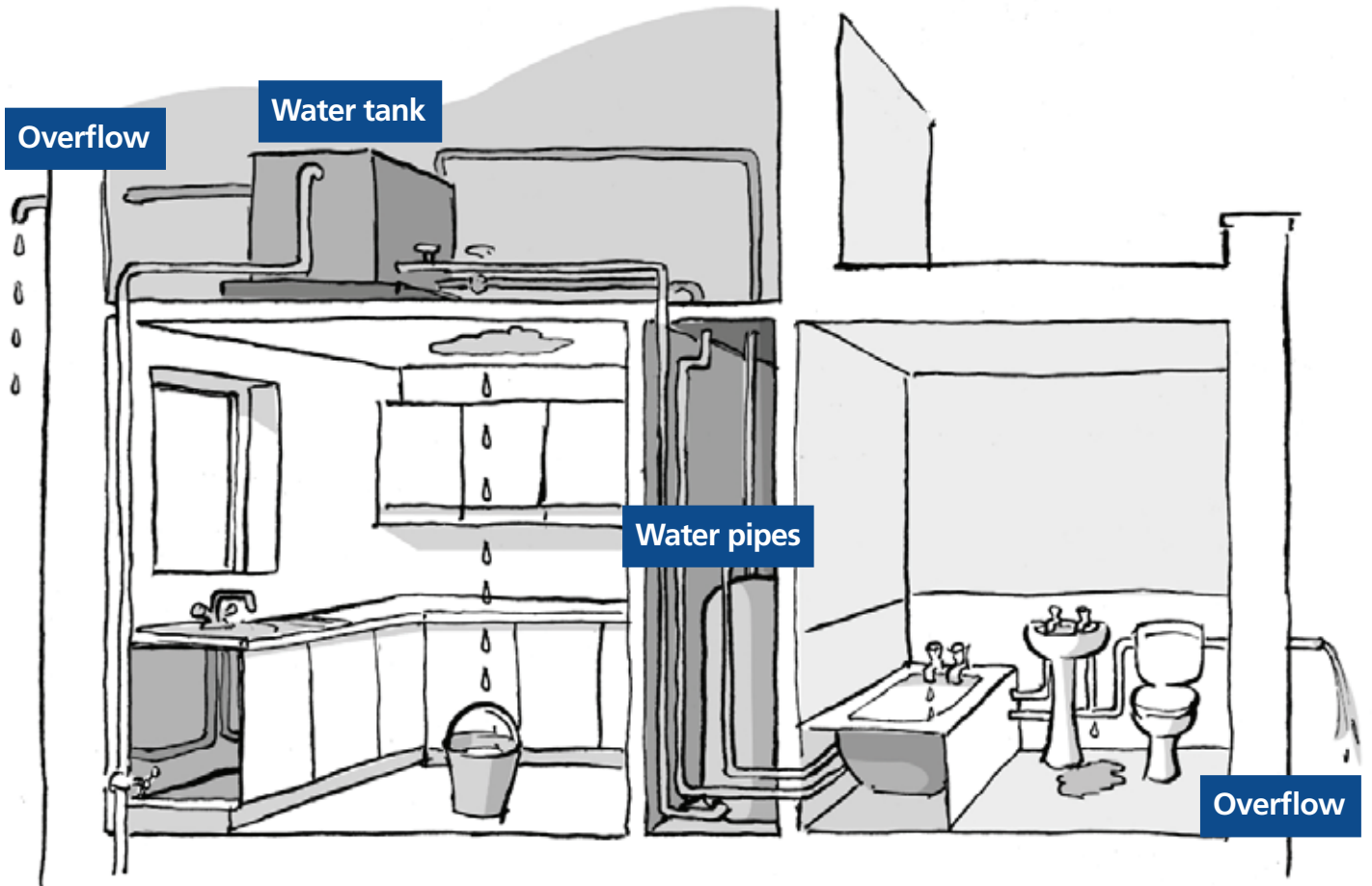
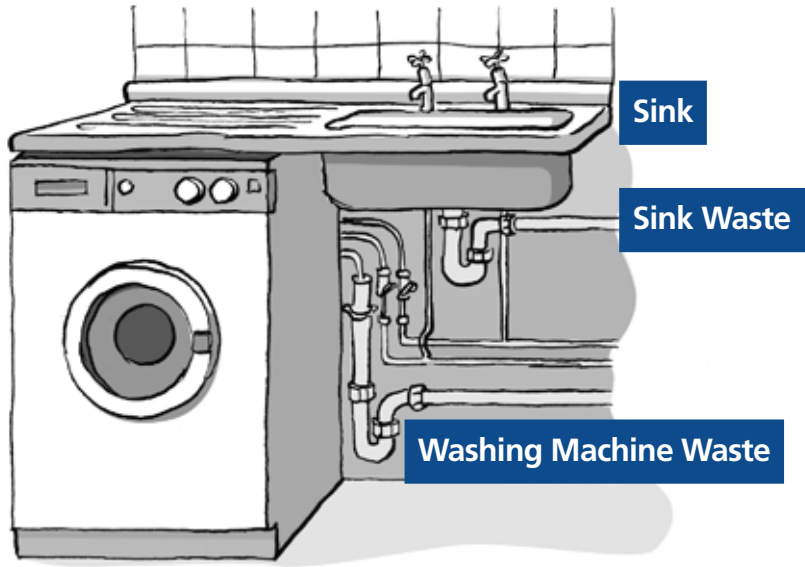
If you think that you have got asbestos in your home, please call the Repairs Helpdesk on **0800 052 6140**.

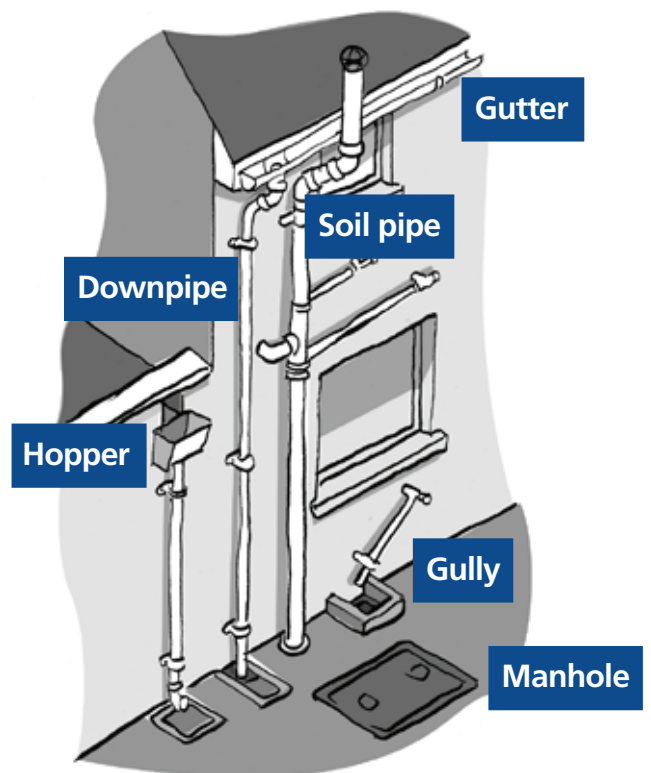
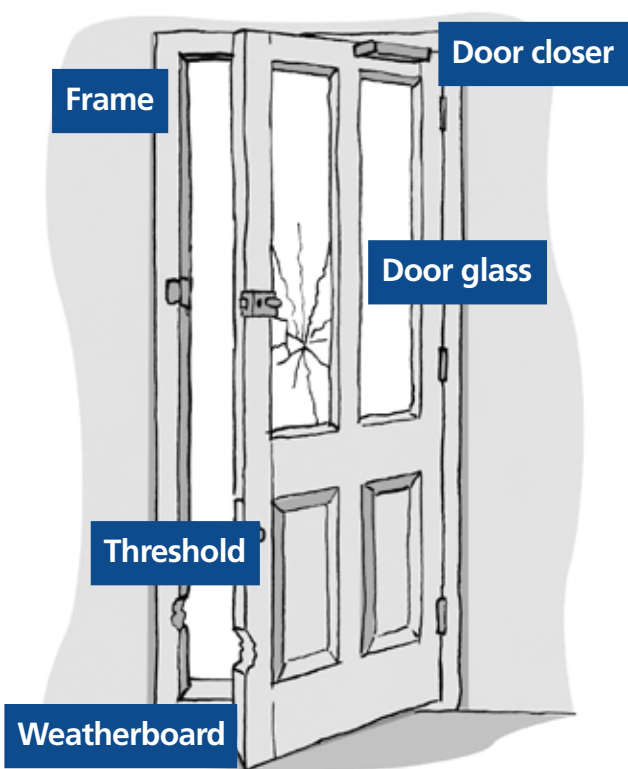
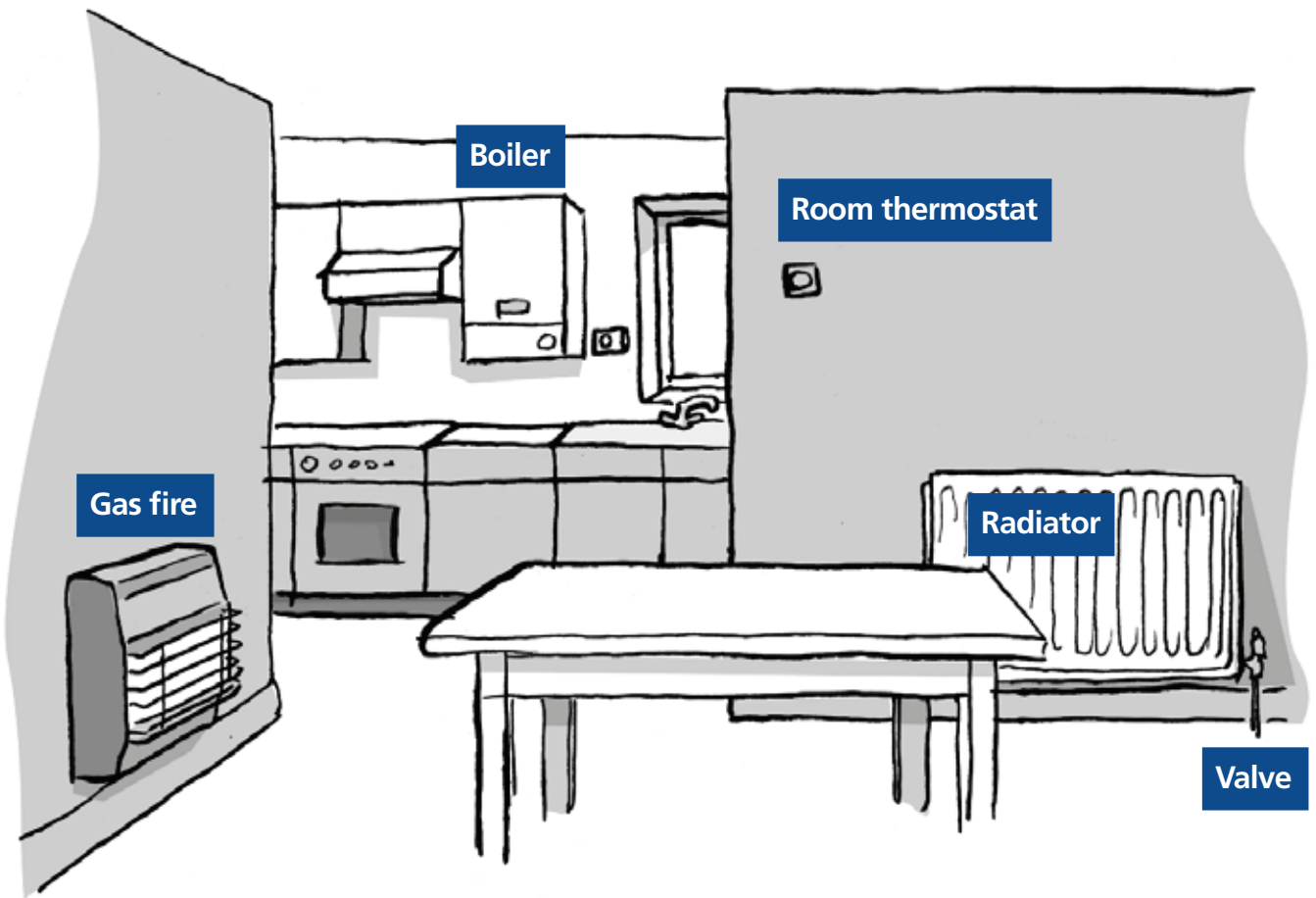


# 9. Reporting repairs – illustrated guides

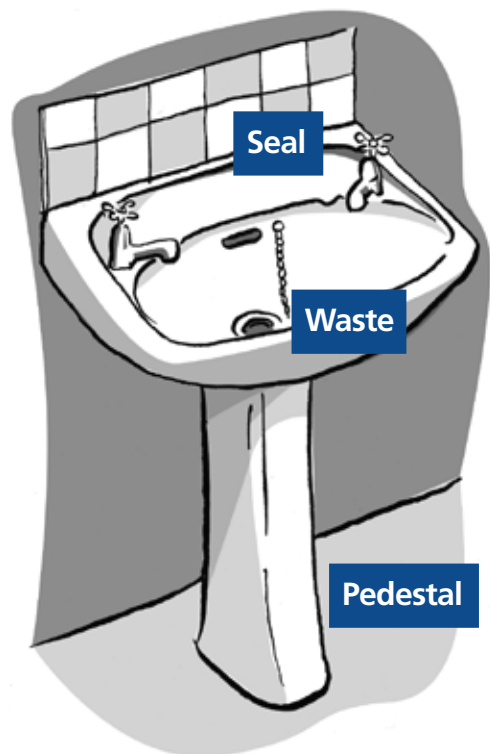
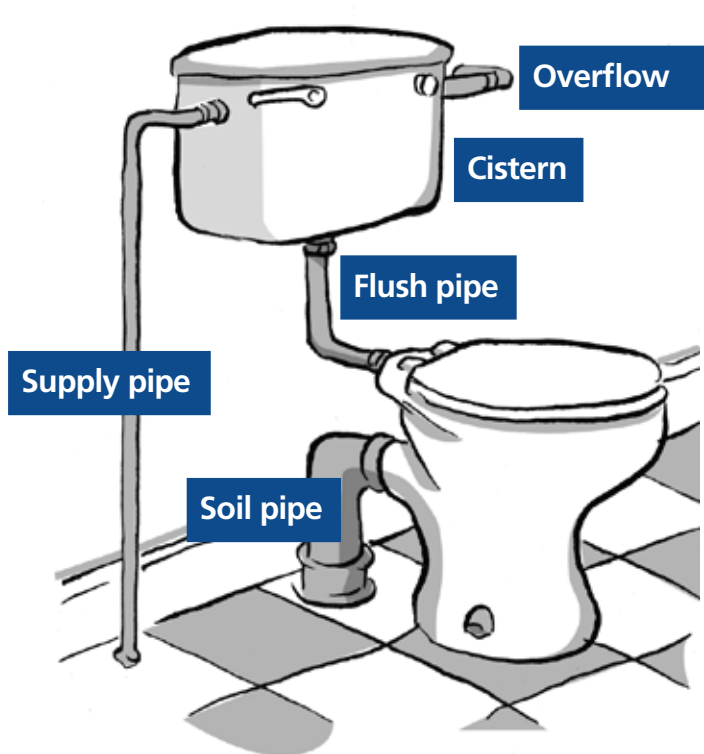
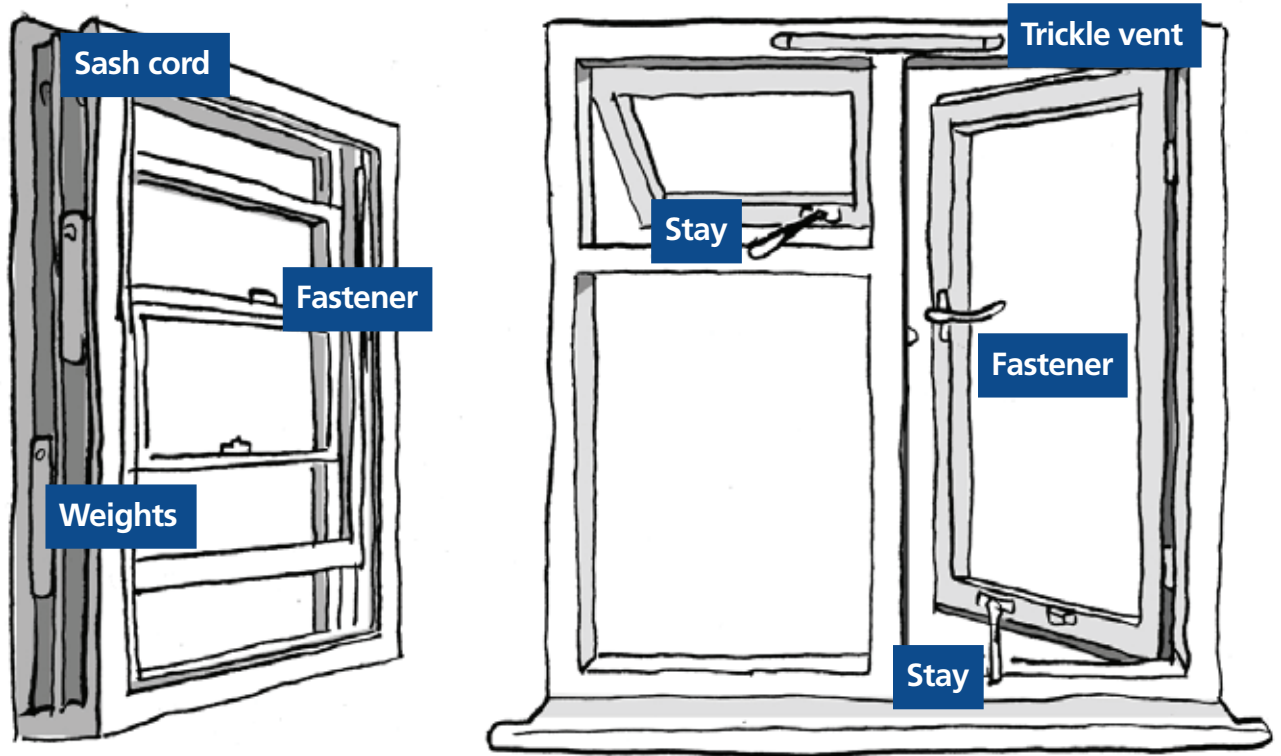
The following pages contain illustrations designed to help you when reporting a repair. You can refer to these to give us better information about your repair.











**Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.**

- ترجمة؟ ضع علامة في المربع وخذها إلى مكتب البلدية. Arabic
- অনুবাদ? বক্সে টিক চিহ্ন দিয়ে কাউন্সিল অফিসে নিয়ে যান। Bengali
- 需要翻譯? 請在這方格內加剔, 並送回任何市議會的辦事處。Cantonese
- ترجمه؟ لطفاً این مربع را علامتگذاری نموده و آن را به هر یک از دفاتر شهرداری ارائه نمایید. Farsi
- Traduction? Veuillez cocher la case et apporter au council. French
- 需要翻譯? 請在這方格內划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Mandarin
- Tłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregoś z biura samorządu lokalnego (council office). Polish
- Tradução? Coloque um visto na quadrícula e leve a uma qualquer repartição de poder local (council office). Portuguese
- Tercümesi için kareyi işaretleyiniz ve bir semt belediye burosuna veriniz Turkish
- other (please state)

**This can also be made available in large print, Braille, or on CD or audio tape**

| Title of EIA   | Repairs & Improvements Handbook   | Ref No. | HM53 |
|--|---|---------|------|
| <p><b>Delivery / Resource / Finance Unit or Intelligent Commissioning name</b></p> | <p><b>Property &amp; Investment Team, Housing &amp; Social Inclusion</b></p>  |         |      |
| <p><b>Aim of policy or scope of service</b></p>                                    | <p>To produce a repairs &amp; improvements handbook for Brighton &amp; Hove City Council's tenants. We aim to introduce a handbook which compliments the tenancy handbook while providing up to date clear information to all residents on repairs and improvements in their homes.</p> <p>The handbook has been developed and designed along with resident focus groups whose views, comments and concerns have been taken into account. This EIA will be revised in light of any observations made by Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC).</p> |         |      |

## 2. Record of data/engagement; impacts identified; and potential actions to meet the Duties.

|  | Data <sup>1</sup> that you have  | Community engagement exercises or mechanisms <sup>2</sup>   | Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential) <sup>3</sup>  | Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)   |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Community Cohesion</b><br/>(what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together.)</p> | <p>There are currently some 12,300 tenancies and 2,230 leaseholders.</p> | <p>We have consulted with resident group including selected tenants from the STATUS survey. We have also consulted with other resident groups such as: RMMG (Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group); Partnership Group; CORE group and the Tenancy Management Group during the course of the inclusion of the contents and</p> | <p>It is the landlords' responsibility to keep tenants informed on changes and to communicate those changes in a timely manner. The risk and effect of not producing the new document is that residents cannot access the correct information and this could impact on their homes.</p> | <p>The handbook has been revised is to ensure all tenants have the correct information necessary to report repairs and plan their own improvements and will be distributed by March 2012 to all residents by methods of distribution yet to be decided.</p> |

<sup>1</sup> 'Data' may be monitoring, customer feedback, equalities monitoring, survey responses...

<sup>2</sup> These may be ongoing links that you have with community and voluntary groups, service-user groups, staff forums; or one-off engagement sessions you have run.

<sup>3</sup> If data or engagement are missing and you can not define impacts then your action will be to take steps to collect the missing information.



|   | Data <sup>1</sup> that you have   | Community engagement exercises or mechanisms <sup>2</sup>   | Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential) <sup>3</sup>   | Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
|   |   | draft design  |  |  |
| <b>Age</b> (people of all ages)   | Equality Act 2010<br>Human Rights Act 1998<br>Equalities & Inclusion policy and action plan 2008-11<br><a href="#">Link to profiling data</a><br><a href="#">Link to STATUS survey 2008</a> | The residents groups consulted had representatives from SHAG (Sheltered Housing Action Group) who participated in drafting the document. Their input and comments were approving and helpful. They recommended the addition of images and it was noted these would be useful. | During the consultation with residents groups it was identified that elderly residents may need assistance and would benefit from having updated information. Examples of this are clearer text on the new handbook and images added for clarity and ease of understanding | Discussions will take place with Housing Managers to ensure the tenants understand their rights and responsibilities and how to access services. This will take place in Jan. 2012 and implemented when the handbook is published. |
| <b>Disability</b> (a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to | Equality Act 2010<br>Human Rights Act 1998<br>Equalities & Inclusion policy and action plan 2008-11   | Although consultation took place with resident groups, representing a diverse range of people, it is noted that no groups representing those  | Depending on the type of disability this may affect a tenant's ability to understand the handbook or the tenant may require a different format to  | Tenants may benefit from an audio version in CD format. This will be investigated at the next Housing Managers meeting and discussed in Feb.   |

|  | <b>Data<sup>1</sup> that you have</b>   | <b>Community engagement exercises or mechanisms<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential)<sup>3</sup></b>   | <b>Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)</b>  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p>carry out normal day-to-day activities<sup>1</sup>)</p> | <p>Housing management IT system data<br/> <a href="#">Link to profiling data</a> :</p> <p>Tenants needing alternative formats</p> <p>OHMS data on mobility bands:<br/> <a href="#">Link to STATUS survey 2008</a></p> <p>We do offer a variety of formats to allow residents to access the handbook in a way that meets their needs (large print, audio tape, CD Braille). British Sign Language signers at sign up.</p> <p>Profile data from tenancy visits is regularly improving the data held by the council.</p> | <p>with disabilities were directly consulted.</p>               | <p>access the information.<br/> It was identified at the resident groups that tenants with learning disabilities will benefit from the images and graphics in the handbook.<br/> They also thought some would benefit from an audio version CD</p> | <p>2012, after which a proposal will be put forward.</p> <p>A proposal for customer facing staff to receive mental health training will be presented at the Partnership meeting on 23 Jan. 2012 and the Housing Managers' meeting in Feb. 2012.</p> |

<sup>1</sup> The definition includes: sensory impairments, impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects, progressive, organ specific, developmental, learning difficulties, mental health conditions and mental illnesses, produced by injury to the body or brain. Persons with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection are all now deemed to be disabled persons from the point of diagnosis.

|   | Data <sup>1</sup> that you have   | Community engagement exercises or mechanisms <sup>2</sup> | Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential) <sup>3</sup>   | Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)                                      |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Gender reassignment</b> (a transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does <u>not</u> need to be under medical supervision to be protected)</p> <p><b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> (protection is during pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which the woman is entitled)</p> <p><b>Race</b> (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, including refugees and migrants; and Gypsies and Travellers)</p> | <p>No specific issues identified</p>  | <p>-----</p>  | <p>We do not envisage any impact on this group, however, we see the importance in engaging and empowering all residents</p>  | <p>Possibility of training with contractors and customer facing staff on sensitivity. This is an agenda item to be discussed at the next Partnership meeting on 23 Jan. 2012</p> |
|   | <p>No specific issues identified</p>  | <p>-----</p>  | <p>-----</p>   | <p>-----</p>   |
|   | <p>Equality Act 2010<br/>Number of requests for translation<br/>Housing register applicants via ethnicity:<br/>Tenant Data on the housing</p> | <p>-----</p>  | <p>There is the potential for the handbook to be less well understood amongst some tenants that are non English speaking or not confident in reading or speaking</p> | <p>To confirm language needs at lettings stage and add to tenant profiling data</p>  |

|   |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
|   | <p><b>Data<sup>1</sup> that you have</b></p>   | <p><b>Community engagement exercises or mechanisms<sup>2</sup></b></p>   | <p><b>Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential)<sup>3</sup></b></p>  | <p><b>Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)</b></p> |
| <p><b>Religion or belief</b><br/>(religion includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief.)</p> | <p>management IT system.</p> <p><a href="#">Link to STATUS survey 2008</a></p> <p>The council offers translation services and Interpreters can be arranged for meetings. The council accesses the Bigword language service for telephone interpreting.</p> <p>Little is known about the influence religion, faith and belief may have on tenant's repairs and maintenance requirements. Repairs helpdesk and the contractors at Mears are trained on faith and awareness</p> <p>Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.</p> <p>Equalities &amp; Inc. policy &amp; action plan</p> | <p>It was identified at tenant meetings that in some cases women may not like one man to enter their home alone to carry out a repair.</p> | <p>English and those who are not aware of their legal rights and council processes if translation / interpreting services are not available</p> <p>Commission for Racial Equality Code of Guidance for racial harassment in housing.</p> | <p>Staff check the person checklist on the housing management IT system (OHMS) to flag up any needs to ensure these can be met during the tenancy.</p>    |

|   | Data <sup>1</sup> that you have   | Community engagement exercises or mechanisms <sup>2</sup> | Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential) <sup>3</sup> | Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)    |
|---|---|---|--|--|
|   | 2008-11<br><a href="#">Link to profiling data</a><br>Housing Management leaflet; 'Culture, diversity religion and belief' – faith awareness guidance for staff and contractors.<br><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar">www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar</a> |   |  |  |
| <b>Sex</b> (both men and women are covered under the Act)                                   | There is currently no gender specific repairs & maintenance satisfaction data available.<br>There is the potential for female tenants to express a preference for female operatives.<br><a href="#">Link to profiling data</a>  | As per religion or belief above                           | -----  | Raise awareness at the letting / first tenancy stage that a female operative can be requested.<br>At time of reporting repair if issue raised. |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b> (the Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people) | Little is known about the influence sexual orientation may have on tenant's repairs and maintenance requirements.<br>Equality Act 2010  | No specific issues identified                             | No specific issues identified  | Raise awareness with contractor staff at the next Partnership meeting in Jan. 2012   |

|   | Data <sup>1</sup> that you have   | Community engagement exercises or mechanisms <sup>2</sup>   | Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential) <sup>3</sup>   | Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|   | <p>Equalities &amp; Inclusion policy and action plan 2008-11</p> <p><a href="#">Link to profiling data</a></p> <p><a href="#">In the STATUS survey 2008</a></p> |   |  |   |
| <p><b>Marriage and civil partnership</b> (only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)</p>                                     | <p>No specific issues identified</p>  |   |  |   |
| <p><b>Other relevant groups</b> eg:<br/>Carers, people experiencing domestic violence, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children etc</p> | <p>Dyslexia information DATA</p> <p>Carers that are involved in offering support to tenants can advocate and contact Repairs on their behalf.</p>               | <p>The residents groups consulted had representatives from the SHAG Group who participated in adding and comments and approving the document. Their input and comments were approving and helpful. Their comments were specifically around easy read publication of document.</p> | <p>Tenants who are not confident in reading or writing English may not be aware of their legal rights, responsibilities and council processes. More vulnerable groups could require assistance in understanding their responsibilities around repairs.</p> | <p>The handbook is subject to a plain language review and will also be available in audio tape and on CD. An audio visual version will be further investigated. It will be an agenda item in Feb. 2012 at the Tenancy Management group to discuss ways to</p> |

|  | <b>Data<sup>1</sup> that you have</b> | <b>Community engagement exercises or mechanisms<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential)<sup>3</sup></b> | <b>Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)</b>                  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
|  |                                       |   |  | <p>ensure the information is clear and different methods of engaging with these groups. A point of contact by phone will be discussed and added to the website.</p> |





#### 4. Attach data and/or engagement lists as appendices.

| Title (of data or engagement)   | Date   | Main findings  | Gaps in data | Contact          |
|---|--|--|--------------|------------------|
| A tenant focus was formed with representatives from across the city to review the Tenant Handbook.                            | Series of meetings from April 2009 to present. | The focus group reviewed the tenancy agreement comments and used this as a basis for finalising the agreement and developing the handbook. The focus group considered equalities issues throughout the handbook in both content and style/layout of handbook.  | -            | Michelle Johnson |
| Housing Management Equalities & Inclusion Steering Group.   | April 2010                                     | The group agreed with the findings and supported the pre tenancy workshop initiative to help younger tenants maintain their tenancy.   | -            | Martin Booty     |
| Consultation with all tenants on new tenancy agreement (the tenant handbook has been written to complement the new agreement) | August/September 2009                          | 2,384 responses were received to the tenancy agreement consultation with 1,615 individual comments (16.9% response rate).<br><br>Some comments indicated support for harassment clauses, zero tolerance on racist and homophobic incidents and support for domestic violence clause. Equalities monitoring information was included and collected on the feedback forms. | -            | Di Hughes        |

## Equalities Impact Assessment Summary

| <b>Repairs &amp; Improvements Handbook – HM53</b>                                 |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of review:</b>  |  |
| <b>Period of review:</b>  | 2009- 2011   |
| <b>Date review signed off by Head of Unit / Lead Commissioner:</b>                | -  |
| <b>Scope of the review:</b>   | To produce a repairs & improvements handbook for Brighton & Hove City Council's tenants which compliments the tenancy handbook and gives clear up to date information to all residents on repairs and improvements in their homes.   |
| <b>Review team:</b>   | Perrin Horne, Glyn Huelin, Mark Dennison, Michelle Johnson   |
| <b>Relevant data and research:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A tenant focus group was formed with representatives from across the city to review the Tenant Handbook, with a number of hosted meetings taking place</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Consultation:</b> indicate who was consulted and how they were consulted       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation took place with all tenants being written to on the proposals for a new tenancy agreement (the repairs handbook has been written to complement the new tenant handbook)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Assessment of impact, outcomes and key follow-up actions:</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree methods by which the handbook is to be distributed</li> <li>• Investigate production of an audio version in CD format with Housing Managers.</li> <li>• Present proposal for customer facing staff to receive mental health training at the Partnership and Housing Managers' meetings</li> <li>• Investigate audio version in CD format.</li> <li>• Investigate possibility of training on sensitivity relating to gender and sexual orientation etc with contractors and customer facing staff</li> <li>• Improve collection of profiling data on OHMS</li> </ul> |
| <b>Name and contact details of lead officer responsible for follow-up action:</b> | Perrin Horne   |
| <b>For further information on the assessment:</b>                                 | Perrin Horne   |

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 96

Brighton & Hove City Council

|                          |  |  |                    |
|--------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>Housing &amp; Social Inclusion Performance Report (Quarter 3)</b> |  |                    |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | <b>19 March 2012</b>   |  |                    |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Head of Housing &amp; Social Inclusion</b>                        |  |                    |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>  | <b>Name:</b>   | <b>Ododo Dafé</b>                      | <b>Tel: 293201</b> |
|                          | <b>Email:</b>  | <b>ododo.dafe@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b> |                    |
| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> | <b>All</b>   |  |                    |

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:







- 1.1 This performance report for Housing & Social Inclusion is for the third quarter of the financial year 2011-2012 and follows the format for presenting information agreed at the previous meetings and incorporates changes suggested at the last meeting.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee comments on the report.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The report continues the use of the 'RAG' system of red, amber and green traffic light symbols to provide an indication of performance and also trend arrows to provide an indication of performance. In response to a request at the December 2011 meeting, figures as well as percentages have been provided against relevant performance indicators.
- 3.2 **Key to symbols used in the report**  
See table below:


| STATUS  |   | TREND                                    |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Performance is below target (Red)                                     |  | Poorer than previous reporting period    |  |
| An area close to achieving target, but in need of improvement (Amber) |  | Same as previous reporting period        |  |
| Performance is on or above target (Green)                             |  | Improvement on previous reporting period |  |

### 3.3 Rent collection and current arrears


























| PERFORMANCE INDICATOR  | SERVICE PLEDGE | TARGET                | ACTUAL                       | STATUS                  | TREND          |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Percentage of rent collected as proportion of rent due each year   | Y              | 98.86%<br>£44,967,995 | 98.65%<br>£44,870,594        | See comment below table | ↓              |
| Percentage tenants with more than seven weeks rent arrears   | Y              | 3.72%                 | 2.87%<br>(Cumulative figure) | As above                | ↓              |
| Percentage of secure council tenants served a Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) for rent arrears   | Y              | 22.39%<br>607         | 18.58%<br>494 NoSPs          | As above                | ↑              |
| Percentage of households evicted because of rent arrears   | N              | Less than 0.29%       | 0.10%                        | As above                | Not applicable |
| Number of households evicted because of rent arrears   | Y              | Less than 35          | 12                           | As above                | Not applicable |
| Percentage of rent loss due to empty properties (inc. TACC)  | N              | 1.9%<br>£852,876      | 1.68%<br>£754,122            | As above                | ↓              |
| Total former tenant arrears  | N              | £447,641              | £556,129                     | As above                | ↑              |
| During the 12 months covered, the figures reported in the 'Actual' column varies to reflect the debts accruing and those recovered etc in the quarter being reported on. The Income Management Team is unlikely to meet the year end target. |                |                       |                              |                         |                |
| Percentage of rechargeable debt collected  | Y              | 20%<br>£71,315        | 15.09%<br>£34,464            | As above                | ↑              |
| Percentage collection rate of leaseholders' recoverable arrears  | N              | 95%                   | -                            | As above                | Not applicable |

NB: As these targets are for year end (rather than for each quarter), no traffic lights will be applied to this table until the end of year report.

#### 3.4.0 Empty home turnaround time

| Empty home turnaround time  |                |        |        |   |       |
|---|----------------|--------|--------|---|-------|
| PERFORMANCE INDICATOR   | SERVICE PLEDGE | TARGET | ACTUAL | STATUS  | TREND |
| Average re-let time in days (all properties)  | N              | 21     | 17     |  | ↑     |
| A table relating to long term empty properties is attached as Appendix 1 and will be included in the report on a regular basis. |                |        |        |   |       |

### 3.5.0 Property & Investment

| Carrying out repairs to your home   |                |               |                       |   |   |
|---|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| PERFORMANCE INDICATOR   | SERVICE PLEDGE | TARGET        | ACTUAL                | STATUS  | TREND   |
| Emergency repairs completed in time   | Y              | 98%           | 98.01%<br>1,818       |    |    |
| Urgent repairs completed in time  | Y              | 98%           | 95.57%<br>2,635       |    |    |
| Routine repairs completed in time   | Y              | 97%           | 98.07%<br>5,134       |    |    |
| Average time to complete routine repairs  | Y              | 15 days       | 11 days               |    |    |
| Percentage of appointments kept   | N              | 95%           | 93.76%<br>13,306      |    |    |
| Tenant satisfaction with repairs  | N              | 95%           | 95.13%<br>1,661       |    |    |
| Percentage of responsive repairs passing post-inspection  | Y              | 95%           | 87.72%<br>250         |   |   |
| Of the inspections that failed two thirds were due to the need for extra work although overall we are still on track to meet the end of year target |                |               |                       |   |   |
| Percentage of repairs completed right first time  | Y              | 94%           | 95.49%<br>9,273       |  |  |
| Cancelled repair jobs and reason  | N              | n/a           | See para. 3.5.1 below | -   | -   |
| HOME IMPROVEMENTS   |                |               |                       |   |   |
| Percentage of homes that are decent   | N              | 81%           | 83.40%                |  |  |
| Energy efficiency rating of homes (SAP)   | N              | 71 (Year end) | 70.8                  | On target to meet year end figure   |  |
| Percentage of planned works passing post-inspection   | Y              | 95%           | 94.23%<br>312         |  |  |
| Stock with up-to-date gas certificates  | Y              | 100%          | 99.91%<br>10,691      |  |  |
| EMPTY HOMES   |                |               |                       |   |   |
| Percentage of empty properties passing right first time.  | Y              | 98%           | 96.46%<br>226         |  |  |

### 3.5.1 Cancelled repair jobs

For Quarter 3, there were 1,727 cancelled jobs representing 17% of the total orders raised (10,103). 714 jobs (41%) were cancelled as a result of no access. Other reasons include where the tenant cancelled the job and where the work is deferred to planned maintenance.

### 3.5.2 Asbestos























Our asbestos database contains information on 2,460 council dwellings. This is a combination of surveys for common ways within blocks of flats and surveys for individual dwellings.

For common ways, there is a legal requirement to survey these areas for asbestos and act on the outcome as necessary. A programme to complete the survey of common ways in council dwellings for asbestos was finalised in February 2012.

There is an ongoing programme of asbestos surveys for individual dwellings which is part of the 'Decent Homes' project. If asbestos is identified during the survey, the results will be added to our database.

For individual homes, if we go into a property to carry out intrusive works likely to disturb any material containing asbestos eg by drilling and/or removing panels, then we would first carry out an asbestos survey.

### 3.6.0 Estates Service

| <b>Estates service</b>  |                       |               |                |   |   |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|---|---|
| <b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>  | <b>SERVICE PLEDGE</b> | <b>TARGET</b> | <b>ACTUAL</b>  | <b>STATUS</b>   | <b>TREND</b>  |
| <b>Percentage passing quality inspections of our cleaning service</b>   | Y                     | 96%           | 98.9%<br>184   |    |    |
| <b>Percentage passing quality inspections of our minor repairs service</b>  | Y                     | 96%           | 98.3%<br>232   |    |    |
| <b>Reduction in fly tipping removed from common areas</b>   | Y                     | n/a           | n/a            | -   | -   |
| Fly tipping is removed by Estates Service staff.<br>We are currently placing notices in each block of flats giving details of waste disposal companies and charities to encourage the more responsible disposal of unwanted items by residents and hence reduce the level of fly tipping. |                       |               |                |   |   |
| <b>Reduction in graffiti reported</b>   | Y                     | n/a           | 3 cases        |    |    |
| <b>Customer satisfaction eg with cleanliness of the blocks 'rate your estate' satisfaction</b>  | Y                     | n/a           | -              | -   | -   |
| This pledge will be reported on following the results of the bi-annual tenant satisfaction survey (STAR)  |                       |               |                |   |   |
| <b>Completion of cleaning tasks</b>   | N                     | 98.5%         | 98.2%<br>3,323 |  |  |
| <b>Emergency removal of bulk waste that met the target time</b>   | N                     | 100%          | 100%<br>8      |  |  |
| <b>Routine removal of bulk waste that met the target time</b>   | N                     | 96%           | 98.1%<br>796   |  |  |
| <b>Emergency removal of graffiti that met the target time</b>   | N                     | 100%          | 100%<br>1      |  |  |
| <b>Routine removal of graffiti that met the target time</b>   | N                     | 96%           | 92.4%<br>12    |  |  |
| <b>Three day replacement of lights that met the target time</b>   | N                     | 100%          | 98%<br>127     |  |  |
| <b>Routine replacement of lights that met the target time</b>   | N                     | 96%           | 100%<br>830    |  |  |
| <b>Neighbourhood response team jobs completed within target time</b>  | N                     | 95%           | 96%<br>4,768   |  |  |











### 3.7.0 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

3.7.1 The service pledges relating to ASB concern areas of work that do not easily lend themselves to target setting, eg the number of new cases or the number of new cases resolved. The details below on each service pledge are as follows:

3.7.2 Our activity against the ASB service pledges are as follows:

- **Number of new ASB cases – 13**
- **Number of enforcement and support actions taken – 375**
- **Number of closed cases that were resolved – 11**
- **Customer satisfaction – 87%**

### 3.8.0 Sheltered housing

| Support plans, daily call service and social activities                    |                |             |              |   |   |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|---|---|
| PERFORMANCE INDICATOR  | SERVICE PLEDGE | TARGET      | ACTUAL       | STATUS  | TREND   |
| Percentage of people with an up to date support plan                       | Y              | 100%<br>912 | 95.5%<br>871 |  |  |
| Percentage of people who decline a support plan                            | N              | 0%<br>-     | 2%<br>19     |    |    |
| Percentage of new residents with a support plan completed within 21 days   | Y              | 100%<br>27  | 96%<br>26    |    |    |
| Call each resident personally (if requested)                               | Y              | 100%<br>*   | 100%<br>*    |    |    |
| To provide at least one social activity per week (in 21 of our 24 schemes) | Y              | 100%        | 100%         |   |   |

\* Every resident will receive their ring round as they request, but as residents can ask for different forms of contact (some have asked for contact weekly, some have calls weekdays but not at weekends etc) the total number fluctuates.

## 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Resident involvement is key to the successful management of council owned homes and also the setting and reviewing our policies and procedures.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

5.1 Although there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, changes in most performance areas will have a financial implication. An example is the improvement in the rent collection and arrears management, which has reduced the amount required to be put aside for



bad debts during 2011-12 within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Any financial implications affected by performance are included in the HRA Targeted Budget Management report, which is reported quarterly to Cabinet.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen*

*Date: 23/02/2012*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are no significant legal implications arising from the report. The information contained within it reflects the range of powers and duties imposed on the council both as a landlord and as a local housing authority under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Housing Act 1985 etc. It is not considered that any individual's human rights are adversely affected by the information contained within the report.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Liz Woodley*

*Date: 28/02/2012*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Where appropriate, equalities implications are included within the body of the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Where appropriate, sustainability implications are included within the body of the report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct risk and opportunity implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are no direct public health implications arising from this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 There are no direct corporate or city wide implications arising from this report.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Appendix 1. Long term empty properties

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

### **Background Documents**

1. None

Empty properties requiring major repairs  
(long term empty properties)

| Days empty<br>(as at 16.02.12) | Area            | Intended use       | When likely to be<br>brought back into use |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| 774                            | Victoria Road   | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 1411                           | Victoria Road   | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 1537                           | Lavender Street | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 4                              | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site June 2012                    |
| 11                             | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site June 2012                    |
| 18                             | Lavender Street | BHSCH              | Start on site June 2012                    |
| 25                             | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 32                             | Manor Place     | To be re-let       | To be let in March 2010                    |
| 39                             | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 39                             | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 46                             | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 46                             | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 53                             | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 88                             | Lavender Street | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 1712                           | Manor Place     | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 1873                           | Lavender Street | Asset team refurb. | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 25                             | Lavender Street | BHSCH              | Start on site June 2012                    |
| 25                             | Lavender Street | BHSCH              | Start on site June 2012                    |
| 60                             | Lavender Street | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 1222                           | Victoria Road   | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 32                             | Victoria Road   | Re-let             | Let in February 2012                       |
| 46                             | Victoria Road   | To be re-let       | To be let in April                         |
| 81                             | Victoria Road   | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 88                             | Victoria Road   | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |
| 312                            | Victoria Road   | BHSCH              | Start on site April 2012                   |

|     |                 |   |                            |
|-----|-----------------|---|----------------------------|
| 361 | Victoria Road   | Asset team refurb.                                | Start on site April 2012   |
| 361 | Victoria Road   | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 396 | Victoria Road   | Extensions project, works due                     | Start on site April 2012   |
| 32  | Lavender Street | BHSCH   | Start on site June 2012    |
| 39  | Lavender Street | To be re-let. Waiting for damp survey             | To be let in March 2012    |
| 53  | Oxford Street   | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 67  | Victoria Road   | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 116 | Lavender Street | To be re-let.                                     | Let in February 2012       |
| 151 | Lavender Street | Extensive works required. No target date as yet.  | Can start before April     |
| 4   | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site June 2012    |
| 11  | Oxford Street   | To be re-let                                      | Let in March 2012          |
| 11  | Oxford Street   | BHSCH   | Start on site June 2012    |
| 60  | Oxford Street   | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 81  | Oxford Street   | To be re-let once external repair works completed | Complete before April 2012 |
| 158 | Oxford Street   | Mears Projects show-home                          | Currently with Mears       |
| 11  | Selsfield Drive | To be re-let                                      | Let in March 2012          |
| 18  | Selsfield Drive | To be re-let                                      | Let in March 2012          |
| 46  | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 60  | Selsfield Drive | Re-let  | Let in February 2012       |
| 60  | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 67  | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 88  | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 95  | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 242 | Selsfield Drive | Asset team refurb.                                | Start on site April 2012   |
| 361 | Selsfield Drive | Asset team refurb.                                | Start on site May 2012     |
| 417 | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |
| 697 | Selsfield Drive | Asset team refurb.                                | Start on site May 2012     |
| 893 | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH   | Start on site April 2012   |

|      |                 |                           |                          |
|------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1299 | Selsfield Drive | Asset team refurb         | Start on site May 2012   |
| 1551 | Selsfield Drive | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 1740 | Selsfield Drive | Asset team refurb.        | Start on site April 2012 |
| 32   | Victoria Road   | Re-let                    | Let in February 2012     |
| 32   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 39   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 46   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 88   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 95   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site June 2012  |
| 368  | Oxford Street   | Asset team refurb.        | Start on site May 2012   |
| 1663 | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | On site                  |
| 4    | Lavender Street | To be re-let.             | Let in February 2012     |
| 11   | Lavender Street | BHSCH                     | Start on site June 2012  |
| 11   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site June 2012  |
| 11   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 18   | Oxford Street   | To be re-let.             | Let in February 2012     |
| 32   | Oxford Street   | To be re-let.             | Let in February 2012     |
| 39   | Lavender Street | BHSCH                     | Start on site June 2012  |
| 53   | Lavender Street | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 879  | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 1334 | Lavender Street | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 39   | Victoria Road   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 81   | Victoria Road   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 809  | Victoria Road   | Asset team refurb.        | Start on site May 2012   |
| 1747 | Victoria Road   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 11   | Lavender Street | Extensive works required. | Let in March 2012        |
| 11   | Oxford Street   | To be re-let              | Let in March 2012        |
| 39   | Lavender Street | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |
| 53   | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                     | Start on site April 2012 |

|      |                 |                          |                          |
|------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 172  | Lavender Street | Extensive works required | Can start before April   |
| 1082 | Oxford Street   | BHSCH                    | Start on site April 2012 |
| 81   | Victoria Road   | To be re-let             | Let March 2012           |
| 11   | Oxford Street   | To be re-let             | Let March 2012           |
| 242  | Oxford Street   | Asset team refurb.       | Start on site April 2012 |
| 396  | Oxford Street   | Asset team refurb.       | Start on site May 2012   |
| 879  | Oxford Street   | Asset team refurb.       | Start on site May 2012   |
| 907  | Oxford Street   | Asset team refurb.       | Start on site May 2012   |
| 1299 | Oxford Street   | Asset team refurb.       | Start on site May 2012   |
| 3833 | Oxford Street   | Eco-refurb. scheme       | Start on site April 2012 |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Asset Team Refurb.</b> | Properties being refurbished by the Asset team and re-let as part of general needs stock |
|---------------------------|--|

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>BHSCH</b> | Properties that meet the criteria for re-letting to Seaside Homes, then being managed by Temporary Accommodation once refurbished |
|--------------|---|

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>All other properties listed</b> | Properties that will be re-let by the Lettings team but need repairs as per the Best Value Performance Indicator Government definition - for example, damp works; removal of asbestos; full re-wire |
|------------------------------------|---|