



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Panel

Title:	Housing Management Panel: Central Area
Date:	28 March 2017
Time:	2.00pm
Venue	The Barnard Centre, St Johns Mount flats, Mount Pleasant, Brighton, BN2 0JP
Members:	Councillors: Gibson (Chair), Ward Councillors for the Area, Delegates of Tenants Association in the area.
Contact:	Cliona May Democratic Services Officer 01273 291354 cliona.may@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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To <u>note</u> the minutes and reports of the following Committees and City Wide groups (copies attached):	
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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA

2.00pm 30 NOVEMBER 2016

**THE BARNARD CENTRE, ST JOHNS MOUNT FLATS, MOUNT PLEASANT, BRIGHTON,
BN2 0JP**

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Gibson (Chair).

Representatives: Carl Boardman, Ann Ewings, George Coates, Martin Cunningham, Barry Hughes, Christina Hadleigh, Tomm Nyuus and Jason Williams.

Officers: Becky Purnell (Resident Involvement Manager), Glyn Huelin (Business & Performance Manager), Miriam Gee (Performance & Improvement Officer), Annabel Tate (Housing Manager), Mike Meik (Health & Safety Business Partner), Di Hughes (Business Change Manager), Emma Gilbert (Tenancy Services Operations Manager), Rebecca Mann (Resident Involvement Officer) and Ododo Dafe (Head of Income Involvement & Improvement).

Guests: Jeff Tourmentin (Mears Representative).

18 APOLOGIES

18.1 Apologies were received for Theresa Mackey, Linda Shaw, Alan Davis, Jane Thorpe and Tony Worsfold.

19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

19.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 September 2016 be approved and signed as the correct record.

20 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

20.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“The recent City Wide conference took place on the 17th November 2016 and 40 people attended.”

20.2 Ann Ewings noted that extending the question time at the City Wide conference would be a positive change.

20.3 The Chair stated that he wished to hold an informal budget meeting on the HRA with residents.

20.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to have an informal budget meeting in The Barnard Centre, St Johns Mount on Monday 16 January 2017 at 1600 hours.

21 HOUSING FIRE SAFETY POLICY

21.1 Di Hughes, Business Change Manager, and Mike Meik, Health & Safety Business Partner, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The new fire safety policy would be reported at the Housing & New Homes Committee on 18 January 2017.
- The current policies and vulnerable resident fire procedures had been updated.
- The sprinkler system had been installed in Somerset Point and a further two high rise blocks were to have the system installed in 2017.
- Following the advice from the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, alternative solutions were being found to store mobility scooters, as they could not be kept in the communal hallways.
- There was an article in the previous edition of Homing In providing information regarding fire safety, and there would be a further, more detailed, article in the winter edition. Posters had been redesigned and leaflets had been produced.

21.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Officers clarified:

- The article in Homing In did give advice regarding the use of candles.
- A resident believed that the sprinkler was unnecessary, not aesthetically pleasing and may disturb the residents. The Officer responded and explained that the sprinkler system was an additional precaution and was match funded by the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS). The sprinkler system would put the fire out quicker and would limit the damage caused, in addition to potentially saving the lives of residents and fire fighters.
- The sprinklers were in every room in the flats and common ways.
- A failure in compartmentation was highly unlikely, especially in purpose built blocks; however, regular checks were undertaken.
- The cooker cut off system would be wired to an electric cooker and if it was to detect the temperature exceeding a certain amount, the supply would be cut off before a fire developed.
- If anything was noticed on the communal hallways then residents should contact the Housing team, rather than wait for an estate inspection.

21.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

22 RESIDENTS QUESTION TIME

22.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the responses.

23 HRA ASSET MANAGEMENT - DELIVERING ACCOMMODATION

23.1 Simon Pickles, Housing Stock Review Manager, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The Housing & New Homes Committee agreed to the closure of Stonehurst Court, senior housing scheme, as it was in an inappropriate location.
- There were six possible options; however, four of these were viable. These were to create:

- 1) 11 new homes.
- 2) 14 new homes.
- 3) 10 converted homes.
- 4) Retain the 20 existing studios.

- The preferred options would be to either offer family homes or temporary housing for homeless people.

23.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Housing Stock Review Manager clarified:

- There were currently 20 studio flats on the site.
- Six studio flats situated at the front of the building would be retained.
- Family homes were needed in the city.
- That he would feedback that the residents had suggested a mix of studio flats and family homes.

23.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

24 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2

24.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The report had been reformatted to be read easier.
- The indicators showed that 34 areas were on target, six targets were almost met and five were below target.
- The repairs contract was under target due to the average time to repair and the answering calls time. This was mainly due: to the loss of subcontracting work; the high demand of work; and the change of staff on the helpdesk.

24.2 In response to queries from the Panel the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement clarified:

- A resident raised concerns regarding major projects running one year behind schedule and noted that more detail should be included in the report explaining this. The Officer explained that the Council were working to resolve the issues with certain areas, for example, scaffolding and were monitoring the performance with Mears on a weekly basis.
- Mears was a competitive business and retaining staff was challenging. There was a recruitment day for Mears in December.

24.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

25 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET

25.1 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement highlighted the presentation that was given at the City Wide Conference on 17 November 2016.

25.2 The Officer outlined the slide regarding the Capital Investment and the proposed areas that would have their budgets either reduced or increased to make savings. The seven voting co-optees present undertook an electronic vote in response to “Do you think we have got the balance right?”. The results were as follows:

*57.1% voted "yes".
28.6% voted "no".
14.3% voted "not sure".*

25.3 A resident noted that the budget for sustainability and carbon reduction work should not been reduced. The Business & Performance Manager noted that it was not economically beneficial.

26 TENANCY FRAUD AMNESTY BRIEFING

26.1 Annabel Tate, Housing Manager, introduced the report and highlighted:

- An amnesty was beginning at the beginning of December to potentially gain properties back that may have been sub-let.
- The Housing team were working alongside the tenancy and fraud team.
- The keys to the properties could be returned to the Council anonymously and the resident would not be prosecuted. It was a cost effective way to regain properties.
- Similar amnesties had been successful in other authorities.
- The residents were encouraged to report and fraud suspicions they may have.
- There would be a feedback report presented at the Area Housing Panels in March.

26.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

27 STAR (SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS) SURVEY 2016

27.1 Ododo Dafe, Head of Income Involvement & Improvement, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The postal survey was sent to a randomly selected sample of 3000 tenants and had received a higher response rate from the previous year.
- There were two areas where the satisfaction rate had been reduced, these being: the overall quality of homes; and neighbourhoods as a place to live.
- There will be a short article in the next edition of Homing In and a further, more detailed article in the spring edition outlining the findings.

27.2 In response to the queries raised by the Panel the Head of Income Involvement & Improvement clarified:

- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had strict guidelines outlining where the money should be spent. The HRA could be spent on improving neighbourhoods; however, the Council could not spend the HRA on residents that were not Council tenants.
- The choice based letting scheme allowed tenants to bid for available properties and these properties were not prioritised for mental health needs but for housing need. It was added that a higher number of residents with mental health issues were being housed because there was a greater need.
- It was proposed and agreed that a future item should be presented to the Area Housing Panel.

27.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the report.

28 ESTATES DEVELOPMENT BUDGET REVIEW

28.1 Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, introduced the report and highlighted:

- The budget was going to be reduced; however, the reserves in place would be added to the total and the amount would remain the same as the previous year.
- The feedback that had been received through the EDB budget consultations and through the “blue pages” showed that residents wished for the process to be made fairer.
- A survey had been sent to the Chairs, Secretary and Treasurers of the Tenant Only Meetings.
- The proposals for the EDB budget were:
 - 1) To limit the number of main bids to four per association.
 - 2) To limit the value of a main bid up to £15,000.
 - 3) To limit the number of quick bids to five per year.
 - 4) Residents should not use the EDB budgets for multiple quick bids for a work that should be a main bid.

28.2 A resident proposed that the report be deferred; however, this was not seconded.

28.3 A vote was taken by the voting co-optees present.

28.4 **RESOLVED** – That the recommendations were agreed.

29 CITY WIDE REPORTS

29.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Panel agreed to note the reports.

30 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

30.1 There was none.

The meeting concluded at 4.20pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

Three star items from the East Area Tenant Only meeting held on 09/02/17

1. Trades buttons and resident involvement

Following the decision to remove trades buttons throughout the city there was concern about how resident associations will be able to access blocks to deliver flyers, put up posters, or consult with residents.

*Action (** 3 stars):*

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel to ask what provision will be made for resident association's access to locked blocks and whether associations will be provided with keys or fobs to facilitate their role of involving local residents.

Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, Housing,

Tel: 01273 293022

We encourage the associations to get to know their neighbours and identify one person in each block as a block representative who can help deliver flyers or let committee members in. It is possible to issue fobs as these can be cancelled. However we have had some cases where former committee members have not returned keys. This undermines the principle of increasing the safety of the blocks that turning off the trades buttons is trying to achieve.

2. New Housing Management Teams

There is some confusion about whether the new Housing Management structure has been implemented.

Estate Inspections

Alan reported that there hasn't been an Estate Inspection in Craven Vale for some time, and it is not clear whether these will continue under the new Housing Management structure, or which officers will be responsible for carrying them out.

*Action (** 3 stars):*

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel to ask:

- a. That residents associations and local residents be informed about the new Housing Teams with guidance on who to contact about different issues.*
 - b. Whether Estate Inspections will continue and who will be responsible for them?*
-

Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, Tel: 01273 293022

a. A three star response regarding the Housing restructure from the West Blue Pages was circulated in the November / December Area Panel reports. It reproduced briefing notes regarding the restructure that were sent to Chairs and Secretaries in September and again in October and gave details of who to contact in Housing and the names of the Housing Area Team staff. The Area Panel reports are available on the council website and paper copies were distributed before the meetings.

Response from Housing East, Telephone 01273 293030

b. All information on estate inspections can be found on the council website;

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/council-housing/east-brighton-estate-inspections>

This information is on the inspection page.

Your Housing Officers are Alex Barton, Caz Boaks, Maggie Chamberlain, Tina Hambly, Cheryl Moss and Toya Regan. Your Housing Manager is Rachelle Metcalfe.

If you have any issues or concerns regarding your neighbourhood, please get in touch:

- Housing Customer Services Team (for all general housing/tenancy related enquiries)
- Telephone 01273 293030
- Email housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk

To see the details of the inspections in your street, please take a look at the East Brighton Estate Inspections document 2016-2018. Estate inspections are now six monthly.

There are two inspections in Craven Vale area;

East Brighton 15 - the latest report is dated 15/02/17 and the next inspection will be on Wednesday 16 August

East Brighton 17 - the latest report is dated 09/01/17 the next inspection will be Monday 10 July

Toya Regan is currently the Housing Officer for inspections in Craven Vale. If anyone would like to attend the next inspections please let Toya know by contacting the Customer Service team to pass on the message that you are coming. The meeting points are on the website.

Each Housing Officer is responsible for the estate inspections and general tenancy check visits in their area. All other tenancy or case related ASB work is shared out across the East Brighton area Housing Officers and trainee Housing Officers ie they are not dealing with everything on their patch as the former Housing Officers did in the past. The first contact point is always the Housing Customer Services Team not the individual Housing Officer.

3. Estate Development Budget 2017/2018

There has been concern that funding for EDB may be cut. Chris confirmed that the budget for the coming year will remain the same, with some reserves being used to make up a potential shortfall, but that this is not guaranteed to be the case in future years.

It can be difficult for Associations to know what land belongs to Housing in their area and this can often lead to proposals being rejected because they are for work on land that doesn't belong to Housing. The meeting felt it would be useful for Associations to be provided with a map of their area which clearly shows where all the Housing land is.

*Action (** 3 stars):*

It was agreed to raise this at the Area Panel to ask that Residents Associations be provided with a map of their area which clearly shows where all the Housing land is.

Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, Tel: 01273 293022

The Estates Development Budget has been reduced and topped up with the general reserves that are projected to be £510,000 on 31 March 2017. The projected reserves for 31 March 2018 are £161,000. The Area Panel areas changed in April 2015 and I am working with the accountant to ensure that any underspend incurred since then is ring fenced to the particular Area Panel.

With 55 Residents Associations it will not be possible to produce maps and where the estate consists of houses the area of the association can include non-housing land. Generally this is the roads and pavements that make up the highway. There is a highways map on the council's website <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/highway-search-information-map> that may be of interest.

There is also the grounds maintenance map that shows the green areas of housing land that are maintained by City Parks <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/grounds-maintenance-map>. If any association is unsure about their area please do contact the Resident Involvement Team, we are happy to deal with enquiries about this on a case by case basis.

Three star items from the West Area Tenant Only meeting held on 03/02/17

1. Increase in fly-tipping

There has been an increase in the amount of fly-tipping on Council land – this is an on-going issue causing a general degradation of council estates and land. Ingram Crescent in particular noted a problem with fly-tipping on their estate. The following questions were raised:

-How much is the clearing of this costing Housing Services?

-What action is being taken to resolve the problem?

-Why is it so difficult to prosecute when there are clear culprits dumping rubbish on a regular basis?

Action: *Ill for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.*

Response from Chloe Goymer, Estate Manager, Estate Services, Tel: 01273 291072

In 2016 the total cost of removal of fly-tipping across the city was £76k.

The Estates Team have a furniture recycling scheme where, if residents have items of furniture that are in good condition, then the Estates Team will collect for free and place in our store ready to be donated to people that are in need. This has reduced fly-tipping in some areas of the city.

With regard to prosecution, City Clean do have an Enforcement Team who will issue fines to offenders if there is enough evidence provided by residents. Photographs, videos, vehicle registration numbers are all good evidence that can be passed on to that Team.

The article below was published in the winter edition of Homing In.

Fly-tipping - why should it matter to you?

It may surprise you to know that last year the council's housing team spent £55,000 clearing items that had been fly-tipped on our estates. That's money that could have been spent on improving your homes and estates. Dumped rubbish ranged from pieces of metal to double beds. Below are a few examples of some of the items removed in 2015:

- 407 mattresses
- 180 televisions
- 144 armchairs
- 137 pieces of carpet
- 89 fridges

Anyone caught dropping litter, fly-tipping or allowing their dogs to foul in public spaces can be given fixed penalty notices with on-the-spot fines between £75 and £300. The fine depends on the type of offence.

Recycling

The Estates Service Team run a recycling project where furniture in good condition can be collected for free and given to people in need. Call 01273 294769. Many charities across the city welcome donations of furniture and will often collect. There are also recycling centres and recycling points across the city.

Waste collection

Cityclean offer a bulk waste collection service, with discounts if you are over 60 or on certain benefits.

Community clean up days

Some tenant groups have arranged community clean up days to clear fly-tipping, and planted flowers and shrubs to prevent it from happening again. If you are interested in doing this in your area, the Resident Involvement Team can help.

Further information

Visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/estates-service or contact the Housing Customer Services Team by emailing housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk or calling 01273 293030.

2. Storage of mobility scooters

The council is enforcing regulations that require all corridors and public ways to be kept clear. This means that some people are being given 3 weeks' notice to get rid of their mobility scooter.

The following points were raised:

People receive PIP/high rate DLA mobility allowance for mobility scooters, and the Council is then forcing them to give up the scooters. The scooters are not a life-style choice – without them people are house-bound and unable to live independently.

There is no assessment of the individual needs of the person involved. People's need for and use of scooters vary, and for some people it is an absolute essential.

In most places, no alternative scooter storage is being offered – people are being told they have to give up their mobility, or their home.

- Where scooter storage has been provided it is often too far away to be of any use. If someone needs a mobility scooter to get around, they are often not able to walk to a central storage facility some distance away.*
- Scooter storage (where available) has not been advertised properly, and use not encouraged by people who are able to access them.*
- Scooter storage was promised in some areas, but never built. Residents have been told there is now no money available.*
- Individuals have been treated insensitively, and by staff who have no knowledge of their particular circumstances. On one occasion a tenant was told their mobility needs were 'not that significant' even though they are receiving PIP mobility benefits. Unrealistic suggestions for alternative transport arrangements are given as a solution.*
- There was no consultation with the Tenant Disability Network about the deadline and enforcement of the regulation before it was implemented.*
- Although the issue of scooter storage has been discussed for some time, the enforcement is happening very quickly with people only being given a few weeks' notice. -As changes to mobility benefit payments can take up to two months to process, people are left for some time without any means of paying for alternative transport.*
- Cancellation of scooter contracts incurs a fine, leaving people already living on low incomes with extra costs.*

It was agreed that the enforcement of this regulation has not been managed in a sensitive or understanding manner, causing distress and anxiety to tenants. It was agreed to ask the Council to continue to look for solutions to the problem of mobility scooter storage, so that tenants with disabilities are not forced to choose between their home and their mobility. A report was requested on this, and on what options the Council are presently looking at to resolve this problem.

Action: *Ill for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel*

Response from Satti Sidhu, Performance & Improvement Officer, Tel: 01273 293219

Mobility scooters are growing in popularity with a greater number of residents choosing to increase their independence with them. For those living in blocks of flats, finding a solution to storing the scooters prior to purchase is a must, to avoid it becoming a hazard and conflicting with tenant obligations.

Although scooters are on the increase and the issue of storage becoming a topic of discussion, the clear common way policy has existed for a number of years. All shared areas in blocks are expected to be kept clear, to meet the fire regulations and this includes mobility scooters.

Due to a number of fires in blocks of flats, we continue to work closely with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, to minimise risks to residents during emergencies. As a result we have produced guidance to enable officers to work with residents to reach solutions that will mean they are storing their scooters in a safe location.

There are a number of solutions that are available for storage of mobility scooters, these include:

- Store rooms specifically built for rental at 4 sites across the city
- External bolts and chain to an appropriate location
- Resident funded external storage units
- Inside flat
- Fire assessed shared area storage
- Alternative available space (this will depend on availability each building)
- Promotion of alternatives – Shop Mobility

Those who have a medical need for mobility vehicles will receive support from the Occupational Therapy and Adaptations Teams.

The process officers will follow will usually be at least 3 attempts to engage with the resident. This will include door knocking and letters inviting contact to discuss storage options and explanation of reasons to relocate. There will be further attempts made by revisiting and warning letters with advice on what will happen should the scooter continue to cause a hazard.

Due to the nature of the situation and urgency to remove the hazard, officers will move quickly through the process to encourage relocation. Where residents continue to park inappropriately and refuse to cooperate to reach a solution, we will as a last resort, take action to remove the scooter, I am leading on this area of work and will be attending the next Tenant Disability Network meeting on 10 April 2017.

3. Proposed change to EDB regulations

New regulations mean that a Resident Association is limited to a maximum of five EDB Quick Bids a year. It was proposed that if there is money left over in the pot 3 months before the end of the financial year, then this restriction should be dropped. If some Areas want to do this and others don't, then each Area should be able to decide for itself how it wishes to allocate any remaining funds.

Action: III for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.

Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, Tel: 01273 293022

The EDB review was worked on by the EDB panel for a number of weeks, driven by the residents' desire to make the EDB fairer. Area Panels with 'quick bid' underspend will be asked to bear this in mind when they allocate the funding in April. If towards the end of the year there is underspend, the Resident Involvement Team will contact associations who have not applied to encourage them to take up the funding.

4. Payback Team

It was requested that information on how to apply for work done by the Pay Back Team is sent to the Chair of every Resident Association.

Action: Resident Involvement Officers

Response from Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Manager, Tel: 01273 293022

A letter and the application form for the community payback work will be sent to the Chair of every Residents' Association.

5. Estate inspections

Two issues were raised about Estate Inspections:

- *Follow-up after estate inspections can be really slow. For example, it took four months before any feedback was received on an Estate Inspection at Ingram Crescent held on 17th October 2016. Are there proper procedures in place for processing jobs raised during estate inspections? What are they?*
- *In many areas there have been no Estate Inspections for some time.*
- *What is the programme for Estate Inspections? What do Associations need to do to arrange one?*

Action: Ill for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.

Response from Janet Dowdell, Tenancy Services Operational Manager / Rachelle Metcalfe, Housing Manager East Housing Team, Tel: 01273 293196

During the period April – December 2016 there were 169 advertised Estate Inspections. 158 of these inspections were completed and our performance was 94%. There were approximately 2414 actions raised as a result of Estate Inspections which is an average of 15 actions per inspection.

The Ingram Crescent inspection happened within the first three weeks of our new service which was an extraordinary period with a high level of new case work. The inspection happened as planned and some priority jobs such as removing abandoned bikes causing an obstruction were dealt with at the time. Although there was a delay in the results being published and we apologise for this.

Helen Burrow, Housing Officer carried out the inspection and has recently returned to tackle items left in common ways. The results of our inspections are displayed on noticeboards where we have access to them and we can send them to tenant representatives to display themselves too. All outstanding inspection results have now been uploaded onto the website for public viewing.

Currently we carry out full Estate Inspections every 6 months. The Estate Inspection programme for the City is displayed on the Council's website <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/council-housing/estate-inspections>. You can also contact the Housing Customer Service Team on 01273 293030 to request this information and register your interest in attending any future inspections on your estate.

We will be meeting with the Tenancy and Neighbourhoods Service Improvement Group within the next two months to discuss a full review of this part of our service. The group will be asked to provide feedback on the current service as well as suggestions to bring about

improvements. We will come back to Area Panel later in the year with an update on our progress
Balconies at Ingram Court

6. Balconies at Ingram Court

Residents are concerned about the inadequate quality of the work on replacing balconies at Ingram Court, and also the poor management of the project. Work was done over an extended and unspecified timespan. This meant that untreated wood was left exposed to the elements for long periods of time, creating potential problems with the new balconies and undermining the quality of the work. Residents were also not given any idea of the time-scale of the project and how long disruptive work would continue for.

It was agreed to ask for an investigation and report on the management and value for money provided by this contract.

Action: Ill for all Blue Pages and discussion at Area Panel.

This response is not ready. West is the last Area Panel on 4 April and it will be included in their blue pages.

Area Panels – March / April 2017

Briefing note – Draft Repairs & Improvement Handbook

Overview

The current Repairs & Improvement Handbook requires a review as there have been many changes within the Partnership since the last review in 2011.

For example:

- We no longer have a 'U' priority, but an appointments system for tenants
- We are carrying out more planned work across the city which is not evident or highlighted
- We would like to give better and clearer information on what the council are responsible for and what tenants are responsible for
- Offices have changed and contact details for Housing teams

We would also like to have a dedicated webpage on the BHCC website which will give further links to tenants seeking specific information on the following subjects:

- Asbestos
- Legionella
- Damp & Condensation
- Contents Insurance
- EDB
- Tenant alterations
- Right to repair legislation
- Code of Conduct

Attached is the text of the draft Repairs & Improvement Handbook. The handbook hasn't reached the design stage yet when formatting and pictures will be added.

Perrin Horne, Customer Services Manager
Telephone: 01273 294641 Email: Perrin.horne@brighton-hove.gov.uk

1 Welcome

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

This handbook includes:

- the council's responsibilities as your landlord
- your responsibilities as a tenant
- how to order repairs for your home
- how long repairs should take
- an explanation of what are planned works
- information about the steps you must take when planning your own improvements

Tenant involvement is at the heart of all the services that we provide. Our repairs partnership is made up of the council, contractors and tenants.

- Residents have a say in shaping the repair service that we deliver by:
Monitoring the service that we provide
- Being involved on making the improvements that are important to you.

Your input and feedback is important to us and you can be involved in influencing the repair service that you receive.

For further information, please contact your local residents association or the council's Resident Involvement Team RIT@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Estate Development Budget

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

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

If you have ideas on improvements for your area, contact your local resident association, e-mail the Resident involvement Team on RIT@brighton-hove.gov.uk or go to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/edb

2. Repair responsibilities

What repairs are the council responsible for?

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

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

What repairs is the council responsible for?

Council responsibility	Comment
Aerials (communal)	Where installed by the council
Central heating	Gas boilers, storage heaters, radiators, hot water
Chimneys	Brickwork, replacement pots etc
Cookers	Senior Housing only
Doors and locks (external)	Except lost or stolen keys, door numbers and battery-operated door bells
Drains	Blocked drains and gullies
Electricity	Except where tenants have installed their own fittings, appliances, plugs, fuses, light bulbs and meters
Fire and smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors	Unless battery operated which are a tenant responsibility
Floors	Concrete structure and floorboards. New kitchen and bathroom flooring
Garages	Structure and garage doors only (not locks)
Gutters	Clearance and repairs to gutters and fascia boards
Immersion heaters	Repair or replacement
Lifts	
Paths	Leading to front or back doors but not patios
Pipes, water tanks and cylinders	
Plumbing and fittings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Replacement of toilets, sinks, baths, wash hand basins (including refixing brackets) ✓ Taps running continuously, tap replacement and other tap repairs ✓ Blocked toilet, bath, sink or wash hand basin Toilet not flushing properly
Roofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Loose or damaged tiles, rain penetration, flashings etc
Stairs	
Walls	Rendering, brickwork, pointing and internal plastering
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Glazing (except wilful damage, which requires a

Call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140

	crime reference number) ✓ Misted or fogged windows ✓ Secure window frame ✓ Window not opening and closing ✓ Repair or replace window catches, handles, hinges and locks ✓ New window frame sills
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What repairs am I responsible for?

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

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

The table below give examples of your repair responsibilities. Please contact the repairs team if a repair is not listed, or if you are not sure who is responsible.

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

Tenant responsibility	Comment
Battery operated smoke detectors	
Clothes lines and rotary driers	Except communal areas
Cookers	Gas and electric, including connections (gas cookers must be installed by a Gas Safe qualified engineer)
Internal decoration, including the inside of the front door	The council does not redecorate after we have carried out repair works. We do however make good and prepare surfaces ready for your decoration.
Doors (internal)	Except door frames
Fencing	Unless health & safety or communal
Floor coverings	Unless fitted by the council
Home contents insurance	You are responsible for insuring your home contents, this is not covered by the council.
Keys	Including garage keys and window keys
Plumbing and fittings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Replacement of WC seats and toilet chains ✓ Replacement of kitchen and bathroom tiles (unless fitted by the council) ✓ Replacement of plugs and plug chains
Utilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gas ✓ Electricity ✓ Water ✓ Virgin (Cables) 	Tenant to contact supplier directly for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ gas and electricity meters (including key and card types) ✓ water meters ✓ cable television / internet

Your responsibilities as a council tenant:

- To be at home for your appointment
- To ensure clear access to the repair area

Call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140

- To treat staff with respect
- To give feedback and reporting any areas where we might have fallen short, as this helps us deliver a high level of customer service.

Contents Insurance

We strongly advise all tenants and leaseholders to take out household content insurance.

Many council tenants and leaseholders believe that we automatically insure their furniture, belongings and decorations against theft, fire, vandalism or burst pipes, but this is not the case. Unfortunately, many people only realise this after the damage has been done.

We recommend [Crystal insurance](#), provided by Thistle Insurance services, insured by Allianz Insurance PLC. They offer a good choice of cover with very competitive premium rates. You can of course choose to make your own arrangements through any other insurer.

Please contact Crystal insurance directly with any questions regarding their scheme on 0845 601 7007 (or 01628 586 187 from a mobile). You can also call them if you need help filling in the form as they can complete the application process over the phone with you.

Apply via the [Crystal insurance website](#), or pick up a form from [housing office receptions](#). New tenant packs include a copy of this form. If you would like to request a Policy Document they are available upon request from [Crystal insurance](#).

Fencing

It is your responsibility to both maintain and, where necessary, replace fencing around your home.

Internal Decorating

Internal decorating is a tenant's responsibility. The council does not redecorate even after we have carried out repair work to your home. We do however, make good and prepare surfaces ready for you to decorate.

There is an internal decorating and gardening discretionary scheme which tenants in receipt of disability allowance or over 75 years may apply for. To check if you are eligible and for further details please contact the Housing Customer Services Team

Housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Telephone: **01273 293030**

What if I lose my keys or fob?

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

If you become locked out of your home, you are responsible for regaining entry. Exceptions are made in some cases for vulnerable tenants - please contact the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 for advice.

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

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

Call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140

Please contact the Housing Customer Services Team who will help you

Housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Telephone: 01273 293030

Fencing

You are responsible for maintaining and repairing all fencing around you home (unless communal)

Soundproofing

The council does not install additional soundproofing retrospectively in our properties.

3. Reporting a repair

To report all repairs just call:

0800 052 6140 or 01273 294409

24 hours a day, seven days a week

You can also report a repair:

- by completing our online repairs reporting form at **www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/report-repairs**
- by e-mailing **BHCC.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk**
- by writing a letter to the Repairs Helpdesk, Housing Centre, Unit 1, Fairway Trading Estate, Eastergate Road, Brighton, BN2 4QL

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



4. When will my repair be done?

Emergency repairs

An emergency repair is one which needs to be carried out quickly to avoid danger to you or serious damage to the building. An emergency repair will be attended to within 24 hours so please be available to give access.

Examples include:

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

Routine repairs

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

Examples include:

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

Out of hours (emergencies only)

Between 5pm and 8am, we provide a service for emergency repairs only. In these cases, we will only carry out a temporary repair to stop the emergency situation or make it safe. We'll then raise a further job and make an appointment with you on the next working day, so that the repair can be completed.

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

Please see next page for further information on planned works.

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

Photo of a Mears ID card – All contractors visiting your home should show you ID – please ask to see ID

Meters

Utility meters are the responsibility of the supplier. If you have any issues with your meter, or meter cupboard, please contact your supplier directly

Cables

Hanging cables on houses and blocks are the responsibility of the service providers, unless they are the council's communal aerial.

5. Planned work

What is planned work?

The citywide planned work programmes include items that requires substantial repairs or replacements to the building. This is to improve the condition of our buildings both internally and externally. Both major project work and planned replacements to our buildings, as well as works to individual homes.

Communal works such as:

- Communal decorations to shared areas
- Renewal of roofs
- Window replacements
- Renewal of guttering, drainage & rainwater goods
- External decorations & repairs
- Long term repairs such as pointing and concrete repairs
- Lift replacement.

These works are being planned in programmes over the coming years to keep our buildings in repair.

Sometimes work that may seem like a simple repair, such as broken or misplaced guttering to a building or block may require scaffold. In these instances we may inspect this and decide to add the property into the planned programme and look at the whole building to see if any other works are required while the scaffold is in place. This demonstrates value for money for the council and ensures that we are meeting all of our full repair obligations using a planned approach rather than in an adhoc way.

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

All planned work is based on need and the programme is subject to change.

To see when planned work is provisionally programmed for your area, have a look at our website by visiting www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-investment-programme, or, request a copy from the Property & Investment team on **01273 293346**

Our planned programme also includes the work required to bring your own home up to the **Brighton & Hove Standard**, such as replacement of gas boilers, rewiring, windows, external doors, kitchens and bathrooms.

What is the Brighton & Hove Standard?

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

The Brighton & Hove Standard means that your home will:

- meet the current minimum standard for housing
- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have reasonably modern facilities
- be warm and comfortable
- include other items above the national standard which have been agreed in consultation with tenants, such as a choice of kitchen style and Secure by Design front doors.

For more information on the standard go to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bhstandard or contact Housing Customer Services for a leaflet.

Or to find out when you are due a new kitchen or bathroom call the Property & Investment team on 01273 293346

Do I get a say in the style of improvements in my home?

Yes, you can choose the following:

- door - a choice over the style and finish
- bathroom - a choice of flooring
- kitchen - you are involved in designing the layout and have a choice of style of cupboard doors, worktops and flooring.

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

What quality of work can I expect?

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

- inspecting work and monitoring quality
- monitoring performance with support of Resident Inspectors and tenant representatives
- asking you to provide customer feedback once work is complete

Further Works

Some jobs are larger than a simple repair and may require further works. Examples of this can be

- Where scaffold is required
- Where work affects the whole building and not just your home
- Where work is weather dependant e.g. roof repairs

Some works will also be subject to the statutory leaseholder consultation which will delay progress

6. Damp & Condensation.

Is Your Home Damp?

Damp in your home is a nuisance and causes mould on walls, furniture and clothes. Mould growth, if not removed, can increase the risk of respiratory conditions. Some damp is caused by condensation; we have highlighted the differences below as a guide to help you.

What is Condensation?

There is always moisture in the air in your home, even though you cannot see it. Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather. It will appear in corners and on walls, around windows or behind wardrobes and cupboards, in places where there is less or little air movement.

What is Damp?

Damp usually creates a 'tide mark' if it has come from outside sources. The main causes of damp in the home are:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Rain seeping through a roof where tiles or slates are missing
- Blocked or defective guttering causing an overflow of rain water
- Rising damp due to a defective damp course, debris in the cavity or slumped wet cavity wall insulation

If the damp in your home doesn't come from an outside source, then it is probably due to condensation.

Tips on How to Avoid or Minimise Condensation

Daily activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly which will remain in the air and form droplets of water, which then form on colder surfaces, such as glass. This can then lead to mould formation. If you and your family spend many hours in one room with the door closed and no window open, this will cause excessive moisture in the air. Similar to when you are in a car and the windows steam up.

Here are some handy tips to help you reduce moisture build up and minimise the risk of mould growth in your home.

- Cover pans in the kitchen when boiling
- Always ventilate bathrooms, kitchens and living areas when in use by opening windows and have the trickle vents open at all times.
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when using these rooms as this will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms which are often colder.
- Dry washing outside where possible and not on radiators. If you have wet clothing in the home ventilate the room by opening windows.
- Tumble dryers require outside ventilation. Even the condensing tumble dryers create some moisture, so close the door of the room that it is located and have a window open, or ajar when using.
- Keep a small window ajar when anyone is in the room for any length of time.
- Avoid putting too many things on top of cupboards and wardrobes as the air cannot circulate properly. Where possible position any furniture against internal walls.
- In cold weather, it is advisable to keep heating on for longer at lower temperatures. Keeping low background heating on all day will prevent the temperature from dropping too sharply, which makes the property more difficult to heat up again.

Treating Mould

- Try to remove and wipe down the mould when you first notice it. This needs to be managed and will not go away on its own.
- Wash down mould with an anti-fungal treatment, or bleach solution. (Always, follow the manufactures instructions.)

The only lasting way to eliminate the mould completely is to ventilate and heat your home effectively.

7. Tenant alterations and improvements

Can I carry out my own improvements?

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

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

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

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

We will always inform you whether you have permission for the work. We will normally give permission, unless the work is likely to affect the safety of the building, cause a future maintenance problem, or cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

We may attach conditions to the permission, such as insisting that the work is carried out by a competent contractor and to a satisfactory standard. We may need to inspect the work that you have carried out.

- Please be aware that we do not allow residents to attach anything to the outside of a building that has exterior cladding. Attaching anything to the cladding will damage the integrity of the building and invalidate any warranty.

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

You can make your alteration request directly online at the council's website using the tenant alteration online form.

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/council-housing/alterations-and-improvements>

Alternatively you can speak to an advisor by calling the Housing Customer Services team on 01273 293030 who will help you.

Adaptations

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

Call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140

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facilities, etc. To see if you qualify please contact our Access Point team: e-mail: accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk phone: **01273 295555** minicom: **01273 296205**

Some small adaptations such as grab rails, lever taps and window openers can be fitted by us without a referral from an Occupational Therapist. Call the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 0526140 and they will let you know if we can install the item you need. The Repairs Helpdesk will also help if your adaptation needs to be repaired. If an adaptation needs repairing within 12 months of being installed, please tell us, as the item will still be under warranty.

What happens when I move out?

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

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

Contents Insurance

We strongly advise all tenants and leaseholders to take out household content insurance.

Many council tenants and leaseholders believe that we automatically insure their furniture, belongings and decorations against theft, fire, vandalism or burst pipes, but this is not the case. Unfortunately, many people only realise this after the damage has been done.

We recommend [Crystal insurance](#), provided by Thistle Insurance services, insured by Allianz Insurance PLC. They offer a good choice of cover with very competitive premium rates. You can of course choose to make your own arrangements through any other insurer.

Please contact Crystal insurance directly with any questions regarding their scheme on 0845 601 7007 (or 01628 586 187 from a mobile). You can also call them if you need help filling in the form as they can complete the application process over the phone with you.

Apply via the [Crystal insurance website](#), or pick up a form from [housing office receptions](#). New tenant packs include a copy of this form. If you would like to request a Policy Document they are available upon request from [Crystal insurance](#).

8. Customer Care

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

Customer Feedback

- To ensure that you are happy with the service received, we may ask you to complete a customer satisfaction survey.
- Your feedback is vital in helping us to provide excellent customer service, so please do take the time to respond.
- Your responses are used to identify any service areas that need improving and to build our training programme for staff. We investigate any negative responses and make sure we put things right.

If you feel that a member of staff or trades person has not delivered the high quality service you expect from us, please call the Repairs team call centre immediately on 0800 052 6140.

What can I do if I'm not happy?

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

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

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

If you are not satisfied with our first response, you should raise the issue with our repairs team in the first instance and ask to speak to a supervisor or manager.

The staff will investigate your complaint thoroughly and may arrange for someone to visit your home in order to resolve your issue to your complete satisfaction.

Step 3: What next?

If you are still unhappy, or think what you have been told will not help, you can make a formal complaint by contacting the council's Customer Feedback Team. They can be contacted in the following ways:

visit: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/customerfeedback

e-mail: customerfeedback@brighton-hove.gov.uk

phone: 01273 291229

Call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140

Right to Repair Legislation

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

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

If the repair is still not completed by the end of the second period, you will be entitled to compensation of £10, plus £2 a day for every day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £50.

The Right to Repair Scheme does not apply if:

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

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

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

For more information about the scheme, see the 'A Better Deal for Tenants: Your Right to Repair' booklet, which is only available online at

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/138340.pdf>

You can help us by:

- being at home for your appointment
- allowing us reasonable access to your home to carry out inspections and work
- ensuring clear access to the repair area
- treating staff with respect
- giving feedback about what we have done well and where we can improve
- telling us when you want to carry out any work in your home yourself
- giving us positive feedback when we get things right

9. Safety in your home

Gas and carbon monoxide

By law, it is essential that we inspect all gas supplies and appliances in your home within every 12 month period – this could save your life. If an appliance is poorly maintained, it can produce carbon monoxide.

All gas safety checks are a free service to tenants. When your home is due for a gas safety inspection, our gas contractor will contact you directly to make an appointment. You must allow them access to carry out the inspection. This is a condition of your tenancy agreement and, if you refuse, we may force access to carry out the inspection. If we do this, we will seek to recover any costs incurred from you.

Are there signs of carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide cannot be seen or tasted and does not smell, but it is poisonous if breathed in, even for a short time.

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

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

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

- always allow engineers in to your home to carry out safety checks of your gas appliances
- never cover the appliance, vents or flues as they provide the air the appliance needs to work properly
- do not let anyone sleep in a room with a gas fire
- buy a carbon monoxide detector and check it regularly If you have doubts about the safety of gas appliances in your home, call the Repairs Helpdesk on 0800 052 6140 without delay.

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

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

Legionella

What is Legionella?

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

What can I do?

Call the repairs helpdesk on 0800 052 6140

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

- if you have a shower, regularly descale and clean the shower head to protect against the risk of legionella
- if you are going on holiday or away for longer than a week, take the shower head off and place it in a bowl of diluted disinfectant or a shower head cleaning agent
- when you return, run the shower without the shower head for a few minutes and then refit it

Asbestos

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

Asbestos could be found in:

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

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

Fire

What precautions can I take?

- never leave cigarettes burning
- never smoke in bed
- keep matches away from children
- never leave the room when a hob or grill is on
- regularly check electrical appliances and their leads
 - do not overload plug sockets
- make sure you know where your door and window keys are
- if you have battery-operated smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector, check them regularly

Meeting action minutes

Meeting	Senior Housing Action Group (SHAG)		
Attendees	<p>Residents: Roy Crowhurst (Chair of SHAG, Woods House) Tony Brown (Evelyn Court), Elizabeth Tinkler (Laburnum Grove), Walter Sargison (Broadfields), Alan Davis (Rosehill Court), Ernie Tidy (Lavender House)</p> <p>Staff: Hannah Barker (Resident Involvement Officer), Ginny Buckland (Team Manager) Bridget Dubeau (Scheme Manager)</p> <p>Partners: Mike Bojczuk (Older Peoples Council)</p>		
Apologies	<p>Ray Goble, Patrick Kite (Hazelholt) Jean Davies (Leach Court), Jean Carter (Evelyn Court) Bob Spacie (Laburnum Grove)</p> <p>Peter Huntbach (Senior Housing Manager), Emma Gilbert, Rob Nayan (Projects Manager- Laundry), Peter Lloyd (Healthwatch)</p>		
Venue	Leach Court	Produced by	Hannah Barker
Date Time	11th January 2017 10am- 12.30pm	Minutes completed	2016

The Chair expressed sadness that Kath Davies, Chair of Broadfields Tenants Association (TA) and regular representative to SHAG had sadly passed away in November. She was a dedicated representative for many years.

	Minutes & Matters arising - Update on actions from previous meeting
1	Minutes updated to include apologies from Tony Brown and Jean Carter
2	Brookmead show flat is likely to be ready in February 2017

Items discussed, agreements and future action

1) Laundry update			
<p>New laundry contract for Seniors Housing is now Armstrongs. They are starting machine replacements mid-January. The machines are newer and in line with new contract. All sites were surveyed, so improvements will be made –e.g. overflow pipe going into a sink at Evelyn. The old machines will be removed and stored by the new company to reduce the time laundry service is out of use. The old company is responsible for those old machines. There are no sub-contractors involved in the delivery.</p>			
Act.	No Actions	Who	Due
2) Guest Room Standard			
<i>Please refer to report from Peter Huntbach – dated 11 Jan</i>			
<p>Various standards currently. 2 very below par and may go all together because of lack of space to enlarge. £15 a reasonable figure, and there will be flexibility within that figure as appropriate. Also, if a relative in receipt of benefits needs a room allowances can be made.</p> <p>Discussion on 7 points:</p>			

- **1 and 2** were generally agreed.
- **5.** Some expressed this could be a good idea, but reads as any council tenant..? Roy will seek clarification from Peter on whether 'to be open to... older council tenants' means local or national or anyone.
- Not suitable for children
- Could have a lower age limit (to ensure only older people can stay)
- **6.** Some expressed concern at contractors staying; because of drinking alcohol, security and dirty work boots causing more cleaning.
- historically there used to be a Wardens Association system of hosting staff from other places, but not sure if Brighton was ever part of it and that Association doesn't exist anymore.

Suggestion to ask schemes what they think via a paper questionnaire

Q: Could Estates Development Budget (EDB) be used to improve Guest Rooms? **A:** Possibly not for small items unless it was major works.

Action 2.1	Roy to seek clarification from Peter regarding some phrases
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3) Service update

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Info | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From 23 January Graham Davies will become full time team manager, thus increasing the Team managers to 3 full time plus 1 part time at 3 days. - All Scheme Managers receiving training with East Sussex Fire & Rescue – to ensure we support tenants most at risk from fire - in fire drills and giving safety talks to residents. We are piloting 'Stove Guard' product. - New Allocations policy has been agreed and all staff are soon to be trained. - Brookmead due to open June 2017. Piloting 'Open Strings' project supporting people with onset of dementia at Lavender house and one other scheme. - Digital Awareness sessions continue across the service. - We are promoting the new single point of contact for befriending service, including SilverLine and The Samaritans in our Christmas information. |
|-------------|--|

Act.	No Actions
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4) Discussion – do we have 'too many staff called managers'?

All felt this wasn't an issue.

Suggestion – a brief description and list of staff roles and responsibilities might help

Follow on discussions:

- Regarding distribution of Scheme managers. Within last few years, change in funding for Seniors Housing; loss of Supporting People finance. All funding is now through Housing Revenue Account. At that time service charge went up and we all need to pay for that service to be there when we need it. All Schemes have a named Scheme Manager, they are covered when necessary and it is working well. We don't want to disturb this system.
- Link between Scheme manager and tenants is changing – used to be Tenants Association chair. It's up to the tenants and scheme manger now to work together in partnership. E.g. TA chair and rep meets with Scheme Manager weekly.
- Issue of blackout and Emergency lights not coming on reported.
- Requested that Mears attend SHAG meetings again.

Action 4.1 4.2	Ginny and Peter to work on this Peter to investigate Emergency lights issue		
5) Discussion – Direction of SHAG			
<p>Chair observed not many participants present. Most TA's disappeared therefore SHAG is not getting representation. Chair has struggled to get together an agenda for this meeting. Questioning how to make the group sustainable and it not disappear. Partly this is positive as SHAG has succeeded to achieve everything we want; new service offer, more scheme Managers, scaffolding no longer an issue, Laundry not on pay-as-you-go.</p> <p>Proposals :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to reduce the number of SHAG meetings to quarterly - to allow any resident to attend SHAG and have an equal voice and voting power. <p>Also to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage schemes to hold 6 weekly meetings with Scheme Manager. - If anyone has item to put on agenda of SHAG to contact Chair (Roy) or Resident Involvement Officer (Hannah or any member of the team) – as long as it's not an individual scheme issue. <p>Q: Re Mears attendance A: Individual issues should not be raised at these meetings, but in local schemes.</p> <p>Agreement in principle: This will go forward as formal proposal to next SHAG meeting, following clear communication of suggestions to all schemes.</p>			
Action 5.1 5.2	Hannah to check current constitution and script possible constitutional changes to circulate along with proposals. Roy to speak with Charles Penrose for second option.		
6) Round robin			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q: Any change to the parking permits in our parking lots? A: no, continue as normal using same permits. - Empty property at Evelyn Court – people have been viewing. They cost the service to be empty. - Residents are encouraged to write wills so that everyone knows what your wishes are. Without a will it can take many months for a property to be available to hand on. Age Concern can assist and it is cheap to use the post office service too. 			
Act.	No Action	Who	Due

Meeting action minutes

Meeting	Leaseholders Action Group		
Attendees	Muriel Briault, David Croydon, James Corbett, Tony Worsfold, Rosemary Johnson, Simon Rogers, Graham Dawes Staff: Keely McDonald, Dave Arthur, Glyn Huelin, John Currell Observers: Norah Meany		
Apologies	Martin Reid		
Meeting location	Hampshire Lodge	Produced by	Simon Rogers + BHCC
Date Time	16/01/2017	Minutes completed on	7/02/17

Section 1 – Update on actions from previous meeting

	Description
1	Invite Theresa Youngman to discuss quality assurance – Complete for Feb Meeting
2	Invite John Currell to discuss identifying and planning major works projects - Complete
3	Changes to be made to Terms Of Reference - Complete
4	Post agreed previous minutes online - Complete
5	Provide council IT Code of Conduct for review - Complete
6	KM to lead on independent leaseholder Facebook group - Complete

Section 2 – Agenda items, agreements and future action

Agenda item 3 Asset Management Discussion with John Currell	
Agreement / Decision	<p>The meeting commenced with a presentation by John Currell, BHCC Asset Manager. A copy of the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2016-2020 (HAMS) was circulated, and JC gave a summary. The HAMS were approved by the Council after referral to relevant committees in April 2016.</p> <p>Questions from Leaseholders:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How is scope of HAMS decided? Repairs history and dates are reviewed, M&E records are also reviewed and obsolete or non-serviceable equipment identified for replacement. Meetings with residents, estate walk-around. Value for money criteria is applied by BHCC QS to decide if repair or replacement in capital programme is best option. Are POD involved in HAMS process? POD are independent consultants, chartered surveyors. BHCC take account of their advice e.g. surveys etc. This only covers part of the capital programme, and excludes M&E, internal refurbishment. BHCC provide the brief for their services. For major works they are under

	<p>contract to Mears.</p> <p>3. Is BHCC satisfied with their work?</p> <p>So far BHCC have been satisfied. L/hs present then stated a number of concerns, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited scope of surveys of existing fabric • Repair reports not being made available in spite of FOI requests • Warranty terms may not be being met either through faulty construction or maintenance, leading to premature failure or decay e.g EWI. BHCC are not pursuing complaints vigorously enough. <p>In response, GH stated that 'some products have not performed as expected' and BHCC are reviewing these.</p> <p>4. Are staff resources adequate to manage the current major works project, including BHCC, Mears and consultants?</p> <p>BHCC have increased staff; there are now 4 project managers, and an additional quantity surveyor, bringing total to 3. M&E team strengthened to deal with lifts, door entry system etc. These assets form part of internal audit, which will look at internal resources over next 12-18 months. Note that there will anyway be a reduction in capital spends towards 2020 when current Mears contract ends. BHCC apply a 'dynamic procurement system' to procurement of services including consultants.</p> <p>5. How are decisions made about global replacement of parts of buildings?</p> <p>Overhead and consequential costs e.g. access are taken into account as well as physical condition. In summary, BHCC rely on long experience as managers of housing stock.</p> <p>6. It was observed that there is a gap between theory and practice.</p> <p>There has been lack of documentation and BHCC have overridden independent surveys e.g of windows. LHs are not being given information which BHCC stated should be available. Concrete examples of disputes should be presented to BHCC for response LHs want same consideration given to BHCC tenants as is given to themselves</p> <p>7. Is BHCC really listening to Leaseholders?</p> <p>In summary, chair questioned if BHCC was really taking notice of LHs. JC replied that LHs need to turn complaints into evidence. Comments of meeting were noted, including the lack of response.</p>		
Action(s)	Arrange visit to Clarendon House at Chair's Request	By Who DC	Deadline
Agenda item 2 Previous Minutes			
Agreement / Decision	<p>The committee agreed the minutes of the meeting on 26 September 2016 to be a true reflection of what was discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>The committee agreed the minutes of the meeting on 7 November 2016 to be a true reflection of what was discussed at the meeting. (This was a member-only meeting which the council did not attend)</p> <p>Next Meeting will be between 7 and 9pm.</p>		

Action(s)	Items 3, 4 and 5 from 26 September 2016 Agenda have been deferred to this meeting. Theresa Youngman to be invited to 27 February Meeting. Terms Of Reference to state that quorum should read 'any four members', this is to include the chair. With this change the Terms Of Reference are agreed.	By Who KMD KMD KMD	Deadline
Agenda item 4 AGM Plan			
Agreement / Decision	AGM will be held on 1 April 2017 at 9:30am for a 10:00 start. It will finish at 13:00. Agenda as follows: Stalls (staff to agree content) – 45min Break – 15min Leaseholders Only Discussion – 90min Elections – 30min Elections for each of the Area Panels will be held at the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting. Vote taken to confirm staff attendance at leaseholders only discussion, majority agreed attendance in order to take minutes. Minutes will only be taken during this discussion and a record taken of election results. Minutes will be published on the council website. Venues suggested in order of priority: Hove Town Hall, Friends Meeting House, The Brighthelm Centre.		
Action(s)	Look into booking Hove Town Hall for AGM After update from DC, look into booking Friends Meeting House Chair to provide report and chair AGM Invite to be sent out by council and to include request that questions/items to be submitted to committee in advance of AGM	By Who MB KMD MB DA	Deadline
Agenda item 5 Leaseholder Survey			
Agreement / Decision	Deferred to next meeting		
Agenda item 6 Partnership Group Report Discussion			
Agreement / Decision	Deferred to next meeting		
Agenda item 7 AOB - None			

Home Service Improvement Group 16 February 2017

- Updates from Partnership Core Group and Estates Development Budget (EDB) Panel
- Resident Inspectors reported on empty properties, K&T Heating, and Mears Awareness session
- Inspections of gas service and Mears shadowing coming up
- Progress report on groups' recommendations making the recharges process clearer for residents
- Reviewed Code of Conduct for Contractors that the group helped develop
- Initial work on the Repairs Handbook review
- Closed several items on the Resident Action Plan after being satisfied standards with Mears had been clarified

Business & Value for Money Service Improvement Group 23 February 2017

- Discussed communal cleaning responsibilities with Estates Services
- Reviewed results of Service Charge value for money survey from Chairs of Residents Associations
- Feedback from Home Group on new Code of Conduct for Mears
- If a repair requires multiple visits it is recorded to prevent unnecessary charging
- Agreed to promote communal gardening clubs at the Citywide Conference

Involvement & Empowerment Service Improvement Group 2 March 2017

- Resident Involvement Budget update
- Review of training for residents
- Producing Tenant & Resident Association Handbook
- Producing Tenant & Resident Association Health Check

Tenancy & Neighbourhood and Community Service Improvement Group 16 March 2017

- Focus of meeting the layout of the Tenancy Agreement document
- Aim to make it easier to read and understand
- Agreed too long and double columns read better
- Use positive language – do rather than must not do
- Keep subheadings

Meeting action minutes

Meeting	Tenant Disability Network (TDN)		
Attendees	Alison Gray, Martin Cunningham, Joe Macrae, Ann Packham, Jason Williams, Barry Kent Council Officers: Sue Andrew (Housing Customer Support Officer, Adaptations) , Simon Pickles (Housing Stock Review Manager), Rebecca Mann (Resident Involvement Officer)		
Apologies	Muriel Briault, Owen Spence, Hannah Barker (Resident Involvement Officer)		
Meeting location	Hampshire Lodge	Produced by	Rebecca Mann
Date Time	31 October 2016 2.00pm	Minutes completed on	14 November 2016

Section 1 – Update on actions from previous meeting

	Description
1	Minutes agreed
2	Newsletter update – Ann and Jason shared emails for newsletter and agreed to meet with Resource Centre for support.
3	Jason advised Ted Harman has stepped down. (Alison to contact Ted to confirm)
4	Previous minutes agreed
5	Item 8 from previous minutes – Adaptations property. Information given to Alison was incorrect as wasn't suitable property to be adapted. Back to general needs housing.
6	Item 9 – contractors came back to clear up after creating hole in car park at Hampshire Lodge.

Section 2 – Agenda items, agreements and future action

Agenda item 1 Terms of Reference			
Agreement / Decision	Terms of Reference Agreed		
Action(s)	None	By Who	Deadline
Agenda item 2 DLA/PIP assessments			
Agreement / Decision	Discussion around DLA/PIP assessments. Reduction in distance - applicants are assessed as disabled no longer walk up to 50 metres – now only qualify if they can't walk further than 20 metres without walking aids. Applicants should be aware of this change when applying as could lose entitlement. Will require doctors' letters to assist as well.		
Action(s)	None required	By Who	Deadline

Agenda item 3 Walter May House			
Agreement / Decision	Walter May House – Simon Pickles		
Action(s)	Ongoing work to provide accessible parking for ambulances/people with disabilities drop off/pick up point.	By Who Simon	Deadline Ongoing
Agenda item 4 scooter storage			
Agreement / Decision	Barry raised issue re. scooter storage issues at Woburn Place.		
Action(s)	Although project to create scooter storage has now stopped Simon agreed to look into this for Barry.	By Who Simon	Deadline Ongoing
Agenda item 5 Resident Assessors			
Agreement / Decision	Resident Assessors – Hannah emailed the group to say that all residents are welcome to attend the meet ups.		
Action(s)	In future RA's from TDN will update group on progress. (Martin and Jason)	By Who As above	Deadline ongoing
Agenda item 6 Newsletters			
Agreement / Decision	Alison to email newsletter template to Resource Centre so that Jason and Ann can proceed with publishing newsletter with RC support		
Action(s)	As above	By Who Alison	Deadline
Agenda item 7 Housing Adaptations Occupational Therapy Team Update			
Agreement / Decision	<p>Adaptations – general update – council's policy is to leave adaptations in a property and advertise appropriately unless the adaptations are not suitable for someone with disabilities. For example if a property has been partially adapted but can not be fully altered to accommodate future disabled residents, or whereby the adaptation is beyond its useful life and would otherwise be unsuitable for someone who is matched to the property.</p> <p>Resident Assessors roles are about getting the property advertised correctly. If in future there are individual concerns properties should be raised with Re-Housing Team or Sarah Potter if necessary.</p> <p>Adaptations Team are working closely with Simon Pickles to improve communal access as well as the Housing Regeneration Team on new builds in particular wheelchair accessible properties. They are also dealing with adaptation requests as soon as possible whilst trying to speed up the process with straight forward bathroom adaptations.</p> <p>Future projects – update adaptations guide for council tenants as well as working with Homemove to support those residents who might need to move to alternative properties, hence avoiding expensive adaptations, where this</p>		

	process is appropriate. Also continuing to work city with the council's 'Registered Provider Partners' to ensure that there is a % of purpose built affordable wheelchair adapted homes.		
Action(s)	None required. Continuing to update at each TDN meeting.	By Who Sarah/ Sue	Deadline
Agenda item 8 Disabled toilet			
Agreement / Decision	Becca asked Simon to investigate whether Elwyn Jones Court communal disabled toilet could be adapted through the 'Improving Disabled Communal Access' budget, as residents feel it no longer meets with current specifications. In particular those residents who are in wheelchairs often find it difficult to use the facilities if at all.		
Action(s)	Simon to investigate	By Who Simon Pickles	Deadline
Agenda item 9 Elections to Service Improvement Groups			
Agreement / Decision	Elections for Neighbourhood and Community – Martin Cunningham Home Group (Martin and Alison already on and representing TDN) Business and Value for Money – Barry elected. Involvement and Empowerment Alison representing		
Action(s)	Appointed members to attend future SIG meetings and feed back to TDN	By Who As above	Deadline ongoing
Agenda item 8 Update on Improving Communal Accessibility			
Agreement / Decision	Simon provided and update on work to improve communal areas. Automated doors on high rise blocks have been completed or are ongoing. (Albion Hill 7 blocks completed) Hereford Court is the next block to be completed. Remote fobs are being given to some residents who need them. These can be obtained through Customer Services who will assess every individual who requests one, (first is free). Alison mentioned that she felt the seats in the foyer of Livingstone House and Conway Court were unsuitable for wheelchair users as they restrict access.		
Action(s)		By Who Simon Pickles	Deadline

New homes for neighbourhoods Update



March 2017

Brighton & Hove City Council's New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme is building much needed new council homes on council owned land.

We work with our local tenant and resident associations, councillors, the council's in-house architects, Housing and other colleagues and partners to improve council estates and neighbourhoods, making best use of council housing land and buildings to deliver new, affordable rented homes that the city needs. We aim to build at least 500 new homes across Brighton, Hove and Portslade.

We have completed 34 new council homes at seven sites since July 2015. Five of those are fully wheelchair accessible, the rest are built to Lifetime Homes Standard. 131 more council homes are currently under construction, another 12 will start on site later this spring, and many more are in the pipeline.

All new council homes are let through Homemove to people on the housing register.

The New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme has been shortlisted in the Housing Initiative category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2017.

Robert Lodge North – 6 new council flats in Whitehawk

Councillors, Robert Lodge Resident Association, staff, constructors and new tenants celebrated the opening of six one and two bedroom flats at Robert Lodge North in December. The scheme was completed within budget and nearly two weeks ahead of schedule.

The development of two new blocks of 15 flats at Robert Lodge brought benefits to existing tenants and residents, too. We worked closely with the resident association to greatly improve communal gardens, install secure mobility scooter and cycle stores and put an end to nearby pavement parking. The construction also provided opportunities for apprentices in various trades.



Pierre Close – 4 new family council houses in Portslade



In December new council tenants also moved into the four newly completed three bedroom houses with gardens built on the former council housing garage site in Foredown Road, Portslade. Before the development, the boarded up garages had attracted anti-social behaviour.

Before: Boarded up garages



Kite Place – 57 new council flats in Whitehawk



West block under construction



How Kite Place will look when completed

At Kite Place, the 57 one, two and three bedroom flats with lifts and private balconies are on track to be ready for letting this autumn.



East block under construction

Westridge Construction also won a Considerate Constructors award for community involvement here.

Hobby Place – 29 new council flats in Whitehawk



Work underway at Hobby Place

The frame of 29 new one to three bedroom council flats is now going up next to Whitehawk Academy. Completion is due next January. We will hold another pupils' art competition and youth graffiti project for site hoardings here. Westridge have a trainee on site and helped train seven local young people for their Health & Safety certification in February.

Brooke Mead – 45 extra care council flats in Albion Street



Brooke Mead extra care scheme show flat



How the completed scheme will look

Prospective tenants referred by Housing and Adult Social Care staff can visit a show flat at this extra care scheme, which is designed mainly for tenants with low to moderate dementia and to encourage independent living for as long as possible. With self-contained flats, carers based on site, a courtyard garden and community café, Brooke Mead will be ideal for older residents who need that extra help to continue living in their own home. The scheme is expected to open in July.

Albion Hill Community Association will see the outcome of their community garden design workshop on 9 March. Willmott Partnership Homes also recently won a Considerate Constructors award for this scheme.

Kensington Street – 12 new council homes in the North Laine

The three small, cleared sites in Kensington Street that now have planning consent for 12 flats and houses are being made ready for construction to start later this spring, with site testing now underway. The sites' graffiti has been professionally photographed and will feature in an exhibition in Jubilee Library in June, before moving to the Keep.



Lynchet Close – new large council houses in Hollingdean

In February we consulted local residents and stakeholders on plans for six new four bedroom council houses and two new two bedroom flats on underused open space in Hollingdean.



Housing & New Homes Committee will be asked to approve the scheme on 15 March, before a planning application is made. We will continue to keep Hollingdean Residents Association and local ward councillors updated as the scheme progresses.

Plumpton Road – 2 new family homes in Queens Park



In January, Housing & New Homes and Policy, Resources & Growth Committees agreed to lease a small, overgrown former garage site to a self-build housing co-operative to build two family homes for rent. The site has very long, narrow access and self build seems the only viable way to bring the site into use for affordable rented homes.

Modular pilots – new ways to build affordable rented homes

Land and funding for new homes are in short supply, sites are often small and very challenging, but many more affordable rented homes are needed. So we are also working with development partners to deliver affordable rented homes on former or underused garage sites using modular homes. These would be built in a factory and delivered by lorry, but be designed to last as long as traditionally built homes.



Proposals for four new modular homes on two small underused council housing garage sites at Patchdean, Patcham were presented to residents and local ward councillors at a consultation event in February. The council would let and manage the new homes if this pilot gets approval.



Designs for more modular homes are being worked up for the site of 51 empty council garages in Buckley Close, Hangleton which are no longer safe to use. A drop in consultation event will be held in April for local residents to see the plans and give us their comments.



Modular Y:Cube homes for single young people may be built on this partly cleared council housing garage site next to the Housing Centre in Moulsecoomb. The Homes & Communities Agency has allocated funding for this scheme. We will arrange a consultation event in the Housing Centre for local residents and businesses when the plans are ready for their feedback.

For more information on New Homes for Neighbourhoods

You can contact the Estate Regeneration Team by:

Email: estate.regeneration@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Phone: 01273 290591

Post: Estate Regeneration Team, Brighton & Hove City Council,
1st Floor, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove BN3 3BQ

Webpage: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/nhfn