



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL:
WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA
ADDENDUM**

2.00PM, TUESDAY, 28 AUGUST 2018

ST RICHARD'S CHURCH

ADDENDUM

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Area Panel:**28 August, 3 September, 5 September,
6 September 2018****Briefing Paper:****Housing Fire Health & Safety Update –
Fire Doors**

Brighton & Hove City Council is continuing to work closely with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service in response to the latest government information on fire doors.

The council is temporarily halting its routine front door replacement programme in blocks of flats following a national agreement by manufacturers to suspend production of fire doors. Essential repairs to doors will not be affected.

The move follows a call to door suppliers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to take action after a number of fire doors failed to meet performance standards in testing carried out following the Grenfell fire.

The advice from the government and National Fire Chiefs Council on fire doors is that the additional risk to public safety is low, as a building's fire protection uses a range of measures and, even when not meeting full resistance standards, fire doors will provide some protection.

IG Doors, the council's current door supplier, has written to our repairs partners Mears to inform them that they've currently suspended the supply of new doors. IG Doors are not one of the suppliers whose doors failed.

MHCLG has informed local authorities that testing on Masterdor fire doors has found they do not consistently meet the 30 minute fire resistance standard. We have 2,254 of these doors in our housing - 1,585 in high-rise blocks and 669 in other properties. All were installed before 2010.

We have carried out additional fire risk assessments on all our high-rise buildings where Masterdor fire doors are fitted. We've looked specifically at the potential impacts of the doors failing within 30 minutes and the assessments have confirmed that the risk remains low.

Our highest priority is the safety of our residents and we are awaiting further instruction from the government on what further action to take.

The National Fire Chiefs Council has advised that people should follow existing fire procedures for the building.

Residents should also test their smoke alarms regularly to ensure they work and ensure that their flat front door is fitted with a working self-closing device.

All doors provide essential protection in a fire if they are properly closed.

If any residents have concerns, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offer free home visits to check or fit smoke alarms and offer a range of advice around home safety. Call 0800 177 7069 or visit www.esfrs.org for more information.

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Area Panel Briefing Paper

Options programme for Housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

28th August, 3rd September, 5th September, 6th September

1. Summary

1.1. This paper details the current position regarding the options programme for delivering housing repairs, maintenance, improvements and capital works. The current contractual arrangements expire in March 2020.

2. Background

2.1. Brighton & Hove City Council (Housing) operates a ten year partnering contract with Mears Ltd. that delivers the following services/works to the council's housing stock:

- Responsive repairs and empty properties maintenance
- Planned maintenance and improvement programmes
- Major capital works projects

2.2. This contract ends on 31st March 2020 and therefore all services and works that come under this contract are being reviewed.

2.3. The current contractual spend across all services delivered under the arrangement is approximately £28,000,000 per annum.

2.4. The end of the current contract for these services provides an opportunity to deliver substantial change in these services and works for our residents, stakeholders and the council as a whole.

2.5. This report updates on the engagement work that has been done over recent months and on the next steps being taken to identify the council's preferred options for the delivery of these services in the future.

2.6. A report will be taken to a special meeting of the Housing & New Homes Committee on 26th September 2018 to agree a strategy for the delivery of these services in the future.

3. Tenant and Leaseholder involvement

- 3.1. To date programme officers have attended the following meetings to provide an initial brief of the programme and next steps for tenant and leaseholder engagement:
 - Area Panels
 - Home Service Improvement Group
 - Leaseholder Action Group – Annual General Meeting
 - Business and Value For Money Service Improvement Group
- 3.2. Area Panel meetings provided some initial feedback around the current contractual arrangements and raised some questions about delivery methods moving forward - feedback was included in the March 2018 report to Housing & New Homes Committee.
- 3.3. Representatives at the Home Service Improvement Group were keen to be updated at future meeting of the progress of the programme and gave appreciation around the scale of the programme.
- 3.4. The programme team presented on the programme at the Leaseholders Action Group (LAG) – Annual General Meeting in April 2018 and have worked with the newly elected LAG representatives to engage with leaseholders and collect feedback on the current arrangements.
- 3.5. Leaseholders fed back that they welcomed the opportunity to be engaged in the programme alongside the work being undertaken to improve engagement with leaseholders. Other feedback included that the council should ensure value for money is being delivered through major housing projects and that there should be a stronger focus on maintenance programmes through future delivery arrangements.
- 3.6. The programme team have now completed the following engagement activities:
 - Running four workshops for tenants and leaseholders to share their views on what works well with the current service, what doesn't and what we should change in the future.
 - Carrying out over 1,000 door to door surveys of tenants and leaseholders across the city
 - Running an online and postal survey for tenants and leaseholders to feedback their views.
- 3.7. The workshops were promoted in "Homing In", the council's website and social media channels, by email to resident groups and in a letter to Tenants and Residents Associations across the city.

- 3.8. We have captured all of the feedback from the workshops and have included this as an appendix to this report. This will be shared with councillors to ensure that the views of tenants and leaseholders are represented when decisions are made as to how these services are delivered in the future.
- 3.9. The results of the door to door surveys and the online and paper surveys are being analysed and will also be included in our report to Housing & New Homes Committee.
- 3.10. As well as formal leaseholder consultation and continued engagement with groups it is also of note that smaller a group of tenants and leaseholders (representative of the demographic profile) will be engaged throughout any tender evaluation process.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. Members of the Programme Board will attend Housing & New Homes Committee in September to present an options report setting out a series of ways that the service could be delivered following the end of the current contract.
- 4.2. These options will include delivering some services in house, continuing to deliver some services through outsourced contracts and some mixed options. There will be different options detailed for day to day repairs/empty properties and our planned and major works across the city.
- 4.3. The report will be supported by feedback from the workshops as attached.
- 4.4. The report will also set out the objectives for the service in the future as informed by the tenant and leaseholder engagement work that has been undertaken.
- 4.5. We will update tenants and leaseholders across the city following September's committee meeting and through the Citywide Conference in the Autumn as well as through future area panel meetings.

Contact officers:

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Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

Tenants workshop 1 – 25th July 2018

What should we stop doing?

1. Repeat trips - Job not done the first time, communication to operatives about job description
2. Using complicated words and acronyms - speak clearly
3. Being late and inform residents
4. Report of repairs only by telephone
5. Thinking everything is ok without checking
6. Relying on contractor checks
7. Relying on sub-contractors
8. Fobbing us off, saying one thing and not doing it or doing another
9. Being late or not turning up
10. Turning up and then disappearing
11. Lack of communication
12. Being disorganised, e.g without the right materials
13. Time wasting
14. Frustrating tenants
15. Us chasing up, wasting time
16. Telling us it's in the tenancy – there could be disabilities
17. Being inconsiderate about parking (drop down kerbs)

What would it be great to start doing?

1. Property MOT's
2. Communication and training – clear procedures so limitations are clear
3. Respect residents to create a home not just a property
4. A visible presence, e.g. estate wardens
5. Area based operatives and offices to do smaller repairs, e.g. Whitehawk pilot
6. Ability to do repairs when needed, i.e. attend to one job, see another, so do it
7. Need more staff on both sides
8. More apprenticeships and local staff
9. Local handyman
10. Increase “ownership” of repairs enquiries etc. by staff – increases local knowledge and improve relationships between residents and staff
11. More awareness of disabilities and how to support residents

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

12. More attendance at resident meetings to report back, take ownership, follow up issues and listen to residents' concerns, etc. e.g. resident involvement officers, contractor staff, BHCC staff
13. Increased direct communication between residents and company
14. Dedicated person to contact
15. To every issue there is a perceived solution
16. Trying to create storage space in homes, especially houses, e.g. removal of immersion heaters/airing cupboards/pantries
17. Tenants to pay for own qualified electricians/plumbers – need more support to do this for personalisation of home
18. Relocating gas/electric meters
19. When BHCC remove an item, e.g. a gas fire, then remove the 'whole', not just the fire but redundant pipes too
20. Forms of communication to tenants check understanding of message, e.g. reading out letters and operative checks tenant is aware of what's happening.

What is good about what we do?

1. Call centre - One contact number (improve ways to communicate, contact points to report repairs)
2. ID cards, branding, visible uniform, vans
3. Empty properties- condition when let is better than old contract. Any issues resolved quickly
4. EDB – [contractor] workers courteous, other operatives from sub-contractors not always so polite and respectful
5. If it's possible to be done, they will do it. If you need help, they will try and help.
6. Once you get contact with correct person, things progress. Can be difficult to navigate.
7. Planned work – if see a common theme, will consider creating a programme of work rather repeat repair
8. Estate inspections used to be good and regular but don't always pick up on relevant issues.
9. New kitchens and bathrooms – (took a long time), kitchen fit was good. Individual specifications need addressing
10. Photo Voltaic cells great, but how does roof etc. cope longer term – more solar panels available
11. EDB – helps the whole estate, effects everyone and promotes positive interactions between tenants "cheers us up"

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

12. Responsive repairs are carried out, but not always planned works, e.g. showers in seniors housing
13. If repair is reported correctly, then process works – if tenant doesn't know or can't report repair then issues happen
14. Repair operatives seem to know what's needed. Forethought there with some workers.

What should we do more of?

1. Identify and stop perverse incentives and moral hazards
 - i.e with systems
 - do more to challenge how we work
 - rewards and incentives
 - more awareness of risks , advantages to contractors
2. More training for operatives and all staff in communication
3. More honesty, less excuses
4. More challenges for poor customer service
5. More accountability for the customer and organisation
6. More honest communication when appointments will be missed or an emergency occurs
7. More understanding around needs to change appointments
8. People's lives and flexibility around appointments
9. Local accountability for operatives and contractor
10. More local operatives
11. Apprentices
12. More 'truths' as to why appointments are missed, 'phantom calls'
13. More appointments outside of office hours – don't presume that people are in mon-fri 9-5
14. More opportunity to have repairs out of hours
15. More services available for responsive repairs out of hours
16. More localised service – teams small enough to take ownership of patch
17. Routine repairs delivered in evenings
18. More local teams delivering services with local knowledge
19. More flexibility in appointments
20. More transparency on costs for all residents – see where the rent goes

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

Tenants workshop 2 - 1st August 2018

What should we stop doing?

1. Relying on contractor to manage first part of empty property process (incoming tenants)
2. Sending out people to 'pre-inspect' small repairs
3. Wasting money on new turf in Summer on new build
4. Wasting money on sub-contractors work, without same guidelines as main contractor
5. Code of Conduct not being bought into by sub-contractors
6. Leaving grass cuttings as can end up blocking gutter
7. Neglecting the neighbourhood and community
8. More transparency about amount of money which goes on sub-contractors

What would it be great to start doing?

1. Let housing go into any empty properties to retrieve any usable items
2. Call centre respecting what residents are telling them about a needed repair
3. Look at new kitchen and bathroom rules within B & H standard
4. More post-inspections of work by (someone) independent to the contractor
5. Put a time limit on when planned/cyclical maintenance takes place, e.g no. of years into the future
6. Clearer about when work is planned
7. Preventative maintenance, e.g gutter clearance, soakaways, drains
8. When dealing with damp consider a whole building & lifestyle options
9. Grounds maintenance in smaller blocks to be appropriate for the site. Service charges to reflect level of service received, value for money
10. In-house delivery
11. TUPE'd BHCC staff to contractor, but now employed additional people
12. More in-house delivery would reduce risk of fraud, wastage etc.
13. Research current and historical in-house delivery, relating to cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs
14. Skill base of contractors, engineers etc.
15. Local employment, apprentices all good

What is good about what we do?

1. New bathrooms for disabled people – the workmanship is good.

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Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

2. Call waiting times are better now
3. Operatives are good – e.g. in manner despite having bad information about the job
4. Uniform and I.D cards, so can check who they are
5. [Contractor] at start of contract
6. Responsive repairs
7. Once on site – empty property cycle is good
8. Text ahead service
9. Repairs desk – first questions asked to assess severity of repairs (scheduling)
10. Good service, quick, personable
11. Guidelines for Code of Conduct for [contractor]
12. Operatives polite and respectful ([contractors])
13. Operatives have I.D ([contractor])
14. Leasehold offers for servicing, repairs and maintenance (gas)
15. Apprentices
16. Employing local people

What should we do more of?

1. Estates to 'advertise' and make clear what minor repairs they do
2. Coming back to Brighton and Hove Decent Homes standard for repairs, kitchen and bathrooms
3. Driving value for money
4. Maintenance? Ensure sub-contractors have same standards and quality of delivery. Code of Conduct
5. More communication around planned works/maintenance
6. More publicity for cyclical works which are planned
7. Continue with 'Resident Inspectors'
8. Repairs rather than replacement (preventative maintenance)
9. More rigorous diagnosis of 'repair' issue (damp/lifestyle impact on issue)
10. More empathy with tenants
11. More energy efficiency
12. Spend more money (wisely)
13. More value for money for service charges
14. Voluntary contribution of service charge e.g. "I'd rather pay more for grass cutting than communal aerial as I don't use a communal aerial"
15. Make gas safety checks for leaseholders compulsory?

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16. Take service in-house?
17. More client surveying (tenant and leaseholder)
18. More statistical analysis

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

Leaseholders workshop 1 – 25th July 2018

What should we stop doing?

1. Wasting money, e.g. repeated visits for one job
2. Overcharging on works of all types
3. Needs better pricing and value for money – e.g. Albion Hill balconies and lifts
4. Stop absence of the truth
5. Stop being opaque
6. Stop spinning and talking things up
7. Inefficiencies
8. Being blind to contractors shortcomings
9. Neglecting proper feedback to residents
10. “Blah and blather” i.e. corporate speak/jargon/ unnecessary– saying something (lots) but really saying nothing, e.g. what are the outcomes of the complaints
11. Being or having a “black hole”
12. Allowing quality to deteriorate after initial period
13. Calling for feedback **only** on jobs that have **not** been complained about – i.e. manipulation
14. Contractor doing their own satisfaction survey
15. Having one contract that incorporates all types of works - so e.g. major projects should always be tendered independent of responsive repairs contract
16. Stop using Community Payback team for internal decorations, e.g. poor job at Albion Hill. Probably better used for non-skilled work.
17. Short-term thinking and inappropriate non future-proofed design considerations (e.g. wrong/corrosive hinges on Essex Place balcony enclosure windows – near the seafront. Problems with telecom mast at Ellen not followed through to save some delays at Livingstone and Conway. Not learning from lessons.
18. Ignoring guarantee/warranty periods (e.g. Somerset Point external staining, although this might not be a warranty issue).
19. Poor specifications
20. Staff under resourcing and/or wrong skills
21. Over specifying jobs/works
22. Downgrading correct specifications just to save money in the shorter term (e.g. quality of ironmongery at Clarendon windows)
23. Spec needs to be better and done by housing not a contractor
24. Relying on people with the wrong motivation, e.g. profit
25. Thinking only within one/a/someone’s box. Think wider impacts/implications

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

26. For major works stop assuming that each block in a programme requires the same works, e.g some concrete repairs at Livingstone might not have been needed as it has a different construction to the other (3/4) blocks (see Sandberg report)
27. One size fits all thinking
28. [Doing things to avoid criticism] and over specifying on Health and Safety, (how dangerous is a doormat?)
29. Stop “trench mentality” – “it’s all too much so you put your hands over heads and hide”
30. Stop being negative of cyclical maintenance, e.g gutters, doors, window ironmongery
31. Stop erosion of proper estate management skills in favour of more social work type skills, e.g needs a works department skilled to look after buildings too
32. Stop the “industrial landscape” in the communal areas – however, also acknowledged that the health and safety implications of cluttered communal areas is very important
33. Stop using [consultant]; need more independent and local surveyors
34. Stop paying a contractor – 18% profit when they simply sub-contract, e.g. hire a scaffolder

What would it be great to start doing?

1. Listen more to what residents want – the people who live in the building
2. At the very inception of the project engage with tenants and leaseholders
3. Better involvement earlier in the process. This will improve confidence that the work is required.
4. Inform tenants what the project cost is and how this effects leaseholders – they need to value where they live
5. Greater competition with works/contractors. Framework of several contractors to choose from – in-house short term tie-in
6. BHCC should be better resourced to manage the new contracts/projects better, quality assurance and quality control.
7. BHCC must specify each product design for installation, e.g kitchens, fire doors.
8. Surveyors should be local firms either in-house for BHCC or external but local as local companies would have an interest in Brighton and Hove.
9. Maintenance supervisors
10. Better and more regular maintenance of assets in order to extend the life of the buildings
11. BHCC should spend smaller amounts of money in making the buildings look nice, e.g unpleasant entrances areas to blocks (looks too industrial)

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

12. Buy in scaffolding. This is a large cost to leaseholders
13. Clearer and better programmes of planned or major work projects to be transparent, and put these on website. Publish this and any changes made clear.
14. Better communication in streams of work where scaffold is required
15. Scaffold register
16. List of outstanding works to a block so that different teams (projects) can tap into that and co-ordinate works
17. I.T system – critical
18. Clearer recordings of what work has been completed for service charges. Again I.T system – joined up
19. Warranty management – BHCC
20. Pool of surveyors/clerk of works to use when required
21. Asset management – out on the ground doing reports of conditions of buildings

What's good about what we do?

1. Quick call answering of call centre (better to have [gas contractor] with own call centre or getting full response)
2. Do more local operatives and sub-contractors*
3. Improved diagnosis (complete at 1st visit) – qualifications/experience of [contractor] staff and trainees titled project manager*
4. Improve communication (ICT system) – style of writing*
5. Graffiti and bulk rubbish could be better (done quickly in few days)*
6. Past 2 years BHCC management of planned major works supervision has improved – very helpful, easy to contact
7. Quality of products, e.g. sinks, kitchens
8. Quantity of improvements good, but not certain of value for money, need more transparency of costs
9. Lack of joined up working coordinating repairs, so have multiple visits*
10. More direct BHCC surveyors to check before and after works
11. Improved coordination of sub-contractors and specialists, e.g. EDB, inadequate information given to operatives*
12. Park Court – fire doors peeling (approx. 5 years ago) *
13. Responsive repairs improved initially with [contractor]... but not sustained. Held to account, contract good.*
14. Planned maintenance no better*
15. Warranty management *
16. Polite staff all the time

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

17. Tenants and residents associations meetings – more frequent attendance by BHCC officers to take queries and feedback (difference between (RIO's PIO's?)) *
18. EDB is a good scheme, quick bids.... but creates divide between tenants and leaseholders due to payments. Power/influence not always fair*
19. EDB budget reduced*
20. Resident involvement is positive with EDB
21. BHCC improved skills and knowledge with planned work. Right people for the job, more BHCC control of quality
22. Improved communication, e.g. workshop today
23. Access to housing centre tricky due to location*
24. Co-location of housing centre
25. One large contract – separate responsive repairs, DLO with BHCC. Major works sub individual jobs directly managed by BHCC not a 3rd party*
26. More BHCC staff means improved supervision of quality and better control. Long term benefit of better product and design and reduced maintenance cost long term/
27. Actual contract was good but [contractor] not held to account led to issues*
28. Cyclical maintenance, e.g window mechanisms, long term costs vs short term savings and energy efficiency.*
29. Improve BHCC accountability for decisions and products

What should we do more of?

1. Transparency
2. Communication – prior to 30 days
3. Refurbish communal areas
4. Parking enforcement for our blocks
5. Visitors parking bays – appropriate use
6. Contractors reporting ASB for hazards
7. Discussions on major works before statutory consultation
 - More engagement
 - Better pricing for major works
8. Work with more contractors to get better quality and value for money and pool of suppliers
9. More quality control, clerk of works
10. Cosmetics – life cycle maintenance, more maintenance
11. Windows, lifts, doors, warranties, programmed works, maintenance – a programme for this
12. Quality assurance – checking, monitoring, building management

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

13. Communication with residents on costs of items in their homes
14. More practical solutions, more people on the ground, more people to contact
15. More joint working across the council. I.e. Cityclean
16. More communication with contractors and works that are not commissioned through partnership (i.e. Aerial works, wires in blocks and cables)
17. Planning with other teams and residents
18. More control over works and contract management
19. Surveying and specifying needs to be employed by council
20. Need to be more accessible
21. Consultation at an earlier stage
22. More joint working across all stakeholders to spec work and engage in procuring works and contracts
23. More involvement from all interested parties to prevent contractors identifying repairs, condemning systems and receiving works
24. Cyclical maintenance to improve life of assets (i.e. Windows, gutters, doors, external doors)
25. Maintenance to ensure warranties remain valid and increase life of asset
26. More resident inspectors – to include external areas and communal areas so that small issues can be dealt with quicker before programmes
27. More accessible reporting on housing ICT system for:
 - Money matters
 - Jobs (old) include start dates, process, competition and cost
 - Warranty management process
 - Asset management process
 - Estate inspections
 - Clerk of works for visits, recommendations, outcomes
 - Communication with leaseholders
 - Block by block reports
 - All relating to audit trail.
28. More accountability and ownership of issues
29. Repairs calls dealt with after 1 call
30. More detailed responses to queries, responding to all points within the query
31. More understanding for leaseholders for major projects costs, large bills for works can be very difficult and impossible and destroy people – capping of major costs needs to be considered
32. More responsibility owned by this council to keep up maintenance – this can be considered appropriately through service charges

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

Leaseholders workshop 2 – 1st August 2018

What should we stop doing?

1. Poor communication
2. Poor responses to email
3. Passing from person to person
4. Leaving people 'in the dark' about works
5. Poor maintenance of buildings
6. Large 'one-off' investment projects that are costly and difficult to budget for
7. Suddenly spending money after leaving blocks for a long time
8. Doing works that don't need doing
9. Hiding behind costs – not transparent
10. Making mistakes that have effects on costs, e.g. scaffolding
11. Withholding full cost information (help to justify costs, detail in bills)
12. Dishonesty
13. Stop all big jobs going to one main contractor (separate repairs and other works)
14. Using staff not qualified
15. Poor control of quality of works, who is checking works?
16. Missed appointments
17. Poor quality of repairs
18. Stop delays in programme of works
19. Avoiding dealing with repairs and allowing disrepair to worsen
20. Passing works between repairs/planned areas and therefore delaying works
21. Poor to little quality checking
22. Mis-use of council properties and funds
23. EDB – money could be better used
24. Stop adding extras onto project works so that bill becomes huge
25. Leaving it so long to do works so that all happens at once
26. Passing on bills to leaseholders for faulty equipment
27. 'Phantom' calls – blaming residents for lack of attendance
28. Repeat visits
29. '10 year plan' always year 1!
30. 'All at once' approach, stage works
31. Replacing all assets at once – do they need it?
32. Stop poor maintenance of assets
33. Mistakes on bills

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

34. Leaving leaseholders to have to find out detail in costs and find mistakes
35. Contractor condemns asset and then is incentivised to make money replacing, i.e. surveying on contractor side (should be council employee)
36. Stop major works bring part of any long term contract
37. Stop giving meaningless answers to questions
38. Stop hiding behind relationships
39. Stop charging double management fees on works
40. Contracting out for major works
41. Stop blurred lines of responsibility
42. Stop profit and additional management costs (hidden and transparent profit)
43. Stop 'non' reactive maintenance - preventative maintenance doesn't happen, reactive maintenance doesn't happen, then a major project gets developed for additional profit
44. Charging management fees as a percentage
45. Stop allowing contractor to dictate costs and run the show
46. Using large national firms when good local contractors are available
47. Stop lying – when works haven't been done, (tree – cherry picker)
48. Stop giving ridiculous excesses (computer system needing to class a job)
49. Unreasonable costs to leaseholders – challenge contractors first
50. Allowing contractors to 'mark own homework'
51. Putting good money after bad - review blocks as a whole, ceilings to asset investment, consider demolish/rebuild
52. Stop employing [contractor]
53. Allowing those to specify the works when they will be doing the works
54. Allowing work to become necessary through neglect of maintenance
55. Major works on a block contract – should be tendered individually
56. Playing divide and rule, e.g. council tenants vs leaseholders vs leaseholders tenants, resident leaseholders vs non-resident leaseholders
57. Issuing contracts without understanding the asset (replacement programmes not always needed, grounds maintenance per sq metre, when we don't know how many, properly assessing needs for works carried out
58. Having people in positions who are not qualified appropriately and cannot fully answer questions (both client and contractor)
59. So employing people in positions who do not have any authority to get things done
60. Stop fobbing us off
61. Stop talking down to us
62. Assuming that everyone is on the internet
63. Assume everyone can get to meetings in working hours

Options programme for housing repairs, planned maintenance and capital works

Tenant and Leaseholder Workshops

64. Letting warranties and guarantees run out
65. Unclear specifications not clearly defined

What would it be good to start doing?

1. Agree in conjunction with committee of leaseholders a maximum price for individual leaseholder per major works project, to ensure costs are reasonable
2. Maintenance of properties as per manufacturers specs
3. Pro-active (planned in) maintenance to reduce costly replacements
4. Transparent, meaningful responses to queries, e.g. evidence warranties are being enacted
5. Separate tendering process for major works – section 20's not being part of long term agreement
6. Commission external/independent surveyors for major works
7. Make reports easier to access (fire, building, roof, cladding etc.)
8. Change green netting on scaffolding to lighter colour
9. Regular preventative maintenance routine
10. Keep to terms of warranties – schedule inspections before warranties ends
11. Create accurate and up to date asset management system
12. Split who is doing specs of what works need to be done from organisation doing the works
13. Independent quality assurance, quality control and sign off
14. Meaningful consultation, early engagement (pre-programming) including inclusion in asset management planning process
15. Grouping works to save and informing leaseholders how much to save (where reasonable), where not then stagger costs to prevent large bills
16. Sector competent staff, e.g. surveyors, not just paper pushers
17. Agree maximum per annum to charge for major works
18. With high cost major works, give more detail; minimum of 5 years in advance to allow for budgeting
19. Complete inspection every one to two years to accurately manage assets and planned maintenance/repairs and major works, in conjunction with reserve accounts for pre-payment of high cost works
20. Online resource showing works history for properties
21. Pre-planning consultation
22. Enforcing an accurate list of warranties
23. Pre-planning consultation with both leaseholders and tenants
24. In-house surveyors, planning of works, Health & Safety, Clerk of Works and cost control

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25. Online resource to see history of properties to enable leaseholders (also for staff use) to plan for costs
26. Regular planned maintenance and inspections to prevent costly repairs
27. Utilising front line staff

What's good about what we do?

1. Responsive repairs
2. On site management at some places
3. Outreach – engagement
4. Apprenticeships
5. Beginnings of a more positive relationship – needs to go a lot further
6. Words maybe OK - need to turn into actions
7. Meetings and resident engagement

What should we do more of?

1. Treat the money/budget like it's your own, (better still treat it like it belongs to councillors)
2. Involve everyone and remember people have the same interests (i.e. tenants and leaseholders), not necessarily true as tenants don't pay directly or at all! But main interest is in having a nice place to live
3. Embrace views of leaseholders more, because the council will also benefit from having more money available (efficiencies) to do more projects.
4. Do more of explaining finances to tenants
5. Routine/preventative maintenance to extend life of assets, (e.g. more at Lennox St)
6. Keep to guarantees, use defects liability periods, especially on cladding works
7. Quality control and QA
8. Employ more trades directly and apprentices
9. More procedures in place to ensure that correct building and safety regulations are followed
10. Communication – 2 way and more option times for meetings, e.g. weekends and later evenings
11. More genuine consultations, earlier in process, i.e. real interest in what people have to say, not just the S20 notice, but before
12. More in-house surveyors and estimators – you can't rely on your contractors

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13. More comprehensive knowledge of assets including e.g. proper info of quantities/size of land/grass areas for grounds maintenance and knowledge of unit costs, and more record keeping
14. Honest charging – e.g. if only mopping/cleaning for 48 out of 52 weeks (to account for holidays and sickness) then only charge for 48 weeks – use these easy wins – but if your cleaners sick you still have to pay for them
15. Works over a certain value should be tendered on the open market, or via chosen list of contractors, usually 3 for high value, and not the same 3 – rigging problem
16. Local approved contractors
17. Have an email list for all leaseholders and invite to meetings or send communications (only found out about this meeting via someone else)
18. PDFs online – e.g. Homing In, save money, a Facebook page (but not everyone has a computer)
19. More surveyors – even on a project by project basis
20. Bank of local surveyors with local offices with a vested local interest (support the local economy) “sticky money”
21. More details on the annual expenditure bill – be more transparent, open, honest, don’t wait until asked
22. Let LAG use councils mailing list, even though they shouldn’t have access to it
23. Shorter term contracts
24. More penalty clauses for poor performance, late delivery etc.
25. In-house control
26. More focus on overall property and estate maintenance, not just the tenancy management/people side
27. Transparency – production of reports, availability or access to reports that show we’re maintaining properties/components as per manufacturer specification
28. Proactive maintenance – preventative
29. More in-house or independent surveyors, clerk of works, quantity surveyors
30. Meaningful S20 consultation, and the contract shouldn’t cover major works, not just about commenting on work a contractor will automatically get “it moved from a democracy to a dictatorship” “the dictator moved in without anyone noticing”
31. Leaseholders to have special representation or advocate when long term contracts are agreed (legal or surveyor), paid from the increase in service charge fees from major works because leaseholders end up paying multiple times – e.g. contract managers managing contract managers managing main contractors.
32. More equitable charging across the city because, e.g. unfair to have percentage of block costs in those blocks with fewer flats (e.g. for MEDs)

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33. Have a maximum cap on the value of works or bills for any leaseholder during a fixed period, e.g. an extension or variation of Florries Law.

Key

* - a negative comment in the positive section

[text] - where we have amended wording

Area Panels – August/September 2018

Briefing paper – Home Purchase Policy update

1. Background

- 1.1 Housing & New Homes Committee agreed a Home Purchase Policy in September 2017 to enable the purchase of homes funded by the Housing Revenue Account. This enabled the service to:
- Maximise the supply of affordable homes in the city in support of the Housing Strategy
 - Meet housing need through the housing register
 - Utilise retained Right to Buy receipts thereby avoiding the need to return capital funds to the government and reducing the impact on the HRA's borrowing headroom.
- 1.2 The committee agreed that a year long pilot should be undertaken, with a budget of £2m to purchase properties that have previously been sold under the right to buy and that the council has first refusal to buy back. It was agreed that for the pilot '75% should be general needs unless the case is not viable then 25% to temporary accommodation. To charge social rents up to living wage rents' for General Needs stock. Local Housing Allowance rates would be charged for Temporary Accommodation stock.
- 1.3 This briefing seeks to provide an update on the pilot. For the purposes of the pilot it concentrated on the buy back of properties where the council had the right of first refusal to buy back former council homes. The briefing also suggests amendments to the policy.

2. Pilot outcomes: Buy back of properties sold under the Right to Buy (Right of first refusal)

- 2.1 The pilot commenced on the 1 November 2017. As at 6 August 2018 the council has received 17 offer notices and are aware of a further offer notice due to be received. Of these:
- 2 properties (1 x 2 bedroom flat ,1 x 3 bedroom house) have been purchased and have been let as general needs properties
 - 3 properties (1 x 1 bedroom flat, 2 x 2 bedroom flats) have had offers agreed and are proceeding to sale. It is proposed two of these properties are used for general needs and one for temporary accommodation
 - 2 owners withdrew their properties from sale

- 4 offer notices were declined due to the high value of the property (in excess of £250,000 threshold)
- 4 properties are declined due to not providing value for money
- 2 properties are currently under consideration.

2.2 To date the pilot has shown us:

- There are a good number of opportunities coming through and the properties are typically in a very good condition
- The council have also been able to achieve the purchase of general needs units and not have an over reliance on temporary accommodation units, in line with the request from this committee last September
- The threshold of £250,000 has not proved to be a barrier to this policy. However it is acknowledged that this threshold will mean that the council can usually only achieve the purchase of smaller properties (typically 1 and 2 bedroom properties)
- To date the council has spent £428,500 with a further £681,200 committed bringing the total spend to date to £1.1m (July 2018)
- This pilot has demonstrated that the fluctuation in valuations often due to the location of the property does have an impact on the viability of purchases with properties in central locations typically representing less value for money. Four properties have been rejected on this basis
- Each property being considered for purchase is assessed for its viability at a social rent and a living wage rent (for general needs properties) and at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels (for temporary accommodation). To date no purchases have been viable at social rent but a number have been viable at a living wage rent and at LHA level.

3. Expanding the scope of the Home Purchase Policy

Former council properties for sale on the open market

- 3.1 Where there is no right of first refusal, there may still be good value opportunities for the council to buy former council homes back. These were not included in the pilot year but it is proposed going forward that we give consideration to direct approaches from other leaseholders. It is proposed that this would happen at specified times when we may wish to increase activity on the scheme. By limiting it to certain times will also ensure resources are used appropriately to manage enquiries and that leaseholders are not unnecessary contacting the council wishing to sell their property. Appropriate advertising of the scheme can be done via the council's website, social media, the Leaseholders Action Group and through Homing in.

Other opportunities

- 3.2 Alongside the purchase of homes, other opportunities may become available to purchase properties or land for housing including securing affordable housing units as part of new housing developments in the city (S106 sites). At present S106 sites are offered to our five partner Registered Providers in the city. Recently schemes offering less than 15 affordable homes have been declined for purchase by our Registered Provider partners who have confirmed that their current risk management does not allow purchase of small schemes. Although in such cases the council would receive a commuted sum payment in lieu of on site units – the on site provision is generally preferred given land restrictions in the city. In light of this the potential of whether the council could purchase these properties direct to add to its own housing stock is being proposed. The Affordable Housing Brief setting out guidance on the council’s requirements for affordable housing within the city will be revised to reflect this.
- 3.3 These opportunities would need to be subject to business case approval by Housing & New Homes Committee with formal approval sought through Housing & New Homes, Planning and Policy, Resources & Growth Committee (as required).

4. Budget for a Home Purchase Policy

- 4.1 Expanding the scope of the policy will require additional capital and revenue funding. The scheme currently has £3m approved (£2m in 2017/18 and £1m in 2018/19). A further £2m has been provisionally agreed for both 2019/20 and 2020/21 bringing the total anticipated budget of £7m until the end of March 2021.
- 4.2 A fixed term Project Manager will be recruited to oversee the continued operation of the scheme, with recruitment currently underway.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 We will be taking the outcome of the pilot to date and will seek agreement to the revised Home Purchase Policy at Housing & New Homes Committee on 19 September 2018.

5.2 We welcome feedback and your comments on this pilot and the proposed changes to the policy prior to Housing & New Homes Committee on the 19 September 2018. Please contact Diane Hughes, Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager with your feedback on:

Tel: 01273 293159

Email: diane.hughes@brighton-hove.gov.uk