



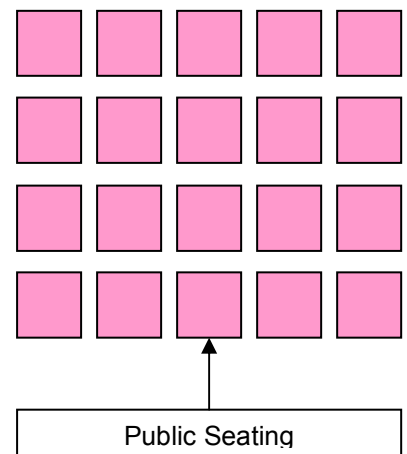
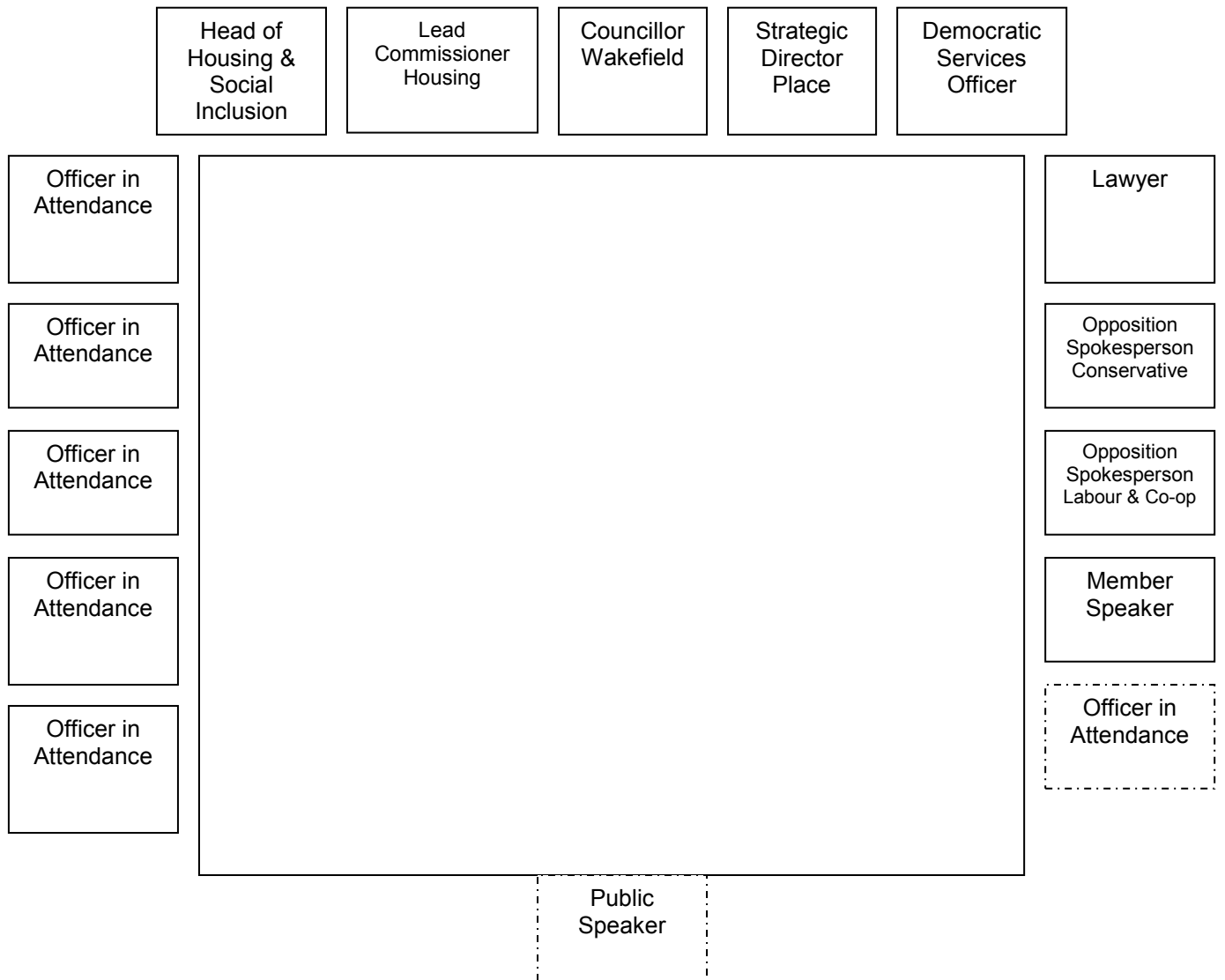
Brighton & Hove  
City Council

# Cabinet Member Meeting

Title:	<b>Housing Cabinet Member Meeting</b>
Date:	<b>7 September 2011</b>
Time:	<b>4.00pm</b>
Venue	<b>Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall</b>
Members:	<b>Councillor:</b> Wakefield (Cabinet Member)
Contact:	<b>Caroline De Marco</b> Democratic Services Officer 01273 291063 caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

	The Town Hall has facilities for wheelchair users, including lifts and toilets
	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>  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



**AGENDA**

**16. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.*

**17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**1 - 6**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 June 2011 (copy attached).

**18. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS**

**19. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION**

- (a) Items reserved by the Cabinet Member
- (b) Items reserved by the Opposition Spokespersons
- (c) Items reserved by Members, with the agreement of the Cabinet Member.

*NOTE: Public Questions, Written Questions from Councillors, Petitions, Deputations, Letters from Councillors and Notices of Motion will be reserved automatically.*

**20. PETITIONS**

No petitions have been received by the date of publication.

**21. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 31 August 2011)

## HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

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

### 22. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 31 August 2011)

No deputations have been received by the date of publication.

### 23. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

### 24. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No written questions have been received.

### 25. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

No Notices of Motion have been received by the date of publication.

### 26. MINUTES OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 7 - 14

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2011 (copy attached).

### 27. MINUTES OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 15 - 24

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2011 (copy attached).

### 28. ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS 2011 25 - 46

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

*Contact Officer: Carol Jenkins Tel: 29-3832*  
*Ward Affected: All Wards*

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.

## HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

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 - Tuesday, 30 August 2011



### BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

### HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00pm 5 JULY 2011

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, HOVE TOWN HALL

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Wakefield (Cabinet Member)

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Peltzer Dunn (Opposition Spokesperson) and Farrow (Opposition Spokesperson)

### PART ONE

#### 1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 1(a) Declarations of Interests

1.1 There were none.

##### 1(b) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.2 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Cabinet Member considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

1.3 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

#### 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting held on 22 March 2011 be agreed and signed by the Cabinet Member.

**3. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS****Working Together**

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member reported that she was keen to work in partnership with Children & Young People's services and Adult Social Care & Health as well as Housing officers and tenants. Although difficult times lie ahead with services under pressure, there would be a common purpose and consensual solutions. The Cabinet Member stressed that she would do her utmost to provide decent homes for all the citizens of the city.

**Housing Centre**

- 3.2 The Cabinet Member reported that earlier in the day she had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the new Housing Centre in Moulsecoomb.

**Cap on Housing Benefit**

- 3.3 The Cabinet Member reported that there had been leaked reports of a planned cap on Housing Benefit. Housing officers were investigating how many people in the city would be affected by these changes and how the council should respond.
- 3.4 Councillor Farrow stated that there was great concern at the news of the leaked reports. He considered that these changes could lead to the eviction of families in the city. He hoped officers would investigate this matter and report back.
- 3.5 Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked if Chair's Communications was a vehicle for the Cabinet Member to communicate news to the meeting or whether it was an item that could lead to a debate.
- 3.6 The Senior Lawyer replied that the council's constitution allowed some flexibility with regard to Cabinet Member Meetings, which would not be permissible with formal committee meetings.
- 3.7 The Cabinet Member stated that she would prefer matters to be raised in advance of the meeting and placed on the agenda in the form of Letters from Councillors and Written Questions from Councillors. However, in this instance the matter had arisen urgently following weekend press reports.

**4. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION**

- 4.1 **RESOLVED** – That all items be reserved for discussion.

**5. PETITIONS**

- 5.1 There were none.

**6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

- 6.1 There were none.



**7. DEPUTATIONS**

7.1 There were none.

**8. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

8.1 There were none.

**9. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

9.1 There were none.

**10. NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

10.1 There were none.

**11. MINUTES OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

11.1 The Cabinet Member considered the minutes of the Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 10 March 2011.

11.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes be noted.

**12. MINUTES OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

12.1 The Cabinet Member considered the minutes of the Housing Management Consultative Committee meetings held on the 7 March & 22 March 2011.

12.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes be noted

**13. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO HOUSING**

13.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing which gave an overview on Housing Commissioning in the city. The presentation set out the priorities and principles of the Housing Strategy 2009-2014. It further detailed the average price of property in the city and the annual property price inflation.

13.2 The presentation contained graphs relating to housing affordability, new affordable housing, non-decent housing within tenures, numbers of non-decent housing, homelessness, temporary accommodation and Supporting People.

13.3 The presentation concluded with details of housing and health working together. A map showed overall deprivation in the city and a housing commissioning future framework was set out.

**14. AUTHORITY TO AWARD A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR THE BUILDING OF 15 NEW COUNCIL HOMES AT AINSWORTH HOUSE**

- 14.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Strategic Director Place which requested delegated authority to award the contract in relation to the construction works at Ainsworth House. The report summarised the work to procure a contractor.
- 14.2 The Cabinet Member was informed that improving housing supply was one of the key strategic priorities of the City-Wide Housing Strategy. A key goal was to increase the supply of affordable rented housing including building new Council homes. Planning approval for the Ainsworth House proposals was awarded on 27 April 2011.
- 14.3 The Cabinet Member was informed that three tenders had been returned on 13 June 2011. They would soon be evaluated. The development of Ainsworth House would meet high standards of sustainability.
- 14.4 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to the recommendation. He asked if it was not the case that the tender was based on specifications which included the design. He expressed concern that there was mention in a public paper that the contract was for 1.6m. He further asked why there had been slippage in the tender process.
- 14.5 The Head of Housing and Development and Private Sector Housing explained that the £1.6m was the sum of money that the council had indicated as part of the budget but was not the cost of the contract as such. The reference to design and build was a generic term. It was further explained that the slippage was about two weeks, and had been due to the extra bank holiday in April. Officers were hoping to catch up and complete the process on time.
- 14.6 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member made the following decision:
- (1) That the Strategic Director of Place be given delegated authority to award and enter into the design and build contract for Ainsworth House. This requires awarding and entering into a contract with a delivery partner following a competitive procurement process via the Homes and Communities Agencies Delivery Partner Panel. The approximate contract value is £1.6m

**15. RENEWAL OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE**

- 15.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Strategic Director Place which stated that improving housing quality in the city was one of the key aims of the Citywide Housing Strategy 2009-14. The city's private sector housing renewal assistance programme supported this aim and focused on improving conditions in the private rented and owner occupied sectors.
- 15.2 The programme had been funded since 2008 by successful Brighton & Hove and East Sussex Together (BEST) partnership bids for Regional Housing Board (RHB) private sector housing renewal capital. The 2008-2011 BEST funding programme had now come to an end. The Government announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn of 2010 that further RHB funding for private sector housing

renewal would not be made available. In light of this it was agreed to carry forward some existing capital funding into 2011/12.

- 15.3 As delivery of the renewal assistance programme was subject to availability of resources it was proposed to review the private sector Housing Renewal Policy based on likely future funding.
- 15.4 As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review the council had been awarded £723,000 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding for 2011/12. Approval for this spending was sought.
- 15.5 Councillor Farrow stated that the previous government had made Regional Housing Board (RHB) private sector housing renewal capital available to local authorities. £23 million had been allocated to Brighton & Hove, East Sussex Together Partnership (BEST), over three years to improve the living conditions of households in the private sector. Councillor Farrow considered that adaptations in particular had demonstrated significant cost efficiency and provided jobs for local people. He considered that the government's decision not to make further funds available was short-sighted and urged the administration to do all it could to continue provision.
- 15.6 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member made the following decisions:
- (1) That the strategic importance of private sector housing renewal, the successful delivery of private sector housing renewal in the City and the issues outlined concerning future availability of capital funding to support the assistance available to eligible households, be noted.
  - (2) That it is noted that the Lead Commissioner for Housing is undertaking a review of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy with a view to submitting a revised policy based on likely funding streams to a future meeting.
  - (3) That expenditure be approved within Brighton and Hove of the council's 2011/12 Disabled Facilities Grant allocation of £723,000 in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

The meeting concluded at 4.57pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of



### BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

#### ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 28 JUNE 2011

#### COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

#### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors K Norman (Chair); Buckley, Gilbey, Peltzer Dunn and Cobb

**Co-opted Members:** Mick Lister, LINK

#### PART ONE

#### 1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 1A Declaration of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Denise Cobb was attending in place of Councillor Andrew Wealls.

Apologies were received from Councillors Mike Jones and Craig Turton.

##### 1B Declarations of Interest

1.2 There were none

##### 1C Declarations of Party Whip

1.3 There were none.

##### 1D Exclusion of Press and Public

1.4 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.

1.5 **RESOLVED** – that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

2.1 These were agreed.

**3. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

3.1 The Chair welcomed all of the new members and the attending officers to the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.2 The Chair congratulated the Overview and Scrutiny Team for their success in the national Centre for Public Scrutiny awards, where they had won the Innovation award for their scrutiny panel work, and had been runners-up in the 'Team of the Year' award.

**4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS, LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS AND NOTICES OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLORS**

4.1 None were received.

**5. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE LEAD COMMISSIONERS**

5.1 The committee received presentations from the Lead Commissioners for Adult Social Care and for Housing, Denise D'Souza and Jugal Sharma, and Head of Service for Housing and Social Inclusion, Nick Hibberd.

5.2 Denise D'Souza, Lead Commissioner, Adult Social Care and Health, spoke about the local authority's statutory responsibilities and the prevention services that were undertaken in Adult Social Care. She also told the committee about safeguarding, homecare, and the commissioning priorities.

Ms D'Souza said that future development work included a need for more work on developing social capital and increasing the market in personal assistants to offer customers a real choice.

5.3 Ms D'Souza responded to questions from committee members.

Members asked how Brighton and Hove's safeguarding statistics compared with other cities. Ms D'Souza said that the increase in safeguarding reports was in line with what was anticipated, as the need for safeguarding became more known and more publicised. Ms D'Souza offered to include comparator statistics in the annual report.

Members asked who tended to make safeguarding reports; Ms D'Souza said that reports could be made by anyone with a concern but that they tended to be made by health professionals, both within and outside the local authority.

5.4 Jugal Sharma, Lead Commissioner for Housing, gave a presentation on the pressures on housing in the city, in particular those on social housing and in the private rented sector. There was an annual deficit of approximately 500 properties, particularly within larger family accommodation.

The committee heard that, in Brighton & Hove, one in five households had someone with a vulnerability; these figures were the highest in the Southeast. Mr Sharma also told the committee that there was a higher level of non-decent housing in the private rented sector than in social housing.

It was often the case that substandard accommodation was being used to house the most vulnerable people; it was one of the priorities for Housing to tackle the inequalities within the private rented sector.

**5.5 Mr Sharma responded to questions from committee members:**

Members asked how the council was planning to tackle the financial gap for housing. Mr Sharma said that affordability was a key issue, particularly for people who were returning to work and would therefore have reduced benefit income. The council had recently introduced a working household allocations policy in order to keep people in work and to give them priority for social housing.

Members asked about the joint working between the PCT and the council in terms of a shared approach and shared costs. Mr Sharma explained that there was a 'Repairs on Prescription' initiative which had already proved successful in enabling families to stay in their own homes once necessary repairs had been carried out. In terms of sharing costs, the council was talking to the PCT about this at present.

Members asked about the likely impact of the Housing Benefit caps that were being introduced. Mr Sharma said that people were already starting to move out of Brighton and Hove towards Southwick and Newhaven. Housing Benefit levels were the same in the area between Southwick and Newhaven although if you went further afield, Housing Benefit levels were set at a much lower rate.

**5.6 Nick Hibberd, Head of Service for Housing and Social Inclusion, introduced the members to his service, explaining that it was the delivery unit for housing services.**

Mr Hibberd said that the council was the largest landlord in Brighton & Hove, with over 12,000 properties; this was large in comparison to other social landlords.

Mr Hibberd spoke about the level of need within social housing; almost two thirds of households have multiple deprivation, including drug and alcohol problems; high levels of intergenerational worklessness; mental health problems; physical disabilities and so on. This means that there is a great deal of work to do within these households.

Mr Hibberd also spoke about the work being done to achieve Decent Homes standard within council properties. As of the end of June 2011, 75% of properties would have reached the standard. This represented a huge achievement and was the result of a large financial investment into the properties. The council would reach Decent Homes standard in all of its properties by the end of 2013.

The new longterm repairs contract with Mears meant that the council is projected to save over £47 million in capital value alone. It had also been possible to add additional items to the Mears contract including a number of apprenticeships, a commitment to more energy efficient properties etc.

Finally Mr Hibberd gave some information about the success of the new service centre, which co-locates a number of back-office Housing functions. The centre was working very well; it also had space for a number of other services including space to carry out kitchen assembly onsite; space to store spare parts for repairs etc, which all helped to save time and deliver a more efficient customer-focussed service.

**5.7 Mr Hibberd answered members' questions:**

Members asked about Government proposals to enable residents to carry out some repairs themselves and whether this was in line with health and safety regulations. Mr Hibberd said that there were certain roles that the council had to carry out itself including gas safety checks. The Government pilots are aimed at supporting residents to do things that they wish to do themselves, and are not intended to replace a council service.

Some residents had already received training in carrying out mystery shopping of Housing services, and had been trained to carry out estates inspections. This was part of the council's approach to involving tenants in a much more inclusive way, and had helped shape service delivery.

Members asked how Housing involved under-represented groups when working towards community empowerment. Mr Hibberd said that there was a database approximately 2000 residents who had already indicated that they wished to be involved or to be kept updated on what was happening.

Mr Hibberd felt that future plans for community empowerment would need to consider childcare issues and how to make events fun. He gave the example of a Financial Inclusion event that had been held in a soft-play centre, for young families to talk about financial matters in a fun setting. The work there had shown that over 70% of those attending did not have their own home insurance despite the council publicising its own low cost scheme. Information of this kind is invaluable and can help the council shape its services more effectively.

**6. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS- END OF YEAR REPORTS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & FOR HOUSING**

**6.1 Nick Hibberd, Head of Service for Housing and Social Inclusion, presented a report on Housing's performance for the last quarter and answered questions.**

Mr Hibberd said that there were a number of areas of very high performance, for example in rent collection levels and in energy efficiency measures. Other authorities were looking to Brighton & Hove City Council to follow our good practice.

**6.2 Members commended Mr Hibberd and the Housing teams for their excellent performance figures.**

**6.3 Philip Letchfield, Head of Performance and Contracting for Adult Social Care, presented a report on Adult Social Care's performance.**



Mr Letchfield explained that there had been some major changes in national performance reporting, and there was a move towards more local reporting instead. However limited guidance has been issued to date on how this would work particularly in relation to Local Accounts.

In 2010, the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) role in performance monitoring for councils was ceased. This means that there will be no annual report from CQC on Brighton & Hove City Council's performance. The CQC also ceased the rating system for individual care services. The CQC will be introducing a voluntary 'excellence' scheme from 2012.

At the same time, the NHS Information Centre has decided to undertake a 'zero based review' of all the statutory data returns with the intention of identifying a more limited single national data set. Existing data returns are continuing to be submitted in the interim. This means that there will be no benchmarking figures available in relation to Councils performance and the quality of commissioned care.

The combination of the above two changes has left Adult Social Care in a state of limbo. There will be a new reporting framework, with much more of an emphasis on outcomes. An interim Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) has been agreed for 2011-12 and this was appended to the report. This year, Brighton & Hove City Council has carried out a user survey; it will be repeated next year, at which time it will also be issued to carers.

Mr Letchfield explained that the data included in appendix three of the report was intended to give some provisional examples of the data being collected but it had not been fully verified yet.

6.4 Members welcomed the report and thanked Mr Letchfield.

6.5 **RESOLVED:** Recommendation 2.1 was agreed.

There was an amendment to recommendation 2.2. It was amended to show that ASCHOSC would receive the ASC performance report on a six-monthly basis. The report should also include information on any performance reporting proposals that were due to be considered by Cabinet. This amendment was agreed.

## **7. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY MEALS**

7.1 Debbie Greening, Contracts Manager for Adult Social Care, presented the report on Community Meals.

There had been a noticeable drop in the number of meals that were being purchased since 2007/08; this was a cause for concern although it was noted that it seemed to have levelled out.

Ms Greening said that the current contract had been extended for a further six months, but during this time, they would be consulting on the new contract with a view to re-tendering it.

7.2 Ms Greening responded to members' questions.

Members asked whether customers were asked why they were leaving the service, if this was applicable. Ms Greening said that she was not aware that this was currently carried out but that she would suggest this to the service providers.

Members asked about the timing of the consultation and of the retendering process. Ms Greening said that consultation would start in autumn 2011, although the planning was already underway. At present a range of major contracts were being recommissioned and consulted on, including homecare services.

Consultation took a significant amount of resource on each contract, and it was important not to overload either the team or the customers with requests for consultation responses and feedback.

7.3 Ms D'Souza asked whether ASCHOSC would like to be involved as part of the consultation. It was necessary to look at all aspects of the contract including whether the contract should be split between providers, whether customers preferred to make more personal arrangements for their meals etc. It was likely that any decisions that were made about the service would be controversial; Community Meals represented a significant cost for Adult Social Care.

The Chair of the committee welcomed the opportunity to become involved in the consultation and asked how ASCHOSC could best help the Contracts Team in their work. It was agreed that two or three ASCHOSC members would meet with officers from Adult Social Care to discuss the issue and decide whether it could be a suitable topic for a Review Panel.

7.4 **RESOLVED** – that ASCHOSC members would meet with officers from Adult Social Care to discuss the issue and decide whether it could be a suitable topic for a Review Panel.

## **8. SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN**

8.1 Brian Doughty, Head of Services, Adult Assessment, presented the report on Safeguarding Adults at Risk.

8.2 There were no questions from committee members.

## **9. ASCHOSC ANNUAL WORK PLAN**

9.1 Members discussed the proposed ASCHOSC work programme for the forthcoming year.

9.2 Comments included the view that Housing might not be a natural fit for the Committee along with Adult Social Care and Health; Ms D'Souza said that there were some very strong links between Housing and Social Care.

Members asked whether the Health and Wellbeing proposals would help to align Adult Social Care, Housing and Health. The Chair commented that it was important that any new arrangements did not cause any more work for members.

9.3 **RESOLVED** – Members noted and agreed the work plan as listed in the appendix to the report.

**10. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET OR THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER MEETING**

10.1 There were none.

**11. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL**

11.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of



### BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

#### HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 13 JUNE 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

#### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors Wakefield (Chair); Duncan, Farrow, Pidgeon, Randall, Robins, Summers and G Theobald

**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), Chris Kift (Hi Rise Action Group), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group) and Barry Kent (Tenant Disability Network)

#### PART ONE

#### 1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 1A Declarations of Substitute Members

1.1 Councillor G Theobald declared that he was attending as a substitute for Councillor Peltzer Dunn.

##### 1B Declarations of Interests

1.2 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).

##### 1C Exclusion of the Press and Public

1.3 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.

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

## 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Management Consultative Committee Meetings held on 7 March & 22 March 2011 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

## 3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

### Scrutiny Panel Proposals

3.1 Councillor Randall referred to the scrutiny panel proposals raised by John Melson at the City Assembly. An report on this matter would be brought to the next HMCC in September. This work would be carried out with the support of the tenants.

### Annual report to tenants and leaseholders for year ending 31 March 2011

3.2 The Chair reported that at the last meeting, the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion had informed members that last year's annual report to all council tenants and leaseholders had been held up as a good example for other landlords to look at in a report by the four national tenant organisations.

3.3 They praised this council's report for its comprehensive and honest service assessment and were impressed with the number of quotes from tenants about levels of service. And they gave credit for having heavily involved tenants in the development of the report.

3.4 All tenants and leaseholders had been asked what they would like to say or see in this year's annual report in Homing In and on the website. Officers would be giving an update and asking residents for contributions at this month's Area Panels, as Chris Kift did at the City Assembly.

3.5 Officers were now drafting the 2011 report and it would be circulated to resident associations and published for consultation with residents at the end of June. Tenants and leaseholders could then give their feedback on the council's performance and report the achievements of their associations and resident-led groups – to be included in the final report.

3.6 The Cabinet Member hoped that residents would contribute to this report as much, if not more than, last year and looked forward to the final draft coming to the HMCC in September 2011.

**4. CALLOVER**

4.1 The Chair asked the Committee to consider which items listed on the agenda it wished to debate and determine in full.

4.2 **RESOLVED** - That all items be reserved for debate and determination.

**5. PETITIONS**

5.1 There were none.

**6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

6.1 There were none.

**7. DEPUTATIONS**

7.1 There were none.

**8. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

8.1 There were none.

**9. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

9.1 There were none.

**10. HOUSING CENTRE PRESENTATION**

10.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Senior Project Manager regarding the new Housing Centre in Moulscroomb which would have its official opening on 5 July 2011. Major works on the Centre were completed in March. Staff began to move into the centre in April 2011 and would continue to move in up to July.

10.2 Members were informed that Property and Investment, Mears, Car Parks and Garages, Rent Accounting, Estate Service, Lettings Team, Right to Buy & Leasehold and Policy & Performance would all be based in the Centre.

10.3 The purpose of the Housing Centre was to transform and improve the service, provide a central hub for housing, improve customer service, provide repairs and improvement co-location and develop the partnership.

10.4 The Centre offered closer working, improved service, training and conference rooms, meeting rooms, an atrium & display area and a residents' room. Michelle Johnson, Community Participation Officer, would work with residents and users with regard to the use of the residents' room.

10.5 HMCC members would have an opportunity to look round the building at the official opening on 5 July.

- 10.6 The Senior Project Manager reported that the building had high sustainability levels. The building needed air conditioning but would use heat pump technology. The building had an Energy Performance Certificate with a 46 energy efficiency rating, which placed it in the B Category. This was very energy efficient for a retro building.
- 10.7 The Senior Project Manager thanked all those who had been involved in the project and hoped all HMCC members could attend the official opening.
- 10.8 Chris Kift asked why the disabled toilets in the building were locked. The Senior Project Manager replied that there were 4 or 5 disabled toilets in the building. One was locked due to special medical needs on the recommendation of doctors. This required a RADAR key to open it. The other disabled toilets were accessible.
- 10.9 Tina Urquhart considered the Housing Centre to be a very nice building but stressed that it was difficult for people living in Mile Oak to get to meetings at the Centre at 10.00am. The Project Manager replied that officers would want to arrange meetings at times that the tenants could attend. He stressed that the Housing Centre would not be used for all meetings. It was important to make use of other facilities across the city.
- 10.10 Councillor Robins expressed concern that the Housing Centre was too far away for the people in Portslade and West Hove to attend meetings or see officers. He asked if there would be provision for tenants in this area of the city. The Project Manager replied the idea was not to use the Housing Centre as a major public access point. Officers would continue to provide face to face services to local areas.
- 10.11 Stewart Gover considered the Housing Centre the finest operational centre Mears Ltd had ever had. He stressed that taxpayers had paid for the lease, and major renovations had been paid for by the people of the city.
- 10.12 Jean Davis asked for consideration to be given to tenants who are unable to walk far. It was a long walk from the car park to the Housing Centre. The Senior Project Manager replied that there were 6 disabled bays in the car park which were close to the front doors. The Housing Centre was disabled compliant and had a disabled lift which could be used in the event of a fire.
- 10.13 Councillor Randall was pleased to see that the building had a good sustainability rating. He asked if there would be capacity in the building for adult learning and whether it would be possible to provide crèche facilities. The Senior Project Manager replied that two rooms had been equipped for training. The training would be run in a similar fashion to the training provided at the Hollingdean Depot. With regard to crèche facilities, the building was quite flexible and as the service developed officers would work out priorities for the workspace.
- 10.14 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted.



- 11. AUTHORITY TO AWARD A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR THE BUILDING OF 15 NEW COUNCIL HOMES AT AINSWORTH HOUSE**
- 11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Place which requested delegated authority to award the contract in relation to the construction works at Ainsworth House. The report summarised the work to procure a contractor.
- 11.2 Members were informed that improving housing supply was one of the key strategic priorities of the City-Wide Housing Strategy. A key goal was to increase the supply of affordable rented housing including building new Council homes. Planning approval for the Ainsworth House proposals was awarded on 27 April 2011.
- 11.3 Councillor Farrow welcomed the construction of council homes in the city. He looked forward to seeing details of other sites in the city for the provision of 800 other homes that had been promised.
- 11.4 Stewart Gover reported that the Ainsworth House was in his area. The planning for the development had been wonderfully carried out by tenants and residents, who considered it to be an excellent scheme. He hoped it would prove to be a flagship scheme. The Head of Housing Management & Development and Private Sector Housing thanked everyone who had worked on the scheme.
- 11.5 Chris Kift thought it was a great scheme and stressed the importance of looking for further suitable sites for housing. Tenants would be on the look out for further sites and would report back to the HMCC.
- 11.6 Tom Whiting stressed the need for sheltered housing. This was just as financially viable as other housing. The Chair concurred and stressed that the council would definitely want to provide sheltered housing.
- 11.7 Councillor Randall considered the proposed scheme to be excellent. He informed members that a report would be prepared on further housing provision, including extra care housing and housing for older people. Meanwhile, enquiries were being made to ascertain the latest developments with regard to an Anchor housing scheme.
- 11.8 Councillor G Theobald stressed that the scheme and other excellent schemes were developed under the previous administration. The Chair stated that she recognised the work carried out by the previous administration.
- 11.9 An indicative vote was carried out by tenants. The tenants unanimously supported the recommendations.
- 11.10 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the HMCC supports the proposal that the Cabinet Member for Housing delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Place to award and enter into the design and build contract for Ainsworth House. This requires awarding and entering into a contract with a delivery partner following a competitive procurement process via the Homes and Communities Agencies Delivery Partner Panel. The approximate contract value is £1.6m.

**12. PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 4 - END OF YEAR)**

- 12.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Housing & Social Inclusion which set out the Housing Management Performance for the year 2010-2011.
- 12.2 Members were informed that this report would be the final one to use the current style of presentation. Members would have the opportunity to both comment on and influence the proposed new style of report which would be presented to the 26 September meeting.
- 12.3 The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement presented the report and highlighted some of the achievements. She congratulated the work of the various teams in achieving or exceeding their targets. The target for 2010/11 for Rent collected as a % of rent owed was 98.68%. End of year performance was 98.70%. This was an additional £10,000 income.
- 12.4 All empty properties had been let and Repairs and Improvements had exceeded their target.
- 12.5 A total of 34,275 responsive repairs were completed in 2010/11, which was an average of 94 per day.
- 12.6 This year saw the partnership achieve its target of 74% of the council's stock meeting the decent homes standard. The target was 88% for the current year. 984 new boilers had been fitted in the last year which would make significant reductions in heating costs to residents. The result for the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) (a measure for energy efficiency for the housing stock) was 76.6 out of 120. For 2011/12 the council were moving to the new government measure (SAP) 2005 which used a score out of 100. This explained why the target had been revised to 71.
- 12.7 20 properties were waiting for a gas safety certificate and this was being actioned.
- 12.8 Performance and targets for the Estate Service were set out in paragraph 3.4. The Neighbourhood Response Team had now taken on the role of carrying out minor housing adaptations, which resulted in a speedier service for residents. The adaptations included grab rails, lever taps and stair rails.
- 12.9 Referrals of anti-social behaviour to the Social Inclusion Team had reduced slightly in the last quarter. The Social Inclusion Team had managed to successfully close 17 cases. One led to an eviction. Turning the Tide had been successfully rolled out city wide. This work had resulted in a reduction of evictions and seen increased satisfaction with that team.
- 12.10 Barry Kent made the point that gas prices would be increased by 20% this winter. Meanwhile, he expressed concern about the cleaning service in Woburn Place. Cleaning was not carried out properly. For example, the lights inside and outside the property had not been cleaned for months.
- 12.11 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion replied that national fuel price rises were a concern. Housing had a financial inclusion strategy and this would focus on more

financial inclusion matters in the coming months in order to help local residents. Meanwhile, he would ask the Estate Services Team to look at the cleaning of Woburn Place.

- 12.12 Tina Urquhart reported that at Downland Court, three bin areas needed locks on doors. The hall was untidy and she did not agree with the figures for cleaning quoted in the report. The Chair replied that these matters would be investigated.
- 12.13 Stewart Gover referred to paragraph 3.2.1 of the report. (Empty property turnaround time). He considered that the turn around time of 42 days for sheltered housing was unacceptable. With regard to the price of gas, he considered that the city was obsessed with combination boilers. He urged Mears Ltd to consider alternatives. If economy 7 systems were fitted, they could be reloaded with energy by Baxi boilers. Worcester boilers would not be suitable for the Baxi system.
- 12.14 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion reported that because of the nature of sheltered housing it could take longer to let. This enabled the properties to be bid for and refused and then go through the cycle again. There might be a need to provide support for redecoration.
- 12.15 Councillor Robins asked what support was given to tenants who fell into arrears with their rent. He considered the figures for repairs and improvements to be high and asked how the figures were collected.
- 12.16 The Head of Customer Access & Business Improvement replied that officers tried to prevent arrears arising in the first place. Tenants were contacted as soon as possible after they fell into arrears. They would be offered ways of paying off the arrears and would be put in touch with local organisations who might be able to help.
- 12.17 The Partnering and Performance Manager reported that an IT system recorded repairs carried out. The target time depended on the priority. The system recorded the time and date the job was completed. This information was checked for accuracy.
- 12.18 Beverley Weaver stressed the need for a breakdown of tenant satisfaction on the figures quoted in the report. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion agreed that with regard to the information on repairs, there was a lot of different information that could be reported to the HMCC. The last City Assembly had been used to obtain feedback. An action plan would be presented to the Repairs and Monitoring Group on 22 June. This information could then be shared with the HMCC.
- 12.19 Chris Kift informed the Committee that he would like to see electric combination boilers in blocks. People in blocks with communal boilers would not benefit from the savings gas combination boilers would bring.
- 12.20 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion replied that the issue of communal heating was a challenge in high rise blocks. However there were proposals for a solution to meet these challenges.
- 12.21 Councillor Randall reported that after the City Assembly he had met with representatives of Mears Ltd to discuss issues raised on the day. He considered that there should be

figures for the number of repairs and improvements that were right first time. Quality was important with regard to cleaning tasks. There was a need to revise standards. Meanwhile, a proposal for a financial inclusion plan was supported.

- 12.22 Councillor Randall noted that there was no information about the management of open spaces under the Estate Service. The issue of boilers would be investigated. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion reported that officers carried out financial health checks at the start of each tenancy. He undertook to look at cleaning, ground maintenance and the measure of performance. The figures of right first time were available and could be put into the report.
- 12.23 Tom Whiting stressed the need to have a strategy for dealing with properties when they became vacant. He considered that more attention should be paid to the foyer areas which needed to be painted. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion reported that officers did move very quickly with regard to letting a property. He would listen to Tom's feedback and would work with residents to re-let more quickly and improve performance.
- 12.24 The Chair informed the Committee that she and Councillor Randall were very happy to talk to tenants about any ideas and new ways of working.
- 12.25 Ted Harman suggested recording customer satisfaction in the report. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion replied that complaints and compliments were recorded and could be put into the report.
- 12.26 David Murtagh stated that he had visited a number of properties as a member of the Choice Based Lettings Group. There were some places being let that he would not live in. They were not finished properly and the work was not to the required standard. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion replied that a group had been established to look at lettable standards and consider costs. There needed to be a discussion with tenants to determine whether they would like more to be spent on decoration to bring properties up to a higher standard. He agreed that work needed to be carried out to a good standard. Meanwhile, there was a special needs scheme for older people who required decoration works.
- 12.27 Councillor Farrow considered that the communications that Mears Ltd had established with tenants representatives needed to be improved to enable tenants to obtain the information they required.
- 12.28 The Chair reported that she had had a meeting with Mears Ltd and had spoken to them about communications and new ways of communicating such as social media.
- 12.29 Councillor Farrow asked for an item on Communications to be submitted to the next HMCC meeting. The Chair agreed to this request.
- 12.30 Chris Kift raised the issue of letting standards. He knew of a young couple who had been offered a council flat but had to let it go as it was not in a condition to let. The Chair agreed that that this was not good enough and questioned why it was on the list if it was not suitable for habitation.

- 12.31 Beverley Weaver reported that she had visited several properties with the lettings team. Some properties still had possessions in them. Some were supposed to have decent homes bathrooms when they were not decent (due to an error on the form). She suggested that damage to the properties should be paid for by the previous tenants. The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion reported that there was a strong rechargeable repairs process. When damage was carried out to properties the council charged the tenant or previous tenant as appropriate.
- 12.32 Councillor G Theobald considered the figures in the report to be excellent. When the format was changed he considered it very important that the Committee were able to compare this quarter and the previous quarter with the new target. It was confirmed that this would be the case.
- 12.33 Barry Kent mentioned that he had been in properties where the work to bathrooms and kitchens was less than acceptable. The Head of Housing and Social inclusion agreed that this was not good enough. He asked tenants to report poor quality work, or take the issue to the Repairs and Monitoring Group. The Chair asked members to report problems to ward councillors.
- 12.34 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report and the above comments be noted.

### **13. HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY INVESTMENT OPTIONS**

- 13.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing. Members were informed that one of the key strategic priorities outlined in the City-wide wide Housing Strategy 2009-14 was to improve housing quality and make sure that residents were able to live in decent homes suitable to their needs. Strategic goals under this priority included reducing fuel poverty, minimising CO2 emissions and improving tenants' homes ensuring they are of high quality and well maintained.
- 13.2 With less central government funding available energy companies were becoming the main source of funding. This could be obtained from Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP), Feed In Tariffs, The 'Green Deal' and Renewable Heat Initiatives. The presentation detailed these options.
- 13.3 Chris Kift referred to the statement in the presentation that there were approximately 1600 council housing properties that would be suitable for the installation of solar PV panels on roofs. He stated that he was 100% behind the idea of having solar panels.
- 13.4 Councillor Randall asked whether this work would be affected by proposals to change the FIT scheme. He further asked whether there were any proposals to subsidise the work or have cheap deals. The Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing replied that with regard to the "Green Deal" there was an obligation on the energy companies to support vulnerable households. The review of the FIT scheme would be targeted at large solar farms and would not affect domestic schemes.

- 13.5 Stewart Gover expressed concern about wastage in the city. Security lights and street lights were often left on all day due to poor maintenance. He considered that photo voltaic installations were not always the best way of saving energy.
- 13.6 The Strategic Director Place stated that this matter could be investigated and that there could be a report back to the Committee on how to make the cities lights more efficient.
- 13.7 Councillor Randall agreed that there needed to be more efficient lights in the city.

The meeting concluded at 4.58pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

# HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

## Agenda Item 28

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2011</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>7 September 2011</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Housing &amp; Social Inclusion</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Carol Jenkins</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-3832
	<b>Email:</b>	Carol.jenkins@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The council is required under the current regulatory framework for social housing landlords to publish by 1 October 2011 for our council tenants a performance report for the year ending 31 March 2011.
- 1.2 An annual report has been produced with the involvement and scrutiny of tenants and leaseholders, in line with the plan and timetable agreed with the Housing Management Consultative Committee on 24 January 2011.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing approves the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2011 at Appendix 1 for publication and distribution to all council tenants and leaseholders.

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

- 3.1 The current regulatory framework for social housing which is still in force requires 'registered providers' (including council landlords) to publish an annual report to their tenants containing a self assessment of their performance against the standards set by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). The annual report is a key mechanism for landlords to make themselves accountable to their tenants, as part of 'co-regulation'.
- 3.2 The TSA's requirements are that the annual report should:
  - assess how the council is currently meeting the TSA standards, including how it measures its compliance
  - note any gaps and any associated improvement plans
  - include the council's service offer to tenants against the standards over the current year, including local service offers
  - include reference to how the council has gained assurance on the outcomes reported, including how tenants have been involved in scrutinising performance

and, where appropriate, use of external validation, peer review and benchmarking and

- detail how tenants have been involved in producing and scrutinising the report.

It expects an honest and robust self assessment that is evidence based.

Landlords must meet the commitments they make to tenants in the report.

3.3 Under the regulatory framework landlords are also required to send a copy of the report to the TSA as a means for it to assess landlords' compliance with their standards. However, the government's Localism Bill currently going through Parliament proposes to abolish the TSA next year and transfer a 'backstop' role to intervene on consumer matters to the Homes and Communities Agency, repealing the regulator's power to receive annual reports. In view of these changes, the TSA announced in July that it does not require providers to routinely send them a copy of their 2011 annual reports.

3.4 In January the Housing Management Consultative Committee noted the progress already made in implementing the council's improvement plans included in the first annual report to council tenants and leaseholders last year. The Committee also noted the proposed plan and timetable for involving residents in producing and scrutinising this annual report to tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2011.

3.5 We followed the agreed plan with the aim of involving as wide a range of residents as possible in the production and scrutiny of the report. The section of the annual report entitled 'How tenants and leaseholders have been involved in producing and checking this annual report' outlines the opportunities we offered to residents to have their say in the report, which were extensively publicised in Homing In magazine, at the City Assembly and Area Panels. In addition to asking all residents what they would like to see or say in the report, a consultation draft version was issued on 29 June and sent to all tenant and resident associations, made available at our offices and put on our website and the council's consultation portal. We emailed over 2,200 tenants and leaseholders who we have email addresses for with a link to the portal for their comments. We also posted on Twitter and Facebook that we were asking all council tenants and leaseholders to have their say in the annual report. Despite greater notice and publicity for the consultation draft this year - in order to give all tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to scrutinise the annual report before it is published - we received fewer comments on this year's draft than last year. Only three comments were made via the consultation portal although further comments and quotes were received by letter, email and telephone.

3.6 We have included a range of the comments received from tenants and leaseholders in the final draft to reflect the feedback we received. As in last year's report, residents are strongly featured in the annual report in pictures and their own words, demonstrating the key role they have in co-regulating our housing management services. The Homing In Tenant Editorial Board have also been requested to comment on the final draft at their meeting on 30 August. Finally, the final draft report will be scrutinised by members and tenant and leaseholder representatives at the Housing Management Consultative Committee meeting on 5 September 2011.



- 3.7 Once approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing, the annual report will be sent to all tenants and leaseholders with the September edition of Homing In magazine. It will also be publicly available on our website and made available in alternative formats on request.

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

- 4.1 Council tenants and leaseholders have been extensively involved in producing and scrutinising the annual report. We consulted residents on what they wanted to say and see in the report and on the draft report. The introduction to the annual report and paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6 above detail the consultation that has been carried out. Residents' responses have shaped the final version of the annual report and some are quoted within the annual report itself.

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

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The cost of producing and distributing the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2011 is included in the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2011/12

*Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 23/08/11*

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By section 193 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2004 the TSA may set standards for registered providers as to the nature, extent and quality of accommodation, facilities or services provided by them in connection with social housing. Section 204 of that Act permits the TSA to require a registered provider to prepare an annual report assessing the provider's performance by reference to the section 193 and 194 standards, and to send a copy to the Authority within a specified period. The TSA have indicated that they do not require a copy of the report to be sent to them this year. Failure to comply with a requirement is a criminal offence, punishable with a fine of up to £20,000.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 23/08/11*

##### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out on the housing management work programme to meet the TSA's regulatory requirements, including the production of an annual report. The TSA's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard requires providers to understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants. The annual report illustrates how the council meets that standard and its progress in continuously improving its performance in this area.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The annual report outlines how the council as landlord addresses sustainability issues and its progress in meeting its objectives. The commitments in the report include actions to cut carbon emissions and residents' energy bills, support apprenticeships and initiatives to help get people into work and training and also benefit our residents and to work with communities to develop community gardens and growing projects.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The annual report outlines how the council as landlord addresses anti-social behaviour, its progress in meeting its objectives and commitments to continue to work with residents to improve our services.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The TSA standards specify that landlords must meet the commitments they make to tenants in the annual report. The report demonstrates how the council has met the commitments it made in the last annual report and includes commitments for this financial year 2011/12. The TSA states in its regulatory framework that it will take a risk-based and proportionate approach in considering any further regulatory intervention in respect of landlords' performance on their commitments, as it wants an approach that encourages registered providers to aspire to better service outcomes and avoids perverse incentives from regulation.

#### Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are strong links between improving housing and reducing health inequalities. The annual report details the council's investment in improvements to its housing stock to bring all tenants' homes up to Decent Homes Standard. The annual report also reflects our progress and commitments to reducing inequality, such as continuing to extend financial inclusion and support the Credit Union to help residents manage their finances and to increase our understanding of tenants' needs and tailor our services to meet them.

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 Publication of this honest and robust assessment of our performance to council tenants and leaseholders meets the council's commitment to resident involvement and transparency. The commitments in the annual report to further improve our landlord services and housing stock support the council's priorities to involve residents in everything we do, tackle inequalities and make Brighton & Hove the greenest city in Britain. The annual report illustrates how the council as landlord works in partnership with residents and other agencies to improve the neighbourhoods that council tenants and leaseholders live in and provide opportunities for local residents.

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

- 6.1 The council is required to publish the annual report as explained in the body of this report.
- 6.2 The report plan and timetable were agreed with Housing Management Consultative Committee on 24 January 2011.

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

- 7.1 The council is required to publish an annual report for its tenants by 1 October 2011 to meet the TSA's requirements under the current regulatory framework.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices:**

1. Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2011 final draft  
(Note that the outstanding photo will be inserted before the meeting date)

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

None

#### **Background Documents**

1. *The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2010*  
Tenant Services Authority, March 2010  
([http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Regulatory\\_framework\\_for\\_social\\_housing\\_in\\_England\\_from\\_2010.pdf](http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Regulatory_framework_for_social_housing_in_England_from_2010.pdf))
2. Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2010 ([http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/housing/council\\_housing/3231\\_Housing\\_Annual\\_Report\\_summary.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/housing/council_housing/3231_Housing_Annual_Report_summary.pdf))





# Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2011

Council tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of our services. We aim to treat you fairly and ensure that our services meet your needs and provide value for money.



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**



As the new Cabinet Member for Housing, I welcome this annual report to all council tenants and leaseholders on the council's performance as your landlord in the year from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Liz Wakefield  
Cabinet Member for Housing

The report sets out facts and figures about the council's performance and how it has worked with residents to improve services to you, in line with the commitments made in last year's annual report.

It also sets out how I and the staff plan to make further improvements to housing services to you in this current year. The priorities of the new Green administration include involving residents in everything we do, tackling inequalities and making Brighton & Hove the greenest city in Britain. I intend to reflect those priorities in how we develop our housing services to you. I want to build on the strong partnership between the council, tenants and leaseholders to include more of you in shaping our landlord services.

Our priorities for council housing are to involve council tenants more deeply in managing their homes by holding annual consultations on housing budget options and setting up a Tenants' Scrutiny Panel with powers to look into any aspect of council housing management. We also aim to reduce council housing maintenance and management costs and will continue to work to improve conditions in sheltered housing schemes.

Our other housing priorities include working with Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes – the housing company set up by the council as a 'local delivery vehicle' to raise investment to help bring every council tenant's home up to standard – and others to begin a programme of at least 1,000 new affordable homes. We will work to ensure minimum acceptable space and design standards for new homes. We also want to create an ambitious programme to insulate every home in the city and install renewable energy technologies. That would make homes healthier, slash carbon emissions and cut residents' energy bills.

I would like to thank all those tenants and leaseholders who gave their suggestions of what they wanted to see and say in this annual report or who commented on the consultation draft. A big thank you also goes to the tenants, leaseholders and officers whose words are quoted in this report, and to all other residents and staff who work hard in their communities and resident working groups to make life better for everyone in council housing.

Liz Wakefield,  
Cabinet Member for Housing

# Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	4
How tenants and leaseholders have been involved in producing and signing off this annual report	
<b>SECTION 1 RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT</b>	6
Customer service, choice and complaints	6
Involvement and empowerment	11
Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants	14
<b>SECTION 2 HOME</b>	15
Quality of accommodation	15
Repairs and maintenance	17
<b>SECTION 3 TENANCY</b>	19
Allocations and lettings	19
Tenure	20
<b>SECTION 4 NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY</b>	22
Neighbourhood management	22
Local area co-operation	24
Anti-social behaviour	24
<b>SECTION 5 VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	25

The sections in this draft annual report reflect how we meet the standards set by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) for council and housing association landlords, any gaps and our improvement plans.

At 31 March 2011 Brighton & Hove City Council owned and managed 12,283 rented homes across Brighton, Hove and Portslade, including 847 flats in 23 sheltered schemes. Another 2,248 flats in our blocks were owned by leaseholders.

# Introduction

This is our second annual report to all council tenants and leaseholders. We have again tried to involve as many tenants and leaseholders as possible in reporting how we perform as a landlord and how residents work closely with us to deliver the services you need and that fit your priorities.

Last year's report included tenants' views on how we met the standards for all council and housing association landlords, introduced by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) in April 2010. We collected them through questionnaires, exercises with resident representatives and focus group meetings with tenants not involved in our resident participation structure. We used that information to outline in last year's report how we met the TSA's standards, any gaps and what we planned to do by 31 March 2011 to improve our services to you.

This report for 2010/11 sets out the progress we have made in those improvement plans, so you can see how we have met our commitments to you. It shows how we measure up against the TSA's regulatory framework and the performance outcomes we've agreed with the council's Lead Commissioner for Housing through a performance compact.

It outlines the consultation we carried out with residents during the year to review all our customer charters and replace them with new service pledges. These service pledges were developed and agreed with residents to reflect what you think is most important in how we provide our services to you, and they are our 'local service offers' required by the TSA. Residents will be closely involved in checking that we meet them.

Finally, this report also sets out the further improvements we plan to make to our services this year.

## How tenants and leaseholders have been involved in producing and checking this annual report

We asked tenants and leaseholders to tell us what they thought of last year's annual report and how we could improve it in the report itself, in *Homing* magazine and on our website.

In January the Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC), including tenant and leaseholder representatives, agreed a plan and timetable to involve residents in producing and checking this report. We asked tenants and leaseholders for suggestions on the content of this report and outlined the plan, with a short update on our progress in meeting our commitments in the 2010 report, in the spring edition of *Homing* In. All residents attending the tenants' and leaseholders' City Assembly and Area Panels in May and June were asked what they would like to see or say in this report. Summer's *Homing* In invited comments and suggestions from all tenants and leaseholders, explaining a consultation draft of the report would be available for everyone to comment on at the end of June.

The consultation draft was sent to all tenant and resident associations and made available on our website and in our housing offices to every tenant and leaseholder who wanted a copy, along with a feedback sheet. We also emailed over 2,200 tenants and leaseholders who we have email addresses for with a link to the council's consultation portal on our website for their comments. We posted on Twitter and Facebook that we were asking all council

tenants and leaseholders to have their say in the annual report. We asked what you think of our performance and our improvement plans, and for residents to report in their own words what they and their groups have achieved. We have included a range of tenants' and leaseholders' quotes to reflect residents' feedback and achievements in this final version.

**"I think you have covered everything in this consultation draft annual report. I have no other comments than well done, keep up the good work!"**  
Resident comment on the consultation draft report

The final draft report was checked by resident representatives and members of the Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC) and the *Homing* In Tenant Editorial Board, then approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing. This final report has been sent to all tenants and leaseholders with *Homing* In magazine in September.

If you would like to know more about our performance or services or have any other queries, please contact your housing office or look on our newly improved website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing).

**Nick Hibberd,**  
Head of Housing & Social Inclusion



Last year's report

# Section 1

## Resident involvement and empowerment

### Customer Service, Choice and Complaints

#### Customer service

#### How are we doing?

In 2010/11 staff in housing management responded to more than 131,000 phone enquiries, 54,000 customer visits to our offices, 17,500 home visits, 10,000 email enquiries and 5,500 letters. More tenants and leaseholders are choosing to use our website to get information, pay rents and charges, report repairs and other jobs that need doing, give feedback and make applications. This is a cheaper and often easier and quicker way of contacting us and getting things done, for both the council and residents, and you can contact us at a time that suits you.

We changed the Housing Officer duty system to increase the time they can be out on estates and meeting tenants, which residents had told us they wanted.

91 tenants returned customer satisfaction forms about the sheltered service in 2010/11. 90% were satisfied with our service overall; 55% were very satisfied. Three people were dissatisfied and one person very dissatisfied.



In her own time, late on Christmas Eve Ginny Buckland, Sheltered Housing Team Manager, shopped for food for a sheltered resident just discharged from hospital

Residents agreed opening and closing times for 12 laundries newly refurbished under a contract monitored by the Laundry Facilities Review Group.

Our new service pledge, agreed with residents to reflect what's important to you, includes that we will be easy to reach, be clear and treat you with respect and listen and act to get things done.



"Communication with the council has improved. If you use the right process to report things you get better information and results."

Dave Murtagh, East Moulsecoomb Tenant and Resident Association

#### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

You can now get more services on our website at a time to suit you at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingdoitnow](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingdoitnow). You can pay your rent and other charges, report housing repairs, report housing fraud, order a PayPoint card for your rent, as well as getting access to a whole range of forms and information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This August we introduced a 'Customer online system' giving tenants secure access to check their rent and other accounts. You can sign up for the service at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/tenants-online](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/tenants-online).

"Nice clear easy to use site, have used it a couple of times now, no problems, but it would be nice to have a proper log off button."

Tenant feedback on the new 'Customer online' system.

We are making improvements in response to your feedback.

We provided easy instruction guides by our computers in housing offices that customers can use. Library staff and trained volunteers can now show you how to get information or carry out transactions on the internet through Council Connect, introduced in libraries in March 2011. Internet transactions save money both for us and residents, free up our time to focus on those in most need of help and improve sustainability by, for example, using less paper.

Using information from residents who had contacted us, staff across the housing service have mapped out how we get and deal with customers' queries, eg on moving home and rent arrears letters, to see if we can streamline them to improve our customers' experience, and developed a plan of actions to make improvements. We reported our customer access review work to resident representatives at the Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC), which agreed with our proposal to set up a housing customer service hub as the main contact point for all housing management queries (apart from repairs).

We agreed an action plan with the Sheltered Housing Action Group on developing the sheltered service, with five tenant-led working parties looking at key aspects. Having reviewed our sheltered local letting plan and our out-of-hours service, the groups are now focusing on how care and support is provided, promoting tenant participation, repairs, lettings and health and safety.

We contacted thousands of residents asking what you think of our services through community events and questionnaires to develop the new service pledges with you. We also got your views through paper, phone and online surveys for Customer Services Week, the Estates Service, sheltered housing, lettings and leaseholders' satisfaction surveys and also knocked on doors and held meetings in the grounds maintenance review pilot areas. We reported results in Homing In and in our Leaseholder Update.

We have used your feedback to improve our services in 2010/11. For example, in response to leaseholders' concerns about wasting electricity, we are monitoring areas where lights are not needed during the day. Where they wanted to make sure the outside of the building was kept much cleaner, we made sure litter picks take place. And when sheltered tenants told us they wanted more social activities, we worked with community groups to offer a range of new weekly social events.

"I would like to congratulate you on the very kind and helpful staff you employ. Nothing is too much trouble for these hard working duo and they go out of their way to be very helpful to one and all."

#### Sheltered scheme resident, July 2010

Below: "Five Sheltered Housing Action Group working parties work in real partnership with the council improving services and care for sheltered residents"

Louis Loizou (left), Bryan Balchin, Charles Penrose, Roy Crowhurst, Kath Davies and Paul Agius, SHAG working party members





In October, nine sheltered schemes took part in the Elderly Accommodation Councils Housing for Older People award. They scored the sheltered service as average for the 162 providers overall. We can use their survey results to benchmark our service against the other providers and make improvements.

In 2010/11 tenant and leaseholder mystery shoppers carried out three checks on the customer services we and Mears provide and our response to complaints. We reported the results in Homing In and there is more information in this report.

*"I have really enjoyed our assignments, it has given me an opportunity to help change things and suggest things to help make services better for everyone."*

*"What I have liked is working in a relaxed way with housing staff, just being able to discuss issues and change things but as well just see what good things are done."*

**Resident mystery shoppers**

Residents helped produce new welcome packs for new tenants and leaseholders. We set up a new Tenancy Management Focus Group of residents to review our procedures including improving our letters and forms.

We made rent statements and arrears letters easier to understand after tenants told us they didn't understand some phrases. We also switched to one clear rent increase letter at the end of February, greatly reducing tenant enquiries and complaints. And we made the way we charge for our sheltered service easier to understand. We have improved the information on our website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing) for both tenants and leaseholders.

**How will we continue to improve?**

We will improve the ways you can get information and report issues on our website at any time, not just when our offices and phone lines are open.

We will support residents to make use of the internet by publicising training opportunities and giving step-by-step advice on how you can access the service you need on-line.

We will consult with you and involve groups of tenants on various aspects about how access to our services can be improved. We have a programme for mystery shoppers to complete five 'shops' in 2011/12.

We will use a new STAR (Survey of Tenants & Residents) national resident satisfaction survey for council and housing association landlords to help us compare our service with other social housing providers and focus on areas for improvement.

We will carry out the actions agreed with the Sheltered Housing Action Group in the Business and Progress Plan 2011/12. They include revising our out of hours service to ensure a more specialist and targeted service to those in need, as a result of the tenant-led working group.



*"To achieve this is a fairly long work process of changing habits and thinking out of the box to ensure the best services for the best value for money. However to tick all the boxes takes time but we are getting there, thanks to very enlightened tenants, officers and councillors."*

**Tom Whiting, Sheltered Housing Action Group**

**Choice**

**How are we doing?**

Residents have continued to control the yearly £540,000 Estate Development Budget (EDB) to decide on improvements to communal areas around their homes through Area Housing Management Panels.

**How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?**

By working with the Estate Services Monitoring Group and conducting surveys in five pilot

areas, we understand better what residents want from the grounds maintenance service. Where residents agree, we make changes to the service where we can. For example, Elwyn Jones Court tenants did not like the planting so Community Payback cleared the site, and our parks service replanted with colourful flowers residents wanted and left an area for residents to maintain. Our new leaseholder service charge collection strategy and procedures aim to give more options to leaseholders who have difficulty in paying for major works charges.

The Leaseholders Action Group worked with staff to ensure leaseholders got more choice of lower cost options in a review of the fire door strategy. Mears are working on a range of services that leaseholders could buy directly from them, including new bathrooms, kitchens and doors.

We found out more about what sort of choices residents would like through our 'Tell us what you think!' events and surveys to develop service pledges, through questionnaires for the grounds maintenance review pilot areas and feedback from resident groups. Our Estates Service pledges include offering to change locks for tenants on payment of a charge and fitting spy holes to doors for vulnerable households on request.

**How will we continue to improve?**

We will complete the grounds maintenance review and extend choices to other areas where we can.

We will investigate extending payment options for high major works charges for leaseholders.

We will carry out loft or other extensions for some overcrowded families in suitable properties to offer them the choice of staying in their current home.

**Complaints**

**How are we doing?**

We received more complaints in 2010/11 than in the previous year and some replies took longer than our target timescales. We just missed our target of replying within an average of 10 days on complaints about Mears, but took longer on average to reply to other complaints about repairs and maintenance. We met our target of replying to 70% of complaints about housing management within 10 working days but some complaints took longer. We completed 68% of all replies within 10 working days, the same as in 2009/10.



*"We lobbied the council to do our own grass cutting with a 'proper' mower to save money. If you're sure your idea has merit – don't let go of it, keep your eyes on the prize!"*

**Stewart Gover, Wellington Road & Ainsworth House Tenants & Residents Association and Vice-Chair of the City Assembly**

Our performance in dealing with complaints in 2010/11			
Complaints about	Number of new complaints we received	Average time we took to reply to complaints, against our target of 10 working days	Percentage of replies we completed within our target of 10 working days
Housing management	188	10.8 days	71%
Repairs and maintenance	269	10.5 days	74%
• Mears	72	25.5 days	39%
• other			
Total	529	12.6 days	68%
		Overall we missed our target of replying within an average of 10 working days	Overall we just missed our target of replying to 70% of complaints within 10 working days

The largest number of housing management complaints were about tenancy management issues, car parks and garages and anti-social behaviour. For repairs and maintenance, they were about delays in repairs and poor diagnosis or quality of repair. 35% of complaints at Stage 1 of our complaints process were fully or partly upheld, putting us in the top performing quarter of council and housing association landlords in the new Housemark national benchmarking club.

In 2010/11 we dealt with 69 Stage 1

leaseholder disputes, 19 at Stage 2 and 9 at Stage 3. The council's record on resolving leaseholders' complaints over the last seven years is 80% resolved at Stage 1 and 62% at Stage 2. This means that 92% of disputes have been resolved at either Stage 1 or Stage 2.

Tenant and leaseholder representatives also play a valuable role in telling us when residents have problems with any of our services so we can put things right where we can.

#### Some examples of how we've acted on and learnt from your complaints:

- we're replacing the handles of new doors installed under the contract before the Mears partnership started

- we produced a leaflet explaining why we need to replace communal TV aerials before the region switches over to digital in March 2012

- we surveyed residents after complaints of nuisance parking and introduced parking enforcement where most wanted it

- Mears and/or council staff now inspect all new bathrooms and kitchens to check they meet the standards agreed with tenants.

#### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

We asked resident mystery shoppers over a three week period to look at a random selection of complaints and our replies. They gave us lots of useful feedback and recommendations about our letters. Our new service pledges include details of how residents can complain about our services online, by phone or in writing.

We are reviewing our complaints process to improve the speed and quality of our response to complaints.

**How will we continue to improve?**

We will improve our performance in answering complaints within target times.

We will work with managers, officers and partners to improve the quality of our responses to complaints, following the recommendations from resident mystery shoppers. We will carry out quality checks and review progress and improvement.

We will report the outcome of tenants' complaints and our complaints performance.

We will follow any new requirements for dealing with tenants' complaints that are introduced for social landlords.

#### Involvement and empowerment

#### Offering all tenants a wide range of opportunities to be involved

#### How are we doing?

In March 2011, there were 72 tenant and resident associations and over 20 resident-led working groups plus citywide groups such as the High Rise, Leaseholders and Sheltered Housing Action Groups. New groups include the Building New Council Homes Tenant Working Group (BuNCH) which is working on the design and planning process for new council homes.

*"As a member of the BuNCH Group, being able to have a say in the design of the 15 Homes on the Ainsworth Site and have also been part of the Procurement & Evaluation Team has been great. As a resident, being involved from the start has been a good experience."*

**Phil Bradick, Building New Council Homes Tenant Working Group (BuNCH)**

127 tenants and leaseholder representatives served on resident groups, most of them elected by their Area Panel. But of those, 56 representatives were on more than two resident working groups and 17 reps served on six or more groups. The average number of tenant and resident association committee members was six or seven. We recognise it can be a strain on representatives to maintain all these groups, when they also work hard in their communities to look after their estate and residents' interests.

*"There needs to be a comprehensive examination of the nature of the resident participatory structure and proposals brought forward to ensure maximum and representative participation."*

#### Resident feedback on consultation draft report

Our new service pledge commits us to provide a wide range of opportunities for you to be involved in what we do and how we do it.

*"My new association is trying to get more youngsters involved and working together to improve the community."*

**Billy Miller, Manor Farm (North) Residents and Tenants Association**



Our new Housing Centre in Moulsecoomb has an area for resident groups and representatives to use and they are being involved in deciding how the room is developed and what they would like in it. This will also help them play a full part in managing the repairs and improvement partnership with Mears, who are also based at the centre.

#### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

We are continuing to build on our strong resident involvement structure to offer a wider range of opportunities for you to have a say in how your home and neighbourhood are managed, in ways that suit you. Tenants' and leaseholders' twice yearly City Assemblies in May and November gave residents across the city an opportunity to tell us their views and suggestions.

*"To get more residents involved, including younger people, I'll update Twitter @CityAssembly regularly on what tenant reps are doing."*

**Chris Kift, Chair of Brighton & Hove Tenants' & Leaseholders' City Assembly**



The residents' Tenant Compact Monitoring Group did more work on the draft tenant and leaseholder involvement strategy, with four groups considering each of the strategy's four objectives and feedback from consultation with residents and staff. They confirmed the strategy's objectives to:

- provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in their housing
- develop a framework for agreeing local offers and priorities with our residents
- involve residents in the development of housing policy and the design and delivery of housing services, and
- involve residents in monitoring and scrutinising our performance in delivering housing services

They also recommended some changes, including providing more information about resident associations, to consult younger residents in particular and to set up a residents' scrutiny panel.

Over 1,800 tenants and leaseholders are on our resident involvement database to tell us how they'd like to have more of a say in how their homes and neighbourhoods are managed. We used this to contact residents about their priorities and choices in developing the service pledges, on the draft resident involvement strategy and to recruit more resident mystery shoppers and members for the Asset Management Panel. Having a record of residents' preferences means we can make sure we can contact people of all ages, genders, races, religion, sexual orientation, etc, and those with disabilities, and hear from all sections of the community.

#### **How will we continue to improve?**

We will continue to try to involve a wider range of tenants and leaseholders in having a say in how their homes and neighbourhoods are managed, including younger people, families with children and other groups who are under-represented in our formal participation structure and whose voice we need to hear.

We will make greater use of our website and social media such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate with and involve a wider range of residents.

We will consult residents on the revised resident involvement strategy and proposed changes through our website, our resident involvement database and resident groups.

We will continue to record the ways residents tell us they would like to be involved and the areas they are interested in, and to use that information to contact all sections of the community for their views and suggestions.

We will work with residents to develop a tenant scrutiny panel which will be able to check in detail how we manage and maintain council homes.

### **Agreeing 'local offers' for service delivery**

#### **How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?**

We consulted as many tenants and leaseholders as we could to find out your priorities for our services, using a variety of ways to get the views of all sections of the community. Over 100 staff were involved in holding four big 'Tell us what you think!' events across the city. We had activities and a competition for children as well as events at various times and locations to attract all residents. We sent out some 3,300 'Tell us what you think!' questionnaires to a cross section of tenants and leaseholders on our resident involvement database in December 2010 to reach residents in all equalities and diversity groups.

[Tell us what you think! consultation events](#)



We used what you told us to develop service pledges for all aspects of our landlord service with resident working groups. These pledges set out the standards of housing services that you can expect. They cover getting involved, looking after your home, looking after your neighbourhood, dealing with anti-social behaviour, managing your tenancy, living in sheltered housing, paying your rent, council leaseholders and garages and car parking. They include how performance will be monitored, reported to and checked by residents and what we will do if we fail to meet those pledges.

After further consultation on our website, a summary service pledge and eight detailed service pledges were agreed by HMCC and the Cabinet Member for Housing and came into effect on 1 April 2011. All tenants and leaseholders received details of the summary service pledge in the summer edition of Homing In and the pledges are all available at our offices and online at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-service-pledges](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-service-pledges). We can also make them available in translation, in large print, Braille or on CD or audio tape.

These service pledges have been developed and agreed with residents and will be reviewed and updated regularly.

#### **How will we continue to improve?**

We will measure our performance against the service pledges and report back in our annual report, articles in Homing In, regular reports to HMCC and resident groups and by including performance information on the housing pages of the council's website, so you can check that we are meeting the standards we have agreed with you.

### **Meeting the TSA's standards**

#### **How are we doing?**

We have worked to fill the gaps in meeting the TSA's standards tenants identified last year. The new performance compact with the council's Lead Commissioner for Housing requires us to meet the TSA's standards and we will measure that we do that.

### **How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?**

We reported our progress in meeting the commitments in last year's annual report to fully meet the TSA's standards to HMCC and they agreed the arrangements for involving residents in producing this report. We invited all tenants and leaseholders to give suggestions and get involved in this annual report in last year's report, in Homing In, on our website and at the City Assembly and Area Panels.

Full results of the TSA standards questionnaires and exercises last year were displayed at Area Panels and the City Assembly last autumn and summarised in the 2010 annual report.

We have looked at best practice examples for reporting to residents from other authorities and will present a range of reporting options to the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group and HMCC. The outcomes of mystery shopping and resident satisfaction surveys are reported in Homing In.

We included 'You said, we did' feedback in Homing In magazine, letting you know how we take your views into account and giving examples of how you have influenced the service.

#### **How will we improve?**

We will work with residents to develop full proposals for increasing resident scrutiny of our performance.

### **Providing support so tenants can be more effectively involved**

#### **How are we doing?**

Our four Community Participation Officers continue to support tenant and resident associations and resident groups, as does the Resource Centre. A new residents' Activity & Media Centre at Leach Court has been funded from a £4000 'Get Digital' grant and Estate Development Budget money. This centre will help train tenants in computer skills and provide a new social space. Training older residents in computers started in January 2011 with a Get Digital tutor using facilities at Patching Lodge.

"The Council has provided advice and support in the development of our Facebook page to allow us to engage with Residents who would not normally participate with their local association, allowing them to have a say on issues that affect the building and its grounds as well as broader City Wide concerns."

**James Morgan, Hereford Court Community Association**

### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

The Resource Centre helped 61 associations in 2010/11 with 75 support, advice and training sessions, designing 172 newsletters, flyers and posters and checking 50 accounts.

We trained resident mystery shoppers and resident assessors for the 'Rate your Estate' pilot project in East Brighton. Residents came up with lots of suggestions at a Green Communities training event on energy saving that have helped the Energy Efficiency Working Group. Training was held for tenants involved in the Partnership Group for repairs and improvements and we supported tenants to attend conferences.

### How will we improve?

Our Housing IT training officers are starting to help residents associations to use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, as well as free online software for producing newsletters.

We will review and look to improve the support offered to residents groups.

We will offer more residents training in becoming a resident assessor as Rate Your Estate is rolled out across the city.

### Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

#### How are we doing?

We are one of only three local authorities in the country to be awarded 'Excellent' status under the Local Government Equality

Framework for providing fair and accessible services for everyone, while combating all forms of discrimination. Tenant representatives were interviewed as part of the assessment. We have published around 30 equality impact assessments looking at how our housing management services might affect different groups and identifying actions to improve services. Our staff completed new equalities training in 2010/11.

The sheltered service's contract with Supporting People has been extended until 2015 due to its 'excellent service'. We have improved performance in our support planning from 76% sheltered residents having an up to date support plan in 2009/10 to 91%.

We are following the new Sussex multi-agency policy and procedures for safeguarding adults at risk.

### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

We increased recording of tenants' needs to build up a better understanding of them and tailor our services to meet them. We explained what data we keep and why in Homing In. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are being agreed with vulnerable or disabled residents who need them in case there is an emergency in their block. Decent homes improvements are tailored to meet tenants' needs and choices.

We can now help sheltered residents with changing light bulbs, moving furniture, etc and installed new easy access shower rooms in two schemes.

The new Housing Centre is accessible to residents with disabilities and includes an evacuation lift they can use in the event of fire. Our improved website makes us more accessible for people with various needs, or who work during the day. We now use the RNIB Webdocs online service to produce short large print, audio or Braille documents more quickly and economically, with good customer feedback.

"This is marvellous and such a quick service, please keep using it."

Resident on Webdocs

A Mobility Scooter Working Group with members from the Tenant Disability Network and Sheltered Housing Action Group are looking at the options for storing scooters, which were identified as a fire and trip hazard in common ways in fire risk assessments. We are piloting special external scooter stores at Clarke Court and Leach Court.



"The council have recognised the problem of storage for mobility scooters and have worked with a working group to look at solutions to provide storage."

**Alison Gray, Tenant Disability Network**

We deal with racist and religiously motivated hate crime in line with the arrangements across Sussex. We reviewed how we deal with residents experiencing domestic violence in conjunction with the council's Housing Options

## Section 2 Home

Our Property Investment Service is working closely with residents to jointly manage our contractual partners, such as Mears, to ensure quality of accommodation and the delivery of excellent repairs and maintenance services citywide.

### Quality of accommodation

#### How are we doing?

The first year of the new ten year partnership between Mears, the council and residents met its target of improving your homes, with nearly 1,700 properties brought up to the Brighton & Hove Standard, an improvement of nearly 14% on 2009/10.

In 2010/11 we replaced 676 kitchens and 299

service and now recommend priority transfers on police advice. We gave our pledge to the THUMBS UP scheme, developed by people with learning disabilities, and work to the new pan-Sussex multi-agency policy and procedures for safeguarding adults at risk to prevent and deal with abuse of vulnerable adults.

### How will we continue to improve?

We will check we have complete and accurate information about tenants' circumstances and needs when we sign up new tenants and carry out tenancy visits, and make better use of information you give us to meet your individual needs.

We will consult young people and black and minority ethnic residents to ask what they need from our service and what they think about resident involvement. We will use the results from the STAR satisfaction survey to see if any groups are less satisfied with our service and how we can respond.

We will develop the mobility scooter storage pilot and policy before rolling it out citywide.

We will develop our processes and policy on how we safeguard vulnerable tenants.

bathrooms and installed new windows in 209 homes and 1,039 new doors. 298 homes were rewired. We also replaced 984 boilers across the city, improving the energy efficiency of homes and cutting residents' heating costs.

"Thank you so much for sending me such a nice young man...to put in a new fuse box, a new shower and an elec box. He did all of these jobs so well, he was also so nice and polite, so clean and tidy."

"I am writing to thank Mears and the council for our splendid new kitchen ... The professionalism of all the various trades involved was something to behold."

Tenants' letters to Mears in March 2011

Residents are on the partnership's Core Group, which oversees the contract and monitors progress on the decent homes target at monthly meetings. Resident representatives also give us feedback on performance. You said you wanted better communication on decent homes and project works. So the partnership now sends regular newsletters to all residents that have work carried out in their blocks. We also hold evening meetings to update residents where major works are being carried out.

You told us the government's Decent Homes and Brighton & Hove Standards were difficult to understand, so we developed a simplified version with feedback from residents at the City Assembly this May. We also asked their priorities for planned works to feed into our plans.

### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

We met our promise to bring 74% of tenants' homes up to Decent Homes Standard by 31 March 2011, with a £24 million programme of improvements in 2010/11. We are on track to bring all homes up to Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2013/14.

We have invested in most sheltered schemes with shared facilities to bring them up to a modern, self-contained standard. In 2010/11 we replaced shared facilities at two schemes.



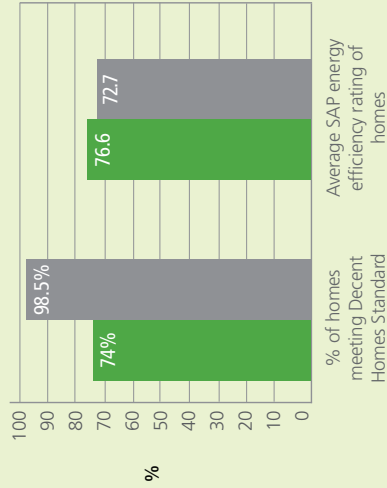
"Residents on the Asset Management Panel are involved in monitoring progress of the Mears contract through the Partnership and Core groups. We're also now participating in the new service contracts for door entry systems, fire alarms, CCTV, emergency lighting, lifts and digital aerial works."

### Nixon Dube, Asset Management Panel

We consulted widely with residents as part of our service pledges to agree the Brighton & Hove Standard, a higher standard for homes developed by the residents' Asset Management Panel. It includes extras like more sockets in kitchens, redecorating new bathrooms and kitchens and a choice of kitchen units and work tops, external doors and tiles and flooring in new bathrooms.

We installed A-rated boilers and improved the energy efficiency of homes, increasing the

### How do we compare? Quality of accommodation at 31 March 2011



SAP measure of energy efficiency for our stock from 75.9 in 2009/10 to 76.6 last year. This reduced electricity and gas costs for residents, improved the sustainability of the stock and kept us in the top performing 25% of councils in England.

A large scale programme to upgrade communal lighting is underway, reducing the amount of energy required with improved fittings and automated controls. The council is working with others to set up a contract to install solar panels on south facing roofs of up to 1600 flats and houses to benefit from 'Feed in Tariffs'. We consulted tenants through the Energy Efficiency Working Group, Area Panels and HMCC. This would reduce the carbon footprint, cut residents' fuel bills and create jobs across the city.

### How will we continue to improve?

We will overclad more blocks of flats, insulating them and reducing residents' fuel consumption by up to about 17%.

We will continue working to set up contracts to benefit from Feed in Tariffs through solar panels.

We will improve 1,720 properties to the Brighton & Hove Standard in 2011/12, bringing 88% of tenants' homes up to Decent Homes Standard by 31 March 2012.

We will upgrade communal TV aerials to be ready for digital switchover in March 2012.

We will modernise and make self-contained sheltered flats at Broadfields and look at options for the 14 shared facilities flats at Evelyn Court.

We will take account of residents' priorities for planned work and involve residents in quality checking work such as new doors and communal aerial systems.

We will consult residents and other stakeholders on a new provisional four year investment programme to ensure that residents' priorities are met and we make best use of available resources.

## Repairs & Maintenance

### How are we doing?

2010/11 was the first year of the new repairs and improvement partnership with Mears Group and over 4,500 more repairs were carried out than in 2009/10. The partnership met almost all its performance targets, with excellent performance in completing emergency repairs within 24 hours and completing routine repairs in an average of 11 days, one day quicker than the previous year. The partnership missed the target to complete urgent repairs within three days by 1% and the Core Group which monitors the contract asked for a review and set a clear action plan to improve performance over the first part of this year.

### Repairs performance in 2010/11

- 34,275 repairs completed – an average of 94 each day
- 98.4% Emergency repairs completed within our target of 24 hours
- 96.0% Urgent repairs completed within our target of three working days
- 98.4% Routine repairs completed within our target of 20 working days
- Average time to complete routine repairs 11 days

Over 95% of the 5,839 residents we spoke to in 2010/11 were either satisfied or very satisfied with the repairs carried out. You also gave us good feedback around uniforms and ID which we have worked to improve. We published Mears' code of conduct in Horning In after you asked about it. Two dedicated Customer Service Liaison Officers regularly visit residents to discuss any issues and are always available for feedback on Mears works.

We have compared our performance with other landlords' and used this in setting performance targets for year two of the partnership and in monthly reports for managers and resident representatives.

We are working to develop this 'benchmarking' and share best practice with all Mears' social housing clients.

The council, Mears and PH Jones continue to deliver high performance in gas servicing. 99.81% of properties had a current gas safety certificate at 31 March 2011, an improvement on 2009/10. Regrettably 20 homes were overdue for safety checks at 31 March 2011. We provide information and support to vulnerable residents but as a last resort we are forced to take legal action if they do not give us access to do these essential checks.

We continue to work closely with East Sussex Fire & Rescue to check that our homes and communal areas are safe. We are ensuring all communal staircases are vented to help any smoke disperse and are adding signs so people know where to go in the event of a fire. The fire door replacement programme is on schedule and due to be completed in 2014.

### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

We worked with the residents' Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group and Asset Management Panel to develop and agree the repairs and maintenance 'local offer' service pledge. This reflects residents' priorities and feedback from events and questionnaires.

We maintained and developed resident involvement at all levels of the repairs partnership. Residents sit on both the Repairs Core Group and the Partnership Group which make the key decisions for the partnership and check progress. We keep a log of issues residents raise in a resident action plan and report back to the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group, who decide when these issues are resolved.

*"The new Housing Centre and the progress of the contract so far show that the partnership is working well."*

**Mbye Sohna, Asset Management Panel and Core Group**



The City Assembly this May was dedicated to getting your views and suggestions on the repairs service and all recommendations fed into the Core Group's action plan. Valuable feedback from residents' mystery shopping of the repairs desk and out-of-hours service was used to improve performance in answering calls and helping residents with enquiries.

Mystery shoppers found that response times and standards improved dramatically after the Repairs Helpdesk transferred to Mears in April 2010. While they found the out-of-hours repairs service to be reasonable overall – with 46 out of 48 calls connected on the first try – they recommended training on a number of issues and an action plan for further improvements, which Mears are following up.

We invested £773,000 on 498 adaptations to help disabled or elderly tenants stay in their council homes in 2010/11. To avoid delays, our Neighbourhood Response Team now carry out small jobs such as grab rails, stair rails and lever taps. They did 43 from January to March – more than the target of 10 a month – in an average of four days.

The Housing Adaptations Occupational Therapy team are now responsible for all major housing adaptations to assess needs more quickly. They work with Mears on the Decent Homes programme so tenants who need a kitchen or bathroom adaptation get the adaptation and Decent Homes work done together. They also now attend Tenant Disability Network meetings to give information about the adaptations service and

get feedback. After a resident's suggestion at the City Assembly, we now have a single phone number for residents to ask about adaptations work. You can now call the repairs desk to request adaptations.

We are recruiting a group of tenants to help develop the new tenant guide to repairs.

### How will we continue to improve?

We are in discussions with tenant representatives about training resident assessors to check and sign off works as part of our quality assurance processes.

We will look at using social enterprises to improve our decorating and gardening schemes for elderly and disabled tenants.

Residents from the Asset Management Panel and High Rise Action Group will help choose the new lift service contractor, who will also carry out a city-wide renewal programme.

Mystery shoppers will look at the whole process of reporting a repair to find ways to improve.

We will work with residents and Mears to produce the new tenant guide to repairs.

## Section 3 Tenancy

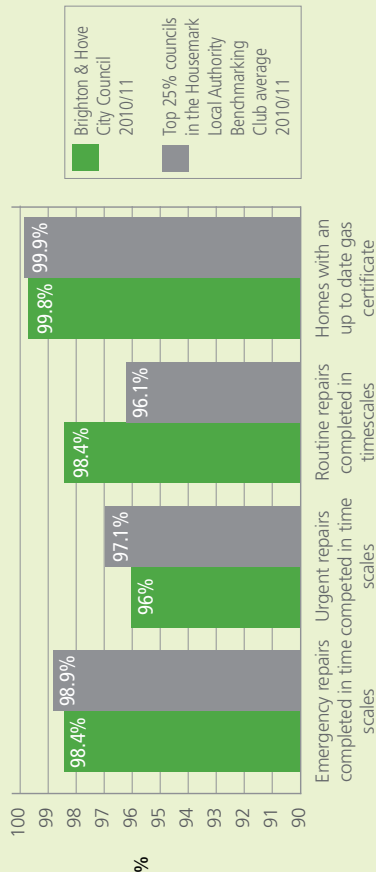
### Allocations and lettings

#### How are we doing?

We let 986 council homes in 2010/11, 32% of them to existing tenants transferring. At 31 March 2011, 20% of the 12,737 applicants on the Homemove joint housing register for council and housing association homes in the city were transfer applicants.

We continued to use local lettings plans to make best use of our stock and balance communities after wide consultation. For example, the sheltered local lettings plan was revised as a result of a tenant-led working

### How do we compare? Repairs and maintenance performance





Our Lettings Team worked hard to re-let empty homes an average of 7½ days faster in 2010/11 than the year before

an empty home (including repair work) to only 18 days in 2010/11 from 25½ days in 2009/10. Sheltered flats took an average of 33 days to re-let, five days less than in 2009/10. We now add post codes to details of empty properties advertised in Homemove after residents asked for them.

A survey of the 47 new tenants in February 2011 found 75% who responded were very satisfied with the overall lettings service and 59% said they would rate it 10/10. They were less happy with the condition and cleanliness of properties, and we have now worked with residents to review our standard for empty homes before they are let.

After the Energy Efficiency Working Group highlighted the furniture that is dumped or left in properties when people move, we now send details of four furniture recycling companies to tenants who are moving. Mears are also talking to the YMCA about recycling furniture that tenants leave in properties.

**How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?**

We brought in a new allocations policy after a review by a tenant-led group and full consultation with tenants and homeseekers in the city. Changes include giving priority to working households, having a local connection of residency in the city of 24 months and reducing homeseekers' banding after three unreasonable refusals of accommodation.

before their tenancy started. Our Turning the Tide strategy involves three levels of support depending on tenants' needs and a balance of support and enforcement. New and vulnerable tenants needing support were referred to our Tenancy Sustainment Officers and we worked with other services to ensure support needs were met. The Tenancy Sustainment Team helped 89% of tenants they worked with who needed intensive support to keep their tenancy.

We evicted 26 tenants for rent arrears in 2010/11, including eight properties that were abandoned, which was within the target agreed with HMCC. We are robustly enforcing tenancy conditions around the upkeep, maintenance and appearance of homes and gardens, recharging costs of putting things right and serving notices where we need to.

We set up a resident led Tenancy Management Focus Group in August 2010 to consult about our tenancy management policies and procedures. It meets regularly and has become an effective forum. We issued the new tenant handbook produced with residents to all tenants, which summarises our policies on tenancy management.

"Tenancy visits are making a real difference in helping to identify and support some of our most vulnerable tenants and their families."

**Allan Haryott, Community Warden, who received the council's 'Big Difference' award in December for his outstanding effort and results.**



We launched a new financial inclusion strategy, so staff can spot financial hardship and point residents to appropriate financial help and advice to help them manage any debts and avoid loan sharks. Support from staff helped reduce tenants' rent arrears by £170,104 from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2011.

We became the second council in the country to successfully prosecute a tenant who was subletting their council home unlawfully. We trained staff to identify and deal with people fraudulently living in council housing and have specialist officers to investigate and prevent it. We publicised that residents can easily report if they suspect tenancy fraud, anonymously if preferred. HMCC agreed we should use a £30,000 government grant to improve the prevention and detection of tenancy fraud to buy equipment to introduce photographic records of tenant identity for new tenants.



"We continue to work with the Right to Buy & Leasehold Team to improve guidance on responsibilities for new leaseholders, who increasingly include those purchasing for buy-to-let. Their tenants can also cause anti-social behaviour that affects other residents and needs to be addressed at an early stage."

**Muriel Briault, Leaseholders Action Group**  
**How will we continue to improve?**

We will continue to extend financial inclusion and support the Credit Union to help residents manage their finances.

We will make information on our website for new tenants or those wanting to move more customer-friendly and informative.

We will introduce photographic tenancy records and continue to use other initiatives to prevent tenancy fraud. We will continue to investigate and act on all reports of fraud.

# Section 4

## Neighbourhood & Community

### Neighbourhood management

#### How are we doing?

We are developing a policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with residents' homes, working with the Estates Service Monitoring Group. This will bring together information on how we work with residents to deal, for example, with vandalism, fly-tipping, graffiti, bad weather, supporting community clear up days and use of community rooms. We also work with other services and community groups helping to deal with crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and safety problems, such as neighbourhood Local Action Teams.

Our Estates Service managers now check at least 20% of work done by cleaners and the Neighbourhood Response Team and have found over 90% satisfactory performance. We are continuing to work with the council refuse and recycling service to improve how they do work for us such as graffiti removal. And, after customers' request, we are starting to jet wash moss and algae from external common areas. We provided 75 grit bins for ice and snow and they are ready for next winter.

Estates Service staff worked hard in the snow and ice to grit paths and roadways



The grounds maintenance review involved residents in five pilot areas looking at improving the grounds around their homes, offering choice, making clear what residents are paying for and the service they should expect, and leading to better working. Examples include the Estates Service picking up litter beyond the immediate buildings and following CityParks spraying and removing weeds, working with residents to establish wildlife conservation areas, agreeing a service pledge with CityParks on planting, and training Community Wardens to identify trees that need attention.



"I enjoy trying to get improvements to our small area and appreciate the help officers and community wardens give us. The Community Payback team are a great help with making the gardens look good."

**Chris El-Shabba,**  
**Robert Lodge**  
**Residents**  
**Association**

The RSPCA awarded us a bronze Community Animal Welfare Footprint for having a good pet policy and offering vouchers for free cat neutering. Residents on the Housing & Estates Forum are working with us to apply for the Cleaner Safer Greener Neighbourhood Quality Mark award in Moulsecomb.

#### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

We developed and agreed with residents service pledges on the estates service and tenancy management, including grounds maintenance, as part of 'local offers'. Our Estates Service carried out telephone

satisfaction surveys on our cleaning service and developed new cleaning standards and monitoring sheets for the 724 blocks they clean with the Estates Services Monitoring Group. We have had positive feedback from both the group and customers and you have alerted us to deal with any problems. Eight out of 10 customers told us they were satisfied with the service from cleaners and the Neighbourhood Response Team.

We encouraged residents to get involved in our regular estate inspections by putting the dates of inspections on our website and results of inspections on community notice boards and in our offices. The Rate your Estate pilot in East Brighton, which uses score cards and photo books, encouraged more residents to get involved. You can find out when estate inspections are happening in your area and report issues you would like the inspection to look at on our website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingdoitnow](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingdoitnow).

Residents presented the outcomes of the Rate Your Estate and Housing & Estates Forum initiatives in the 'Turning the Tide' pilot in Moulsecomb and Bevendean to the residents' City Assembly in November 2010. In January, HMCC and the Cabinet Member for Housing agreed they should be rolled out city-wide.

We developed comprehensive emergency response procedures for in and out-of-office hours covering our response if there are gas leaks, electricity supply failures, lift breakdowns, severe weather, etc. We have an out-of-hours rota in place, business continuity and emergency plans completed and staff briefed and trained.

We have continued to make improvements to fire safety. We have been installing new fire signs to all our common ways to make sure people know where to go in the event of a fire. We carried out regular inspections of blocks to check that common ways are clear of hazards and obstructions, both to prevent fires and ensure everyone can evacuate blocks quickly and safely. We are visiting vulnerable residents to advise them and agree plans to provide help to those who need it. Fire drills are now

Photo to be taken 25 Aug

Councillor Bill Randall, Leader of the Council, went with Housing Officer Eve Hitchens and residents on the Queens Park estate inspection

taking place annually in all sheltered schemes and the resident-led Fire Safety Working Group for sheltered housing is working to address problems and find solutions.

Our Health & Safety team continually carry out fire risk assessments in our buildings with communal ways and prioritise and deal with any risks. Our Fire Safety Working Group meets regularly with East Sussex Fire & Rescue and fire safety experts. For high rise blocks we are producing information leaflets and evacuation plans tailored to each block.

#### How will we continue to improve?

We will complete the policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with residents' homes with the Estates Service Monitoring Group and take it to HMCC for consultation and approval.

We will continue with the grounds maintenance review, evaluate the pilots and, if residents agree they are successful, roll it out citywide.

We will develop the Rate Your Estate model to roll out across the city and recruit and train more resident assessors using the resident involvement database.

We will minimise fire risk and comply with fire safety requirements, with regular meetings and training with the fire service. We will also help the fire service to carry out their own tests and training in our buildings.



## Local Area Co-operation

### How are we doing?

We work in partnership with residents and other agencies to improve the neighbourhoods you live in and provide opportunities for local residents.

### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

We worked with residents and other organisations to help make your neighbourhood a better place to live in and reported successes in Hoving In. Staff attended Local Action Teams (LATs) and various community-led meetings and were actively involved in 'Cleaner Greener' initiatives including community clean up days. Bevendean LAT won a government Big Society award for their achievements clearing up their area, with help from staff and residents.



43

"We are not frightened of getting stuck in and in getting down dirty, and it was dirty, but even better than that ...the rubbish has not returned, or the fly-tipping, so all in all a really good result."

**Cathy Bath, Housing Officer who helped in Bevendean LAT's clean up**

We supported community garden initiatives and projects such as Leybourne Parade Project, Bevendean Community Garden and the proposed Moulsecoomb Community Farm.

Sheltered schemes held many successful community events including an Active Pharmacy with Brighton University, and our Community Warden launched a new Sundowners Club open to older people in the community. The sheltered service agreed protocols with partner organisations including Community Transport, Complete Community Care, Money Advice and MIND, who ran outreach surgeries in our schemes. Access Point also established outreach services in two schemes, giving specialist advice and support to residents.

As well as the 10 new local apprentices taken on by Mears this year under the repairs partnership, we gave local construction students training in a project with Mears and City College to bring an empty home back into use. The Community Payback Team improved communal facilities and gardens, benefiting residents and the wider community. The High Rise Action Group won its long campaign for Southern Water to install water meters in individual flats where residents want them, after meetings led by the council.

### How will we continue to improve?

We will work with communities to develop community gardens and growing projects.

The new Housing Centre will offer local employment opportunities, including Mears apprenticeships and kitchen assembly work and cleaning and catering roles.

We will support partnerships with social enterprises and projects which help get people into work and training and also benefit our residents.

## Anti-social behaviour

### How are we doing?

The Anti-social Behaviour Team and Tenancy Sustainment Team have now set the approach to dealing with and preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB) across the city. You can now report anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance on our website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing).

### How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?

Anti-social Behaviour Housing Officers now provide case management on low and medium level ASB cases city-wide, as well as managing the most serious and complex cases. We have continued to take early and robust action to deal with ASB and work closely on each case with Sussex Police and other agencies. We have brought an end to situations of noise, public disturbance, harassment, threat, acts of nuisance and drug dealing throughout the city and secured the closure of three properties.

By providing a balance of support and enforcement, taking appropriate action and offering better support for victims and witnesses, we have improved resident satisfaction with how we deal with ASB from 39% to 84%, compared to 68% nationally. We have also increased turnover of cases and now deal with 28% more cases than the national average. At the same time, we have reduced the number of evictions by 40%.

We have worked with the residents' Anti-social Behaviour Focus Group set up in May 2010 to deliver an action plan addressing a range of ASB issues. The representatives looked at how to improve communication and understanding about ASB, and develop trust in ways to successfully deal with it. They have also been working towards increasing tenant involvement.

We introduced improved service standards for victims and witnesses of ASB as part of our service pledge for anti-social behaviour developed and agreed with residents. These ensure that we provide a more intensive level of service for residents who are the most

"Before taking part, I had no prior knowledge whatsoever of the comprehensive framework of legislation designed to tackle anti-social behaviour, or the hard work and long hours allocated to every single case...Housing...are strongly committed to ensuring that as far as possible their residents are able to live free from nuisance, annoyance, fear or distress."

**Rita King, Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group**

vulnerable and at risk. We have appointed an ASB Housing Officer who has special responsibility for overseeing support for victims and witnesses.

### How will we continue to improve?

We will carry on developing new and innovative ways to tackle anti-social behaviour.

We will continue to develop personalised support services for victims of anti-social behaviour.

We will continue to work with the ASB Focus Group to scrutinise our work and look at ways to improve our services.

## Section 5

## Value for money

### How are we doing?

The new repairs partnership helped us save £2.5 million on our maintenance costs in 2010/11. Costs of responsive repairs, repairs to empty homes, gas servicing and other service contracts were cut from an average of £20.02 per rented property per week in 2009/10 to £15.99 in 2010/11. Leaseholders also benefit from the savings, with an average service charge for 2010/11 10% lower than the previous year and savings on administration and management as well as on repairs.

Our management costs for 2010/11 were £17.67 per rented home per week, higher than in 2009/10 mainly because of inflation and the Turning the Tide pilot, but lower than budgeted. Our costs are now average

compared to other councils, but we are working to reduce them further. We expect to save around £100,000 this year on office costs and bringing teams together to work more efficiently at the new Housing Centre.

The Housing Income Management Team achieved their highest collection rate ever in 2010/11, collecting 98.7% of rent due. The Former Tenant Arrears team collected £269,000 - 47% of rent owed by previous tenants - in 2010/11. We also improved the time taken to set up rent accounts for new tenants from five days to three days.

We implemented the leaseholder service charge collection strategy and collected 95%



"Value for money is a key issue for all leaseholders. The Leaseholder Action Group ensure that contractors are invited to the LAG meetings to inform and update on work to be carried out and are challenged when charges for proposed work are deemed excessive, with some positive outcomes."

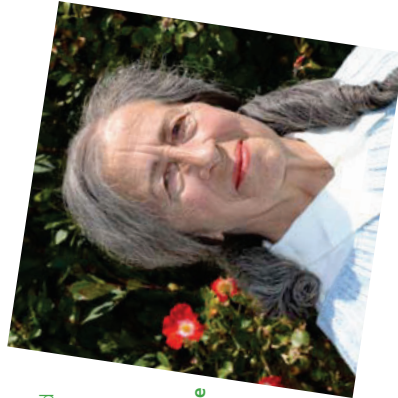
**Linda Shaw, Leaseholders Action Group**

of recoverable arrears, beating our target and performance in 2009/10. Benchmarking leaseholder services with eight other city councils has shown we have the second lowest staff costs per leasehold flat. The Mears partnership has resulted in much lower costs for work to which leaseholders contribute, and the council's Clerks of Works and quantity surveyors help control and oversee costs.

We have completed the first three years of our Improvement Programme which has coordinated the service's improvement work and projects. This has largely focused on developing the new repairs and improvement partnership and Housing Centre, but also included projects to improve customer service, tackle inequality and improve financial inclusion, among others. By taking a project management approach to our improvement work we have been able to complete our projects on time and achieve the expected benefits and financial savings. We reported our progress to HMCC.

We are moving ahead with the housing company set up by the council – Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes. We expect to start receiving payments from leasing 499

vacant properties to the company over a five year period this autumn. This includes homes currently empty because the council does not have funding for major repairs to bring them back into use. We will use these payments to help bring all council tenants' homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. The company will also pay for the leased homes to be brought up to standard and the project's set up costs, which have not been funded from the council housing budget.



"It's exciting to be involved in such a worthwhile project which is going to benefit the tenants."

**Ann Ewings, Tenant Board Member, Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes**

**How did we meet the commitments in last year's report?**

We continued to involve residents in working to ensure that the services we provide meet your priorities, are high quality and at the right cost. Residents on the Partnership and Core Groups helped ensure the repairs partnership delivered within budget. The Leaseholders Action Group made sure our fire door strategy for leaseholders achieved clearer communication and more choice of lower cost options. Following tenant consultation, we are looking at upgrading existing front doors in sheltered schemes for fire safety instead of replacing them, saving around £300 per door.

The resident-led Laundry Facilities Working Group monitor the new contract for laundry facilities, which will save around £25,000 a year. A tenant representative suggested we install sensors so lights come on only when someone uses the laundry, saving electricity and CO2 emissions. We will install sensors at other suitable locations.

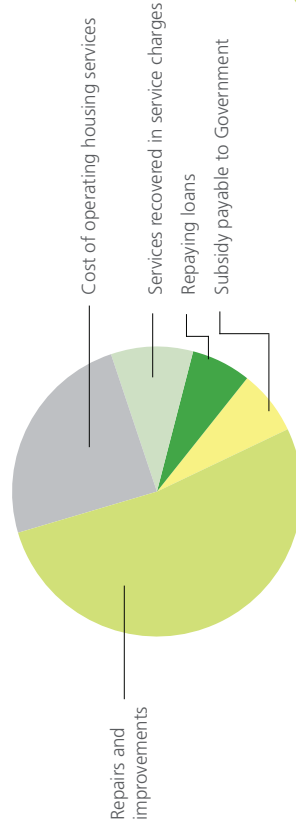
As a result of consultation with a tenant-led working group and the Sheltered Housing Action Group, we made our out-of-hours service for sheltered tenants more effective. The grounds maintenance review is securing better value for money and all sites are being redrawn electronically, to allow more accurate and transparent bills of quantities and charges to tenants and leaseholders.

With the resident-led Car Parks & Garages Working Group, we've worked to increase rental income. We introduced clamping at some sites and Penalty Charge Notices at others as a pilot scheme and a new licence agreement allowing empty garages to be used for storage where there are no waiting lists. Bringing management of St James House car park inhouse will save about £40,000 a year.

We are reviewing options for reporting to residents so you can see how well we provide value for money and compare our performance and costs to other landlords. These will be presented to the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group and then HMCC.

The average rent in 2010/11 was £66.55 per week.

**How we spent tenants' rents and service charges in 2010/11**



**"Moving forward with energy efficiency would be a goal of mine."**  
**Resident suggestion for this annual report**

**How will we continue to improve?**  
 We will continue to involve residents in monitoring that the repairs partnership and other contracts operate efficiently and provide value for money.

We will deliver services more efficiently and cost effectively by making better use of our buildings, streamlining our processes and making other organisational changes.

We will launch the next phase of our Improvement Programme and carry on taking a co-ordinated project management approach, involving residents in this work.

We will review our licence agreements to ensure we can get garages and car parking spaces back if a resident moves out of the area and re-let to local residents.

Please let us know what you think of this annual report and what you would like in a future year's report.

Send your comments via our website [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing), by email to [housingcommunityparticipation@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:housingcommunityparticipation@brighton-hove.gov.uk), through your housing office or by post to **Carol Jenkins, Housing Stock Review Manager, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2SR.**

Thank you.

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? 請在這方格內加別, 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
- 需要翻译? 请在这方格内划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。 Mandarin
- Tłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregokolwiek 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**

Housing & Social Inclusion  
Brighton & Hove City  
Council  
Kings House  
Grand Avenue  
Hove BN3 2SR



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

[www.facebook.com/BrightonandHoveCityCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/BrightonandHoveCityCouncil)

[Twitter.com/BrightonHoveCC](https://twitter.com/BrightonHoveCC)

