

Strategic Housing Partnership Meeting

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Housing for Older People

There is a very high proportion of over 85s with support needs with BHCC has to meet. How can the city avoid high cost residential care? The non-decent homes rate rises as people age, across all sectors.

Under occupancy is an issue. BHCC seeks to enable people to remain independent and seeks to find ways of linking housing and social care agendas.

[A question for the voluntary and community sector is how much interest and support there would be for a new style of housing development which created cluster flats for people to share some facilities whilst maintaining their own home? This would provide a blend of personal and communal space. Such schemes could be created as part of the proposed Community Land Trust, especially on sites close to existing residential areas.]

Tenancy work

Cllr. Tracey Hill: the Rate Your Landlord survey is to be rolled out to the general population (only covers students at the moment). There is a Tenant's Charter and accreditation system which all letting agents must sign up and take part in the 'redress' scheme (to respond to complaints etc). It is mandatory for landlords to provide tenants with a Code of Conduct, but more outreach needs to be done to increase uptake across the city. There is discussion about an ethical lettings agency, but this would need cross partnership support and isn't happening yet.

Employment and Skills Plan Update

"To achieve the skills to enable the local economy to grow"

16% graduates stay in B&H, and this is on an upward trend. However there is a mismatch between their skills and the work they do - in bars, catering, hotels, retail, etc. Apprenticeships have been declining, but there is a new initiative "1000 apprentices in 1000 days" - launched in march, and has 100 pledges now.

A government 'apprentice levy' will be coming soon - employers must have one, or pay a tax.

Women are earning less than men in B&H. Not clear why...

City Plan Part 2

Reminder about Part 1: Sandra Rogers (Planning BHCC) reported that the Inspector accepted that the ideal housing target between 2016 - 2030 of 30,000 homes is not feasible due to the city's restraints, so the target is 13,200 homes. This implies the delivery of 660 pa.

The council is developing a new approach to reliving affordable housing, involving 'commuted sums' on schemes, on a sliding scale. (A commuted sum (or payment in lieu) is an amount of money, paid by a developer to the Council, where the size or scale of a development triggers a requirement for affordable housing, but it is not possible to achieve appropriate affordable housing on site). It seems to be a half-way house between S.106 and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). BHCC is still required to operate under S.106, but within strict negotiations, so the system is harder to use. This is pushing the city towards CIL. So, CLI will take over some

schemes which become ineligible for S.106, but both systems will run along side each other for a while.

Schemes between 5-9 homes will trigger 20%; 10-14 = 30%; 15+ = 40%.

This is good for the council's New Homes for Neighbourhoods, as the sums received will go straight into delivery of new council homes, and not for any other infrastructure.

Part 2 of the City Plan turns to the allocation of known sites, and the identification of further sites. The council is preparing a suite of development management policies which are geared to meet particular housing needs as outlined in the Housing Strategy: older people, higher accessibility, space standards.

12 weeks consultation commences on June 30th with a scoping paper, and an event run by the Brighton Business Forum on June 30th.

Rob Fraser (Head of Planning) stated that they strongly invite developers to engage, to say what they would like to build, where, and how, etc. This includes community led proposals. He issued a caveat however: how do we put together a policy for social housing provision which does not discourage developers building in the first place?

Housing & Planning Bill

BHCC is waiting for news on the potential sale of high value homes under the Right To Buy. This is a convoluted arrangement where local authorities are required to pay a levy to government on assumed sales, even if those sales have not actually occurred. RTB on high value homes has slowed down because even at their discounted price, buyers cannot afford them. BHCC's 'assumed' figure is 108 homes per year. Even when RTB sales go through, the council only receives 25% of the value, which does not add up to deliver new homes. This is one reason why BHCC is developing a new delivery vehicle in partnership with a housing association. To go on SHP Sept. agenda.

Owner occupier levels are falling, and it is unlikely that the Government's 'Starter Homes' scheme will address the desire of people to own their own homes. However, the Government will not discuss any other framework for delivering more homes.

In this environment, it is possible that the Pay To Stay requirement in Housing Associations might translate in Right To Buy: if a tenant has to pay more to stay put, then they might decide to try and buy their home instead, leading to further losses of social homes nationwide. Shared Ownership resales are not selling either, because they are too expensive.