

Residents Questions - 3 star, All Areas

C3.1 - Estate Development Budget

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star – City Wide issue
Date question raised	4 th July 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Sam Warren
Officer job title	Community Engagement Team Manager
Contact Details	Sam.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.1 Question & Response

Issue	<p>Two concerns were raised about the Estate Development Budget (EDB)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The extended criteria for EDB bids b. The process used to agree an EDB bid for a group in the Central area
Background	<p>A. The money for the Estate Development Budget comes from the Housing Revenue account, which is rent paid by tenants. EDB was initially established to improve the physical environment of Council estates and blocks, for the benefit of Council tenants. Examples given on the Brighton & Hove City Council website include community gardens and growing projects, cycle storage, patio areas, new footpaths and refurbished handrails. At a recent EDB meeting residents were informed that the Estate Development Review had proposed a change in criteria for what could be funded under EDB and that this was agreed in a paper that went to Area Panels. This broadens the criteria so that community groups and projects can also apply to the EDB. There is concern from Central residents that this means Housing Revenue money will not be spent on Council housing tenants. Central residents asked for a copy of the EDB review paper containing this change but did not receive an answer. An EDB report they found in agenda papers from previous Area Panel papers does not mention an extension of the criteria.</p> <p>B. Central residents raised concerns about the legitimacy of voting procedures at the May EDB budget meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward boundary changes meant that several Associations previously in Central were now in the North Area. These Associations were still given a vote on Central bids.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the vote was taken, some Associations were permitted votes from members not present at the meeting, while other Associations were told anyone not present at the meeting could not vote.
<p>Request or Question</p>	<p>A. Central residents asked for evidence that the change to the criteria was agreed through the proper processes at Area Panel. If this did not happen, why has a decision been made by officers to extend the criteria for the use of money that comes from the Housing Revenue?</p> <p>B. Because the vote was not carried out in a fair way, it should be considered invalid, and a re-vote taken.</p>
<p>Response</p>	<p>The changes to the funding scope of the Estate Development Budget were made as part of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>The Strategy came to Area Panels in November 2020 and had been reviewed prior to this by the Involvement and Empowerment Service Improvement Group.</p> <p>The strategy had a recommendation to: <i>'Maximise the Estate Development Budget by agreeing a change of scope to include tenant and leaseholder led projects and well as physical items and works.'</i></p> <p>This was approved by Housing Committee in March 2021.</p> <p>The formal ward boundaries changes did not come into place for housing areas until after the local elections. There was a presentation of the new boundaries and changes to tenant groups at the June 2023 Area Panel.</p> <p>The EDB main bid meeting was on the 10th May so the boundary changes were not yet in place. Therefore, all original groups were invited to be involved. In the future only the groups now in the Central area will be invited.</p> <p>We have always included votes from people that could not be present if they have sent them in to us prior to the meeting. This is standard practice for the EDB main bids.</p> <p>The request that was turned down was to allow extra tenants to vote after the date of the meeting. This is not standard practice and therefore would be placing extra conditions on this bid that has is not applied to any other group.</p> <p>It is standard practice to allow the applicant group to have 1 vote for themselves, although in this case this vote was not counted due to the difficult meeting environment.</p> <p>The final vote for this bid was:</p>

	<p>In Favour – 4 Wiltshire House Warwick Mount Hereford Court Sylvan Hall</p> <p>Against – 2 Essex Place Somerset Point</p>
Action	
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

C3.2 - Parking and Visitors Bay

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star – City Wide issue
Date question raised	4 th July 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Benjamin Tedder
Officer job title	Carparks and Garages Manager
Contact Details	Benjamin.tedder@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.2 Question & Response

Issue	The new visitors' permit scheme, although a good idea, is failing
Background	It was hoped that the new visitors' permits would resolve the problem of people parking in visitors' slots, but the problem continues. People are misusing the permits – for example they have been seen offered for sale on social media. This has been reported but no action taken.
Request or Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask for it to be acknowledged that this scheme is not working and that further thought needs to be put in to how to resolve the visitors' parking problem. b. Suggest that all areas are asked to put forward ideas on how to improve the visitors' permit scheme. These are then pulled together and discussed, possibly at a city-wide meeting.
Response	The visitor parking system for car parks on Housing land is funded by Housing and offered as a free service to residents, whereby reusable

	<p>permits are allocated to each household. The majority of car parks across the city do not contain visitor bays and the Housing Service is not required to provide them, though they do exist in some areas.</p> <p>As the permits are reusable, the system is open to abuse by residents who sell their permits to other drivers. If abuse is reported to the Housing Customer Service Team, they will contact the resident who holds the permit to gauge the evidence of the reports and have the authority to cancel any permits that are demonstrably proven to be misused.</p> <p>Housing welcomes any suggestions from residents concerning changes to the visitor permit system and can perform further consultation on options to change the current system if there is agreement from residents of affected car parking areas.</p>
Action	If residents of affected car parks feel that there should be consultation on changes to the visitor permit system then this will be carried out.
Start date	N/A - dependent on resident approval
End date	

C3.3 - Laundry Review

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star – City Wide issue
Date question raised	4 th July 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Craig Cotton
Officer job title	Contract Manager - Housing
Contact Details	craig.cotton@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.3 Question & Response

Issue	Residents have not been consulted about the future of communal laundry facilities.
Background	Residents have been told that the communal laundry facilities will be free until the end of 2023, but do not know what the future of this service will be after that.

	A review paper was scheduled for the June 2023 Area Panel but was not on the agenda.
Request or Question	Ask for consultation with residents on the future of communal laundry facilities to start immediately. This consultation needs to start with talking to residents who use the laundries to find out their opinions and ideas.
Response	<p>There has been no end date set for the free use of the laundry service. Despite the understanding described in the background, the laundry service will continue to be free of charge unless a decision is made otherwise.</p> <p>Although, not included in the June Area Panel, the laundry service review is ongoing and will involve input from residents, as detailed below.</p> <p>A consultation with residents who use the laundry will take place, and their views, comments and experiences will be important to the review. The detail of the consultation plan, regarding the residents involved, the information sought and a variety of ways in which residents can share their experiences and views, will also be communicated to Panel. We would of course welcome any additional input from Panel at this point.</p>
Action	When the starting date for the consultation is confirmed, we will inform Panel.
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

C3.4 - Sprinkler systems at High Rise Flats

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star – City Wide issue
Date question raised	4 th July 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Geof Gage
Officer job title	Head of Housing Investment and Asset Management
Contact Details	eofrey.gage@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.4 Question & Response

Issue	High-rise flats have been told they will have sprinkler systems installed, but there has not been any consultation about this. There are some concerns amongst residents about these systems.
Background	N/A
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stage of the process is the Council at with the installation of sprinkler systems? • What consultation will there be on this? • Can they ensure there is good communication throughout the process with residents living in the blocks?
Response	We do not have a programme for the installation of sprinkler systems to be installed to our blocks. A pilot consultation at two blocks did not receive the required resident support and was therefore cancelled. There is no statutory requirement for the installation of sprinklers systems to high rise blocks.
Action	Complete
Start date	24.07.2023
End date	24.07.2023

C3.5 - Transparency about processes and decision making

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star – City Wide issue
Date question raised	4 th July 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Keely McDonald
Officer job title	Senior Community Engagement Officer
Contact Details	keely.mcdonald@brighton-hove.gov.uk

C3.5 Question

Issue	A resident requested a video recording of an Estate Development Budget meeting but were told that meetings are not recorded.
Background	Residents are not always able to attend meetings and minutes do not always give a full account of what happened at the meeting, as they mainly record decisions and actions. Recordings should be made available in the interests of transparency and accountability.

Request or Question	Central residents are asking for Estate Development Budget meetings, Area Panels, the Home group, and the Involvement and the Empowerment Group meetings to be recorded and made publicly available.
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C3.5 Response

In the past, recordings of meetings supported by the Community Engagement Team, held on Zoom, were made for the purposes of taking minutes. These were used by a member of our Admin team to support accurate minute writing, and deleted when the task was completed.

Democratic services also use this function to support accurate minute writing of Area Panel meetings.

We don't agree the idea of recording and publicly sharing recorded meetings as an ongoing basis for many reasons.

- Being recorded can put attendees and staff under pressure to speak or behave in a particular way, we aim to create an open space for discussion and debate where people can voice questions or concerns freely, share lived experiences.
- A two hour-long recording of a meeting and may only have a small proportion of time where a viewer would observe a resolution to a discussion; it would be a very lengthy process to find clear information.
- Consent would be required by everyone in every meeting, and we think this request itself could put people off attending, not wanting to be the person who says no to the group.
- Records of consent would need to be held accurately and this consent can be rescinded at any time.
- It would take up staff capacity and not be good use of staff time for the Community Engagement Team to record, upload and manage recordings of meetings, which would include removing recordings at any time at the request of any of the attendees.
- The cloud memory needed to store a recording of a two hour-long meeting would be a very large file, this would be very slow to upload.
- Storage of files on the cloud has a large carbon footprint. Having numerous large files being created and stored like this would not be in line with the council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- Editing two hours of footage would also require a lot of staff time; again, it would not be a good use of time.

We think that supporting positive development of services, improvements and change is what is important about the work we do with residents, not who said what.

We appreciate that not everyone can attend every meeting they might be interested in. The Community Engagement Team do their utmost to ensure that all minutes are an accurate record of the pertinent information from each meeting. The written minutes are a record of decisions and actions taken, what the outcomes of discussions were, what points were made and what will happen next as a result.

We choose not to create minutes that capture what is said, word for word in huge detail. A resident who can't be there, won't be able to see who said what, but they will be able to read quickly through a few pages. Staff also refer to minutes as part of their work.

C3.5 Actions

Action	No actions are agreed
Start date	None
End date	None

C3.6 - Communication & Consultation

Area in city	Central
Star rating	3 star – City Wide issue
Date question raised	4 th July 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Hannah Barker
Officer job title	Senior Community Engagement Officer
Contact Details	hannah.barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk 01273 296639 / 07771 389497

C3.6 Question

Issue	Communication and consultation with residents and Resident Association representatives is poor and needs to be improved.
Background	<p>A consistent problem behind a lot of the issues raised is a lack of information and communication about progress and action. When complaints are made, or questions asked, it often seems like these disappear into a void. Nothing comes back and this is disappointing and demoralising.</p> <p>Housing may actually be doing something to sort out an issue but are failing to keep resident representatives (or the person who raised the issue) informed about this.</p> <p>Just keeping people informed and having a good channel of communication would make a huge difference to Residents Associations. Committee members and Resident Association representatives are often asked by residents for information and updates on local issues. If the representatives have not been kept up to date or given any information they are not able to provide this. This is a frustrating and difficult</p>

	situation which makes the job of Resident Association representatives more difficult. It also creates the feeling that the Resident Association is not able to achieve anything, and this makes it more difficult to involve people.
Request or Question	How can communication between Residents Associations and Housing be improved? Central residents are open to ideas from the Council and from other Areas.

C3.6 Response

Overview of Response:

This response is written alongside other resident's questions, W3.1 and E3.1, which also raise issues around communications.

West residents made a specific request for a residents meeting on the subject. Please read our response to W3.1, including how this issue, and improvement, relates to Social Housing Regulation and Consumer Standards.

Involvement & Empowerment Group

We propose the Involvement & Empowerment Group will be the focus, with the support of the Community Engagement Team, for some detailed discussions on communications and consultation. We can drill into the issues to look at solutions together and be able to get the most appropriate staff around the table to look at improvements.

I appreciate speaking with Emma and Jason, (Resident-only Central co-chairs) about this. I have more detail and suggestions to take to the Involvement & Empowerment Group:

- Emails & phone calls that 'go into a black hole'; TRA's hear nothing back.
- Different people give different answers
- Associations are 'pushed from pillar to post'; told to talk to different people.
- Better information about what support is available for people that don't have online access, and not just referral to a library or help from a friend.
- Tone and wording of communications can lack humanity, resulting in discouragement and frustration. (e.g. a legal sounding response without any softer supportive statement alongside.)
- More information to Associations about city wide groups and forums available to all residents. e.g., 'You have a voice' poster from Community Engagement Team and template inserts for Association newsletters.

There may be a role for Housing Customer Service Team, or Repairs Team, or Major Works or another department within Housing to support. We need to inspect the issue a bit more to understand what communications residents need more of.

Examples of questions for residents and associations to discuss:

Our questions about 'poor communication':

We recognise that communication is a vitally important issue for residents' associations to function. But also, we point out that 'Communication' is a very broad subject. To begin to answer how communication could be improved, we could look at:

- How do different associations request information about progress and action from Housing?
- What sorts of updates from Housing are residents' associations hoping for?
- Communications with whom and about what? Is it a particular team or part of the service that residents don't hear from?
- Is it about use of different communication channels, (e.g., Homing In, letters received, email and phone, social media) Is it a particular method of communicating that is or is not working?
- What ideas associations have on how better communications could work?

Our questions about 'poor consultation':

This resident's question describes consultation as poor. We need to look into what is meant by this, who is unhappy with this, to be able to understand and look at how to make improvements

- Are residents thinking of a specific consultation or several?
- What is residents experience of consultation?
- What is poor about those consultations? Is it the publicity, timing, questions asked, feedback at the end, amount of consultation?

Being organised and tracking information and communication:

As part of the solution for Residents Associations, there might also be tools or skills to help groups keep track of issues raised over time. It is understandable that information can get lost or dropped when there might be multiple and complex issues being worked on between a group of people. Having a clear record of communications sent, received and actions taken over time, with dates, is useful to trace issues and when making further complaints.

Use of established processes including Corporate Complaints process:

The Involvement & Empowerment Group regularly comment on the development of the *Tenants & Residents Groups Toolkit*, (working title) which will be a support resource for groups. It will include sections about how-to-get-stuff-done, about all the channels for communications, what to expect and how to make complaints when things don't work.

C3.6 Action

Action	Involvement & Empowerment Group to pick this up as part of the agenda of the next meeting.
Start date	Ongoing
End date	25 th October 2023 (date of I & E)

E3.1 - Poor communication and response rates from senior council officers

Area in city	East
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Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 2023
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept 2023
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Justine Harris & Geof Gage
Officer job title	Head of Tenancy Services Head of Housing Investment and Asset Management
Contact Details	geofrey.gage@brighton-hove.gov.uk justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.1

Issue	Resident representatives have not seen improvement to response or action rates of Council officers to issues that they have raised in their areas.
Background	<p>In Woodingdean, Justine Harris (BHCC) did an estate inspection with resident representatives on 9th June following the East Area Panel meeting. Reps were assured that issues would be followed up. However, there has been no follow-up communication or action, in spite of reps chasing this up multiple times.</p> <p>The Leaseholders Action Group reported that they have been trying to arrange a meeting date with Martin Reid and Geof Gage, but there has been no response from them.</p>
Request or Question	Resident reps request a response from officers to their emails and phone calls within 10 working days, and that issues are actioned within a reasonable timeframe.
Response	<p>After the estate inspection at Woodingdean, Justine Harris has been following up the issues that were raised and will give a verbal update at Area Panel.</p> <p>With regard to arranging meetings with resident groups, in this case LAG, these meetings are managed and arranged by the Community Engagement team who facilitate these and arrange with appropriate officers, we understand that this meeting has now been scheduled for 8th August.</p> <p>At all times we do aim to respond to emails and calls from resident reps within 10 working days.</p>

	<p>Note from Community Engagement Team (Hannah Barker, Senior Community Engagement Officer)</p> <p>We recognise that issues around communication have also been raised by Central and West resident only meetings this round. Therefore, we ask residents to refer to responses to questions C3.5 and W3.1. We also welcome East Area residents to attend the Involvement & Empowerment Group meeting for tenants & leaseholders, where we will look at issues around communication together, in more detail.</p> <p>Contact the team on 01273 291518 or communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk for information.</p>
Action	None Geof Gage
Start date	2. 24.07.2023
End date	2. 27.07.2023

E3.2 - Poor repairs and maintenance service

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Officer job title	Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Contact Details	grant.ritchie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.2 Question & Response

Issue	<p>Residents are frustrated that they spend inordinate amounts of time and energy reporting and chasing up on issues. When issues such as repairs, missed rubbish collections and maintenance issues in communal areas are reported through the normal channels, these don't get actioned. It is the Council's responsibility to maintain its properties to a decent standard. However, estates are regularly left in states of disrepair and neglect, affecting residents' morale and negatively impacting on individuals' mental health and the well-being of the community more broadly.</p>
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<p>Background</p>	<p>In Woodingdean, a tenant has reported damage to a roof gable on their property 6 times. The repair has not yet taken place, and further damage has been caused to the property as a result due to water ingress. The resident keeps being told that repairs can't be done due to staff shortage. In North Whitehawk, a resident reported that a communal window at Linchmere required cleaning due to stains from eggs being thrown at it. The resident chased this up multiple times via the regular reporting routes. She was eventually told by Council staff that the cleaning of windows could not be done as it was too expensive because scaffolding would need to be put up. However, the resident received quotes from commercial window cleaners at less than £50 for the service. The communal window was finally cleaned after 2 years of chasing up, and only after the resident raised it at Area Panel. The resident has since received a Council pamphlet for leaseholders which clearly states that the Council is responsible for the cleaning of communal windows.</p> <p>At Linchmere, North Whitehawk: there are frequent missed rubbish collections and not enough bins to serve a building containing 25 flats. This means that there are frequently overflowing bins and rubbish strewn everywhere. Additional bins have been requested but have not been supplied.</p> <p>At Blackdown Flats, North Whitehawk: there has been a flickering light in the corridor for over a month, but nobody has come to fix the bulb.</p> <p>At Robert Lodge, the communal gardens and pathways were overgrown. Residents have been chasing this issue up for months. The overgrown trees in the garden were finally trimmed back, but the workers left a mess in the garden, and the overgrowing brambles and bushes along the paths were missed.</p> <p>At Robert Lodge, a repair was made to a shower pump but the plastic cover got broken in the process. The resident was initially told the cover would be replaced the next day, but has now been informed she would have to wait until 28th September. The same resident reported a flashing lightbulb on one of the light fixtures but no investigations have yet been made to the potentially faulty electrics. Another resident reported waiting 2 months for lights to be replaced in her bathroom. They were informed that the delay to repairs is due to the backlog caused by Covid.</p>
<p>Request or Question</p>	<p>It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents request regular (ideally fortnightly) estate inspections so that maintenance issues affecting communal areas can be identified in a timely manner and fixed quickly. • Residents are paying towards the maintenance service of communal areas, but the service is substandard: residents would like to know how is this money being allocated and used. • Residents want a reliable, simple and streamlined service from the Council, through which repairs and communal maintenance issues can be resolved in a timely fashion. The current process is inaccessible, convoluted, lacks clarity and takes too much time. Resident reps request a meeting with Senior officers to discuss what the problems are and how things could be improved.

Response	<p>Residents request regular (ideally fortnightly) estate inspections so that maintenance issues affecting communal areas can be identified in a timely manner and fixed quickly.</p> <p>1. Following our series of walks under the pilot we have reviewed the outcomes and are planning to introduce a 2-year programme to cover our housing estates. This work is in progress, we aim to start the estate inspections in October 2023 and are working towards publishing the schedule online. We will return to Area Panels with an update before publishing details on the website. Tenant reps will be invited to take part in the inspections.</p> <p>Residents are paying towards the maintenance service of communal areas, but the service is substandard: residents would like to know how is this money being allocated and used.</p> <p>2. A presentation was given to area panels in December 2022. This presentation outlined the proposed Housing spend in 2023/24 and how this is distributed between the different service areas. Approximately, 10% of total revenue expenditure £6m goes directly to the day-to-day repair of your homes. In addition, 85% of capital expenditure £25m goes to planned maintenance and improvement schemes designed to improve the quality of homes. These capital schemes include new windows, doors roof replacements, external works and decoration.</p> <p>Residents want a reliable, simple and streamlined service from the Council, through which repairs and communal maintenance issues can be resolved in a timely fashion. The current process is inaccessible, convoluted, lacks clarity and takes too much time. Resident reps request a meeting with Senior officers to discuss what the problems are and how things could be improved.</p> <p>3. Repairs can be reported to us in a number of ways. We have direct phone line to the repairs team. Repairs can be booked between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours emergency repairs can be booked on the same phone line. Tenants can email us with repair requests which again comes to a monitored inbox in the repairs team. Alternatively, tenants can order and monitor repairs through the Housing online system provided they have signed up and have a Housing Account. In the year up to April 2023 the repairs help desk received 82,030 calls. We answered first time 69,333 or 85% of these calls. In the same year we completed 114,045 email exchanges through our repair's inbox. These figures demonstrate a high volume of calls and emails being handled by the team each year. Based on surveys with tenants the service achieved 98% customer satisfaction.</p>
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	However, we are always keen to improve and would be more than happy for a Snr Member of the team to meet with Residents Reps to understand their concerns and investigate alternative methods for tenants to contact us.
Action	Introduce a 2 year programme of Estate Walks.
Start date	Ongoing
End date	

E3.3 - Window replacements and other building works

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 23
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Geof Gage
Officer job title	Head of Housing Investment and Asset Management
Contact Details	geofrey.gage@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.3 Question & Response

Issue	Contractors brought in to do major works are frequently not suited to carrying out works to occupied residential properties and are not sufficiently respectful of the residents they are doing the work for.
Background	<p>A resident of Craven Vale reported various issues with the contractors taken on to carry out the window replacement works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They don't arrive at the time that they are expected • They fit glass that is already broken, with the expectation that they will return another day to refit this • The quality of materials fitted is sub-standard • They expect residents to take further time off work to accommodate multiple visits • They do not clean up the mess they make on site • They treat the place like a building site, without regard for residents living in the property and living in the surrounding area.

	Contractors who are trained to work on building sites of commercial properties, rather than within occupied residential properties, lack an understanding of how to work with residents while carrying out the works.
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents request that reliable contractors are used for major works, who have a proven track record of working in occupied residential properties and are experienced in working with, and are respectful of, residents (who are their clients). • Residents request that Brighton & Hove-based firms and contractors, with the right experience, are used wherever possible. • Residents request that the Council ensure that the materials, fixtures and fittings used for major works are of good quality and have adequate warranty periods.
Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our framework of contractors has been agreed and is monitored by our project managers and also through core group meetings with the contractors on a monthly basis. This will include overall performance to meet KPIs and general aspects of the contract and any issues raised are taken forward accordingly. 2. All contractors appointed to our contracts have the relevant experience and expertise in the field in which they are appointed and the process of appointment is rigorous and meets procurement requirements. The contracts are open to all companies which includes local businesses and are vetted and evaluated and only companies who meet the strict criteria are appointed. 3. All materials are specified to relevant British Standards or other regulatory expectations and carry the necessary warranties as set out in the BHCC contract.
Action	None
Start date	24.07.2023
End date	24.07.2023

E3.4 - Unaffordable parking in areas of high deprivation

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 23
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept 23

Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Paul Nicholls
Officer job title	Parking Strategy & Contracts Manager
Contact Details	paul.nicholls@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.4 Question & Response

Issue	<p>The planned increase in parking charges disproportionately affects Council tenants and residents, those living in areas of high deprivation and low-income households.</p> <p>There are various issues with visitors' parking permits (see details below)</p>
Background	<p><i>A full letter was submitted by Ben d'Montigny (BELTA) and is appended to these minutes for reference.</i></p> <p>Residents are concerned that an increase in parking charges will adversely affect residents in their area (and other areas of high deprivation), many of whom are vulnerable, socially isolated and already struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. It was noted that excessive parking charges will also make it financially unviable for volunteers travelling to the area to provide key outreach services in the community (e.g. Bristol Estate Community Centre), as well as staff working at the hospital.</p> <p><i>Visitors' parking permits:</i></p> <p>The limit of 50 visitors' parking permits per household means that socially isolated and vulnerable residents are unable to accommodate visitors as frequently, particularly if on-street parking charges are increased and visitors are unable to afford parking. This impacts negatively on the mental health and well-being of such residents, further increasing social isolation.</p> <p>Community assets, such as community centres, are unable to acquire visitors' parking permits. Volunteers are therefore having to pay for parking out of pocket, or pass the cost of parking on to community centres, which are run on a shoe-string budget. This threatens the existence of community centres and community activities which are a lifeline to local residents.</p> <p>The process of obtaining visitors' parking permits is difficult and requires excessive and unnecessary levels of verification.</p>
Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents request that the Council reconsider the increase in parking charges in the city, taking on board issues and concerns raised above. Residents request that the visitors' parking permit purchase process be streamlined, removing the need for excessive proof of address

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents request that community centres and other community assets become eligible for applying for visitors' parking permits Residents request that the maximum number of visitors' parking permits is increased
Response	<p>Parking charges are set by Councillors and at the last Transport & Sustainability Committee meeting, the Committee agreed to pause some of the tariff increases previously agreed.</p> <p>The visitor parking permit purchase process is being reviewed with a view to streamlining the process. This is a technical piece of work but work has started on this.</p>
Action	Review of visitor parking purchase process.
Start date	Ongoing
End date	

E3.5 - Fire alarm check at Robert Lodge

Area in city	East
Star rating	3 Star - City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 23
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept 23
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Robert Mabey
Officer job title	Mechanical and Electrical Manager
Contact Details	robert.mabey@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E3.5 Question & Response

Issue	A contractor came to inspect the fire alarm system at Robert Lodge Meeting Rooms, but the resident reps (and key holder for the building) were not informed that this was happening. The contractor had not been given the contact number and name of the key-holder.
Background	N/A

Request or Question	<p>It was agreed to raise this at all Area Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was the fire alarm contractor not given the contact details of the resident reps and key-holders of the building he was scheduled to inspect? • Why were resident reps not informed that this fire alarm check was scheduled to happen?
Response	<p>All BHCC Fire Alarm panels are checked quarterly and a check of every detector and sounder is made over the course of the four visits over the year.</p> <p>The contractor is given a fair amount of autonomy as to when these assets are checked. This enables the contractor to run their operations efficiently and give BHCC value for money. With this in mind, it is difficult to call ahead and give notice for access to all areas.</p>
Action	<p>If we could have a copy of the key to enable ongoing access to these areas without the need to inconvenience the Resident Rep this would be useful. If this is not possible we will endeavour to try to give the contractor up to date contact details for access to such areas. This does rely on BHCC's Tenancy Management system, NEC Housing, having up to date info of who and how to contact for access to these areas and as such request that this info is volunteered for adding to NEC Housing.</p>
Start date	01/08/2023
End date	31/07/2024

N3.1 - Weeding and maintenance of footpaths and pathways

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	22 nd June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Melissa Francis
Officer job title	Head of Cityclean
Contact Details	melissa.francis@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.1 Question & Response

<p>Issue</p>	<p>The city's public footpaths and pathways are overgrown with weeds, brambles, bushes and trees (raised also at North Area RO meeting of 19th December 2022)</p>
<p>Background</p>	<p>Hollingdean residents reported that the weeds are overgrowing on the streets/pavements in their area, particularly Davey Drive and Tavistock Down.</p> <p>Bates Estate residents reported that there are various footpaths and pathways in their area that are overgrown with brambles, bushes and trees, which are preventing people from being able to walk through safely, including people with mobility issues and pushchairs.</p> <p>Residents of Parkmead and Coldean also reported that their areas are affected.</p> <p>It was noted that the central reservation on the Lewes Road is also overgrown.</p> <p>Residents have also observed that when jobs such as cutting the grass or cutting back overgrown areas do get done, they are half done (only one half of the path is cleared, for example).</p>
<p>Request or Question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will weeding/cutting back of overgrown footpaths happen in Hollingdean, Bates Estate, Coldean and Parkmead? • Why is the maintenance of the city's streets, footpaths and pavements not taking place as frequently as needed? • Does the Council have plans in place to ensure that this service is improved in future? • What is the maintenance schedule for the North area for weeding and cutting back of overgrown footpaths? How frequently are weeding, grass-cutting, and cutting back of overgrown footpaths scheduled to happen in the North area? • Outside of scheduled maintenance, how do residents report areas requiring attention to the Council, in order to get this actioned as quickly as possible?
<p>Response</p>	<p>In 2019, the council stopped using pesticides to remove weeds from the city's streets. Since this time, the Street Cleansing Team have worked hard to remove weeds manually however, this takes much longer than weed spraying.</p> <p>The council has invested in additional staff and equipment, such as trimmers and weed rippers, however, there will be more weeds on the pavements without the use of pesticides.</p> <p>Cityclean is piloting a new traffic light system to address reports of weeds that cause a trip hazard, access issues or are damaging the pavement</p>

	<p>and these weeds will be prioritised for removal. Cityclean continue to review new technology to improve street maintenance. A report will be presented to the City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee in the winter, before the new season next year, with options for future weed removal</p> <p>There is a Street Cleansing Operative allocated to the Coldean area who is carrying out weeding. The Operative is in this area every other week as this is a two-week area - the other area being Hollingbury. The dedicated weeding crew will be moving to the Coldean area towards the end of September.</p> <p>The Hollingdean area is currently covered by two operatives, where they are slowly working their way through the weeding.</p> <p>It is not possible to provide a timescale for Bates Estate at this moment in time as the crew are used to concentrate on Red zone areas as well (traffic light system). As it is an estate, it could be possible that the Estates Team may assist with some of the deep cleaning and weeding and Cityclean will contact Housing colleagues to ask for support.</p> <p>The footpaths and pavements are being completed as frequently as possible bearing in mind the size of the East and West areas, with the number of teams in operation and the manual methods being used.</p> <p>The council and Street Cleansing Team are always looking for the most efficient way of clearing weeds. However, without the use of pesticide, most methods are usually physical ways of clearing the weeds, which in turn can be time consuming. The service uses weed ripping machines, trimmers and other tools and methods to clear the weeds.</p> <p>If the weeds are causing blocked access, trip hazard or damaging the highway these can be reported through the Environment Contact Centre. On receiving the complaint, Cityclean supervisors check the area concerned, take photos and make an assessment on how quick the Street Cleansing Team need to respond to the complaint using the traffic light system prioritising weeds causing blocked access, trip hazard or damaging the highway infrastructure.</p>
Action	Please see notes above.
Start date	Ongoing
End date	Ongoing

N3.2 changed to a 2-star question.

N3.3 - Internal Decorations Eligibility

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	22 nd June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Justine Harris
Officer job title	Head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.3 Question & Response

Issue	The criteria for eligibility for internal decoration scheme excludes tenants on low incomes who are not on benefits.
Background	A tenant at Bates Estate has discovered that they are not eligible for the internal decorating scheme because they are not on benefits. Residents felt that the criteria for eligibility should be wider.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the criteria to be eligible for the Internal Decoration Scheme so narrow? • Can the Council reconsider their policy to ensure that low-income tenants who are not on benefits are able to apply to the scheme?
Response	<p>The criteria for the internal decorating scheme was agreed at committee level and restrictions were brought in to try and ensure the scheme meets the needs of those residents who need the help the most.</p> <p>We are reviewing what discretionary help is available to tenancy and how it is accessed as part of the review of Tenancy Services.</p>
Action	To update AP with any changes to the help available.
Start date	
End date	

N3.4 - Maintenance of Communal Areas

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue

Date question raised	22 nd June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	10 th August at 9am
Name of officer responding	Chloe McLaughlin
Officer job title	Estates Service Manager
Contact Details	chloe.mclaughlin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.4 Question & Response

Issue	Regular maintenance of communal areas (cleaning, gardening) is not taking place frequently enough, or is being done poorly.
Background	<p>Tenants are paying for this service through their rent. However, communal areas are being neglected.</p> <p>Parkmead: Residents have reported that gardens are overgrown and cleaning is not being done regularly enough.</p> <p>Sylvan Hall: Residents at The Pines reported that there have been repeated instances of the floors being mopped only once, and left very wet. One of the residents slipped on this wet floor and was injured. This is a health and safety hazard.</p> <p>Additionally, the existing "Caution: wet floor" A-signs are broken in 7 different blocks. These broken panels are left propped up against the walls 24/7. Residents cannot easily see these signs when they are positioned like this. Furthermore, the propped-up signs slip down onto the wet floor, posing a further health and safety hazard. Estate services has been contacted but the resident rep was told that these broken signs were too expensive to replace.</p>
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the maintenance and cleaning schedule for the communal spaces in North area? • How often is this maintenance and cleaning schedule not met in the North and what is the council going to do to improve the service? • When can residents at Sylvan Hall and Parkmead expect a regular and decent maintenance service to resume? • Residents at Sylvan Hall request new "Caution: wet floor" signage for all their blocks.
Response	This question has been resolved following a resident's complaint. New wet floor signs have been ordered and put out across the blocks. The

	cleaner has been instructed that they need to be taken away at the end of each cleaning day. The cleaner has also been reminded that the floors need to be left as dry as possible to avoid slips and falls. These blocks are cleaned once a week including sweeping, mopping, dusting and internal glazing being cleaned. Litter-picks are also carried out and bin areas kept clean and tidy.
Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

N3.5 - EDB Bids

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	22 nd June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	10 th August at 9am
Name of officer responding	Keely McDonald
Officer job title	Senior Community Engagement Officer
Contact Details	keely.mcdonald@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.5 Question

Issue	Approved bids/projects take a long time to get started. There is also a lack of clarity about what can or can't be applied for.
Background	In Coldean, EDB bids for a handrail and steps to be put in at 39 Acres, and for noticeboards to be put up in the area, were approved over a year ago. However, the work has yet to happen, and residents have not heard back to know when these improvement works are due to take place. There is confusion amongst residents about what items can be applied for under EDB, and what can't. Some residents were informed that fencing was approved in Whitehawk, whereas they have previously been told that fencing cannot be applied for.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process that EDB projects go through, from point of approval to completion? Who project manages these EDB bids to ensure that these are done?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a project is complex or there are delays, how can the council ensure the communities are made aware of any updates? • Is there a timeframe in which approved EDB projects are meant to be implemented by the Council? • Can the Council provide a list of EDB projects approved in 2021-22 and 2022-23 that are still outstanding?
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N3.5 Response

Thank you for your question, the Coldean Independents bid to install a handrail, new steps and a bench was approved in October 2022, unfortunately this has not yet been given a start date, but we will inform the independents group as soon as we have an update. There is information on the council’s website on how to apply to the Estate Development Budget (EDB) as well as what it can be used to fund.
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/estate-development-budget

For anyone who is not able to access this information, the Community Engagement Team would be happy to discuss any EDB project ideas and give advice on feasibility, please do let us know if you would like to discuss a project in more detail in a face-to-face meeting or over the phone. Please note that there is a new dedicated email address for anyone making enquiries about EDB which is **edb@brighton-hove.gov.uk**, but please be reassured that any enquiries which come to the general team inbox (communityengagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk) will be picked up by our EDB Officer.

Process for EDB projects:

Bid Approval

In some instances, the panel meetings can give approval on principal to a project; this means that the works will go ahead, or funding released as long as some additional information is provided, or changes are made to the project based on the panel’s feedback. If there is feedback for the bidder to consider, their Community Engagement Officer will get in touch with them to help them decide how to proceed.

Communications

It is the lead bidder’s responsibility for passing on any further information to their community relating to the bid. The lead bidders are those whose contact details are on the bid form. Once a bid is approved, the EDB officer updates the lead bidders, and forwards any feedback from the decision-making meeting to them. The Delivery team will also inform bidders about start date of works, or progress or delays reports.

Arranging works

If there are physical works to be carried out, the EDB Officer notifies the Delivery Team of the funding being awarded. The works are then programmed into the schedule for the financial year. The Delivery Team then plans the works, contacts the bidders to inform them of a start date and updates with any progress or delays, liaising with the Community Engagement Officer and the EDB Officer to ensure works go ahead as planned.

If the successful bid is waiting on a funds transfer, the EDB Officer completes this transaction with the account information provided by the bidder.

Project management is joint between EDB Officer and Delivery Team:

There is no Project Manager who is leading on agreed bids. The bids are coordinated by the EDB Officer who ensures projects are recorded, feasibility checks are carried out by

the appropriate teams and the information is available for the decision-making panels, as well as administrating the meetings themselves and being a point of contact for residents enquiring about their bids. The Delivery Team schedules works and manages communications with bidders as well as updating the Community Engagement Team with progress.

Timeframe:

The aim is for each project to be completed by the end of the financial year; however, this is not always possible. Where there are issues around works being undertaken within that timeframe, if funding hasn't yet been released, it will be retained into the new financial year to allow for it to be started as quickly as possible. If funding has been released or if works started, the Delivery Team will continue to work on a project to ensure that it is completed as quickly as possible.

Complex projects and delays:

In the case of complex projects, or those which are delayed for any reason, the Delivery Team updates the bidder and stays in touch with them until the project is complete. The EDB Panel also regularly receive updates and discuss ways forward for projects which are 'stuck' with the Delivery Team, EDB Officer and Senior Community Engagement Officer.

In the past few months, the number of projects delayed has increased, this is due to the Delivery Team devoting their resources to reducing the repairs and maintenance backlog. Unfortunately, this has had an impact on the completion of EDB projects, including the Coldean Independents bid for noticeboards, of which the EDB Panel has been made aware and updated on over the past few months.

Suggested solution to help speed up project delivery

The Community Engagement Team and the Procurement Team are working on a solution to this, which will be a procurement process where small contractors will be offered the EDB works which are outstanding, taking on projects which fall under their speciality, e.g. gardening, painting and decorating, building works, etc. The aim is for these providers to take on all the outstanding bids, ensuring projects are completed as quickly as possible, giving the Delivery Team more capacity to complete urgent repairs and maintenance work.

Fencing

Apologies for any confusion around whether EDB funds can be used for fencing. While individual fencing, that is fencing in gardens of houses, cannot be funded through EDB, fencing around communal areas can. Housing will work with tenants who have requested fencing to their property on a case-by-case basis.

N3.5 Actions

Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement Team to update the Area Panel on the progress made in implementing a new procurement process to ensure outstanding projects are taken on by new contractors as quickly as possible. • Include list of outstanding EDB projects approved between 2021 and 2023 (see report in appendix)
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Start date	07/08/2023
End date	05/09/2023

N3.6 - Estate Walks

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	22 nd June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	10 th August at 9am
Name of officer responding	Janet Dowdell
Officer job title	Housing Operations Manager
Contact Details	janet.dowdell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.6 Question & Response

Issue	Residents value Estate walks and would like these to happen more regularly.
Background	N/A
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When are the next estate inspections scheduled to happen in the North area? • How frequently are these due to take place?
Response	Following our series of walks under the pilot we have reviewed the outcomes and are planning to introduce a 2-year programme to cover our housing estates. This work is in progress, we aim to start the estate inspections in October 2023 and are working towards publishing the schedule online. We will return to Area Panels with an update before publishing details on the website. Tenant reps will be invited to take part in the inspections.
Action	Introduce a 2 year programme of Estate Walks.
Start date	Ongoing

End date	
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N3.7 - Adaptations

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	22 nd June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	9am on 10 th August
Name of officer responding	Alex Dickie
Officer job title	Operations Manager - Housing Adaptations
Contact Details	alex.dickie@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.7 Question & Response

Issue	Adaptations to Council housing are not happening fast enough
Background	Residents with health and mobility issues are waiting a long time for adaptations to their Council properties. This is posing a danger to their health and well-being and impacting the quality of their daily lives. It is also putting pressure on external services such as the fire brigade. Example given: Leach Court sheltered housing scheme – a tenant was unable to get out of the bath 4 times because the correct adaptations had not been made. The fire brigade had to be called out on all occasions.
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the expected length of time that tenants have to wait for adaptations to be put in place? • How many requests for adaptations have been made across the city in the past year, and what percentage are still waiting to take place? • What is the council's policy on keeping adaptations in homes if they are in good condition?
Response	There is high and rising demand for adaptations and a waiting list for assessment. All new cases are triaged and the most urgent cases are prioritised to be seen quickly. This means some less urgent cases can take up to 8 months to be seen by an occupational therapist. Current time following assessment averages 8 weeks until the work is ordered. To reduce waiting times a pilot scheme to provide straightforward bath replacement level access shower without further assessment is in

	<p>progress. Furthermore, additional temporary staff are in post to reduce the list.</p> <p>In the period 1 Aug 2022 – 31 July 2023 there were 410 requests for adaptations, of which 186 (45%) have been completed. Therefore, 224 (55%) are still in progress.</p> <p>The Council will always try to maintain adaptations in situ though it should be noted that level access showers have a limited life and there is often a preference for a bath from new tenants, especially in family homes.</p>
Action	N/A
Start date	
End date	

N3.8 - Clear-up on estates

Area in city	North
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	22 nd June
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept
Deadline for officer response	9am on 10 th August
Name of officer responding	Justine Harris
Officer job title	Head of Tenancy Services
Contact Details	justine.harris@brighton-hove.gov.uk

N3.8 Question & Response

Issue	Janet Dowdell (Tenancy Services Operational Manager) mentioned to residents that a clear-up would be happening across estates in the city, and skips would be made available.
Background	N/A
Request or Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When is this clear-up due to take place? • When and where are these scheduled to take place? Will these be publicised?

Response	<p>No firm plans have yet been put in place for this community led initiative. Initial planning is taking place by the Housing Estates Services team, City Clean and the Community Engagement team.</p> <p>The Community Engagement team will liaise with residents on any future plans.</p>
Action	As above.
Start date	
End date	

W3.1 - Consultation and communication with residents

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 2023
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Hannah Barker
Officer job title	Senior Community Engagement Officer
Contact Details	01273 296639 / 07771 389497 hannah.barker@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.1 Question

Issue	<p>West residents are proposing a meeting to discuss on-going concerns about consultation and communication with residents. They are requesting a city-wide meeting with residents from all four Areas, Councillors and Council officers. The focus of this discussion is listening to residents' concerns and allowing enough time for residents to put this forward. Its aim is to be a wide-ranging exploratory discussion, which helps progress the issue in a constructive direction.</p> <p>Representatives from each Area should be involved in the process of working out the structure and content of the meeting.</p>
Background	<p>Issues about communication and consultation are consistently raised at all of the Resident Only meetings. These get responses at Area Panel but are never discussed in depth or resolved and keep coming up again. This process has begun to feel circular and unconstructive and West residents thought a new approach was needed.</p>

	<p>West residents noted the response at the June Area Panel to an item from North, which began: 'We're sorry that you feel that there is a lack of communication with residents. This implies it is something residents feel, rather than something that is actually happening. Residents' concerns need to be taken seriously and addressed - a meeting would be part of this process.</p>
<p>Request or Question</p>	<p>Request for the Community Engagement Team to organise a meeting on communication and consultation. The focus of the proposed meeting is to listen to residents' concerns and allow enough time for residents to put these forward.</p> <p>Each Area to be asked to nominate two representatives to help organise the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that Muriel Briault and Pat Weller would be the West representatives and contacts for the Community Engagement Team.</p>

W3.1 Response

Overview of Response:

This response is written alongside other resident's questions, C3.6 and E3.1, which also raise issues around communications.

- We will work with the Involvement & Empowerment Group to look in more detail at the issue as a next step and report back to Area Panel.
- The preparation to comply with the new Social Housing Regulator includes ensuring high standards of communications and consultation for residents.

Detail of Response:

We do not have capacity currently to organise an additional meeting

The Area Panel Terms of Reference supports this request for a short-term focus meeting, depending on capacity:

However, in terms of '*available resources and competing priorities*', we would like residents to note that preparation for the Social Housing Regulation Act and Regulators inspections, for Housing and the Community Engagement Teams is very pressing; in the short term.

Social Housing Regulator

Work is ongoing relating to standards of communications and consultation across many areas of Housing and Engagement. This is part of the intensive work in preparation for the Regulator inspections. The Regulator requires Housing to publish their Engagement Plan by April 2024, which will address issues relating to communication and consultation.

For example, the Regulator will be measuring the council against Consumer Standards. One of the draft Consumer Standards, set by the government, which relates to communication and consultation says:

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.

The Involvement & Empowerment Group

We suggest that instead of establishing a separate time limited focus group on the topic of consultation and communication, this item is included in the action plan and work of the existing Involvement & Empowerment Group (I & E). The resident chair of the group, Chris El Shabbah agrees these issues fit within the remit of the group.

The next I&E meeting is on 25th October. 3 residents who helped draw up this question attend this meeting already. Pat, and anyone else, are very welcome. At this meeting we can decide what next steps to take in relation to communication and consultation.

The I&E forum is a good place for the question to be explored in more detail, over some time, because it sits alongside other related work that this group are looking at. For example, the Tenants & Residents Groups Toolkit includes supporting groups around communications and consultation.

I appreciate talking with Muriel and Roy, (Resident-only West co-chair and area Panel Vice Chair) to understand the issue in more detail. We will take these things to the Involvement & Empowerment Group.

- The need to have more time to dig into residents' questions responses, either at or outside of Area Panel.
- Lack of response from Housing on reports regarding estates

We disagree with the background statement supplied, “Issues about communication and consultation are consistently raised at all of the Resident Only meetings”

We looked at 11 rounds of Area Panel and the 44 Resident Only Meetings which took place, across all 4 areas, between August 2021 to Sept 2023. During that time there were 13 Questions (not including this one) with ‘communication’ or ‘consultation’ in the title. The total number of residents questions over this time was 191 questions, so approx. 6.9% of questions were about communications or consultation in any way.

W3.2	Sep-23	Laundry review & consultation
C3.6	Sep-23	Communication and Consultation
E3.1	Sep-23	Poor Communication from Senior Council Officers
E3.1	Jun-23	Council staff lack of responsiveness
W3.5	Jun-23	Working with residents: What does consultation mean?
C3.3	Jun-23	Lack of response from Officers
N3.2	Jun-23	Poor Council Communication
C3.6	Feb-23	Improving Communication with Council
N2.2	Oct-22	Parking consultation in Hollingdean

W2.2	Feb-22	Response to service requests and queries
W3.2	Feb-22	Area Panel Review and time for consultation
W3.2	Dec-21	Communications between Council and residents
N3.3	Aug-21	EDB - Communication

This does not show that residents are consistently raising this issue at all resident only meetings. It also does not show whether the majority residents were happy or unhappy with the response given.

However, we are aware that communications and consultation are vitally important for both Housing and the Engagement Team; communications and consultation are fundamental to our work. We also want our Residents Questions process to work better.

W3.1 Action

Action	Involvement & Empowerment Group to pick this up as part of the agenda of the next meeting, including: - How can residents question responses be better served, discussed and lead to resolution?
Start date	7 th August 2023
End date	25 th October 2023 (date of I & E)

W3.2 - Consultation process and laundry review

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 2023
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Craig Cotton
Officer job title	Contract Manager - Housing
Contact Details	craig.cotton@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.2 Question & Response

Issue	Agreements at Area Panel to follow up on the laundry review consultation with Philip Court were not kept. The meeting asked for the following concrete example of poor communication and lack of response to be noted.
Background	

	<p>15/12/22: <i>West Resident only meeting, Item 18, 'Working with residents':</i> Proposals around the laundry at Philip Court was given as an example of 'top down' consultation, where residents are informed of solutions rather than engaged in a joint process of discussion and development from the beginning. This went as a 3-star item to the February 2023 West Area Panel.</p> <p>15/2/23: <i>West Area Panel, ref W3.6, Working with Residents:</i> The officer response to the item from the West Resident Only meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Housing will bring a laundry review paper to the next Area Panel (Jun 2023). b. The Community Engagement Manager will speak to housing officers and residents to understand what happened with the Philip Court Laundry room consultation. <p>23/3/23: <i>West Resident Only meeting, item 7: Working with residents: what does consultation mean?</i> This meeting noted that Philip Court had not yet been contacted about the laundry review. Concerns were again raised that the laundry review paper scheduled for June 2023 Area Panel would not have the views and experiences of the people using this service as its starting point. This went as a 3-star item to the June 2023 West Area panel.</p> <p>16/6/23: <i>June West Area Panel</i> Philip Court had still not been contacted about the laundry review. The laundry review paper scheduled for Area Panels in June was not on the agenda and there was no communication or explanation about this.</p> <p>29/6/23: <i>West Residents Only meeting</i> Philip Court had still not been contacted about the laundry review.</p>
Request or Question	<p>Graham Dawson to contact Sam Warren, Community Engagement Manager, to follow up on consultation about the laundry review at Philip Court.</p> <p>Item to go to Area Panels as a concrete example of poor communication and consultation.</p>
Response	<p>The consultation has not started to date. The concerns of the West Area Panel meeting on the 23/3/23 have been noted, and we would like to assure the Panel that the views and experiences of the people using the laundry service will be important to the review. A start date for a comprehensive resident consultation has yet to be decided. Although, not included in the June Area Panel, the laundry service review is ongoing and will involve input from residents.</p>
Action	<p>When the starting date for the consultation is confirmed, we will inform Panel. The detail of the consultation plan, regarding the residents involved, the information sought and a variety of ways in which residents</p>

	can share their experiences and views, will also be communicated to Panel. We would of course welcome any additional input from Panel at this point.
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

W3.3 - Grass Cutting and Weeding: Contractors

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 2023
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Melissa Francis
Officer job title	Head of City Clean
Contact Details	melissa.francis@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.3 Question & Response

Issue	Contractors employed by the Council to clear weeds from pavements and grass areas are not doing their jobs properly. The Council needs to be checking and monitoring this work.
Background	Contractors were observed in Godwin Road over several hours on the 14 th June 2023. They had a Brighton & Hove City Council van. There was no evidence that any weeding or maintenance was being done, or any signs afterwards that any weeds had been cleared.
Request or Question	Ask the Council to ensure there are checks and monitoring of the work done by contractors on weeding and grass cutting.
Response	The Council has not engaged contractors to clear weeds. Records were checked to ascertain whether Council staff were working in this area on 14 th June 2023 and there were no staff recorded as working from Cityclean or Cityparks in Godwin Road.
Action	No further action.

Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

W3.4 - Grass Cutting and Weeding: Ongoing Concerns

Area in city	West
Star rating	3 star – City wide issue
Date question raised	29 th June 2023
Week of Area Panel	11 th Sept 2023
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Sarah Carlisle
Officer job title	Operations Manager, City Environment (Cityclean & Cityparks)
Contact Details	sarah.carlisle@brighton-hove.gov.uk

W3.4 Question & Response

Issue	<p>There is a lot of work to be done to get pavements weeded and cleared and grass areas mown so they are at a safe and accessible standard. There is also work needed to ensure that a better service is provided in the future, preventing these problems from arising.</p>
Background	<p>West residents have consistently raised concerns about grass-cutting and weeding. This is an important issue because blocked pavements and overgrown areas limit accessibility and create health and safety hazards. This is particularly hard for residents with any mobility difficulties. It has made it impossible for some wheelchair users to move around their local area. A number of specific complaints were raised about neglected areas, which residents will follow up with local Councillors.</p>
Request or Question	<p>West residents want a commitment to a better service as a fundamental provision from the Council, as paid for out of rents and council tax. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular mowing and weeding uniformly across all areas (not just the tourist and central parts of the city). • Proper clearing up after mowing: insuring that wet grass is not going to cause a hazard. • Work done systematically and fully – eg not leaving half an area uncut or missing a section out altogether.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refunds if work is not done.
Response	<p>We're sorry that you have concerns about the grass-cutting and weeding. We have had weather that has meant rapid growth both for grass and shrubs. We are on schedule with grass cutting to those sites we can access. We have commenced hedge trimming & shrub pruning and are working our way through sites currently.</p> <p>Any complaints received on Housing sites by Cllrs that come under City Parks contract have been addressed to date.</p> <p>The Ride on mower is quicker than the pedestrian follow up (mowing & strimming) team so it will mean there will be times when the ride on mower has been to site to cut and the follow up will come later. As far as reasonably practicable we try to make that as short a time as possible.</p> <p>We aim to mow verges at the same rate throughout the city depending on the resource of the team.</p>
Action	N/A
Start date	N/A
End date	N/A

Residents Questions- 2 star, East

E2.1 - East Area Community Engagement Team

Area in city	East
Star rating	2 star - Local area issue
Date question raised	29 th June 2023
Week of Area Panel	4 th Sept 2023
Deadline for officer response	10 th August 2023
Name of officer responding	Sam Warren
Officer job title	Community Engagement Team Manager
Contact Details	sam.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

E2.1 Question & Response

Issue	Residents are concerned that there are not enough community engagement officers working for the East Area who are also physically present.
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Background	Residents appreciate Community Engagement Officers who are present and active on the ground in the areas where they live. While remote working may work for individual members of staff at the Council, this means that they are removed from what is actually happening in the city, and unable to engage in-person with residents that they serve.
Request or Question	It was agreed to raise this at the East Area Panel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the Community Engagement Team have plans to recruit an additional Community Engagement Officer for the East Area who will also be physically present in the city?
Response	<p>Thanks for your question.</p> <p>Clare Nichols is one of our Community Engagement Officers who has been on maternity leave and is due back to work in September, she will be working with Gabs Tiranti in the East of the City. Her post is 18.5 hours per week and Gabs works 22hrs per week.</p> <p>Our Senior Community Engagement Officer is working remotely for a temporary period, the Senior Community Engagement Officers have more responsibility for strategic issues, developing processes and practice and offering guidance to the Community Engagement officers rather than working on the ground.</p> <p>We do hope to be recruiting to this post in the future so that it doesn't remain remote, but we currently have a recruitment freeze for all posts in the council.</p>
Action	Recruit to Senior post when recruitment freeze allows
Start date	September 2023 - Clare will return to work and will be based in the East working in person
End date	No end date