

Housing Management Panel: West Hove & Portslade Area

Date: 14 December 2021

Time: 2.00pm

Venue Hybrid Meeting - Zoom / In Person
Hove Town Hall - Room G32
Norton Road,
Hove,
BN3 3BQ

Members: Councillor Allcock (Chair), Ward Councillors for the Area,
Delegates of Tenants Association in the area.

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AGENDA

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3 ESTATE DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 10 Minutes	
4 RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS QUESTIONS 40 Minutes <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Role of Field Officers2. Lack in communication3. Task and finish groups4. Service improvement groups5. Face to face meeting6. Scaffolding7. Dog poo bins	15 - 28
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8 BUDGET UPDATE 15 Minutes – Verbal update from Ododo Dafe, Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement	

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5 Minutes - Verbal

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact , (01273 291354, email thomas.bald@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Date of Publication - Date Not Specified

West Area Panel – meeting invitation

Dear Resident,

On behalf of the West Area Panel, I would like to invite you to the next meeting. This will be a **hybrid meeting** with a limited number of people seeing face-to-face and others taking part on-line. You will be able to see and hear each other.

To book your physical place, please contact the Community Engagement Admin Team at 01273291518 / 07717302986 / communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk. **Please note** that due to limited capacity, physical places will be allocated on a first book first served basis.

When	Tuesday 14 th December 2021 – from 13:45 to 16:00
Where	<p>Hove Town Hall – G32 Norton Rd, Hove BN3 3BQ</p> <p>and online on Zoom</p> <p>Please type the following address in your browser:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.tinyurl.com/WAP141221</p> <p>There's no difference between uppercase/lowercase letters. You won't need to enter meeting ID or password.</p> <p>If the link above doesn't work or you will join through the Zoom client instead, please use the following credentials:</p> <p>Meeting ID: 851 5198 8520 Passcode: 7ueG42</p> <p>(no difference between uppercase/lowercase letters). You won't need to enter meeting ID or password.</p> <p>If you can't use a device able to connect to the internet, you can access the meeting through audio only, calling with a normal phone one of the following numbers and typing the meeting ID and passcode when asked:</p> <p>0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0203 901 7895, 0131 460 1196</p> <p>Meeting ID: 851 5198 8520 Passcode: 838442</p> <p>To mute and unmute yourself when calling by phone, press *6 (asterisk and 6)</p>

Please read the papers in advance of the meeting.

We can help with transport costs: please let us know **at least 7 days in advance** if you need the provision of bus tickets or taxi vouchers to get to the meeting, and we will send those to you in due course. If you drive, you can claim mileage and parking costs through your resident association grant. Taxi Vouchers can only be requested by people with mobility issues.

Please contact the Community Engagement Admin Team at 01273291518 / 07717302986 / communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk to get tickets or vouchers or to obtain more information.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: WEST HOVE & PORTSLADE AREA

2.00pm 12 OCTOBER 2021

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Allcock, O'Quinn and Pissaridou.

Representatives: Janet Dowell, Claire Johnson, Ian Graham, Allison Gray

Officers: Justine Harris, Grant Richie, Robert Keelan, Richard Weller, Lesley Campbell

Guest: Sarah Booker- Lewis (Local Democracy Reporter)

1 WELCOMES APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 ACTION AND MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Resident Representatives asked that going forward minutes should be proof-read before presented at meetings, and the action log to be numbered.

- Graham Dawes asked whether the word notes should not be used in minutes, and that language should be explored.
- It was agreed that note takers can interject meetings and ask for clarification on items they might be unsure of.
- Corrections to be made on previous minutes that Councillor Pissaridou's apologies were not recorded at previous meeting
- Minutes should be proof-read before presented at meetings
- At the previous meeting specific questions were asked around the EDB audit and only one question had been answered.
- Action log to be crossed referenced against minutes.

2.2 Rob Keelan and Justine Harris provided an update on solutions for plant watering on estates.

2.3 Points highlighted

- On the 10th September three taps were installed.
- Clarke Court will need a long hose to top up water butts

- Three keys are readily available
 - Justine Harris to contact Allision to arrange hand over of keys for butts
 - The other two taps will be installed in spring 2022
 - Justine Harris to carry out a site visit inspections
- 2.4 **Action** - Keely McDonald to send Rosemary a brief letter / email copy of EDB report.
- 2.5 **Action**– Keely McDonald said a EDB report will be provided to representatives at the end of the year around ongoing work.
- 2.6 On Thursday 21 October 2021, the Task and Finish group meeting will be held, an update will be provided at the next meeting.
- 2.7 The meeting heard representatives concerns around EDB scoring bids by officers.
- 2.8 The Chair said that representatives should be updated with EDB progress at the next meeting.
- 2.9 The meeting heard around resident’s dissatisfaction of the management of EDB process, and there were several action points that were recorded in the minutes that needed to be addressed under EDB. The Chair acknowledged residents on going dissatisfaction with EDB process. However, this will be reviewed at the Task and Finish Group with participation from tenant representatives.
- 2.10 The meeting heard that gardening bins are needed for some estates.
- 2.11 It was agreed that the allocating keys for water butts would be resident lead.

3 POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

- 3.1 The meeting heard around how tenants reported repairs. Grant Richie said tenants can email or access the customer service repair team through the website all call the help desk where all calls are transferred to relevant department. Repairs are prioritised as a matter of urgency tenants are allocated a time and date for repair when operative will attend. A new computer system will be installed in March 2022, which will record historical repairs.

RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS’ QUESTIONS

- 4.1 In response to question Graham said that all voids’ properties are inspected before handed back housing colleagues prior to re letting. The meeting heard if housing colleagues were not satisfied with property the voids team would be contacted. Due to Covid additional new contractors are used, and concentrated is more around post inspection. Housing supervisors are aware of rubbish left in communal areas by contractors, however, contractors are

asked to properly dispose of rubbish. The meeting also heard around tenants who had experienced problems with their hot water tank and delays in carrying out repairs. In addition, it was stated that resident inspectors had not visited empty properties.

- 4.2 The meeting heard some valuable criticism from residents around contactors leaving rubbish in communal areas, also outside empty properties. Furthermore, a contractor had entered a property with residents' keys while tenant was at home. Representatives emphasized the importance of work carried out by resident inspectors.

Action

- 4.3 Justine Harris will shortly have a meeting with resident inspectors.

Representatives suggested empty properties should be called empty and not void properties.

- 4.4 Ododo Dafe said the group should not share personal confidential information and individual circumstances in a public meeting.

2nd Question Impact residents vaping in properties

- 4.5 The meeting heard that the Council contacted resident that vaped in communal areas. Also vaping in hallways and communal areas had negatively affected some residents, However, as a landlord the Council acknowledged they did not much derestriction in this area.

Action

- 4.6 Justin Harris said she would talk with Rob Wheelan to investigate Muriel's concerns around how she was treated when she called customer services to report her concerns around tenants vaping in communal areas.

Maintenance Schedule

- 4.7 The meeting heard that cynical programmes are not in place due to budget constraints. Representatives were alarmed that the Council did not have resources for planned works. In response, Justine Harris said that this issue has been raised in other forums with residents. The Council are looking how they can improve on reporting areas that need repairs. Discussion took place around the Council using estate development money that is targeted for cleaning communal areas, it was not considered appropriate to use EDB funds for maintenance works.
- 4.8 The meeting heard that the Council want to allocate some money for catching up on delayed repair works, However, there is a lot of work that needs to be carried out, unfortunately funds are not available. The Council plan to engage with residents to identify priority areas that can be addressed. The environment improvement budget is designed to quickly support communal repairs.

- 4.9 **Agreed that** -The Council need to prioritise where money is being spent, and to engage more with residents. It was stated that environmental improvement budgets can be used for ad hoc improvements, as there are no cynical budgets available.
- 4.10 The meeting heard that Tenant representatives were saddened to hear the Council did not have a maintenance budget since was a central government. The Council should be aware of the decorating needs of their properties to remain at a decent standard.

Overgrown paths on estates.

- 4.11 In response to the question, Justine Harris said she was in regular communications with City Parks and acknowledged overgrown paths is a concern across the city.
- 4.12 The meeting heard that managing weeds were challenging as staff can only operate weed grabbing machine for short periods due to staff having injuries due to repetitive task. Further challenges were that weeds were only pruned, and increased weed growth during the summer months. In addition, the Council now use private contractors who do not use Glucophage weed treatment. Muriel Brault said that the Council had not tackled overgrown weeds around alley ways near her property and all block needed to be treated.
- 4.13 It was agreed that grass will be cut before the winter, and hard surface weeds to be removed.
- 4.14 **RESOLVED:** That EDB would be included as an item at the next meeting.
- 4.15 **RESOLVED:** That overflowing bins at Clarke Court.
- 4.16 The Chair provided an overview of three-star questions from residents and asked representatives to read the paper that had been circulated.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 5.1 There was no other business

Action List from October West Area Panel

Ref	Action	Officer	Response
2.1	Answers to Questions from the August meeting on the EDB to be provided		
2.4	To send Rosemary a brief letter / email copy of EDB report.	Keely McDonald	
2.5	EDB report will be provided to representatives at the end of the year around ongoing work	Keely McDonald	
4.3	Meet with Resident Inspectors	Justine Harris	
4.6	To speak to Rob Wheelan about concerns around treatment by customer services when reporting vaping in communal areas.	Justine Harris	

West

Actions of Area Panel Meeting October 2021

Action	Who	Response
Emma McDermott to send EBD paper to Rosemary	Emma McDermott	Was sent by post
EDB included as agenda item next meeting	Keely McDonald	Complete, the EDB is under agenda item 3.
Tenants not received responses from EDB	Keely McDonald	West representatives have now received the responses to the questions raised about the EDB Audit process.
Send Rosemary EDB report	Keely McDonald	Was sent by post
Provide update from T&F group meeting on 21st October	Keely McDonald	Keely will provide a verbal update at the West Area Panel meeting
Contact City parks - removal hard surface weeds - find contractors for hard surfaces	Justine Harris	Following consultation with CityParks Housing have started to used contractors for hard surfaces in some areas and will continue with this approach when needed.
Officers provide alternative to cyclical repairs	Ododo Dafe	
Look into concerns by Muriel regarding how she was dealt with RE vaping	Justine Harris / Robert Keelan	
Meet with resident inspectors	Justine Harris	The Community Engagement team and Housing will be arranging a Resident Inspector meeting.
Hand over butt keys to Rosemary	Justine Harris	Verbal update
Send email regarding Muriel's guttering repair	Ododo Dafe	
Provide update solution watering plants on estates	Justine Harris / Robert Keelan	Verbal update

Central and West Area 3 Stars

Task and Finish Groups

Background

Structure of Task and finish groups Central: The Environment Task and Finish group and the Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish group should be chaired by residents and facilitated, not directed, by officers. These groups were established following requests from residents and focus on issues that have been consistently raised as problems of major concern. It's important that they are resident led and properly explore the concerns of residents, which can be more effectively done with a resident Chair. The officer's role is to facilitate and support this process.

West: These are all the task and finish groups, all services improvement groups and any other groups for example TDN. It has always been recognised that the reps are voted for on Area Panel meetings every two years and we would get a list of the groups and reps. The officer's role is to facilitate, enable, support, take minutes in this process.

Action

Request that the Environment Task and Finish group and the Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish group are restructured so they are chaired and led by residents and focus on the concerns of residents. Barry Hughes will also bring this issue to the attention of the Chairs of Housing.

West: Could we please be provided with a list of all current groups including task and finish with a list of the reason behind each group?

Response

The Residents Associations, Service Improvement Groups and Citywide Groups/Sub-Groups are chaired by residents and we're wary of overburdening individuals with additional meetings and responsibilities, however we would like to offer to trial this suggested approach for the calendar year 2022/2023. As Task and Finish Groups are set up with a specific purpose and are time limited, we would require chairs to undergo additional training in order for them to be able to guide these meetings to be as productive and focussed as possible.

We'd be happy to provide the West Area Panel Representative with the list of current groups

Central and West Area 3 Stars

Role of Field Officers

Background

Central residents would like an update on the role and function of Field Officers. Central residents do not have much contact with Field Officers and are unsure of their value and purpose. Residents Associations used to have regular Estate Inspections with Housing Officers, which formed a useful and important part of Resident Associations' work. It was hoped that Field Officers would take over this role.

West: When will there be Estate inspection dates? We understand Estate inspections seem to have started up again?

Action

Request a report (needs to include how many officers there are currently) on the Field Officer programme, covering what work they do, what this costs the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), what the benefits are to residents and Residents Associations and whether they can do Estate Inspections. Theresa Renolds should be invited.

West: Please provide a timetable of inspection dates.

Response

The Field Officer team consists of 6 x full time and 2 x Part time members of staff. Their core working hours 12pm-8pm. The team returned to carrying out visits in April this year. The HRA funds £51,000 per year towards the cost of Field Officers.

They have carried out witnessing tasks for Housing in the last few months and are currently working with Housing colleagues on linking their work to estate inspections. Currently we are planning to have two Field Officers carrying out inspections in each of the 4 Housing areas. This is so that they will get to know the Housing teams and build relationships with residents. This will also enable them to become familiar with the different areas. We are currently planning how we start up estate inspections and what staffing resource will be needed. We aim to get to a position where we are including information online in relation to the inspections as to when and how they will take place.

A further update will be provided at the next round of Area Panels.

Central and East Area 3 Stars

Sustainability

Background

Home Insulation: Central residents would like to see money allocated in the 2022-3 budget for a programme of home insulation. There is an urgency to reduce carbon emissions and a programme to insulate homes could be started on immediately. It is important that this is carried out to a high standard and problems currently experienced with poor retrofitting work are addressed. Practically, for example insurance about insulation in the roof and cooling in housing blocks during the summer.

Transfer to low-carbon heating: Information has not been circulated clearly to residents about how the Council proposes to manage a transfer from gas to air source or ground source heat pump technology for heating council housing stock. This issue was discussed at the Citywide Conference, but this discussion has not reached the majority of tenants and leaseholders. Leaseholders, in particular, need to be kept informed about plans that will incur costs to them.

Action

It was agreed to ask the council for a report detailing their plans for moving from gas heating to air source or ground source heat pumps for existing and new council housing properties.

Response

Please see the attached report, Carbon Reduction in Housing. This was considered at Housing committee on the 17th November and provides an update on actions and future plans to reduce carbon across the city's housing stock.

As you will see in the report it is acknowledged that the transition away from gas fired heating and hot water services to renewable sources. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) will have a significant role to play in this alongside more efficient forms of electric heating and new technologies as they are developed and scaled up. We have experience of installing ASHPs on a small scale but expect to see the installation of these significantly increase in the next few years. Housing is installing its first GSHP at the Victoria development in Portslade.

As you will see in the report over the coming months we will be developing a more detailed plan as to how Housing will improve our stock to contribute towards the 2030 carbon Neutral target, we will continue to update residents as this develops as we recognise how important this is to you and the key role residents will play in delivering on the plan. There will be further reports to housing committee in the next few months that will also give more detail and context as to how heating and hot water services will be provided in the future, in particular a new contract for these services from 2023 onwards.

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There is a budget allocation for 2022/23 for energy efficiency and renewable projects and this budget is likely to be increasing significantly over the coming years, these will be detailed in the budget papers to be considered by committee in the new year. We recognise the potential impact on leaseholders and acknowledge the concern this may cause. As we develop workstreams and specific projects on blocks of flats or neighborhoods we will ensure that we engage at an early stage to gather views and address any concerns we can at an early stage.

East , North and Central Area 3 Stars

Grounds maintenance service and weeds

Background

The increasing weeds, overgrown shrubs and uncut grass are becoming a hazard for residents. The council's decision to stop the use of glyphosates has not been matched with an increase in staffing levels to ensure the city is kept tidy and safe. Residents felt that the council should investigate the option of using alternative, safe herbicides to address this problem. This issue was raised at the Area Panel on October 12th and the response was "We are now exploring use of a contractor, who is able to weed without use of chemical pesticides." Residents felt that this response did not address the question raised, which was about alternative (non-glyphosate) herbicides.

Weeds: There has been an ongoing problem with grass cutting and weeds growing over pavements since the council stopped using glyphosate. While the council have started to allocate more resources to this and that the grass has been cut, weeds have been left to grow on the pavements and along the kerbs.

This is a health and safety hazard: the weeds get slippery during wet weather, people are unable to see the edge of the kerb and likely to trip, and it's difficult for those with walking difficulties or disabilities to negotiate the pavement.

Action

It was agreed to raise this again at the Agenda Setting meeting and request a report from CityParks on non-glyphosate herbicides.

Residents would like to know what the Council's plan is for removing weeds on pavements and kerbs in the area on a regular basis.

Response

Thank you for your question. CityParks currently use two non-glyphosate herbicides. Icade: for the treatment of tough, invasive and woody vegetation; specifically used to treat outbreaks of Japanese Knotweed.

West Area Panel Residents Questions

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Katoun Gold: a natural herbicide for hard surfaces and around obstacles. It is a 'contact' not a 'systemic' herbicide, meaning it kills surface vegetation it touches but is not transmitted through the plant's system to kill underground roots. The result being more rapid regrowth requiring more frequent treatments.

As set out in the response to the last Area Panel meeting, managing weeds is challenging without the use of glyphosate herbicide. Since the last Area Panel Housing have deployed the use of a private contractor to clear areas of Housing land where health and safety hazards. The hard surfaces team have also continued with weed clearance using mechanical means. I appreciate this is an important issue for residents, we will continue to monitor and respond to areas that may need more attention.

East Area

3 Stars

Officer attendance at Area Panel meetings

Background

Written responses to residents' questions are often not the best way to get information across. The meeting felt that it would be better to ask officers responding to residents' questions to attend the Area Panel meeting and give their responses personally. This would enable residents to clarify or ask additional questions. For example, the responses to two of the questions raised by East Residents at the October Area Panel (Grounds maintenance and Graffiti) misunderstood or didn't fully answer the actual questions submitted. Because the officers were not present at the Area Panel, residents have to repeatedly raise issues again, instead of being able to follow up immediately with further questions and clarifications

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and ask if officers giving responses could also agree to be present at the meeting (even if this is only for a few minutes) to ensure that their response adequately addresses the questions.

Response

I appreciate the feedback from residents on this part of the Area Panels meetings, I do recognise that there is sometimes difficulty in resolving an issue due to follow up questions not being able to be answered at the time the response is discussed. It is important to balance the opportunity for attendees to ask relevant questions and clarify points with the other topics on the agenda. Whilst it might not always be possible for the responding officer to attend, this will be looked at as part of the Area Panel review planned for early next year.

East Area

3 Stars

Allergies

Background

The allocations process should take into account issues in the immediate environment of properties being let, which may make them unsuitable for some tenants. Craven Vale Community Association has installed a beehive on the estate, following a process of full consultation with the Neighbours. Subsequently, a family moved into a neighbourhood property, who were unaware that the beehive was about to be installed, and were unhappy due to a phobia or allergy to bees.

Action

It was agreed to raise this at the Agenda Setting meeting and ask if a note can be made on HomeMove of which properties have beehives (or other potential allergy triggers) nearby in order to make this information available to potential bidders.

Response

We have explored the possibility of including this information, I can confirm that unfortunately we cannot safely and reliably update the Homemove system with information regarding proximity to beehives or other potential allergens / phobic triggers.

North Area

3 Stars

Tackling anti-social behaviour in high rise blocks

Background

Residents have been told by Council officers that nothing can be done about tackling the reported issues with anti-social behaviour, particularly in reference to the situation at Nettleton Court and Dudeney Lodge (See Minutes of North Area Residents Only Meetings: Item 4 from 24th August 2021). They have been told to report problems to the police. The police have been called on numerous occasions (Agenda Setting items from North Area Residents Meeting 26th October 2021 Page 2 of 5), but they are unable to resolve the problem in the long-term. The impact of years of daily antisocial behaviour is detrimental to other tenants' lives and well-being.

Action

Residents asked for a report on what immediate steps will be taken to resolve the issue at Nettleton and Dudeney Lodge. Residents are not satisfied with the council's response and lack of action with regards to tackling the issues of anti-social behaviour

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in blocks of flats: the council have a responsibility to all council tenants to keep them safe. Residents ask for a report on the steps the council is actively taking to:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour in council properties in the city;
- Improving allocations policies so that both the needs of the new tenant and existing tenants are taken into consideration;
- Improving tenancy support, including provision of support to vulnerable people;
- Better supporting residents moving from temporary accommodation into settled accommodation;
- Ensuring perpetrators of anti-social behaviour receive support, and are able to sustain to tenancy without their behaviour impacting on others.

Response

As discussed in the last Area Panel the points raised are being considered as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Review. This review is currently underway. In the last Area Panel response we set out how we are seeking to further enhance tenancy support, including consideration of provision of support to the most vulnerable tenants. This will include the transitional support residents receive when moving from temporary into settled housing. We have also significantly increased the provision of Housing First and Housing Led Support accommodation.

We currently have ten cases of ASB open at Nettleton and Dudeney. Immediate steps being taken include referrals for extra support for people who need to modify their behaviour and assigning each a dedicated Housing Officer to respond to the reported issues. The Housing Officers are pro active in engaging with the alleged perpetrators of ASB. There is an additional complicating factor in that there are currently a few properties within Nettleton that are void and the void works are also creating a noise nuisance which we believe are linked to at least one of these reports.

We hope residents continue to work with officers to respond to the issues arising and thank you those participating in the antisocial behaviour policy review.

North Area

3 Stars

Repairs

Background

Residents are having to wait a long time for repairs to get done, and the Council has reported that this is because there is a backlog due to Covid.

Action

Residents would like to know why there is still a backlog to deal with both urgent and routine repairs, and asks to know what the Council is doing to resolve this problem.

Response

The insourcing of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service was completed on 1 April 2020 during the first national Covid lockdown. The service transferred with approximately 1500 repairs in progress. 132 Mears staff transferred to the council as part of the new Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service. This was fewer staff than anticipated would join the council.

In line with Government Covid-19 pandemic guidance during the first lockdown, the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service was only carrying out essential repairs to council housing, health and safety maintenance checks, and repairs to empty properties where possible until July 2020. During this period, repairs were still being reported and booked but due to Covid restrictions only essential works actioned. This created a backlog of routine repairs across most trades and was first reported to Housing Committee on 16 September 2020. From July 2020 the definition of essential repairs was expanded for all trade teams to include repairs that, if left unattended in the long term, would have an impact on the residents and on properties. Examples were heating and hot water repairs, containable leaks, and condensation wash downs. However, Covid 19 provisions continued to apply.

In addition, some residents were reluctant to have operatives in their homes to address non-essential repairs during the pandemic. The pandemic also had a significant impact on the service staffing resources with operatives and office staff being off work as a result of positive Covid tests received by them or a member of their household or shielding because they or a family member were in a Covid vulnerable category. The Service is seeking to clear the backlog and are currently recruiting trade operatives and office-based staff to expand capacity to complete more repairs. We have estimated it will take 12 months to clear the backlog.

North and West Area

3 Stars

Communications between Council and residents

Background

North: Residents feel that the level of communication between the Council and residents is unsatisfactory:

- There is no follow-up by Council officers with resident reps after Area Panel meetings.
- Residents are not being informed in a timely fashion of changes that affect them: for example, the Repairs system, the Estate Development Budget process

West: Why is there a lack of communication? Officers very difficult to get in touch with. Phone calls go unanswered and messages/emails ignored. This is especially the case for EDB and Task and Finish groups.

West Area Panel Residents Questions December 2021

Action

North: Residents would like to see an improvement in how the Council communicates with them. They would like:

- Council officers to follow up on their actions after Area Panel meetings and contact reps with updates.
- To be consulted and kept informed in a timely fashion of any changes to Council Housing services that affect them.

West: What is the solution?

Response

Thank you for raising the matter of communications, and I am very sorry that tenant representatives have found some areas of communications between themselves and the Council to be unsatisfactory, and that some calls have not been returned. Your request for us to follow up on actions discussed at Area Panels and provide you with updates is perfectly reasonable, and we will make immediate improvements on this as well as addressing it as part of the Area Panel Review.

In the fullness of time, our ambition will be that any answers to questions raised at Area Panel, whether via resident's questions or during the meeting will be posted on the resident pages on the council's website.

This will enable any interested residents to easily see issues being raised on their behalf and the responses to them. Naturally, this can be extended to matters raised in other meeting – e.g. Task & Finish Groups. This will also be taken forward as part of the review of Area Panels.

With regard to consulting with you and keeping you updated on matters, again please accept my apologies if information is coming to you late. Where there are changes to areas of our service that we need to communicate, we will make sure that you receive a bulletin so that you are all updated.

Please do get in touch with the Community Engagement Team with any specific information you expected, as it's helpful for staff to understand where the communications failure has occurred and how it could be prevented in future.

North Area 3 Stars

Estate Development Budget

Background

There is a general lack of information and clarity around the Estate Development Budget forms, bids and overall process. There is only a 2020-21 EDB quick bid form available to download on the Council website. Residents have been told that this is out of date and is no longer valid. There are no other available downloadable forms. Residents have been told they have to fill these out online. The EDB task and finish group were told there would be simplified EDB forms, but have not yet been sent or seen these yet.

Action

Residents would like to know why the new 2021-22 Quick Bid forms are not available to download on the Council website yet, and when it will be available. Residents would like to see the new, simplified EDB forms. Residents would like to point out that not everyone has access to, or can easily fill out online forms, and would like EDB forms to be made more accessible.

Response

The council website sets out the process for EDB applications, including step by step pages taking residents through the process. It also includes a link to the downloadable form and contact details – email and telephone number for support. Estate Development Budget (brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Apologies that this year's downloadable forms were in not available, this is now resolved. We continue to explore the use of an on-line form similar to many council and grant funding processes and remain mindful of ensuring accessibility in its development. We will update residents when one is available to use via the EDB pages on the council's website.

The EDB Task and Finish group reviewed the existing EDB forms in August and suggested changes to simplify the form to make it more accessible for applicants. The draft simplified version is to be discussed and agreed by the Task and Finish Group in the new year and forwarded to Area Panel for approval as soon as possible thereafter. If the Area Panels approve it's use, it will be widely shared on the council web pages and with Resident Groups.

As always support through the EDB process is available from the Community Engagement Officer (CEO) for the relevant area and the EDB officer Lucy - Lucy.beasley@brighton-hove.gov.uk

To clarify the EDB bid form can be either filled in via downloading the form (Forms and guidance document for estate development budget bids (brighton-hove.gov.uk)) from the website or by requesting a paper copy from the Community Engagement Team.

West Area Panel Residents Questions

December 2021

This can be through the CEO, EDB Officer or the Team's inbox community.engagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

West Area

3 Stars

Service improvement groups

Background

There is confusion about the different service improvement groups.

Action

Please provide clarification on when the four service improvement groups merged into two and copies of the minutes.

Response

The Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy approved at Housing Committee March 2021 includes a recommendation to reduce the four Service Improvement Groups to two, minutes of that meeting can be found on the council's website (<https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/g10054/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Mar-2021%2016.00%20Housing%20Committee.pdf?T=1>).

These groups will focus on 'People' and 'Buildings'. This will allow for time limited task and finish groups to focus on specific issues in detail and report back to Area Panels. Discussions have begun in the Home and Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Groups on a Terms Of Reference for the two new groups. Further discussion is required and the intention is to bring the draft Terms Of Reference for these groups to the Area Panels in the Spring 2022 for approval.

West Area Panel Residents Questions
December 2021

West Area
2 Stars

Face to face meetings

Background

When are we going to have face to face meetings? St Richards, Vallance Centre, Sanders House are all west Venues previously used and are taking bookings.

Response

The Community Engagement Team has arranged for the December Area Panels to be hybrid meetings where possible, based on availability of suitable venues allowing for social distancing and preferences of the Area Panel Representatives. As this is the first time these meetings have been held in this way, we welcome your feedback on how you think they went, please get in touch with the Community Engagement Team (communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk) to tell us what you think went well and any suggested changes.

West Area
2 Stars

Scaffolding

Background

Scaffolding still left up despite having replaced the 5 tiles on the roof. (Location to be clarified, probably on Ingram Crescent.

Action

Has the work been signed off by BHCC?

Response

Thank you for your question unfortunately without an actual address I cannot update on the status of project. If we receive confirmation of the address we can update at Area Panel.

West Area
2 Stars

Dog poo bins

Background

Greenleas park still waiting for larger bins for dog poo. Have small bins but they are constantly overflowing.

Action

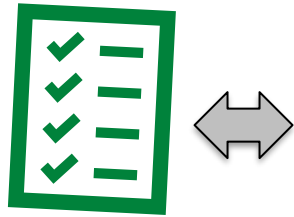
When will bins be installed?

Response

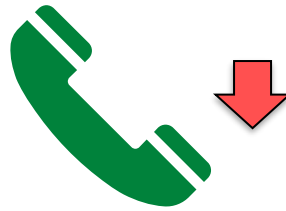
Through the delivery of the Bin Infrastructure Action Plan, Cityclean is reviewing the locations of dog waste bins and seeking to replace with normal litter bins, which can also be used for dog waste. Normal litter bins are larger than dog waste bins and so through this piece of work, there is likely to be an increase in capacity for Greenleas Park. We are unable to provide timescales as present.

Council housing performance

Quarter 2 2021/22 (Jul to Sep 2021)



100%
Gas safety
compliance



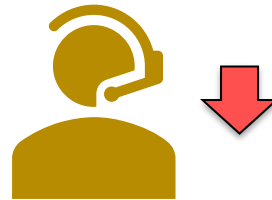
93%
Repairs calls
answered



66 days
Empty home
re-let time



92.9%
Dwellings
meeting Decent
Homes standard



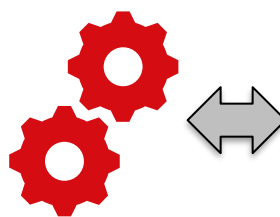
87%
Customer
services calls
answered



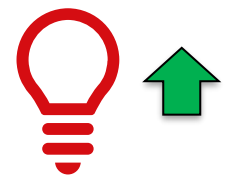
97%
Tenancies
sustained



85%
Complaint
responses within
10 working days



91%
Lifts restored to
service within
24 hours

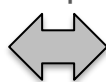


68.1
Energy efficiency
rating out of 100

Performance since previous quarter is:



Better



Same



Worse



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Quarter 2 2021/22 council housing performance – key trends

Top scores (compared to target)

1. Calls answered by Repairs Helpdesk (93% vs 85% target)
2. Tenancies sustained following difficulties (97% vs 90% target)
3. Stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days (85% vs 80% target)
4. Council homes with a valid Landlord's Gas Safety Record (100% vs 100% target)

Bottom scores (compared to target)

1. Average re-let time excluding time spent in major works (66 days vs 21 day target)
2. Stage two complaints upheld (47% vs 18% target)
3. Lifts – average time to restore service when not within 24 hours (9 days vs 7 day target)
4. Energy efficiency rating of homes out of 100 (68.1 vs 76.8 target)
5. Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard (92.9% vs 100% target)

Biggest improvements (since previous quarter)

1. Average re-let time excluding time spent in major works (88 to 66 days)
2. Tenancies sustained following difficulties (92% to 97%)
3. Stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days (81% to 85%)
4. Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard (92.1% to 92.9%)
5. Energy efficiency rating of homes out of 100 (68.0 to 68.1)

Biggest drops (since previous quarter)

1. Stage two complaints upheld (9% to 47%)
2. Lifts – average time taken to restore service when not within 24 hours (9 to 12 days)
3. Calls answered by Housing Customer Services (87% to 82%)
4. Calls answered by Repairs Helpdesk (94% to 93%)

Please note there are fewer indicators to compare than usual because several are temporarily absent from this report while work is underway to develop new reporting systems following the switchover of our main housing management IT system since the start of July 2021. Please see the full version of the performance report for more information.