

REVIEW DRAFT
Housing
Strategy 2015



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The Housing Strategy

Our Vision

The strategy is for everyone living in the city as housing has a fundamental effect on our lives whether we are an owner-occupier, living in a social rented home or living in the private rented sector. Our vision is:

We want Brighton & Hove to be an inclusive city with affordable, high quality, housing that supports a thriving economy by offering security, promoting health and wellbeing and reduces its impact on the environment. We want to help bring about integrated communities in a society that values everyone to recognise and tackle the inequality faced by families, the poor and the vulnerable.

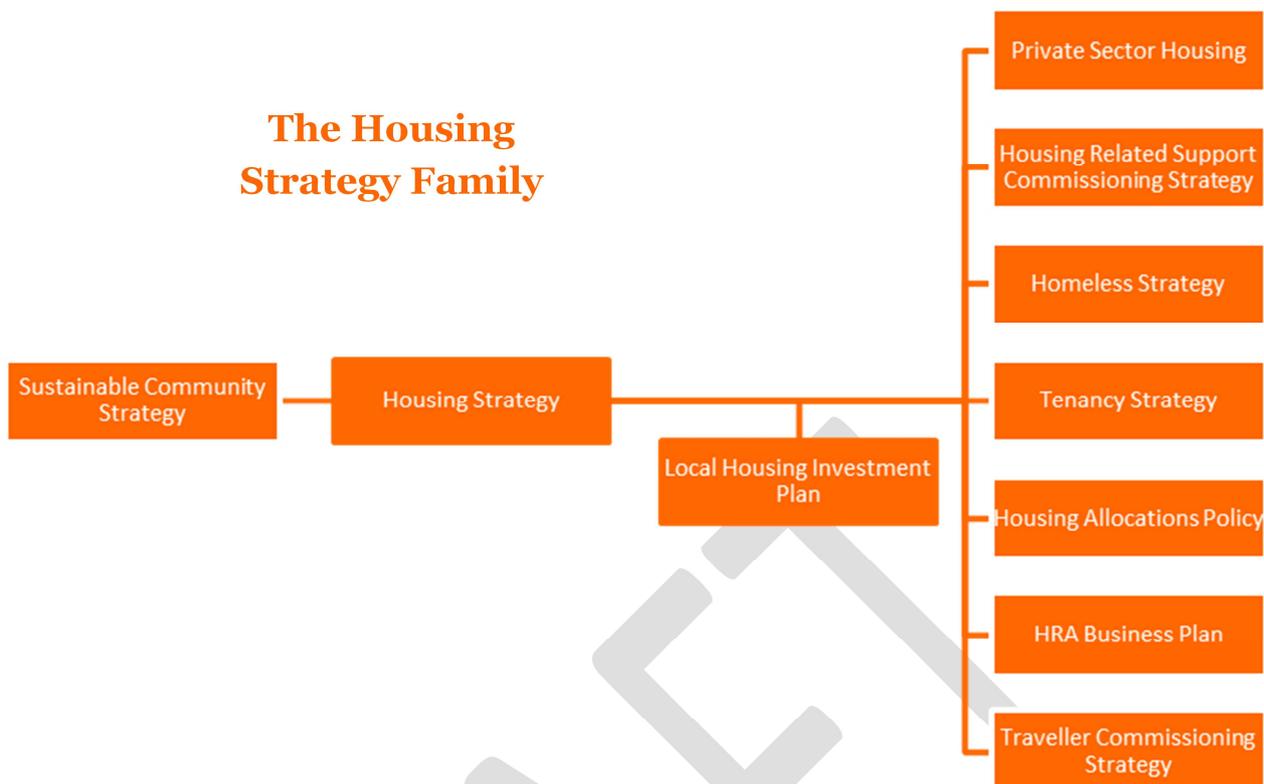
We have listened to local people to identify the housing needs that matter most and set out a plan for action that will make a real difference to their lives and have a positive impact on the city. Our strategy also supports the council's priorities and other policies where housing impacts on their success.

The council's Values of Respect, Customer Focus, Openness, Creativity, Efficiency and Collaboration underpin the work we do by going beyond the traditional bricks and mortar focus of housing to deliver real change focussed on the needs of individuals and communities.

The new Housing Strategy is a key stand alone chapter of the Community Strategy and a fundamental piece of evidence to support the City Plan, our Local Housing Investment Plan and other housing related funding opportunities. The strategy sets out how the council and its partners work together to address housing pressures in the city and brings benefits to the city through leveraging in funding for the authority and its partners.

This is an overarching document that focuses and co-ordinates a number of other housing related strategies enabling us to continue our impetus to help address the housing needs of the city and provide a consistent drive towards achieving our priorities. We are committed to making sure that all of our housing work continues to align and work together to provide effective and efficient services in a time of reducing resources and increased need.

The Housing Strategy Family



Delivery of the new Housing Strategy and Action Plan will make sure that services internal and external to the council are able to adapt to and address the city's housing needs.

This strategy is presented as an aspirational plan with clear commitments to improving the issues identified through consultation and research, as well as building on the successes of the previous housing strategy.

Our Housing Challenges

Brighton & Hove is a popular place to live, work and visit, and is recognised for its important commercial, educational, tourist and conference, sporting and cultural role in the South East and beyond. The city has good transport links to neighbouring towns and is within easy reach of London making it an easy location to commute to and from.

Over the last few years we have been successful in providing additional affordable housing across the city and improving the quality of homes both in the private and social sector.

We have built the first new council homes for a generation and successfully bid for funding to build extra care housing in the city. We have initiated and invested in our New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme to build further

new council homes. Our existing council homes have been brought up to 100% decency and the introduction of additional licensing is improving housing conditions for residents living in smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation.

We have successively been one of the best performing councils in preventing homelessness in England, helping many households sustain their home or find an alternative suitable home.

However, our city is a place of contrast, with areas of extreme affluence and areas of deprivation where residents can experience significant inequality compared to the rest of the city in terms of access to suitable housing, employment, health and life expectancy.

Pressures from an increasing population, high property prices, pockets of poor quality housing, limited opportunities for new development and the effects of welfare reform are impacting on many families, particularly the most vulnerable people living in the city.

The city has one of the highest average house prices outside London, coming within the top 10 local authorities and high rents in the private rented sector making rent unaffordable for many households.

It is estimated that an additional 18,038 affordable homes are needed by 2017 however high land values are pushing up the cost of building making it difficult to develop sound business cases that balance the need for affordable housing against the cost of development.

Over the past few years we have seen an increase in the number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need, placed in temporary accommodation and on our Joint Housing Register.

Over the years we have made steady progress in improving the housing stock in the city but third of the city's housing stock still remains non-decent.

However, the last few years have seen significant changes to the funding available to deliver our strategy which means we have to look at new ways of working to support local people. These changes include the removal of private sector renewal funding that helped owners and landlords improve the quality of their homes, a reduction in grants for new affordable housing which has

seen a shift to affordable rented housing away from social housing and a range of welfare reforms affecting housing benefit and other support.

Additionally, the funding challenges faced by the council, wider public sector and third sector need to be met by making the best use of the resources available. This strategy comes at a time where the council has to save £102m over the period 2015/16 to 2019/20, around 30% of our net budget. We need to ensure that provision is based on good research and intelligence to enable us to meet the housing needs of the city's diverse population.

As a city, we also want to support our diverse communities to help them realise their potential and shift the emphasis away from requiring services. Citizens and communities are the lifeblood of our city with independent community action and volunteering building resilience and cohesion. This includes building community skills and capacity to take on more responsibility to create a cultural shift from reliance on traditional support to one where everyone does their bit as active, independent and resilient citizens.

Our Priorities and Themes

The strategy has 3 overarching priorities that reflect the fundamental housing needs of the city. Within these, there are a number of themes detailing areas of need which have been highlighted by local people during the consultation as those areas that matter the most and will make the most impact:

- **Priority 1: Improving Housing Supply**
 - New Affordable Housing
 - Family Housing
 - Community land trust and co-operatives
 - Student Housing

- **Priority 2: Improving Housing Quality**
 - Decent Warm Homes
 - Private Rented Sector
 - HMO Licencing

- **Priority 3: Improving Housing Support**
 - Housing Related Support
 - Supporting Older People
 - Supporting our BME Communities
 - Supporting our LGBT Communities

Our Consultation

This strategy, the themes and priority actions have been developed through extensive consultation with commissioners, service providers, community groups and residents over 2014.

In addition to attending a wide range of individual meetings and partnership meetings, three key events were held, a main stakeholder event, a BME community event hosted by BMECP and one for those with disabilities hosted by the Fed Centre for Independent Living. There was also an online consultation questionnaire. We promoted our events and engagement routes via social media using the council's Twitter account and Facebook page.

The main findings are summarised in the consultation report as part of our evidence base.

Our Evidence

The background documents contain a detailed analysis of the issues affecting the city including demographic change, housing costs, development pressures, deprivation, and changing need that were used to support the development of this strategy:

- Supporting Data Analysis;
- Family Housing Supporting Data Analysis;
- Consultation Report;
- Equality Impact Assessment.

This strategy is designed to be read with reference to these documents, which are available at: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingstrategy

We also publish a number of regular reports that help us monitor the city's housing markets and residents needs:

- Housing Strategy Statistical Bulletin: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-strategy-statistical-bulletins
- Housing Costs Update Report: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-strategy-costs-reports
- Rent and Local Housing Allowance Comparison Report: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-strategy-costs-reports

To be added to the mailing list, please contact housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Priority 1: Improving Housing Supply

The city is an expensive place to live. The Council's Assessment of Affordable Housing Need Report 2012¹ identified that almost 88,000 Brighton & Hove households (72%) can not afford market housing without spending a disproportionate level of their income on housing or some form of subsidy.

Our research² has identified that the average cost to buy a one bedroom flat is around £205,000 needing an income of £47,000 per annum and a three bedroom house is around £367,000 needing an income of around £85,000 per annum³ to be affordable. Property prices in the city are now 44% higher than the England & Wales average.

Renting in the private rented sector is also expensive with a one bedroom flat costing around £843 per month needing an income of £44,000 per annum and a three bedroom house around £1,550 per month needing an income of £82,000 to be affordable. Over the last 5 years, our monitoring has shown that private rents have risen faster than the rate of inflation.

With half of all residents earning less than £28,240 per annum, the city's private sector housing is unaffordable for the majority of our population and the reason we around 20,000 households on our Housing Register.

The Assessment of Affordable Housing Need Report 2012 estimates that 22,132 households will be in housing need and unable to afford buying or renting in the residential housing market in the period 2012-17. In addition, 59% of those in need (10,642 households) are only able to afford social rented housing rather than affordable rented.

With only around 3,500 affordable homes expected to be built by 2030 it leaves an unmet housing need of more than 18,000 affordable homes by 2017. However, the city only has the space for an additional 11,798 homes between 2015 and 2030.

¹ Assessment of Affordable Housing Need Report 2012: http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/downloads/ldf/Assessment_of_Affordable_Housing_Need.pdf

² Housing Costs Report, Autumn 2014: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-strategy-costs-reports

³ Assuming a 25% deposit and a mortgage of 3.5 times income

New Affordable Housing

Since April 2009 a total of 553 new affordable homes have been completed and funded through our Affordable Housing Programme in partnership with the Homes & Communities Agency and Registered Providers in the City. In addition there are seven schemes on-site and estimated to complete in 2014/15 providing a further 371 homes.

In consultation residents were generally positive about developments in terms of quality and location. The programme to build affordable housing with housing associations (Registered Providers) and our desire to develop more social housing directly is seen as positive for the city.

There is need for all types of affordable housing with residents stating that they wanted the local authority to provide more social housing and more affordable rented homes in partnership with housing associations.

With housing associations reducing their building due to a reduction in government subsidy, it is important that we make best use of our local authority resources to fill this gap, however, developing social rented housing in the current financial climate will be a challenge.

What is the city going to do?

- 1.** Prioritise support for new housing development that delivers a housing mix the city needs with a particular emphasis on family, Affordable Rent and where feasible, social rented housing.
- 2.** Continue to stimulate building of new affordable homes through housing enabling work with a range of partners including Homes & Communities Agency and Registered Providers.
- 3.** Directly provide more council housing, such as by developing ourselves through our New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme, buying new homes off-plan or by supporting others to build and manage on our behalf.
- 4.** Use Right To Buy receipts to fund new housing.
- 5.** Maximise housing provided from best use of HRA investment, land and buildings.
- 6.** Support local housing associations and the Community Housing Network with their proposals to deliver affordable homes.
- 7.** Work with the local business sector to maximise housing on mixed use developments incorporating homes, offices and retail.
- 8.** Continue to look at alternative use of public assets including land.
- 9.** Where compatible with local and national planning policy, increase housing supply through the conversion of unused and unneeded properties.

- 10.** Continue to work with adjacent local authorities in the Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex area to address unmet housing need across a sub-regional area.
- 11.** In accordance with City Plan policy, support taller buildings and higher density development in appropriate locations of the city.
- 12.** Reinvigorate the Home Ownership for People with Long-term Disabilities scheme.

Family Housing

The 2011 Census reported there were 29,809 households with dependent children living in the city, representing around 25% of the total households. 57% of these households were home owners, 19% were living in social rented homes and 22% were living in homes in the private rented sector.

With buying or privately renting a 3-bed home in the city requiring an income or more than £80,000 to be affordable⁴, many families, particularly younger ones are struggling.

The 2011 Census reported 3,900 households with dependent children were living in overcrowded homes. 991 were owner occupiers or shared ownership households, 1,443 were living in social rented homes and 1,466 were living in the private rented sector.

In April 2014 there were 2,805 households on the Housing Register overcrowded through lacking 1 or more bedrooms however, during 2013/14, only 103 larger homes with 3 bedrooms or more were available for letting.

Consultation respondents welcomed the Transfer Incentive Scheme that supports council tenants who are under-occupying to find more suitable accommodation which frees up family sized homes for re-letting and in 2013/14 a total of 101 homes were re-let under this scheme.

Residents were very concerned about the lack of affordable family housing in the city and the conversion of previous family homes into HMO's.

⁴ Housing Costs Report, Autumn 2014: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-strategy-costs-reports

What is the city going to do?

- 13.** Prioritise family housing in our housing investment plan and in enabling work with Homes & Communities Agency, Registered Providers and other partners.
- 14.** Look to new developments to deliver family housing as part of the affordable housing requirement.
- 15.** Support households wanting to downsize to increase supply of available family housing.
- 16.** Work with occupational therapists and social workers to ensure that family properties are allocated and adapted in a co-ordinated manner.
- 17.** Early intervention for families struggling with accommodation including money advice and tenancy support.

Community Land Trust and Co-operatives

Community Land Trusts (CLT) are non-profit community-led organisations that steward land and buildings to meet long-term community needs, by promoting development of affordable housing and other community facilities.

There are 5 Key features of CLTs:

- Community controlled and owned;
- Open local membership and democratic structure;
- Permanently affordable housing (of other facilities);
- Not for profit;
- Long-term stewardship, with community ownership of freehold or lease.

Our Empty Property Team has a long-term working relationship with Co-operative Housing in Brighton & Hove (CHIBAH), a network formed of seven local housing co-operatives. We work with them to meet shared goals; supporting them in their business modelling, helping them in identifying eligible empty properties in the private sector and supporting them through joint work on short life lease end and lease renewal issues.

In 2012 we supported local housing co-ops and community groups in their successful bid under the communities' element of the Government Empty Homes Programme 2012-15 with £650,000 allocated to local groups. The funding will provide 38 bed-spaces in 6-8 properties by April 2015. Two properties have already been purchased on the open market and negotiations are underway for a further property on a long lease.

Feedback was generally positive on this area with a clear mandate to support the work of these projects.

What is the city going to do?

- 18.** Promote the concept of Community Housing.
- 19.** Explore the viability of Community Land Trust developments when land is available.
- 20.** Explore the use of commercial properties for co-operatives where compatible with City Plan policies.
- 21.** Share information on available land with Community Land Trusts.

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Student Housing

Our universities and students have a positive impact, bringing economic growth to the city. Whilst this was recognised in the consultation responses, those commenting also highlighted there can be tensions between the different communities, with pressure put on housing and other services, as our universities expand.

We need a wider range of affordable accommodation options for students to take pressure off the existing housing stock and we need to work with landlords to improve the quality of accommodation and ensure student housing does not cause disruption in our neighbourhoods.

The City Plan, Policy CP21 Student Accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation, sets out how the council will meet the increasing accommodation needs of students while continuing to create mixed, healthy and inclusive communities. It identifies specific sites for purpose-built student accommodation which do not conflict with proposed housing site allocations.

Over 2,000 units of new purpose built student housing have been approved in the city including large developments at Northfield, University of Sussex Campus and Varley Halls of Residence for University of Brighton in Coldean. Further new purpose built student housing is currently proposed on other major sites in the city; including provision on the site of the old Co-op store building in London Road and the Circus Street development.

What is the city going to do?

- 22.** Continue to support the development of new purpose built student accommodation in accordance with City Plan policies.
- 23.** Support local initiatives to integrate students and the local communities through shared projects such as the Good Neighbour Guides.
- 24.** Reduce the impact of student lets on neighbourhoods through managing the concentration of student lets (City Plan policy) and other measures such as requiring safe bicycle storage, communal bins and working with letting agents to reduce signage.
- 25.** Promote support services to students around tenancy management, rights, and responsibilities.
- 26.** Work with bordering authorities to support satellite campuses.
- 27.** Promote the universities Rate Your Landlord report across the city and the idea of rented accommodation that is 'fit for study'.

Priority 2: Improving Housing Quality

We know from the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 report that more than 1 in 4 of the city's Lower Super Output Areas are in the bottom 10% nationally for housing quality and the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2008 reported that a third of the city's housing stock (up to 38,000 homes) is considered to be non-decent. In addition, approximately 1 in 8 of the city's households were calculated to be in fuel poverty (14,500 households).

Private Sector Housing Team work to improve housing conditions in private rented and owner occupied homes through renewal advice, assistance and enforcement; improving Home Energy Efficiency, improving thermal comfort and reducing fuel poverty and CO₂ emissions.

However, 2011 saw the end of government funding for private sector housing renewal in the city. In 2011/12 we were able to continue this work with a further £1.1m of the council's money but the council's financial pressures have meant that no more capital funding is available and most elements of our renewal assistance have been suspended.

Decent Warm Homes

The council works to improve the quality of homes in the city and introduce measures to reduce the city's carbon footprint through a wide range of initiatives and continues to seek to utilise appropriate available resources:

- Private Sector Renewal: Since 2009, more than £9m has been invested in enabling over 4,500 homes to be made decent or moved towards decency.
- Energy Efficiency: Since 2009, 2,438 energy efficiency measures installed and 1,592 tonnes of CO₂ saved. In addition:
 - £122,000 has been secured to reduce fuel poverty and cold homes in the private sector;
 - £221,000 has been secured for 100 free Green Deal assessments;
 - £411,000 has been secured for energy efficiency improvements to vulnerable householders in the private sector through a joint bid with Eastbourne Borough Council;
 - Held energy cafés to offer advice and assistance to residents;
 - We have seen a reduction in number of homes in fuel poverty.

Within our council housing stock we have now achieved 100% decency through an intensive programme of improvements undertaken via a 10 year partnership between Mears and the council. Since 2009 the improvements to council homes have included replacement kitchens, bathroom, new windows, new doors, and homes rewired. In addition we have replaced boilers; improving the energy efficiency of homes and so cutting residents' heating costs, completed installations for insulations that has included solid wall, cavity wall, loft and floor insulations and installed new solar installations.

In consultation there was support for the work done to improve council housing stock in terms of insulation and sustainability. There were concerns that although we were leading the way we needed to offer support to owner occupiers and the private rented sector in order to have a city wide approach to reducing emissions, home improvements, and fuel poverty.

What is the city going to do?

- 28.** Continue to promote the highest possible building, space and environmental standards in all new developments, including the Council leading by example and providing opportunities for innovation through new council homes being built to high sustainability levels.
- 29.** Promote available grants and loans to owner occupiers and landlords.
- 30.** Continue to improve council housing sustainability standards.
- 31.** Set target on reducing the carbon emissions from housing in the city.
- 32.** Work with services to address fuel poverty by identifying older people most at risk and using building improvements to reduce fuel costs.
- 33.** Work with the Food Partnership to ensure that housing and food are linked to improve well being and reduce waste.

Private Rented Sector

There is a growing private rented sector in the city with 28% of households living in a home that is privately rented. This percentage rises to nearly 60% in some areas of the city and we are aware that some of the most vulnerable households can be living in this tenure.

The consultation saw clear feedback that we had a thriving private rented sector that generally delivered good quality vital housing but there were ongoing concerns around rising costs and affordability.

A large majority of respondents to the consultation wanted us to introduce a register of all private sector landlords to help support efforts to maintain and improve standards.

What is the city going to do?

- 34.** Support a register of landlords in the city.
- 35.** Support for landlords to better manage properties.
- 36.** Develop an ethical standard for letting agents including a commitment to equalities and diversity, a 'living rent' scheme where rents are linked to wage inflation, and longer tenancies to support family stability.
- 37.** Up skill small and accidental landlords to improve tenancy management.
- 38.** Promote commonhold ownership amongst leaseholders in the city (in both the private sector and amongst council leaseholders when all the flats are leasehold).
- 39.** Review evictions from the private rented sector to analyse the underlying reasons behind homelessness.

HMO Licensing

It is estimated that there are a total of 6,460 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the city which is nine times the national average and 1 in 35 of all HMOs in England and Wales.

An HMO is a property rented out by at least 3 people who are not from 1 'household' (e.g. a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen. It's sometimes called a 'house share'. Examples of HMOs include bedsits, shared houses, lodgings, hostels, blocks of converted flats, halls of residence (privately operated), asylum seeker/migrant accommodation, accommodation for workers/employees and refugees.

The Housing Act 2004 requires landlords of certain HMOs to apply for licences. The HMOs that need to be mandatory licensed are:

- Three or more storeys that are
- Occupied by five or more people forming two or more households and
- Which have an element of shared facilities (e.g. kitchen, bathroom, etc.)

We currently licence or have applications to licence 1040 of these larger HMOs across the city under the national mandatory licensing scheme.

The licensing scheme is seen as improving the quality and fire safety in these properties and in November 2012, the council introduced additional licensing in five Lewes Road wards where a concentration of smaller HMOs has been identified. This additional licensing applies to HMOs, consisting of two or more storeys, with three or more occupiers from two or more households sharing facilities. To date we have received 2035 additional license applications and issued 1910 draft licenses of which 1795 have now been issued as full licenses (often subject to conditions).

Consultation showed that HMO's provide vital accommodation for single working people and students. There were concerns raised that we needed to improve standards by ensuring that the additional licensing scheme is applied fairly across the city. More publicity is needed for tenants and landlords to ensure that we can improve the standards of HMO's in the city.

What is the city going to do?

- 40.** Promote the HMO licensing scheme for tenants and landlords so that we can ensure that un-licensed HMO's are reported and licensed properties are of standard.
- 41.** Extend HMO licensing to other areas where there is an identified need.
- 42.** Respond to issues where legal standards are not being met.
- 43.** Plan refuse collection and storage where there are high levels of HMO's.

Priority 3: Improve Housing Support

Working to help residents remain independent in their own homes and preventing homelessness are a fundamental part of the Council's approach to helping local people. The Housing Related Support services provided or commissioned by the council support 5,000 households and each month thousands of households seek advice and assistance from our Housing Options Team or agencies working in partnership with us.

We also know some communities in the city face additional housing barriers as a result of health conditions or legally protected characteristics⁵ which can often manifest themselves in increased incidences of poverty, poor health, accessibility issues, discrimination and homelessness. We need to understand these needs and ensure the city's housing provision and services are as flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals as practical within the available resources.

Housing Related Support

Housing-related support helps many people with support needs such as:

- Mental Health
- Older People
- Substance Misuse
- Physical and Sensory Disability
- Former Offenders
- Rough Sleepers
- Single Homeless
- Young People at risk
- Teenage Parents
- People at risk of Domestic Violence
- People with a Learning Disability

It helps people to sustain their own home through supporting them to:

- Look after themselves
- Manage their money, pay bills, budget and apply for benefits.
- Look after where they live
- Understand their tenancy agreement
- Stay safe at home

⁵ Equality Act 2010: Protected characteristics relate to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation

- Get on with neighbours
- Take up day time activities, training, education and employment within the community

The council has invested £11m in housing related support services that support around 5,000 vulnerable people to work towards or maintain independent living through the provision of long-term and short-term support.

Consultation showed the need to continue this work in the city with increased need for these services. People who had used these services said that they were invaluable in promoting and sustaining their independence.

There is a need for services to be delivered in a more integrated way with prevention services linked to statutory services such as social care, probation, and health. The pathway for people who have been homeless needs to be reviewed so that we can ensure that we are able to support people with more complex needs, and continue to help people to achieve and maintain independence.

What is the city going to do?

44. Review and remodel the Integrated Support Pathway for homelessness so that it can deliver a more personalised service with better outcomes for service users.
45. Review where services are commissioned and funded from so that we can ensure a joined up approach to prevention.
46. Support more independent accommodation to prevent long term use of hostels and reduce rough sleeping.
47. Review how people access support services.
48. Ensure supported housing reduces the need for acute and residential care services.
49. Work with public health to manage the impact of housing on well being.
50. Work with social care to ensure a joint approach to housing for people with learning disabilities.
51. Review outreach, advice, and floating support services to ensure that they meet the need in the city.
52. Support the early help pathway for young people and vulnerable adults who are parents.
53. Ensure that services support survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
54. Ensure that services are accessible to people with autism.

- 55.** Investigate the benefits of women only services.
- 56.** Referral panels to promote choice and mixed communities in supported accommodation.
- 57.** Support the Mental Health Accommodation as a good practice model.
- 58.** Assess the impact of any potential future budget challenges with community groups and service users.

Supporting Older People

Although over the past decade the number of people aged 65 and over has declined, the number of oldest old has increased and is projected to continue to increase. Many older people and carers living in the city are home owners, asset rich but cash poor and have limited disposable income, preventing many from maintaining and heating their homes effectively.

Over the last few years we have seen improvements in house conditions across the different tenures, including improvements to our sheltered housing stock, that has seen the adaptations team working closely with the decent homes programme, improved support to vulnerable older people through services like Carelink Plus and all newly built affordable houses constructed to lifetime standards with 10% fully wheelchair accessible.

In addition we have seen an increase in the provision of extra care housing and the council has been awarded £2.4m government funding to build a new extra care scheme at Brooke Mead, that will provide 45 flats for older people with support care provided on site and communal spaces not only for residents but also for people from the local community.

Consultation showed support for sheltered housing and extra care, but that sheltered housing needed to offer more social activities to improve well being. As well as outreach support to enable older people to remain in their own homes, there was support for 'downsizing' allowing older people greater choice about where they move to and when.

What is the city going to do?

- 59.** Support further extra care developments including Brooke Mead.
- 60.** Remodel sheltered housing to ensure that it supports the right people and improves social networks and well being.
- 61.** Continue to renovate sheltered schemes to convert studios into one bed homes.

- 62. Ensure that adaptations are done at the right time to support people to stay in their homes when they want to.
- 63. Support to people to 'downsize' when they chose and provide a range of options for them.
- 64. Ensure that new developments are built to 'dementia friendly' standards and that staff in older people services have access to training on dementia.
- 65. Support community links between older people and students where both groups can benefit.
- 66. Better links between sheltered schemes and surrounding communities.
- 67. Ensure new housing development includes community spaces.

Supporting our BME Communities

There is a growing Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) population in the city with 53,351 of the population identifying as being from a minority ethnic group, representing 19.5% of the city's population, 1 in 5. The 2011 Census reported that 38% of the BME households are owner-occupiers, 49% are living in homes privately rented homes and 13% were living in socially rented homes.

In May 2014, a BME communities and housing event was hosted by the BME Needs Assessment Steering Group. Over 60 people attended who were split into groups and to consider questions that had been agreed in advance.

Responses to the questions highlighted the issues of affordability for people renting and also for home owners. The size of available housing was identified not just for families but also for elders who needed spare rooms for family or a carer. There were concerns regarding racial discrimination, neighbourhood noise and harassment across the different tenure and barriers to accessing housing and housing services were identified.

What is the city going to do?

- 68. Continue to work with the BME Needs Assessment Steering Group to identify housing issues specific to BME communities.
- 69. Work with Community Safety to resolve housing issues and harassment in a timely manner.
- 70. Work with the BME groups to provide scrutiny on the Housing Strategy.
- 71. Improve front facing customer service at Council housing offices.
- 72. Review the equalities impact of the allocations of social housing and consider the positive contribution made by single parent families.

Supporting our LGBT Communities

Brighton & Hove is known throughout the world as an LGBT centre. We believe there are more than 40,000 LGBT people living in the city⁶, which is about 21% of the city's adult population, 1 in 5.

We need to ensure that the city has:

- Accessible, welcoming and safe housing and support services that are responsive to the needs of LGBT people and promote their health and well-being;
- Housing and support services that contribute to LGBT community safety and challenge harassment, discrimination and hate crime;
- Housing and support services that are planned and reviewed in consultation with the LGBT community.

In consultation, Housing services are seen as supportive and accessible in general but there was a perceived need for further training.

What is the city going to do?

73. Ensure that as services are reviewed we check that they are accessible and safe for all.
74. Carry out more research in partnership with community groups to identify specific gaps and needs.
75. Joint work with Community Safety to resolve housing issues and harassment in a timely manner.
76. Investigate potential impacts of 'out of area' placements for LGBT people.
77. Work with sheltered housing providers to ensure that services are accessible for the LGBT communities.
78. Support local LGBT agencies who are working with LGBT agencies in other areas where LGBT people are looking to move to Brighton to ensure this is done in a planned way.
79. Use the skills in LGBT community groups to deliver improvements to frontline housing services.
80. Examine the provision of LGBT specific housing support services in the city.
81. Continue to implement Trans Scrutiny Panel Recommendations for Housing.

⁶ Count Me In Too

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