

# HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 15

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Management Performance Report Quarter 4 and end of year 2014/15</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17th June 2015</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director for Environment, Development &amp; Housing</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This Housing Management performance report covers quarter four of the financial year 2014/15, alongside end year results.







### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing & New Homes Committee notes and comments on the report, which went to the citywide Area Panel in May 2015.

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

- 3.1 The report continues the use of the 'RAG' rating system of red, amber and green traffic light symbols to provide an indication of performance, and also trend arrows to provide an indication of movement from the previous quarter. For this end of year report, explanations have been provided for indicators which are red or amber.

### 3.2 Key to symbols used in the report:



















Status		Trend	
Performance is below target (red)		Poorer than previous reporting period	
Performance is close to achieving target, but in need of improvement (amber)		Same as previous reporting period	
Performance is on or above target (green)		Improvement on previous reporting period	

3.3 The report includes benchmarking figures from Housemark to compare our performance with other housing providers. Unless stated otherwise, all figures represent the top 25% of performers during the year 2013/14 and benchmark against our peer group of the following housing providers:

- Bristol City Council
- Derby Homes
- Enfield Homes
- Hounslow Homes
- London Borough of Croydon
- London Borough of Wandsworth
- North Tyneside Council
- Norwich City Council
- Plymouth Community Homes
- Southampton City Council
- Thurrock Borough Council

This group comprises local authorities and ALMOs (Arms Length Management Organisations) who have housing stock with similar characteristics to Brighton and Hove, including number of dwellings, ratio of flats to houses and proportion of high rise flats. The local authorities as a whole are not necessarily similar to Brighton and Hove in terms of demographics, although many are similar in terms of the overall level of deprivation.

## 4.0 Rent collection and current arrears

Performance Indicator		Year end 2013/14	Year end 2014/15	Target 2014/15	Status against target	Trend since last year	Bench mark
1	Rent collected as a proportion of rent due for the year	98.31% (£49.82m of £50.67m)	98.39% (£51.31m of £52.15m)	98.66%			-
2	Tenants with seven or more weeks rent arrears	3.57% (415 of 11,619)	4.07% (470 of 11,544)	2.85%			-
3	Tenants in arrears	25.89% (3,008 of 11,619)	25.93% (2,993 of 11,544)	-	-	-	-
4	Tenants in arrears served a Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP)	26.79% (806 of 3,008)	24.82% (743 of 2,993)	27.02%			-
5	Tenants evicted because of rent arrears	0.04% (5 of 11,619)	0.07% (8 of 11,544)	Less than 0.29%			0.2%
6	Rent loss due to empty dwellings*	1% (£495k of £49.7m)	0.86% (£436k of £50.9m)	1.6%			1.0%
7	Former tenant arrears collected	34.66% (£166k of £478k)	34.25% (£209k of £612k)	18%			-
8	Rechargeable debt collected	12.08% (£31k of £255k)	19.78% (£47k of £237k)	11%			-
9	Collection rate of leaseholders' gross arrears	78% (£2.45m of £3.13m)	73% (£2.89m of £3.98m)	80%			-
10	Collection rate of leaseholders' recoverable arrears	98% (£3.07m of £3.13m)	97% (£3.87m of £3.98m)	98%			-

\*This indicator is just for dwellings, whereas the rent collection indicator (row 1) includes rent due for car parks and garages.

4.0.1 As of the end of 2014/15, five indicators are on target (green), three are near target (amber), and one is below target (red).

The indicator below target is:

- **Percentage collection rates of leaseholders' gross arrears**

The collection rate of gross arrears (73%) fell due to a significant increase in major works billing. This has risen from £764k in 2012/13 to £1.3 million in 2013/14 to £1.9 million this year. There is also a negative impact on the collection rate due to factors such as disputes, legal action, difficulties with payment, and making payment arrangements.

The indicators near target are:

- **Percentage of rent collected as a proportion of rent due for the year**  
Although the target for the year of 98.66% was missed, the collection rate has improved by 0.08% since last year to reach 98.39%. The target was an ambitious one, as it was based on 2012/13 performance but was retained for 2013/14, in spite of a decrease in the collection rate during the year. This result shows that the downward trend in rent collection since April 2013, when welfare reforms were introduced, including the reduction in Housing Benefit for under-occupying households, has slowed down and is starting to improve again.

Although Housemark do not benchmark against this indicator, their 2013/14 results indicate that we perform well compared to other organisations, as we have the lowest arrears, as a proportion of rent due, in our peer group.

Actions that have already been taken to reduce arrears include:

- Having in place our MACS contract which provides independent money, debt and benefits advice to council tenants.
- Supporting under occupiers and other tenants to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Encouraging under-occupying tenants to move by holding mutual exchange events and providing practical and financial support for moves.
- Providing direct support to tenants through our Inclusion Team in areas such as fuel switching advice/support, money advice, work and learning support.
- Increasing analysis and profiling of tenants in arrears to help guide future actions – eg communications to new tenants.

To continue this trend, further actions are being considered as part of a rent arrears recovery action, such as:

- Looking at how technology can support income collection and arrears minimisation – eg Housing app, text message notifications/reminders, mobile working possibilities.
- Identifying tenants who are paying in arrears so we can encourage them to pay in advance.
- Carrying out further analysis to get a better understanding of the impact of wider welfare reforms (eg Employment and Support Allowance/Jobseekers' Allowance benefits sanctions, delays in Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments).
- Meeting with social landlords in the city to share learning and relevant practices in preparation for the introduction of Universal Credit.

- **Tenants with seven or more weeks rent arrears**

The proportion of tenants who had seven or more weeks gross rent arrears during the 2014/15 financial year (4.1%, or 469 tenants) is slightly higher than last year (3.57%). These are predominantly tenants of working age (93%) who do not receive any Housing Benefit (56%). The majority (72%) have made payments towards their arrears in the past two months, but are still behind on their rent. Of those who haven't paid recently, 55% of cases have been served a Notice of Seeking Possession or have gone to Court.

- Percentage collection rates of leaseholders' recoverable arrears**  
 The collection rate of leaseholders' recoverable arrears was very good, at 97%. However, the target was slightly missed because it was set based on last year's performance, which was at an unprecedented high of 98%. This indicator accounts for factors that impact gross collection rates, such as disputes, legal action, difficulties with payment, and making payment arrangements.

#### 4.0.2 Rent collected as proportion of rent due each year by area

Area	Q4 2014/15	% full Housing Benefit	% partial Housing Benefit	% no Housing Benefit
North – includes Seniors Housing (formerly Sheltered)	99.00% (£14.64m of £14.78m)	48%	23%	29%
West	98.97% (£10.44m of 10.55m)	42%	24%	34%
Central	98.42% (£9.52m of £9.67m)	52%	20%	28%
East	97.50% (£16.71m of £17.14m)	38%	26%	36%
All areas*	98.39% (£51.31m of £52.15m)	45%	23%	32%

#### 4.0.3 Tenants in arrears by amount




Amount of arrears	No. tenants	... as % of tenants in arrears
Under £5	117	4%
£5 to £49.99	609	20%
£50 to £99.99	533	18%
£100 to £199.99	520	17%
£200 to £299.99	323	11%
£300 to £399.99	251	8%
£400 to £499.99	165	6%
£500 to £999.99	300	10%
£1,000 or more	166	6%
Total tenants in arrears	2,984	100%

4.0.4 Following a query at Housing Committee in March 2015, the following table presents further information regarding tenants with arrears of £1,000 or more.

<b>Recovery action stage</b>	<b>No. tenants</b>	<b>...of which arrears increase since Q3</b>	<b>...of which arrears decrease since Q3</b>	<b>Average arrears</b>
Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) not served at this stage	14	12	2	£2,662
NoSP has been served	11	9	2	£1,301
Case due to go to Court	58	45	13	£1,523
Possession Order has been obtained from Court	83	37	46	£1,842
Total tenants with arrears of £1,000 or more	166	104	62	£1,755

4.0.5 A table presenting information relating to the impact of the reduction in Housing Benefit for under occupying households is attached as Appendix 1.

#### 4.1 Empty home turnaround time

Performance Indicator (re-let time indicators are in calendar days)	Performance for the quarter			Performance for the year				Bench mark
	Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Trend since last quarter	Target 2014/15	Year end 2013/14	Year end 2014/15	Status against target	
Average re-let time (excluding time spent in major works)	18	31	↓	18	19	23		23
... as above for general needs properties	14	20	↓	-	16	18	-	-
... as above for Seniors Housing properties	31	118	↓	-	34	54	-	-
Average re-let time (including time spent in major works)	51	55	↑	45	51	49		37
... as above for general needs properties	56	46	↑	-	54	46	-	-
... as above for Seniors Housing properties	34	120	↓	-	38	70	-	-
Decisions on mutual exchange applications made within statutory timescale of 42 calendar days	-	95% (38 of 40)	↑	90%	-	89% (173 of 194)		-

4.1.1 As of the end of 2014/15, one indicator is near target (amber) and two are below target (red).

The indicators below target are:

- **Average re-let time (excluding time spent in major works)**

The overall target was missed for the year because of the disparity between the average re-let times for general needs and Seniors Housing properties. The 544 general needs re-lets took an average of 18 days but the 101 Seniors Housing re-lets, many of which are hard to let, took an average of 54 days. The general needs re-let time was on target throughout the year, with the exception of quarter four, where the re-let time was two days above target.

Because of this disparity, separate targets have been set for general needs (18 days) and Seniors Housing properties (30 days) for 2015/16. We intend to reduce the average re-let time for Seniors Housing properties through reviewing the criteria for potential applicants and by converting studio dwellings into one bedroom flats (14 have been completed so far as part of a three year programme of works). Studios have been unpopular, and the Seniors Housing re-let time was particularly high during quarter four (118 days) due to ten such properties being let after being available for an average of 25 weeks.

- **Average re-let time (including time spent in major works)**

The average re-let time for 2014/15, including time spent in major works, improved upon last year's performance (from 51 to 49 days) but still missed the 45 day target. The result is skewed by two re-lets that were empty for five and three years respectively. These properties used to comprise four small studio flats with shared facilities that were once used as temporary accommodation, but which have now been converted and let as two self-contained general needs flats.

The indicator near target is:









- **Decisions on mutual exchange applications made within 42 days**









Of 194 mutual exchange applications that were dealt with during the year, 173 (89%) met the target to inform the applicant of the decision within 42 calendar days. The 21 applications where the target was not met took an average of 52 days to complete. Performance has improved during the year to reach 95% as of quarter four. Although the target reflects a statutory timescale of 42 calendar days, most exchanges are done much quicker than this, with all 194 completed applications taking an average of 24 days to respond to.




4.1.2 A table presenting a summary of long term empty properties is attached as Appendix 2.



## 4.2 Property & Investment

Performance Indicator		Performance for the quarter			Performance for the year				Bench mark
		Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Trend since last quarter	Target 2014/15	Year end 2013/14	Year end 2014/15	Status against target	
1	Emergency repairs completed in time	99.9% (2,775 of 2,778)	99.96% (2,700 of 2,701)	↑	99%	99.8% (11,261 of 11,287)	99.8% (9,412 of 9,436)		99%
2	Routine repairs completed in time	99.8% (6,405 of 6,417)	99.7% (7,285 of 7,306)	↔	98.5%	99.8% (28,276 of 28,332)	99.7% (25,144 of 25,213)		98%
3	Average time to complete routine repairs (calendar days)	17 days	14 days	↓	15 days	14 days	14 days		-
4	Appointments kept by contractor	97.8% (7,118 of 7,279)	97.4% (7,059 of 7,251)	↔	95%	95.5% (27,579 of 28,889)	97.7% (27,117 of 27,768)		99%
5	Tenant satisfaction with repairs (respondents during the period who were very satisfied or fairly satisfied)	99.5% (369 of 371)	98% (1,734 of 1,769)	↑	96%	99.1% (5,525 of 5,576)	95.7% (6,402 of 6,688)		95%
6	Responsive repairs passing post-inspection	96.6% (1,119 of 1,158)	98.7% (851 of 862)	↑	95%	94.1% (4,023 of 4,276)	98.7% (3,284 of 3,328)		-
7	Repairs completed at first visit	-	94.8% (9,486 of 10,007)	↑	85%	-	94.3% (32,667 of 34,649)		95%
8	Cancelled repair jobs	2.8% (316 of 11,472)	5.2% (550 of 10,662)	↑	Under 5%	3.3% (1,362 of 44,598)	4.9% (1,965 of 40,350)		-

Performance Indicator		Performance for the quarter			Performance for the year				Bench mark
		Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Trend since last quarter	Target 2014/15	Year end 2013/14	Year end 2014/15	Status against target	
9	Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard	100% (11,827 of 11,827)	99.5% (11,626 of 11,683)	↓	100%	100% (11,827 of 11,827)	99.5% (11,626 of 11,683)		100%
10	Energy efficiency rating of homes (SAP 2009)	63.6	64.5	↑	64.2	63.6	64.5		-
11	Planned works passing post-inspection	100% (165 of 165)	100% (114 of 114)	↔	97%	99.2% (1,163 of 1,173)	99.9% (1,047 of 1,048)		-
12	Stock with a gas supply with up-to-date gas certificates	99.91% (10,284 of 10,293)	100% (10,249 of 10,249)	↔	100%	99.91% (10,284 of 10,293)	100% (10,249 of 10,249)		100%
13	Empty properties passing post-inspection	98.8% (159 of 161)	98.8% (167 of 169)	↓	98%	99.5% (655 of 658)	99% (704 of 711)		-
14	Lifts – average time taken (hours) to respond	1h 32m	1h 14m	↔	2h 30m	2h 59m	1h 28m		-
15	Lifts – percentage restored to service within 24 hours	99% (181 of 183)	99% (144 of 146)	↑	95%	96.7% (664 / 687)	96.8% (595 of 615)		-
16	Lifts – average time to restore service when not within 24 hours	6 days (12 days, 2 lifts)	2 days (4 days, 2 lifts)	↑	7 days	9 days (194 days, 23 lifts)	5 days (89 days, 20 lifts)		-

Performance Indicator		Performance for the quarter			Performance for the year				Bench mark
		Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Trend since last quarter	Target 2014/15	Year end 2013/14	Year end 2014/15	Status against target	
17	Repairs Helpdesk – calls answered	61% (15,920 of 26,051)	97% (22,250 of 23,045)	↑	90%	-	95% (79,123 of 83,285)		-
18	Repairs Helpdesk – calls answered within 20 seconds	15% (2,400 of 15,920)	79% (17,596 of 22,250)	↑	75%	-	77% (60,658 of 79,123)		-
19	Repairs Helpdesk – longest wait time	48m 24s	5m 56s	↑	5 mins	-	13m 12s		-

4.2.1 As of the end of 2014/15, 16 indicators are on target (green), two are near target (amber), one is below target (red).

The indicator below target is:

- **Repairs Helpdesk – longest wait time**

During 2014/15, the longest wait for a call to be answered was just over 13 minutes, on 15 April 2014. During quarter four, the longest wait time was within target on 92% of the days, and the longest wait overall was just under 6 minutes, which occurred on Monday 5 January. This is the best ever quarterly result for the Repairs Helpdesk, and it is hoped that the recruitment of additional staff during the quarter will enable this challenging target to be achieved in 2015/16.

The indicators near target are:

- **Tenant satisfaction with repairs**








Satisfaction increased during the year but did not quite meet the 96% target. Responses to the question “What could we do better?” are monitored, analysed and fed back to operatives, sub-contractors and supervisors where applicable.

- **Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard**

Performance is within 0.5% of the 100% target for the end of March 2015, as 57 properties fall short of the decent homes standard. This is due to components that very recently failed the age test, such as kitchens and bathrooms that became too old as of 1 January 2015.

Dwellings are assessed for decency on the basis of each calendar year, rather than each financial year. This means that performance at the end of March shows the partial progress in making those properties decent in the first quarter of the calendar year in which they need to be upgraded. We are now working to replace every failing component a year before it is due to ensure 100% decency is maintained.

### 4.3 Estates Service

Performance Indicator		Performance for the quarter			Performance for the year			Status against target
		Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Trend since last quarter	Target 2014/15	Year end 2013/14	Year end 2014/15	
1	Cleaning quality inspection pass rate	99% (193 of 194)	100% (199 of 200)	↔	98%	99% (723 of 729)	99% (701 of 706)	
2	Neighbourhood Response Team (minor repairs) quality inspection pass rate	100% (186 of 186)	100% (194 of 194)	↔	99%	99% (723 of 729)	100% (617 of 617)	
3	Cleaning tasks completed	99% (13,531 of 13,668)	98% (13,231 of 13,518)	↑	98%	98% (54,602 of 55,766)	98% (53,168 of 54,026)	
4	Bulk waste removed within 7 working days	97% (623 of 640)	91% (667 of 735)	↓	98%	96% (2,786 of 2,889)	96% (2,758 of 2,874)	
5	Light replacements/repairs completed within 3 working days	98% (714 of 731)	98% (542 of 551)	↔	99%	98% (2,180 of 2,216)	98% (2,073 of 2,117)	
6	Neighbourhood Response Team jobs completed within 3 working days	96% (1,276 of 1,329)	97% (1,452 of 1,493)	↔	96%	96% (5,936 of 6,182)	97% (6,770 of 6,971)	
7	Graffiti removals completed within 3 working days	100% (5 of 5)	100% (7 of 7)	↑	80%	86% (31 of 36)	95% (35 of 37)	

N.B. There are no comparable benchmark figures for the above indicators on Housemark.

4.3.1 As of the end of 2014/15, 5 indicators are on target (green), two are near target (amber).

The indicators near target are:

- **Bulk waste removed within 7 working days**  
Although the 98% target was met during the first three quarters of the year, end-year performance was brought below target due to a drop in quarter four. The main reason for this was that the team who carry out bulk removals also had to deal with an increase in the number of jobs that take up more time to complete (eg moving stored goods, office moves). This resulted in the team getting behind on the more day-to-day jobs they usually carry out. The team have introduced two extra bulk collection rounds each week, in order to improve performance.
- **Light replacements/repairs completed within 3 working days**  
Performance was 98% for both quarter four and the year as a whole, slightly missing the 99% target. Of the 2,117 jobs completed during the year, 44 were done late. Of the latter, only six were in common ways, and the rest were either on office premises or in tenants' homes (kitchens and bathrooms).

#### 4.4 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Performance Indicator	Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Year End 2013/14	Year End 2014/15	Bench mark*
Cases closed without need for legal action	97% (114 of 118)	93% (40 of 43)	96% (476 of 495)	96% (323 of 338)	98%
Cases closed resulting in legal action	3% (4 of 118)	7% (3 of 43)	4% (19 of 495)	4% (15 of 338)	2%
Cases closed without eviction	99% (117 of 118)	100% (43 of 43)	98% (485 of 495)	99% (334 of 338)	99%
Cases closed resulting in eviction	1% (1 of 118)	0% (0 of 43)	2% (10 of 495)	1% (4 of 338)	1%
Customer satisfaction with high profile cases (victims of cases closed during the period who were very satisfied or fairly satisfied)**	100% (6 of 6)	71% (5 of 7)	96% (26 of 27)	70% (31 of 44)	80%

\*The benchmarking figures presented in this table cover 2013/14 but do not use our peer group. The data is sourced from 43 Housemark members who provided this data as part of a specialist ASB benchmarking exercise.

\*\*Numbers of ASB satisfaction surveys are relatively low as, although they cover all types of cases, not all cases have an identifiable victim (eg those referred by the Police) and the response rate is fairly low. Generally, this is because potential respondents regard the matter as dealt with and are unlikely to be interested unless they have strong feelings either way. Nonetheless, we make three attempts to contact them by telephone.

##### 4.4.1 Reports of ASB incidents by type

Category	Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Year End 2013/14	Year End 2014/15
Personal (eg verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation)	8% (65)	13% (112)	9% (354)	15% (551)
Nuisance (eg noise, drugs/substance misuse, pets and animal nuisance)	16% (139)	16% (135)	18% (698)	17% (622)
Environmental (eg bulk waste and graffiti)	76% (655)	71% (590)	73% (2,878)	68% (2,512)
Total	100% (859)	100% (837)	100% (3,930)	100% (3,685)

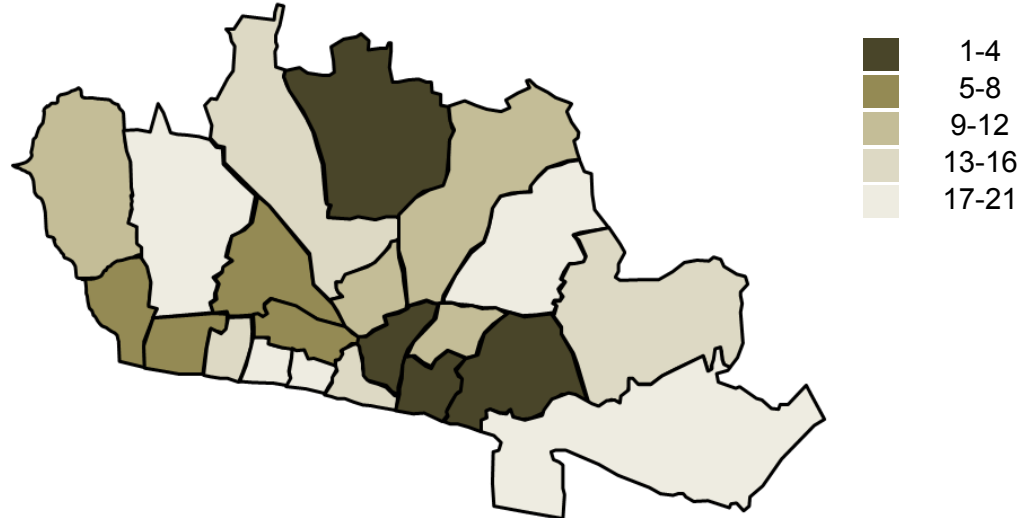
N.B. Although it is possible that more 'personal' category ASB incidents took place in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14, the increase is also likely to be affected by the introduction of electronic recording of ASB risk assessments in summer 2014. These are carried out with victims and witnesses when they report ASB; and through doing them electronically the data for ASB incidents has become more comprehensive.

#### 4.4.2 Reports of ASB incidents by ward

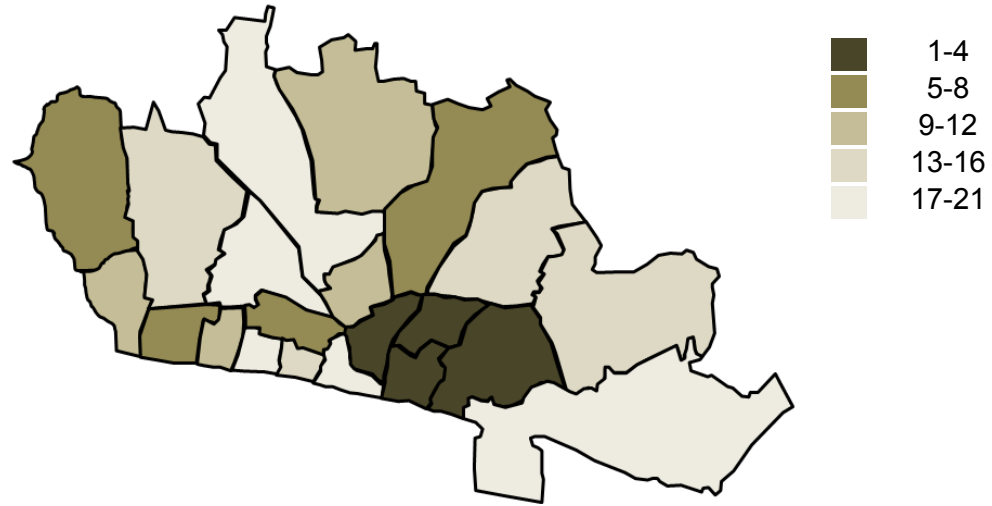
Ward	Incidents during Q4 2014/15				Incidents during the year 2014/15					
	Personal incidents*	Nuisance incidents*	Environmental incidents*	Total incidents	Personal incidents*	Nuisance incidents*	Environmental incidents*	Total incidents	Change since last year	Incidents per 1,000 properties
Brunswick & Adelaide	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	+1	125
Central Hove	1	0	0	1	2	4	1	7	-5	78
East Brighton	23	12	187	222	89	71	774	934	-59	376
Goldsmid	10	1	22	33	23	13	99	135	+34	289
Hangleton & Knoll	8	6	2	16	60	41	57	158	-67	93
Hanover & Elm Grove	5	11	14	30	35	49	86	170	-17	311
Hollingdean & Stanmer	14	15	60	89	77	75	258	410	+58	266
Hove Park	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	59
Moulsecoomb & Bevendean	12	3	15	30	61	30	84	175	-128	106
North Portslade	3	3	19	25	32	7	90	129	-6	257
Patcham	6	10	28	44	20	18	104	142	+48	242
Preston Park	1	1	4	6	5	3	16	24	-2	190
Queen's Park	20	50	149	219	89	238	575	902	+24	428
Regency	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	-9	67
Rottingdean Coastal	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	-2	69
South Portslade	1	0	25	26	13	1	86	100	-46	233
St. Peter's & North Laine	3	19	23	45	29	48	114	191	+59	365
Westbourne	3	0	2	5	5	5	14	24	-1	162
Wish	1	1	28	30	6	9	115	130	-104	256
Withdean	0	2	0	2	0	2	2	4	+4	70
Woodingdean	1	1	10	12	5	8	31	44	-27	89
Total	112	135	590	837	551	622	2,512	3,685	-245	262



4.4.3 **Map of reports of ASB incidents per 1,000 properties by ward (rank) during the quarter**



4.4.4 **Map of reports of ASB incidents per 1,000 properties by ward (rank) during the year**



4.5 **Tenancy Fraud**

This is a key priority for Housing and we have been working in partnership with the Corporate Fraud Team. This year the team have investigated and closed 65 cases, of which 15 have resulted in the property being taken back.

#### 4.6 Seniors Housing

Performance Indicator		Target 2014/15	Q4 2014/15
1	Individual wellbeing calls made to residents	-	29,067
2	Residents living in schemes offering regular social activities	-	95% (827 of 870)
3	Residents living in schemes offering regular exercise classes	-	61% (530 of 870)
4	Schemes hosting events in collaboration with external organisations	-	91% (21 of 23)

N.B. It is not possible to provide end of year figures, or figures from last year, because these indicators are new and came into effect from quarter three 2014/15 onwards.

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION:

5.1 The performance measures in this report demonstrate whether we are delivering quality service and are for scrutiny by members, residents and the general public. This report was taken to the citywide Area Panel on 14 May 2015. This meeting was attended by 33 residents from 25 of the 52 active Area Panel associations across the city. This breaks down as 4 of 8 (50%) from East; 7 of 18 (38%) from Central; 8 of 13 (61%) from North; and 6 of 13 (46%) from West. The topics discussed were:

- Whether arrears have increased with the closure of cash desks in housing offices. Officers responded that we have noticed a marginal increase after completing studies after each closure. The last closure at Lavender Street resulted in the smallest increase and our staff have been contacting those tenants affected and helping them to set up alternative payment methods.
- Whether we accrued additional costs by getting rent in through different methods. Officers responded that, although other payment methods do attract costs, cash desks also attracted costs so as a service we haven't lost out.
- Whether we identify the top 10 worst estates/areas for arrears and what are the reasons why arrears are high. Officers responded that although we haven't identified the top 10, we do know that we struggle more in Whitehawk and Moulsecoomb. Potential reasons for this are the higher concentration of larger homes and the impact of under occupation charges.
- Whether recent works at Hampshire Court are due to the elections or end of year spending. Officers responded that major works programmes cannot be reassigned due to elections and therefore it is coincidental in terms of the programme.
- Tenants in arrears who owe comparatively low amounts, and what is in place to deal with them. Officers responded that 70% of tenants in arrears owe less than £300, with 25% owing less than £50. The reasons for this could include them being one week in arrears or Housing Benefit having not been paid, amongst others. We absolutely want to contact people early so that we can help stop the arrears growing and provide support as needed.
- The problem of fly-tipping and how it contributes to particularly high levels of ASB in East Brighton and Queens Park. Officers responded that we do have fly-tipping issues across the city and there is a Labour manifesto commitment to tackle this issue. We clear it within our target time and if we can identify the source we will take action. Our Estates Service team will be running a project this year with residents to look at how we address the underlying issue of changing behaviour and we will link in with City Clean as well. We have also encouraged recording and reporting of issues which may account for the larger numbers.

- Criticism of City Clean's performance and problems relating to rubbish across the city. Officers responded that their comments which will be fed back to senior officers within City Clean.

## 6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 6.1 The area with the most significant financial impact is the ability to collect rents from tenants. For the year 2014/15, the collection rate has increased by 0.08% which is good news. This continues to be closely monitored and analysed so that appropriate action can be taken to minimise arrears. The level of rent arrears has a direct affect on how much is set aside for bad debts. For 2015/16, the HRA budget for the contribution to bad debt provision is £323,700. This budget was increased by £30,000 as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process to allow for on-going welfare reform changes. Any reduction in rent collected has a direct impact on the resources available to spend on the management and maintenance of tenants' properties.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks Date: 22/05/15*

### 6.2 Legal Implications:

There are no significant legal issues to draw to the Committee's attention.

*Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 22/05/15*

### Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 The increase in the energy efficiency rating of homes reflects an improvement towards the council's sustainability commitments, among other objectives such as financial inclusion and reducing fuel poverty.

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 6.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Cases of anti social behaviour involving criminal activity are worked on in partnership with the Police and other appropriate agencies.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 6.6 There are no direct risk and opportunity implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications:

- 6.7 There are no direct public health implications arising from this report.

Corporate or Citywide Implications:

- 6.8 There are no direct corporate or city wide implications arising from this report. However, two performance indicators featuring in this report ('Dwellings meeting Decent Homes Standard' and 'Energy efficiency rating of homes') are among those used to measure success against the Corporate Plan principle of increasing equality.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Appendix 1. Outline of under occupation arrears and related information
2. Appendix 2. Long-term empty properties

**Background Documents:**

1. None

## Appendix 1. Outline of council under occupation arrears and related information

Item	Indicator	Baseline March 2013*	Feb 2015	March 2015	April 2015
1	Number of under occupying households affected by the charge	949	729	728	728
2	Percentage of under occupying households in arrears (numbers)	29% (277)	55% (398)	48% (347)	51% (372)
3	Percentage of all current tenants in arrears (numbers)	24% (2,791)	27% (3,109)	26% (2,984)	24% (2,794)
4	Average arrears per under occupying household in arrears	£303	£292	£269	£258
5	Total arrears of under occupying households	£84k	£116k	£93k	£96k
6	Percentage increase in arrears of under occupying households since 1 April 2013 (amount of arrears)	0% (£84k)	39% (£116k)	11% (£93k)	14% (£96k)
7	Percentage increase in arrears of all current tenants since 1 April 2013 (amount of arrears)	0% (£639k)	52% (£971k)	39% (£890k)	28% (£820k)
8	Under occupier arrears as a percentage of total arrears	13%	12%	10%	12%
9	Cumulative number of under occupying households moved via mutual exchange since baseline	0	57	57	57
10	Cumulative number of under occupying households moved via a transfer since baseline	0	98	99	101

\*Baseline = before the under occupation charge was introduced in April 2013.

N.B. The arrears figures include both rents and service charges.

## Appendix 2. Long term empty properties

Of the 51 general needs and Seniors Housing properties that have, as of 1 May 2015, been empty for 6 weeks or more:

- 21 are ready to let (12 of which are Seniors Housing dwellings)
- 10 require or are undergoing major repairs/refurbishment
- 20 to be leased to Seaside Homes

<b>General needs and Seniors Housing long term empty properties (6 weeks or more)</b>		
<b>Calendar days empty as at 01/05/15</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Status</b>
76	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
76	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
90	East Brighton	Ready to let following major repairs - 2 bed flat
97	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
125	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
125	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
146	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
160	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
209	East Brighton	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat
237	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
265	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
272	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
279	East Brighton	Ready to let following major repairs - 4 bed house
307	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
342	East Brighton	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
831	East Brighton	This 1 bed bungalow has been undergoing extensive major works, including to the adjoining property. Although the expected works were completed, unexpected problems with the drainage occurred so tanking and other waterproofing operations are required.

<b>General needs and Seniors Housing long term empty properties (6 weeks or more)</b>		
<b>Calendar days empty as at 01/05/15</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Status</b>
62	Goldsmid	Ready to let - studio flat
69	Goldsmid	Ready to let following major repairs - 2 bed flat
139	Hangleton and Knoll	Ready to let - 2 bed flat
440	Hangleton and Knoll	With BHCC for extension and refurbishment (extension started April 2015 and is estimated to be complete during Sept 2015) - 3 bed house
111	Hanover and Elm Grove	Requires major works - studio Seniors Housing flat
216	Hanover and Elm Grove	Requires major works - studio Seniors Housing flat
230	Hanover and Elm Grove	Requires major works - studio Seniors Housing flat
328	Hanover and Elm Grove	Requires major works - studio Seniors Housing flat
342	Hanover and Elm Grove	Requires major works - studio Seniors Housing flat
48	Hollingdean and Stanmer	Ready to let - 1 bed Seniors Housing flat
132	Hollingdean and Stanmer	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat
244	Hollingdean and Stanmer	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
76	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat
90	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat
573	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat
174	North Portslade	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat
62	Patcham	Ready to let - 2 bed house
230	Patcham	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat
48	Queen's Park	Ready to let following major repairs - 3 bed flat
55	Queen's Park	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
76	Queen's Park	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
139	Queen's Park	Ready to let - studio Seniors Housing flat



<b>General needs and Seniors Housing long term empty properties (6 weeks or more)</b>		
<b>Calendar days empty as at 01/05/15</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Status</b>
153	Queen's Park	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
167	Queen's Park	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
188	Queen's Park	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
244	Queen's Park	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
321	Queen's Park	To be leased to Seaside Homes - batch TBC
83	South Portslade	Requires major works - studio Seniors Housing flat
132	South Portslade	Requires major works - studio Seniors Housing flat
153	South Portslade	Undergoing major repairs - 3 bed bungalow
48	Wish	Ready to let following major repairs - 1 bed flat
195	Wish	Ready to let - 1 bed Seniors Housing flat
195	Wish	Ready to let - 1 bed Seniors Housing flat
209	Wish	Ready to let - 1 bed Seniors Housing flat
118	Woodingdean	Ready to let following major repairs - 3 bed house
<b>Total of 51 dwellings</b>		

