



Housing Committee

Wednesday, 9 March 2022 at 7.30 pm

**Council Chamber, Runnymede Civic Centre,
Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors: J Gracey (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), A Balkan, J Broadhead, M Cressey, S Mackay, I Mullens, M Nuti, P Snow and S Whyte
Mrs J Hill (co-opted non-voting member) for the purposes affecting Council housing tenants

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AGENDA

- 1) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- 2) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr A Finch, Democratic Services Section, Law and Governance Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425623). (Email: andrew.finch@runnymede.gov.uk).**
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The Chairman will make the final decision on all matters of dispute in regard to the use of social media audio-recording, photography and filming in the Committee meeting.

List of matters for considerationPage**Part I****Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection**

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To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 January 2022 (Appendix 'A').
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Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable and non-registrable interests in items on the agenda.
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Part II**Matters involving exempt or confidential information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.**

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Runnymede Borough Council

Housing Committee

Wednesday, 12 January 2022 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J Gracey (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), A Balkan, J Broadhead, I Mullens, M Nuti, P Snow, S Whyte, C Mann (Substitute, in place of M Cressey).
Mrs J Hill (Runnymede Council Residents' Association Representative – co-opted non-voting member)

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor S Mackay.

In attendance: Councillors R Bromley and S Williams.

366 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 November 2021 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

367 **Declarations of Interest**

None received.

368 **HRA Estimates for 2022/23**

The Senior Accountant for Housing advised that the current year's revised estimates revealed a difference of some £750k and a slight reduction in the surplus, the primary reason being ongoing repairs to the housing stock.

The revised estimate balance for 31 March 2022 was c£27m, with a further balance of £3m in the Major Repairs Reserve, however there were a number of costs on the horizon, including c£9m in major repairs.

A small repayment to the PWLB would be made in March 2022, which would be coming from capital receipts. Furthermore, it was now envisaged that while the Council would be repaying the PWLB debt to the original timescale, the intention going forward would be to service the original debt, by taking our further replacement loans when the finances required it.

£25m had been earmarked for new builds over the next five years, however approval to release those funds would be sought from this Committee, along with Corporate Management Committee and Full Council.

Current guidance from the government allows providers of Social Housing to increase rents by a maximum of CPI + 1%. Given the high level of Housing repairs required, officers recommended a rent increase of 4.1% with effect from April 2022. This would amount to an average rent increase of £4.50 per week.

However, there was nothing in the estimates to suggest that heating and hot water charges needed to be increased in IRL accommodation, so this would remain unchanged. In response to a Member's query, the potential trajectory had been analysed and officers were confident that an increase was not required. Furthermore, lots of effort was going into making properties more fuel efficient.

Whilst special provision had not been made for inflation, officers were monitoring the

current position, and if needed it would be reflected in the thirty-year business plan, which would be coming to the next Housing Committee.

The Corporate Head of Housing advised that a thorough analysis had taken place of the potential tenants who might be affected by a rent increase. Those on housing benefit or universal credit would not be impacted due to a similar increase in their benefits.

Focus was being placed on those in arrears to try to understand their circumstances. Whilst a small minority in high arrears did not engage with the Council, a large number would potentially be able to benefit from the increase in discretionary housing payments.

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning added that it was anticipated that 99% of rent was expected to be collected this year, even allowing for the pandemic. The Council had a decent track record in recent years in collecting rent.

Resolved that –

- i) The draft revenue estimates for 2022/23 were approved, and Full Council were requested to make provision accordingly.**
- ii) The Committee granted permission for officers to seek written consent from the Secretary of State to top up the DHP allocation by a sum of £30,000, which may only be used to assist in providing DHP to HRA tenants in need; and**
- iii) The proposed changes in rents and charges (including those for Housing General Fund services) for 2022/23 be approved to be effective either from the first rent week of April 2022, or 1 April 2022 as appropriate.**

369 Repairs, Maintenance and Voids Contractor Procurement

The Head of Housing Technical Services reported that the tendering process had begun for procurement of a new repairs, maintenance and voids contractor, with the current contractor in place until April 2023.

A market engagement event had taken place today, which was well attended, with the tender award expected to take place in August with a long mobilisation period ahead of the contract commencing. No additional resources were anticipated to help manage the contract award.

The Head of Housing Technical Services added that steps were being taken to ensure that the Council's requirements for the service were aligned to the tenants' aspirations, including getting repairs done first time, whilst there was strong emphasis on "keeping it local" and ensuring there was an end-to-end process for voids.

The Committee chair stressed the importance of getting maintenance right first time, and stated this was a significant step change in ensuring this would happen.

The Corporate Head of Housing added that there were many touchpoints in the current system, which provided more opportunities for mistakes to be made. The proposal for the new contract would involve a scheduling system where residents could book online and thus reduce touchpoints, and the Council would be able to access the intelligence in real time to monitor the KPIs.

A Member asked about contractors' existing applications, and the Head of Housing Technical Services advised that the medium and larger sized contractors would already have the desired applications, whilst the long lead in time would provide the smaller

companies time to obtain the necessary applications.

Officers had opted to appoint one contractor. This was considered less risky as appointing multiple contractors would result in a postcode lottery for residents in terms of quality of repairs. The necessary due diligence would be undertaken, including contractors needing to meet strict financial criteria.

Members felt that communication from the appointed company would be key to the success of the contractor, and given the likelihood of sub-contractors being utilised consistency in appearance would be necessary. Officers confirmed that as part of the tender it would be a requirement for any operative working on a tenants' home to have a branded van and to turn up in uniform in order to be apparent they were working on behalf of the Council.

370 **Tackling Fuel Poverty**

The Corporate Head of Housing confirmed that the Council had been awarded two government grants to improve the energy efficiency of its social housing stock, with the Council needing to contribute £300k in order to unlock part of this funding.

912 units within the housing stock were currently below the energy C rating, and this funding would only cover a maximum of 303 of those units, but would go some way to achieving C rating across the Council's stock by 2030.

Officers were confident of being able to deliver this within the timescales set out by government.

A councillor was keen to see the funding go towards standard build units that had more longevity, however the Corporate Head of Housing advised that the intention was to prioritise the funding on the worst performing stock, despite plans to regenerate the area in the medium term meaning that would see a small number of the properties being demolished.

The Vice Chair of the Committee stressed the importance of pivoting away from policy development work to being an authority that was building homes, but acknowledged that took time and in the meantime the Council needed to do right by its residents.

Resolved that –

- i) Members approved the request for up to £300,000 in capital expenditure to be funded from the HRA Major Repairs Reserve, to support the investment in energy efficiency measures delivering a total of £1.39m of expenditure in Runnymede Borough Council's social housing stock.**
- ii) Members noted the type of work being undertaken and the wards impacted.**

371 **Investment Standard**

The Head of Housing Technical Services advised that the purpose of the report was to provide clarity around the level of work that would be undertaken when delivering capital works programmes.

The capital works investment/procurement program would address the backlog of works and use the Runnymede Investment Standard as the benchmark for future and planned works.

Approval of the standard would ensure the Council could continue its drive to provide good

services to its residents that capitalises on the procurement activities to deliver a sustained capital works programme over the next five years.

The document was constantly evolving to reflect Decent Homes and would be updated when required. The document was not intended to be customer facing, with a version tailored for residents expected to be available in due course.

Resolved that –

Members approved the Investment Standard, which would then be used in the Council’s procurements of capital works.

372 **Quality Policy**

The Corporate Head of Housing advised that proposed Quality Policy would provide an additional mechanism for continuous service improvements as part of the Quality Management System for Housing services.

The implementation of a Quality Policy would be integral to the Housing Service’s upcoming application for ISO9001 certification, and would ensure processes were effective and met legislative and regulatory requirements.

A major part of this would be the ongoing training and development of staff, as well as the commitment to delivering and maintaining a cycle of continuous improvement and monitoring and reporting on customer satisfaction on core services.

Approval of the policy would ensure officers could gather more customer satisfaction data across the service, and would contribute to the review of the performance framework and what KPIs would be reported within the structure.

The Committee chair added that the policy would provide Members with extra tools to hold officers and Members to account.

Resolved that –

Members approved the Quality Policy for Housing Services for implementation with immediate effect

373 **Financial Wellbeing Strategy - Request to Undertake Tenant Consultation**

The draft strategy had been developed to help tenants improve their financial resilience, as well as helping them into education and employment. Successful implementation would save the Council money long-term on management costs.

Initiatives would be brought to Committee on an ongoing basis within the strategy. Approval would eventually be sought on the general direction of travel rather than all initiatives within the strategy. However, approval was being sought on this occasion solely on instigating a consultation with a view to approval being sought on the strategy in June.

The Chair of the Runnymede Council Residents’ Association would liaise with the Corporate Head of Housing to ensure the consultation – and any future consultations – was promoted via the RCRA’s social media.

Previous drafts of the strategy had been discussed at Member Working Parties, and Members were pleased to see the intention to help tenants stay in their homes for longer, whilst the strategy would also support the housing corporate plan.

Resolved that –

- i) Members gave officers permission to commence consultation with Runnymede Borough Council’s tenants on the aims of the draft Financial Wellbeing Strategy**
- ii) Members requested that the strategy is brought back to a future meeting of the Housing Committee to consider the consultation responses and approval later in 2022.**

374 **Pet Policy - Request to Commence Consultation**

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning reported that the Housing Service had reviewed its pet policy and following a draft that was considered by the recent Housing and Enabling Member Working Party, now sought to consult residents on the proposed updated policy.

Areas that the policy covered included arrangements for keeping a dog, arrangements for IRLs, along with the actions proposed where there are concerns about how a pet was being kept.

As part of the consultation process there would be targeted focus groups with known pet owners and residents of flat blocks, as well as coffee mornings at IRLs.

Resolved that –

- i) Members approved the request for Officers to consult on the draft Housing Pet Policy.**
- ii) Members anticipated receiving the results of the consultation along with the final Policy for approval in June 2022.**

375 **Housing IT Enhancement Update**

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning advised that following Committee approval in September 2021 a new contract had been signed for provision of consultancy services to work with the Council on the system design and then provide the technical build and responsibility for the implementation and training through to the launch.

The Council’s Digital Innovation and Delivery Manager was project managing the process, whilst the head of consultancy at Northgate was also involved in the project.

Workstreams had been planned with dates booked far in advance. Some modules would be implemented concurrently where they would be utilised by different sections.

Housing On Line was due to launch imminently and work remained ongoing to prepare for other modules.

Resolved that –

Members recognised the progress being made to implement Phase 2 of the Housing IT system enhancement.

376 **Afghan Local Employed Staff Relocation Scheme**

The Corporate Head of Housing updated Members that the three households the Council had committed to supporting had now arrived in the borough and were being assisted in a variety of means such as employment prospects, travel arrangements and access to benefits.

The Corporate Head of Housing thanked the Mayor's charity, who had enabled the households to receive televisions and laptops to assist with language and education.

Whilst there had been resource implications on supporting the three households, officers would be looking into the prospect of supporting an additional intake as part of the scheme.

377 **Update on Communication with the Regulator of Social Housing**

The Head of Housing Technical Services had continued meeting with the Regulator of Social Housing on a monthly basis, and an updated Decent Homes figure would be presented at the next meeting later this month.

The Regulator was very pleased with electrical safety work, and whilst 44 high risk fire actions remained, this was largely due to contractors being unable to gain access to the required properties.

It was hoped that an exit strategy from the Council's relationship with the Regulator would be discussed at one of the next meetings, which Members were pleased with.

378 **Performance Data**

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning provided recent performance data in key areas of the Housing Service.

Rent arrears were currently at 2.1%, which was considered a pleasing result given the financial climate and proximity to the Christmas period.

Just four properties remained outstanding on gas certification compliance, whilst electrical certification was currently at 97% compliance. With an expected mandatory five year electrical testing cycle expected to be announced in the near future, Runnymede would be ahead of most of its peers in achieving this owing to the work already undertaken.

Voids continued to be over-target for a variety of reasons relating to staffing resources, particularly Covid related, whilst a number of properties had been returned to the Council in poor condition.

379 **Runnymede Council Residents' Association - Chairman's Allowance**

The Committee were asked to approve the RCRA chairman's ongoing allowance, which amounted to 50% of a Members' allowance.

The current chair was a real asset to both the committee and the borough, and had spent considerable time in recent months revamping the RCRA's social media presence, and also now attended Member Working Parties in addition to Committee meetings.

Resolved that –

- i) The Committee approved the continued remuneration of £2,072 per annum to the Chair of the RCRA to be met from existing HRA budgets, (subject to an equivalent percentage increase, as from 1 April 2022, to reflect any uplift in the Members' Basic Allowance rate); and**
- ii) The Chair of the RCRA's travel expenses be paid in respect of those travel costs associated with meetings taking place both inside and outside the Borough.**

380 **Update on Purchase of Site for Development**

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning advised Members that an issue that had arisen during the conveyancing process around access rights that had diminished the value of the site.

Subsequently the site no longer passes the viability test for an HRA investment and the offer was subsequently withdrawn. Other options were being explored for new social housing which would come to an upcoming Committee.

381 **Urgent Action - Standing Order 42**

Members noted the SO42 completed in October 2021 around the awarding of a contract for the provision of responsive repairs and void management services.

(The meeting ended at 9.40 pm.)

Chairman

Housing Revenue Account 30-Year Business Plan (Finance, Chris Mitchell)

Synopsis of report:

The Housing Revenue Account 30-year Business Plan should be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects expenditure, commitments and is based upon financial assumptions which reflect current economic conditions and legislation.

This report updates the Business Plan approved in March 2021 with forecast expenditure for this financial year and the detail of the Decent Homes planned programmes.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan sets out the vision for the service “*working with our tenants and leaseholders to deliver first class landlord services.*”

The Plan sets out the out the themes and ambitions for Runnymede Borough Council’s Housing Service over the next 30 years as:

- **Optimising Income and Efficiencies**
- **Good Quality Housing**
- **New Council owned homes**
- **Review and modernise provision for older tenants**
- **Well managed neighbourhoods**

The plan details how the service will ensure it complies with the Social Housing Regulator’s Standards and the expectations of the 2020 Social Housing White Paper: The Charter for Social Housing Residents.

The financial information supporting the plan details the resources available to deliver these commitments. The plan includes £25million to deliver additional affordable housing and £62.1 million to improve the quality of Council owned homes over the next 7 years.

Recommendation:

Members approve the Housing Revenue Account 30-Year Business Plan

Context of report

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (Appendix A) outlines the financial strategy and planning for the delivery of Runnymede Borough Council’s landlord services over the next 30 years.
- 1.2 The Localism Act 2011 enabled Runnymede to refinance its Housing stock and The Settlement Payments Determination of 2012 required stock holding local authorities to produce a 30-year business plan.
- 1.3 There are both contractual and statutory obligations placed on landlords. These obligations include health and safety requirements, tenant engagement, the provision of day to day repairs, investment in tenants’

homes, collection of rent, action to tackle anti-social behaviour, support for older people etc.

- 1.4 In Summer 2022 the Regulator will publish a new Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard (the expected measures are included within the report on the service's performance) with the data collection requirements from April 2023 for a first annual submission in Summer 2024.

2. **Strategic Aims**

- 2.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan outlines five themes for Runnymede Borough Council's housing landlord service over the next 30 years (the plan will be reviewed annually – it is therefore unlikely that these themes will be retained for the next thirty years).

- Optimising Income and Efficiencies
- Good Quality Housing
- New Council owned homes
- Review and modernise provision for older tenants
- Well managed neighbourhoods

3. **Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan links to other key strategic documents. The document sits underneath the Housing Strategy Statement and Corporate Business Plan linking work of the Housing Landlord Service to the wider objectives of the Council.

4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan provides income and expenditure projections over a 30-year period. It therefore references considerable levels of spending

- 4.2 The supporting capital investment plans of Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Landlord Service are articulated within the Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.

- 4.3 Detailed delivery plans over the next financial year are articulated within the Housing Business Centre Plan 2022-2023, item six on the agenda.

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 enabled Runnymede to refinance its Housing stock and The Settlement Payments Determination of 2012 required stock holding local authorities to produce a 30-year business plan.

6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 Obligations are placed on public sector bodies to ensure there is no discrimination in the way services are delivered. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out as required for proposed service and policy changes.

6.2 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan encapsulates the economic aspects of delivery and an EIA is not relevant.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 The Housing Revenue Account sets out two commitments on environmental sustainability: -

- Energy Performance (minimum energy performance of our stock at a C energy efficiency rating by 2030)
- Delivery of 125 additional units by 2026, these homes will be built to an A rating and include alternative heating sources to gas where appropriate.

8. Conclusions

8.1 It is recommended that Housing Committee members approve the aims identified within the Business Plan. It is also recommended that members note that the delivery of the themes contained within the plan are described within the Housing Business Centre Plan 2022/23.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

None

Runnymede Borough Council Housing Revenue Business Plan 2021-2051

Date

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DRAFT

Purpose

The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan sets the strategic objectives and financial strategy for the management and maintenance of the housing stock held within the Housing Revenue Account, it is published in conjunction with the Asset Management Plan which details the approach to stock management and the forward plan for investment. The Housing Business Centre aspires to provide first class landlord services for tenants and leaseholders and the themes under which this will be delivered are outlined in the plan.

The Settlement Payments Determination 2012 brought into effect further to powers exercised under the Localism Act 2011 requiring stock holding local authorities to produce a 30 year business plan

Summary

This Business Plan will outline the resources currently available to the Council, current substantial reserves, income projections and potential borrowing costs. Expenditure assumptions are made for management and supervision costs, allowances for void rent loss and bad debt and for the substantial ongoing investment in the stock. Significant staged payments (with fixed interest) are due throughout the plan following the refinancing of the stock. A full stock condition survey was carried out in 2019 and the planned maintenance programme generated from this is within the Asset Management Plan.

The HRA owns and manages the largest social housing stock in the Borough, 2850 properties with an annual rent debit for 2021/22 of £17 million. In addition, the Council owns 1214 lock up garages across 102 sites originally built to accompany the residential properties.

For the initial years of the financial plan costs and income can be reasonably forecast using the 2021/2022 budget and assumptions for inflation, government guidance on rent setting and predicted planned maintenance costs. Inflation is built into the plan at current low levels however beyond year 5 extrapolation of the income and expenditure is tenuous as a percentage variation in rental income or inflation will have significant impact on the long-term forecast. These aspects that are out of the Council's control mean that the financial modelling beyond year 5 is indicative and will probably need to be adjusted during an annual review.

The current forecast indicates that over the 30 year plan the Council will be able to meet its current liabilities for existing loans and investment in the stock and that there is significant potential for future borrowing to increase the stock and generate further income.

Strategic Context: Legislation, Regulatory Standards and Related Strategies

Legislation

The Local Government and Housing Act of 1989 came into force on 1st April 1990 and this requires the Council to operate a Housing Revenue Account which records separately to any other Council services operated within the General Fund, the income and expenditure on services which are provided primarily for the benefit of the council's own tenants.

In March 2012 Runnymede took advantage of the refinancing opportunity within the 2011 Localism Act to buy itself out of the subsidy system in operation at the time. For a payment of £103,292,000 Runnymede could retain all its rental income instead of paying a proportion of it (£6,860,000 in 2011) to Central Government each year. This debt was financed with a loan from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLb) and the repayment schedule is as follows:

Year	2021/2	2026/7	2031/2	2036/7	2041/2	Total m
Capital Repayment (m)	1.956	10	30	30	30	102.9
Interest Charge (m)						82.2

The settlement was agreed based on an expectation of rental income of £491,964,000 over the 30 years from 2012. This assumed an ongoing annual rent increase however the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 imposed a rent reduction in the social sector of 1% per annum for 4 years which has significantly reduced the anticipated income over the period.

From April 2020 the Government's rent policy permits annual rent increases on both social rent and affordable rent properties of up to CPI plus 1 percentage point for a period of at least 5 years. This assumption is built into the 30-year plan but after year 5, a conservative increase in line with inflation is assumed. The approved increase for April 2022 is 4.1% approved in January 2022.

In October 2018 the Government issued a Determination lifting the HRA Debt Cap. providing more freedom and flexibility to undertake additional borrowing, subject to the principles of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities of affordability, sustainability and prudence. This enables Runnymede to increase its social housing stock and provide additional income streams to the HRA for future development as the current reserves would facilitate a limited development capability in addition to the required investment in the existing stock.

The Council published its current [Tenancy Strategy](#) in 2019 and is committed to reviewing this 2 yearly, to ensure that the tenancies being offered in social housing throughout the borough reflect current legislation and housing need in the area. The [HRA Tenancy Policy](#) for Council's housing is determined by this Strategy and is currently under review to be submitted to Housing Committee for approval in June 2021. Since 2012 the Council has been able to offer Flexible or Fixed Term tenancies rather than traditional Secure tenancies (which are still offered for Independent Retirement Living) and this should facilitate best use of stock. The Council recognises the need for a balance between optimising use of its stock, providing households with security whilst creating stable neighbourhoods and communities.

Regulatory Standards

The Regulator of Social Housing sets regulatory standards to cover the operations and financial probity of social housing providers. Not all the standards are applicable to Local Authority Landlords but the objectives of the HRA Business Plan and workstreams detailed within the Housing Business Centre Plan ([link here](#)) will ensure that the Council meets and aspires to exceed all these regulatory standards.

The Economic Standards can be viewed here:

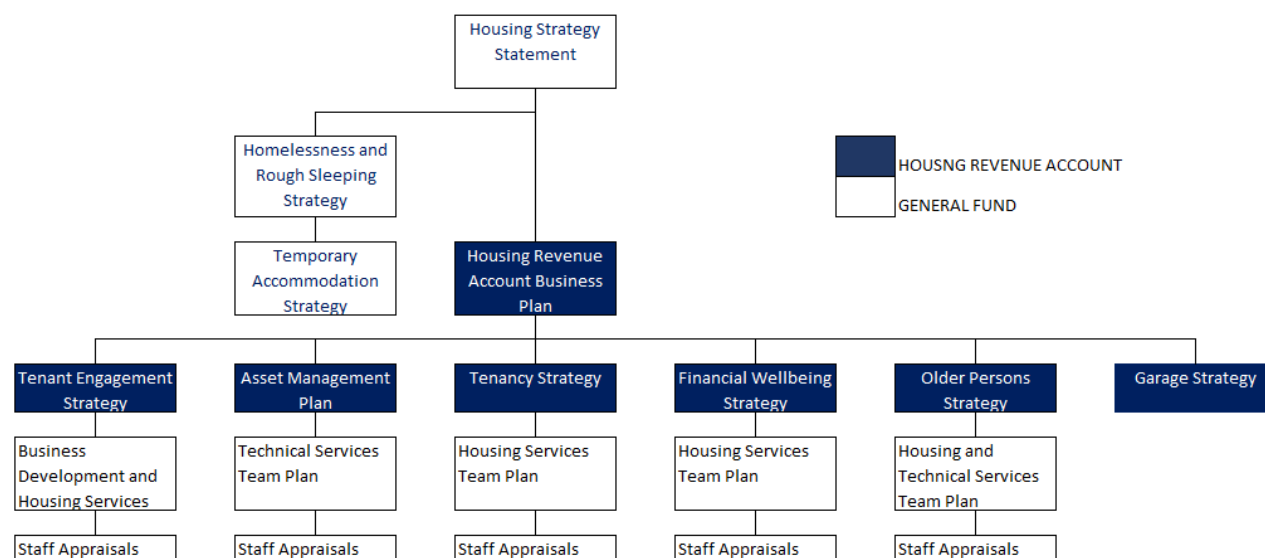
- [Governance and Financial Viability Standard](#)
- [Value for Money Standard](#)
- [Rent Standard](#)

The Consumer Standards can be viewed here:

- [Home Standard](#)
- [Tenancy Standard](#)
- [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#)
- [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#).

In Summer 2022 the Regulator is expected to publish a new Consumer Standard. It is likely to be a regulatory requirement social landlords report on the new Tenants Satisfaction Measures from April 2024.

Related Strategies



Business Context

Owned Residential Stock

Type of property and bed sizes

Property Type	bedsit	1	2	3	4	5	6+	Total
Bungalow		273	44	1				318
Caravan Council			11	6				17
Flat High Rise		34	28	31				93
Flat Low Rise	14	315	103	14				446
Flat Medium Rise		76	34					110
House Detached			1	4	3	2	1	11
House Semi Detached		2	354	676	69	10	1	1112
House Terraced		3	104	206	15	2		330
House Town House			33	39	11			83
Maisonette			15	92	12			119
Independent Retirement	25	178	8					211
Total	39	881	735	1069	110	14	1	2850

Spread of property type

Type	No of homes	% of stock
Flats	649	23%
Houses	1854	65%
Maisonettes	119	4%
Mobile Homes	17	1%
IRL	211	7%

Age profile of Stock

Built	1930/ 1939	1940/ 1949	1950/ 1959	1960/ 1969	1970/ 1979	1980/ 1989	1990/ 1999	2000/ 2010	2010/ 2020
%	9.01%	13.34%	23.63%	19.06%	11.99%	16.25%	5.29%	0.00%	1.42%

Although general needs flats and maisonettes represent only 27% of the stock, the age of these units, mainly constructed in the 1960s, higher cost of servicing these units and maintaining safety standards in communal areas will result in a focus on these homes within the Business Centre Plan and HRA financial provision for the next 5 years.

Average rents

Housing Weekly "Social" Rent Levels				
No. of Beds	Average weekly rent 2020/21	April 2021 increase (1.5%)	Average weekly rent 2021/22	Average weekly rent 2022/23
	£	£	£	£
Bedsit	67.5	1.01	68.51	71.32
1 Bed	92.81	1.39	94.20	98.06
2 Bed	111.23	1.67	112.90	117.54
3 Bed	121.57	1.82	123.39	128.40
4 Bed	132.66	1.99	134.65	140.34
5+ Bed	155.72	2.34	158.06	158.48

New properties can be let on an Affordable Rent which is up to 80% of market rent and within the Local Housing Allowance. The rent for each new development will be approved by Housing Committee on submission of the development financial information.

Proportion of Benefit Dependent Tenants

The number of tenants in receipt of benefit has increased over 2 years by 6% with 19% of tenants now receiving Universal Credit. This increase and the payment of the housing element of Universal Credit direct to tenants may impact on rental income as the roll out of the new system continues. Runnymede still has a significant proportion of older residents in receipt of Housing Benefit who will not move to UC under the current rules.

	Tenants in receipt of HB	Tenants in receipt of UC	Total tenants benefit dependent
Apr-19	1414	103	1517
	51%	4%	54%
Jan-21	1143	523	1666
	41%	19%	60%
Jan-22	983	685	1668
	36%	24%	60%

Links to Runnymede Corporate Business Plan 2016-2020

The HRA Business Plan supports all the themes in Runnymede's [Corporate Business Plan 2016-2020](#) and the those in the emerging Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024 delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic:

- Environmental Sustainability – Good Quality Homes in Well managed Neighbourhoods
- A Revived & Prosperous Economy – New Council Owned Homes, Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Empowered Communities – Increased resident engagement

Aims and Objectives of the HRA Business Plan

Our key themes and ambitions are:

- Optimising Income and Efficiencies
- Good Quality Housing
- New Council owned homes
- Review and modernise provision for older tenants
- Well managed neighbourhoods

Maximising Income

99.2% of HRA stock is let at traditional social rents. Recent new build and acquisitions have been let on Affordable Rents. Some HRA stock is utilised as temporary accommodation for the Homelessness Service enabling households to be housed temporarily in good quality accommodation within the borough if we are unable to prevent them from becoming homeless. Properties which are designated for redevelopment may be utilised as Temporary Accommodation during the planning stage to maintain an income and ensure vacant possession at the appropriate time.

The planned expenditure within the Business Plan is predicated on achieving a forecasted income and the operational target for 2022 is to maintain arrears below 1.75% of the debit. Due to economic conditions and high levels of vacancies within the income collection staff it is anticipated that this target will not be met, however this may be partially offset by salary savings.

Robust income collection procedures will focus on maintaining the historic low level of arrears through early intervention and support, utilising legal action as a last resort.

A Financial Wellbeing Strategy will seek to maximise income by promoting access to higher incomes and more stable forms of employment. The Business Plan commits resources to assisting tenants into employment and training, to ensure those residents dependent wholly or partly on benefits are receiving their full entitlement and to provide debt management advice. A Discretionary Housing Payment fund will be available accessible by HRA tenants not in receipt of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, ensuring that low income waged households above the benefit threshold can access temporary financial support. Promotion of digital inclusion for all our tenants will facilitate our financial wellbeing ambitions.

The level of void properties and relet timescales will impact on income and the Business Plan incorporates an assumption for a void rate of 1.75% from 2025 onwards after a higher rate initially as a result of performance issues with the void contract and impact of Covid 19 restrictions. Operational void targets for 2022/23 will be set lower than those within the HRA Business Plan.

Void rate targets

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025 +
3%	2.20%	2%	2%	1.75

Good Quality Housing

The HRA Asset Management Strategy sets out the approach to management of the stock over the next 5 years.

The current standard applicable for social housing is the [Decent Homes Standard](#) which was last updated in 2006. Within the Asset Management Plan will be the Runnymede Standard as approved by Housing Committee. The current Decent Homes Standard is undergoing a comprehensive sector wide review which is scheduled to be complete by Summer 2022. It is intended that the Runnymede Standard will exceed that which will be mandated by Government and will not require amendment following the publication of the new regulatory standard.

- Full Health and Safety Compliance
- Energy Performance (minimum energy performance of our stock at a C energy efficiency rating by 2030)
- Investment in ensuring Decent Homes
- Stock condition information constantly updated (10% per year)
- Effective and timely procurement of contracts
- Adopt RBC Quality Standard (Decent Homes plus)

New Council owned homes

Access to social housing is limited within the borough, there is high demand for Council properties and this Business Plan includes a commitment to utilising available resources including borrowing to increase the number of HRA homes through development or acquisition. The first objective will be to develop using our own land as this optimises the use of capital for construction however HRA sites are limited and within the borough land values are high. Purchase of developments will be considered where value for money can be achieved and the properties are built to appropriate space standards for social housing.

The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan has an aspiration of 145 additional Council Homes through renewal of existing estates. <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/localplan>

The Asset Management Plan aims to have an approved programme of delivery of 125 additional units by 2026, these homes will be built to an A rating wherever possible and include alternative heating sources where appropriate.

Review and modernise provision for older tenants

Runnymede aspires to be the social landlord of choice for older residents, providing homes that people are proud to live in. A review of older persons housing options and services and of the current individual IRL schemes will be carried out in 2022 and this will inform an Older Persons Strategy for our tenants.

The Council owns and manages 211 Independent Retirement Living (IRL) homes. Situated in 5 schemes across the Borough, these properties provide traditional older person's accommodation with communal facilities and more intensive management. The Council aspires to provide attractive accommodation options for residents as they age. These will embrace technology and services which can respond flexibly to the needs of residents, from younger active people accessing employment and to those receiving care and support to maintain independence within their home. The Council will be working with existing tenants, Community Services, social housing partners and Surrey County Council to understand the future needs and aspirations of older people in the community who may want to access social housing.

The Council is committed to a co-operative approach with residents needs and aspirations driving this model of provision. A Digital Transformation programme for IRL ensuring all residents have access to WIFI as standard and are enabled through provision of training and equipment to access services, entertainment and family through technology if desired.

The schemes will be dementia friendly, modern accessible environments encouraging use of communal facilities for a range of activities representing the interests of a diverse population. Plans to upgrade

communal areas have been delayed due to the Covid pandemic but financial provision has been made for upgrading the facilities and appearance of schemes.

Homes will continue to have alarm systems giving 24-hour support with residents being able to opt in and out of this during their tenancy as required. Against the national trend Runnymede intends to keep a management presence in its older persons housing, the provision may change but there is a commitment to keeping a dedicated team to provide onsite and remote personal support to residents which will not be replaced entirely by technology or a call centre.

Well Managed Neighbourhoods

Improved Estate Services

The exterior and communal areas of our homes will be well maintained through investment, grounds maintenance and cyclical decorations contracts. A rigorous regime of inspections will ensure standards are met and resident safety is a priority.

The current limited Resident Inspector regime will be extended through our digital engagement facilitating high levels of customer engagement and feedback on all elements of the service. Tenants and leaseholders will have access to the detail on the forward investment plan for their home and block.

Investment in a mobile Estate Services Team will ensure high standards of cleanliness and safe environments.

We will continue to invest in the Tenancy Enforcement and Fraud Team, responding to tenant's concerns and dealing proactively with Anti-Social behaviour, keeping the safety and security of residents as a priority.

Through a robust Resident Engagement and Inclusion Strategy we will capture resident feedback and preferences. Customer insight and views will be paramount in shaping service delivery.

Garages

A Garage Strategy will be submitted to the Housing Committee in 2022 for approval.

The HRA owns 1214 lockup garages within its residential estates across the borough. The rent from the garages is paid to the General Fund (net of repair costs) as non-residential income. Due to the date of construction the garages are too small for most modern vehicles and some of the garage forecourts require improvement. A full stock condition survey is required for this asset and this will be carried out over 2022 for consideration in conjunction with the review of development potential of each site. A strategy for future use of the land including an investment plan to ensure retained garages are well maintained will be developed. Three blocks have already been demolished to provide 12 new homes and a further 10 are planned utilising part of a garage site in Egham. Most sites are not suitable for significant residential development due to their location in the flood plain or close proximity to existing properties, but all development opportunities will be considered as well as potential for alternative usage.

Governance Monitoring and Implementation / Performance Monitoring and Delivery

The HRA Business Plan, Asset Management Strategy and annual capital and revenue budgets will be approved by the Housing Committee. All Development initiatives will require member consent and the Housing Committee will be consulted on strategies and approve policy.

The Housing Committee will meet 5 times annually with special meetings to be convened by the Chair as required. The Chair of the Runnymede Council residents Association is a non-voting co-opted Member of the Committee.

The Runnymede Council Residents Association Committee meets regularly and holds an Annual General meeting (suspended during Covid).

A Housing and Enabling Working Party was established in 2020 which has no decision-making powers but informs the work of the Committee and meets 4 times per year with additional meetings as required. Officers may not act upon the direction of the Member Working Party without the authority of the relevant Committee, Sub-Committee, or authorised Officer.

The current objectives for the Member Working party are:

- To ensure that the planned and cyclical works programme is fully resourced and effective for the next five years. (Reporting to Housing Committee where necessary).
- To ensure that a refurbishment of Surrey Towers is put in place
- To review and make recommendations to Housing Committee on the implementation of the HRA regeneration project with indicative costs and timescale.

An agreed set of Performance Indicators covering the Housing Services and linked to the HRA Business Plan delivery will be presented to each Housing Committee.

The Council will carry out a STAR satisfaction survey of tenants and residents in 2022 which will reflect the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures required by the Regulator of Social Housing and regularly thereafter. . The implementation of a survey module and digital communication suite to our Housing IT system will facilitate opportunities for regular tenant consultation and feedback through personal online accounts as well as traditional methods of communication where appropriate.

Threats and Risks

The financial modelling in the plan includes some potential variation in income and performance but there are external factors outside the Council's control which may impact on the delivery of the Plan.

- Challenges of Welfare Reform, capped households, universal credit
- Post Covid recession
- Increased turnover of properties
- Further rent reduction imposed by Government
- Changes in legislation / Industry knowledge leading to additional unforeseen expenditure e.g. Fire Safety works

Opportunities

With a service providing first class landlord services the HRA will seek opportunities to provide these services to other organisations and individual property owners, creating an additional income stream to the HRA.

Through agile contract procurement the HRA will obtain value for money in a timely manner, ensuring that quality standards are never sacrificed in the drive to make economies.

Officers will continually seek to identify opportunities for cooperation and partnerships with other organisations.

The HRA will seek Registered Provider status with Homes England in order to access grants for new homes where applicable.

As part of the commitment to providing Carbon neutral homes all opportunities for grants will be explored.

Delivery

The Housing Department aspires to provide high-quality services which incorporate standard landlord functions with additional packages of appropriate support to residents throughout the life of their tenancy. With an increasing number of residents experiencing multiple deprivations and complex needs increased investment has been needed in staffing resources, including specialist roles for tenancy sustainment. There will be an increase in resident engagement with services driven by resident aspirations and needs. In order

to fulfil these objectives this HRA Business Plan makes financial provision for investment in the stock and services and identifies resources required to ensure that the housing professionals involved in provision of services are adequately trained, have access to appropriate equipment, knowledge and resources and essentially are supported by the organisation throughout their career in provision of essential front line services.

As an organisation on the edge of London, RBC has experienced difficulties over the past 5 years in recruiting and retaining experienced staff to key roles. This Business Plan has a commitment to engaging with the Council's apprentice programme and maximising opportunities for career progression and advancement internally through training and education opportunities. This is the asset management plan for ensuring professional competent staff are in place to provide excellent services.

Looking to the future

The Social Housing white paper published in 2020 outlines the expectations for social housing tenants. The financial provision and service commitments within this HRA Business Plan to deliver enhanced landlord services which will meet and exceed these expectations.

- **To be safe in your home.** We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
- **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
- **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
- **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
- **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
- **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.

To ensure that Runnymede meets these standards, additional resources are included within this Business Plan for resident engagement and provision of a comprehensive suite of documents covering all strategic and operational activity which will be subject to regular review, audit and additions.

The Housing Service will be seeking ISO accreditation for its repairs service in 2022. The ISO 9001 suite of quality management systems (QMS) is a set of standards that assists an organisation to ensure they meet customer and other stakeholder needs within statutory and regulatory requirements. The Quality Policy approved in January 2022 demonstrates our commitment to the QMS and to continuous improvement of our services.

The Runnymede Council Residents Association Committee is a traditional model of tenant participation. The Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy includes a commitment to supporting the RCRA and helping to recruit new members. Demonstrating meaningful and inclusive engagement will be highlighted in the following themes in this Business Plan

- Good Quality Housing
- Review and modernise provision for older tenants
- Well managed neighbourhoods

Through provision of online accounts, residents will be able to access a forward plan for the maintenance of their property and if relevant block maintenance and cleaning regimes. We will be transparent in the publication of health and safety information and involve residents in the formulation of plans for their homes.

An Annual Report will be published providing financial and performance information. Regular newsletters will be used to disseminate important information and update residents on projects, policies and opportunities available through our Financial Wellbeing Strategy.

The Housing Complaints process complies with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code and we will ensure that complaints are taken seriously, properly investigated and that the complainant receives a full response to their concerns. We will publish details of how we have made improvements based on complaints and feedback.

Whilst traditional communication methods will be maintained for those who choose to opt out of our digital services, we will aim for 90% of our tenants to manage their general tenancy issues through an online account within 5 years. This will enable tailored and regular consultation on all aspects of our service.

A range of digital and traditional methods of engagement including focus groups and panels will be used to share information with residents and solicit feedback.

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Financial Position to Support the HRA Business Plan

Current position as reported to January 2022 Housing Committee:

Assumptions within the Financial Forecast

Data	Position
Opening housing stock	2,850
Opening Debt Allocation	£101,956,000
Rental Income year 2 (2022/23)	£17,418,000
Indicative additional borrowing capacity	£25,000,000
Indicative additional units	125
Reserves at 31 March 2022	£34,463,000

Assumption	Position
Rent Increase Years 1 to 4 (2024/5) CPI+0.5%	2.5% (4.1-year 2 actual)
Rent Increase Years 5 to 30 (2025/26) CPI	2%
Void rate from year 6	1.75%
Annual void rent Loss from year 5 (at 1.75%)	£349,000
Bad debt provision	£90,000
Assumed inflation rate for supervision & management costs	2%
Assumed inflation rate for repairs costs	2.75%
Planned Investment Spend in years 1 to 7 (Decent Homes compliance)	£62,100,000
Right to Buy Sales	4 per year

Loan Schedule and Interest Rates

Principal sum	Term	Interest rate	Annual interest	Maturity	Payment	Year
1,956,000	10	2.40%	46,944	Mar-22	1,956,000	2021/22
10,000,000	15	3.01%	301,000	Mar-27	10,000,000	2026/27
10,000,000	20	3.32%	332,000	Mar-32		
10,000,000	20	3.32%	332,000	Mar-32		
10,000,000	20	3.32%	332,000	Mar-32	30,000,000	2031/32
10,000,000	25	3.44%	344,000	Mar-37		
10,000,000	25	3.44%	344,000	Mar-37		
10,000,000	25	3.44%	344,000	Mar-37	30,000,000	2036/37
10,000,000	30	3.50%	350,000	Mar-42		
10,000,000	30	3.50%	350,000	Mar-42		
10,000,000	30	3.50%	350,000	Mar-42	30,000,000	2041/42
101,956,000						

Current position as reported to January 2022 Housing Committee:

HRA balances

HRA estimated balances and reserves £m			
Description	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023
HRA working Balances	£29.2	£31.4	£22.6
Major Repairs Reserve	£5.8	£3	£0
Proceeds from Right to Buy Sales			
- Sums set aside for debt repayment	£2.8	£1.2	£1.4
- Retained 1-4-1 receipts (for new build)	£0.5	£0.7	£0.3
HRA PWLB loan borrowings	£102.0	£100.0	£100

Major Works Commitment Approved 2022/23

Major Works budget for 2022/23	
	£000
Major Structural Works	
Fire Risk Associated works – (Addlestone flats)	200
Surrey Towers roof and lift replacement	1,500
Asbestos Survey – Including costs of asbestos removal works	220
Internal Works Programme	
Re-provision of commercial boilers in IRL's	300
Electrical Rewires	180
Kitchens & bathrooms	1,650
Boiler and central heating	1,250
External Works Programme	
Replacement windows and doors	925
Replacement Fire Doors	400
Replacement roofing, chimneys, and rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes etc)	3,045
External wall finishes	1,200
Supervisory Costs	
Managed Service Provider	600
Older Persons Accommodation Consultancy	250
Total Special Works budget in 2022/23	11,720

Right to Buy Sales Capital Income / Revenue Loss

Average sale price	195,000	
Paid to government	72,150	37%
Debt redemption	44,850	23%

Retained for 1 for 1	78,000	40%
Assume 4 sales p.a.	780,000	
Retained for 1 for 1	312,000	

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Summary of 30 year forecast as of February 2022

	1	2	3	4	5
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'
<u>Income</u>					
Rent Income (net of voids)	(16,749)	(17,418)	(18,236)	(18,973)	(19,691)
Other Income	(475)	(485)	(495)	(504)	(515)
Investment Income	(32)	(96)	(190)	(182)	(84)
	(17,256)	(17,999)	(18,920)	(19,659)	(20,289)
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Supervision & Management	5,189	5,444	5,553	5,664	5,778
Repayment of PWLB Debt	1,956	0	0	0	0
Less aside from RTB receipts	-1,956	0	0	0	0
<u>Housing repairs</u>					
Cyclical Repairs	963	617	633	651	669
Responsive Repairs	765	791	813	835	858
Void Repairs	1,150	552	567	582	598
Disabled Adaptations	200	0	0	0	0
Major works	4,750	11,981	9,194	9,441	9,495
Capital charges	3,426	3,379	3,379	3,379	3,379
	16,443	22,764	20,139	20,552	20,777
<u>Net Surplus</u>	(813)	4,764	1,218	893	488
Capital Expenditure	1,410	7,130	5,820	5,820	5,820
Opening Balance 1 April	(35,060)	(34,463)	(22,569)	(15,531)	(8,818)
Turn in year	597	11,894	7,038	6,713	6,308
Closing Balance 31 March	(34,463)	(22,569)	(15,531)	(8,818)	(2,510)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure - Revenue	16,443	22,764	20,139	20,552	20,777	5,957	22,588	23,060	23,543	24,039	53,755	24,074	24,609	25,954	26,539
Expenditure - Capital	1,410	7,130	5,820	5,820	5,820	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	17,853	29,894	25,959	26,372	26,597	5,957	22,588	23,060	23,543	24,039	53,755	24,074	24,609	25,954	26,539
Income	(-17,256)	(-17,999)	(-18,920)	(-19,659)	(-20,289)	(-20,958)	(-21,341)	(-21,730)	(-22,126)	(-22,530)	(-22,941)	(-23,359)	(-23,785)	(-24,218)	(-24,660)
(Surplus) / Deficit	597	11,894	7,038	6,713	6,308	(-15,001)	1,247	1,330	1,417	1,510	30,814	715	824	1,736	1,880
Opening Balance	(35,061)	(34,464)	(22,570)	(15,531)	(8,818)	(2,511)	(17,512)	(16,265)	(14,935)	(13,518)	(12,009)	18,806	19,521	20,345	22,081
Closing balance	(34,464)	(22,570)	(15,531)	(8,818)	(2,511)	(17,512)	(16,265)	(14,935)	(13,518)	(12,009)	18,806	19,521	20,345	22,081	23,961
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39	2039/40	2040/41	2041/42	2042/43	2043/44	2044/45	2045/46	2046/47	2047/48	2048/49	2049/50	2050/51
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure - Revenue	48,231	17,830	18,217	18,613	19,019	53,630	23,935	24,513	25,105	25,713	23,434	23,993	24,566	25,154	25,756
Expenditure - Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	48,231	17,830	18,217	18,613	19,019	53,630	23,935	24,513	25,105	25,713	23,434	23,993	24,566	25,154	25,756
Income	(-25,109)	(-25,566)	(-26,032)	(-26,506)	(-26,989)	(-27,480)	(-27,981)	(-28,501)	(-29,035)	(-29,580)	(-30,135)	(-30,701)	(-31,277)	(-31,864)	(-32,461)
(Surplus) / Deficit	23,122	(-7,736)	(-7,815)	(-7,893)	(-7,970)	26,149	(-4,046)	(-3,988)	(-3,930)	(-3,868)	(-6,701)	(-6,707)	(-6,710)	(-6,710)	(-6,705)
Opening Balance	23,961	47,083	39,346	31,531	23,638	15,668	41,818	37,772	33,785	29,854	25,987	19,286	12,578	5,868	(842)
Closing balance	47,083	39,346	31,531	23,638	15,668	41,818	37,772	33,785	29,854	25,987	19,286	12,578	5,868	(842)	(7,547)

Housing Business Centre Plan 2022/23 (Housing, Andy Vincent)

Synopsis of report:

The Housing Business Centre Plan 2022/23 identifies the improvement activity planned by the service for the new financial year. The work streams include: -

- **Work to develop and deliver phase 1 of the Council House new build programme.**
- **A commitment to updating the Housing Committee on the progress against the actions contained within the Housing Strategy documents (Older People, Financial Wellbeing, Tenant Engagement etc.)**
- **The need to prepare the service for new legislation/initiatives such as the Building Safety Bill and the introduction of First Homes.**
- **Proposals to implement enhancements to Surrey Towers (door replacements and procurement of a contractor to undertake roof replacement work).**
- **Preparation for the commencement of the new Repairs, Maintenance and Voids contract.**
- **A commitment to undertake a survey of tenants and residents (a STAR survey).**
- **A proposal to update the Housing Committee on progress in delivering the Housing carbon reduction targets.**

Recommendation:

- i. **That members approve the content of the Housing Business Centre Plan for 2022/23; recognising that reports for approval will be brought to Committee prior to the implementation of any new initiative.**

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The annual business planning cycle first involves the Senior Leadership Team meeting as a group to share their challenges and opportunities for the forthcoming year as well as their intended activity highlights above and beyond business as usual. The process is also used for members of the Senior Leadership Team to advise other business units where their support will be needed for this to then be factored into other Business Unit Plans.
- 1.2 In a typical year, non-corporate Business Unit Plans go to their relevant service Committee for approval. Final approval is then sought from Corporate Management Committee approving the Corporate Action Plan (which is an amalgamation of all the plans for the year).

- 1.3 However, due to the development of the Corporate Business Plan for 2022-2026, formal service area business planning across the business units is postponed pending the release of the new plan and associated strategies. Housing continues to require a business unit plan to demonstrate delivery to the Social Housing Regulator and residents of Council-owned housing stock and therefore a business plan for 2022/23 has been produced for approval.
- 1.4 A standard corporate template is provided to ensure each Business Unit Plan consistently sets out the: key drivers/influences, objectives, performance/activity indicators, and the associated risks.

2. **Report**

- 2.1 The full Housing Business Centre Plan can be found in Appendix A. A summary of the planned work is contained below: -

2.2 **Purpose of the Business Unit**

The primary purpose of the Housing Business Unit is to provide a comprehensive housing service incorporating:

- The management, maintenance, and improvement of the Housing Revenue Account social housing stock
- The development of new Council properties.
- Allocation of council owned stock and Registered Provider properties to which the Council has nomination rights
- Housing advice and explanation of housing options
- Discharge of the Council's statutory duty under homelessness legislation
- Encouraging and enabling the provision of new affordable housing
- Magna Carta Lettings, our in-house agency to incentivise landlords to offer tenancies at affordable (within LHA) rent.
- Delivery of disabled adaptations to both Council owned and privately owned properties
- Provision of statistical information and returns to Government

2.3 **Key achievements in 2021/22 (to date)**

- 2.3.1 The key achievements in 2021/22 to date by the Business Unit are: -
- Production of the Housing Strategy Statement 2021-2026
 - Preparation of the Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan 2021-2051
 - Publication of the Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026
 - Publication of a Housing Development Strategy and Older People Strategy
 - Development activity – completion of site in Addlestone to provide 9 new 2-bedroom Council flats
 - Nomination to 34 Affordable Rent properties with a partner Registered Provider at the Egham Gateway

- Development/review of the following policies: -
 - Adaptations Policy
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
 - Asbestos Policy
 - Decant Policy
 - Fire Risk Management Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Housing Allocations Scheme
 - Rent Setting Policy
 - Repairs Policy
 - Recharge Policy
 - Tenancy Policy
- The year-end projection 99% approx. of rent due collected April – January 2022 (current, HRA tenants)
- 99.31% of gas safety certificates in place – including performance exceeding 99.5% every month this financial year.
- Only 20 placements in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation April 2021 – February 2022
- A reduction in outstanding high risk fire risk assessment actions from 281 to 34 February 2022.
- Improvements in relet times from 162 days to 86 days in January 2022
- 99.7% of electric safety checks in place February 2022
- The Housing Solutions Team bid successfully for **£488,607** grant funding during 2021/22. These funds have been used to appoint a Housing Navigator to specifically focus on ending rough sleeping in Runnymede. Funding to enable homeless people and ex-offenders into private rented sector properties. Funding to introduce a housing led scheme, which provides accommodation and a focus on providing holistic wrap around support to enable individuals to successfully manage their home.
- Of this grant funding, a successful bid to Homes England, DLUHC and Surrey County Council has enabled the Council to purchase 3 one-bedroom properties for the general fund. One property has completed and the other two are on schedule to complete before the end of March. These three properties will enable us to accommodate the small cohort of individuals with extreme, complex, multiple needs and deprivations that otherwise fall through gaps in service provision. The Housing Navigator role will support individuals and the housing led model will wrap support around them too.

2.4 Key drivers/influences

2.4.1 The key drivers/influences impacting on the Business Unit in 2021/22 are:

- Housing Strategy statement
- Regulator of Social Housing – Regulatory Standards
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Stock condition and Asset Management Plan

- Tenancy Strategy
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Older Persons Strategy
- Financial Wellbeing Strategy
- Customer Engagement – Tenant Engagement Strategy (current in draft)
- Tenancy conditions
- Quality Management system

2.5 Key new areas of work in 2022/23

2.5.1 The key new areas of work for the Housing Service in 2022/23 are as follows:-

- Refurbishment work to Surrey Towers – fire doors and procurement of a specialist roofing contractor
- Development of a Council housing new build programme
- Roll out of the ISO 9001 Quality Management System to the rest of the Housing Service
- Mobilisation of the new Repairs, Maintenance and Voids contractor
- Annual updates on the action plans contained within the Housing Strategy documents (Tenant Engagement, Older People, Financial Wellbeing, Asset Management Plan etc.)
- The need to prepare the service for new legislation/initiatives such as the Building Safety Bill and the introduction of First Homes.
- Introduction of a mobile caretaking service (including tenant service charges)
- Review of Magna Carta Lettings
- Introduction of a tree management plan
- A commitment to undertake a survey of tenants and residents (a STAR survey).
- Delivery of phase II of the Housing IT system upgrade
- A proposal to update the Housing Committee on progress in delivering the Housing carbon reduction targets

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 This Plan supports the achievement of the following themes in the emerging Corporate Business Plan:

- ***Improving Health and Wellbeing***, by: -
 - *Delivering good quality homes in well managed neighbourhoods*
 - *Providing good quality specialist supported accommodation for older people*
 - *Identifying the support vulnerable people need to assist them to manage their tenancy successfully.*
- ***Tackling Climate Change***; by: -
 - *Delivering reductions in the carbon emissions of our existing housing stock and ensure new homes are highly energy efficient*
 - *Improving the management of waste from Council owned homes to improve recycling levels*

- **Prosperous Economy; through:** -
 - *Investment in new council owned homes,*
 - *Utilising local contractors to deliver significant improvement work*
 - *Maximising the income of our tenants by developing a Financial Wellbeing Strategy*
- **Empowering Communities, by:** -
 - *Increasing our levels of resident engagement, giving tenants choice where possible in how services are delivered*

4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1 This Business Centre Plan does not make any specific requests for growth.
- 4.2 A business case for growth items will be presented to the Housing Committee if required.

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are a number of areas within the plan, including Fire door installation and preparation for the implementation of the Building Safety Bill, which address issues of compliance with Regulations.
- 5.2 The plan also seeks to strengthen the evidence base that can demonstrate the service complies with the regulatory standards: -

The Economic Standards

- [Rent Standard](#) (The one that applies to local authority registered providers)s

The Consumer Standards:

- [Home Standard](#)
- [Tenancy Standard](#)
- [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#)
- [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.](#)

- 5.3 Advice will be sought from Legal Services on initiatives as indicated on the 'Services Area Plan 2022/23' and further as required.

6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for projects impacting on tenants/residents being delivered as part of this plan.
- 6.2 This will ensure that any equality implications are identified and addressed before new initiatives are introduced.

7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 7.1 The Housing Service has published a series of environmental commitments: -
 - Ensure all Council owned social homes meet a minimum of a C energy efficiency rating by 2030

- Ensure all Council new build properties achieve an A energy efficiency rating
- Support tenants to reduce the waste they produce and maximise recycling rates

7.2 These commitments drive much of the work of the service – and will permeate through actions contained within the Business Centre Plan

8. **Other implications (where applicable)**

8.1 None

9. **Conclusions**

9.1 This plan is being recommended to Housing Committee Members as the key deliverables for the service in 2022/23.

9.2 They seek to maintain the improvement momentum built up in 2021/22 and seek to continue to strengthen the delivery of housing services by Runnymede Borough Council, the engagement with tenants and improvement in performance.

9.3 A considerable number of other improvements are being delivered by the service – via Team Plans and individual appraisals. These are smaller in scale and therefore are not recorded in the Business Centre Plan, which is reserved for larger more strategic actions.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None

Instructions for Completion



Green Tabs make up the document that will be published

Please go through Tabs 1-3 in order as information you add in tab 1 will filter to Tabs 2 and 3 etc.

Tab	Action
1.Cover sheet	Select your Business Unit and CHoS on the cover sheet.
2.Background Service Info	Review and amend as necessary the background info provided in the Background Service Info tab. If you have more than one service area in your department(s) click on the + buttons to the left of the grey row numbers. This will have been populated from your last submitted SABP as copy/paste
3.Planned Activity	This is where you provide information on planned activities/ initiatives for the following year that are proposed for your business area. There are a number of cells where you Pick from lists to enter the data. Initiatives need to be aligned to a Corporate Theme and given a Prioritisation (Must/Should/Could/Would) Identify when you need resource from outside of your service area to be able to acheive the deliverable. Identify if procurement is likely to be required- this will help formulate the procurement forward plan for the Council. This list will be used to produce the Corporate priorities for the Council for 22/23 by theme. A number of these will be agreed to be delivered in the Programmes of Work aligned to MWG.

Orange Tabs are optional to use. However by conducting a PESTLE analysis and risk review of your service, this may support identification of initiatives that are required or could be proposed for the following year

Tab	Action
Horizon Scanning	Use the PESTLE headings to assess the external environment that your service is delivered in.
Risk Review	Review and amend as necessary the background info provided in the Background Service Info tab. This will have been populated from

Yellow tab is for you to use during the year as part of team and individual performance management. Turn the approved initiatives into SMART objectives, delegate to teams or individuals and track progress across the year. Use with your line manager to demonstrate progress and activity.

Tab	Action
In Year Action Plan Tracker	The initiatives and information is auto-populated across in to the Action Tracker from your Planned Activity. Complete Column M and N once initiatives are approved

Blue tabs are For Info Only

Tab	Action
Financial Regs	Reminder of the Financial Regs regarding virements and growth requests by value. Reminder of the Contracts Standing Order thresholds for procurement activity

**Service Area Business Plan for Financial Year 2022/23**

Business Unit: Housing

Corporate Head of Service: Andy Vincent

Version: 1.0

Approvals

Approved by CLT: Date

Approved by Service Chair: Date

Approved by Service Cttee: Date

Housing

Business Unit:	Housing
CHoS	Andy Vincent
Service Area 1:	Housing Solutions Service
Service Area 2:	Housing and Neighbourhood Services
Service Area 3:	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services
Service Area 4:	Business Development & Policy Section



Service Organisational Structure [Insert hyperlink](#)

Budget Book Information [Budget information 2021-22](#) Pages:

The primary purpose of the Housing Business Unit is to provide a comprehensive housing service incorporating:

- the management and maintenance of the Housing Revenue Account social housing stock
- the development of new Council owned properties.
- allocation of council owned stock and Registered Provider properties to which the Council has nomination rights
- housing advice
- discharge of the Council's statutory duty under homelessness legislation
- encouraging and enabling the provision of new affordable housing
- Magna Carta Lettings, our in-house agency to incentivise landlords to offer tenancies at affordable (LHA) rent.
- disabled adaptations
- provision of statistical information and returns to Government

Description of Service (1) [Housing Solutions Service](#)

Main purpose

- To deliver an excellent customer focussed Housing Solutions Service that is compliant with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.
- To work to prevent homelessness, and to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants.
- To ensure that all applicants seeking housing advice receive tailored housing solutions aligned with legislation, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Housing Allocations Scheme.
- Allocation of social housing in accordance with legislation.

Key functions

- Administration of the online Housing Register ([1208 applicants registered as at 1st January 2022](#))
- Allocation of social housing under the Housing Act 1996 Part VI within the Council stock ([124 new tenancies in 2020/21](#)) plus nominations to Registered Providers ([31 successful nominations in 2020/21](#))
- Administration of Downsizing scheme and promotion of best use of the housing stock
- Liaison with Housing Association partners
- Homelessness and Housing Advice provision duties compliant with legislation ([407 homelessness applications in 2018/19](#), [274 in 2019/20](#), [239 in 2020/21](#))
- Personalised Housing Plans
- Homeless prevention and tenancy sustainment
- Liaison with and referrals to supported housing providers
- Surrey wide protocols for vulnerable groups
- Manage Magna Carta Lettings in order to maximise private rent housing opportunities and promote the option of housing within the private rent sector
- Attendance at various fora e.g. MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) and strategic groups e.g. NW Surrey Domestic Abuse Forum and Strategic Housing Group for Young People
- Partnership working with SCC in respect of Looked After Children and protocol for accommodation and move on
- Carry out reviews of statutory homelessness decisions and decisions relating to suitability of accommodation under the [Housing Act 1996](#).

Description of Service (2) [Housing and Neighbourhood Services](#)

Main purpose

To maximise the rent collection for each of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) homes and General Fund garages; to support the Council's tenants in sustaining their tenancies and to take proportionate action when tenancy obligations are breached;

Key functions

- Rent collection (current tenants) – Annual debit of £18m for Council homes, DIYSO properties, leisure properties and ground rent for Heathervale Way
- Tenancy sustainment including referral and liaison with partner agencies
- Administering rent recovery policy, making County Court possession applications and court advocacy
- Council Housing New Build
- Management of temporary accommodation
- Former tenant arrears and recharge collection
- Management of garage licences and rent collection for garages totalling over £670,000
- Tenancy Audits, management of fixed term tenancies and changes to tenancies e.g. requests for joint tenancies, succession etc.
- Estate inspections and improvements
- Estate caretaking and cleaning of communal areas
- Responding proactively to complaints of anti-social behaviour by council tenants ([opened 46 new cases in 2020/21, from 222 reports](#))
- Processing Right to Buy applications ([15 in 2020/21](#))
- Promoting financial inclusion and provision of budgeting advice
- Liaison with DWP to address welfare reform and Universal Credit issues
- Leaseholder queries
- Working to promote anti-fraud activities and investigating suspected social housing fraud, including allocations, sub-letting and RTB fraud
- Setting up new tenancies and managing introductory and fixed term tenancies through a schedule of home visits
- Management of Independent Retirement living (IRL) schemes
- Management of annual rent and service charges
- Mutual Exchanges (20 in 2019/20)

Description of Service (3)

Housing Maintenance and Technical Services

Main purpose

- To manage and deliver a statutorily compliant and cost-effective repair and maintenance service for [2,853](#) Council owned and managed homes plus leasehold properties, communal areas and [1,214](#) garages. The team provides a comprehensive property maintenance service across all the tenure types that fall within its responsibility. This includes liaising with tenants and the technical and administration functions associated with maintaining properties, including the procurement of various contracts.
- Conversion and adaptation of Council properties to make best use of the housing stock and as appropriate for disabled people.

Key functions

- Asset management
- Contract procurement and monitoring
- Management of day to day, responsive repairs and maintenance carried out by contractors
- Inspection of void properties and oversight of void works carried out by contractors
- Stock condition surveys
- Planned and cyclical works
- Major capital projects including kitchen and bathroom replacement programmes
- Health and safety compliance including fire risk assessments, electrical safety, gas certification, management of asbestos, water hygiene, Energy Performance Certificates etc.
- Unplanned major work e.g. fire, flooding to properties
- Adaptations for disabled RBC tenants and their households
- Tree management

Description of Service (4)

Business Development & Policy Section

Main purpose

Monitoring, developing and promoting the work of the Housing Business unit with an emphasis on continuous improvement.

Key functions

- Performance monitoring and service improvement
- Submission of regulatory returns and statistics
- Strategies, policies and procedures
- Business Development
- Housing software systems
- Promoting and enabling opportunities for new affordable housing (24 new units of affordable housing delivered by partners secured through planning obligations in 2019/20)
- Partnership working with Registered Providers and private landlords.
- Ensuring the service considers equalities issues

Service Area Business Plan for Year 2022/23

Business Unit: Housing



Type of initiative	Service Area	Description of initiative	Outcomes/ Deliverables	Priority	Additional resources required from outside department	Additional growth required?	Anticipated start date	Anticipated completion date	Corporate Theme (s)	Is this identified as/in a MWG programme?	Is Procurement required?	Who is leading on the project	Guidance
Legislative/Regulatory Change	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Fire Door replacement at Surrey Towers	Arrangements in place within Surrey Towers that meet the requirements of the fire strategy	Must - the initiative has to be done	Procurement, legal, Project Management Office	No	May-22	Sep-22	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing Technical Services	
Legislative/Regulatory Change	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Publish a tender pack for submissions from suitably qualified contractors to reroof Surrey Towers	Improved accommodation for residents and a longer lifespan for the building	Must - the initiative has to be done	Procurement, legal, Project Management Office	No	May-22	Mar-23	Health and wellbeing	No	Yes - new tender	Head of Housing Technical Services	
Legislative/Regulatory Change	Housing Solutions Service	Implement the First Homes action plan - ensuring residents are aware of the new affordable home ownership product, can register their interest and are prioritised	Runnymede Borough Council promotes First Homes and enables 'appropriate' residents to apply	Must - the initiative has to be done	Planning Policy Digital Services	Yes	Jan-22	Nov-22	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing Solutions	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Business Development & Policy Section	Out of Hours service review	Clarity in arrangements if there is an out of hours call on housing matters - there will be a specific focus on Independent Retirement Living	Should - the initiative should be done	Human Resources Safer Runnymede	No	Jul-22	Mar-23	Organisational Development	No	No	Corporate Head of Housing	
Income generation	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Development of a new Council house building programme - Phase 1 (Planning)	The deliverable is the development of the phase 1 programme with timescales around delivery	Should - the initiative should be done	Planning, Legal	No	Nov-21	May-22	Prosperous Economy	Yes - to add list of prog of work	No	Development Manager	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Implementation of the Older Persons Strategy	The strategy contains projects and timescales; which includes:- Upgrading of the communal parts of our IRL accommodation and gardens Working towards accreditation for the service	Should - the initiative should be done	No	No	Sep-21	Mar-26	Health and wellbeing	No	Yes - new tender	Corporate Head of Housing/Head of Neighbourhood Services	
Legislative/Regulatory Change	Business Development & Policy Section	Implementation of the Tenant Engagement Strategy	The strategy contains projects and timescales; which includes:- Improving our customer satisfaction data collection Understanding our customers better Undertaking a STAR survey	Must - the initiative has to be done	Communications	No	Mar-22	Mar-27	Empowering Communities	No	No	Business Development Manager	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Procurement and mobilisation of the new Repairs, Maintenance and Voids Contract	Maintenance of the day-to-day repairs service to customers Repairing of void properties Improvements in customer satisfaction from better delivery of the repairs service	Must - the initiative has to be done	Procurement, Legal	No	Apr-21	Apr-23	Prosperous Economy	No	Yes - retender	Head of Housing Technical Services	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Business Development & Policy Section	Delivery of the Housing IT upgrade programme phase 2	Implementation of a series of modules:- Asset Management Risk Management Support Services Mobile Working Communications Task Manager	Must - the initiative has to be done	Digital Services	No	Jan-22	Mar-23	Organisational Development	No	No	Corporate Head of Housing/Head of Housing and Business Planning	

Service Area Business Plan for Year 2022/23

Business Unit: Housing



Type of initiative	Service Area	Description of initiative	Outcomes/ Deliverables	Priority	Additional resources required from outside department	Additional growth required?	Anticipated start date	Anticipated completion date	Corporate Theme (s)	Is this identified as/in a MWG programme?	Is Procurement required?	Who is leading on the project	Guidance
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Accreditation – Income and Support Services	Two key front line services where delivery reflects best practice within the industry	Should - the initiative should be done	Council Tax (Corporate Debt) Community Services	No	Jan-22	Mar-23	Organisational Development	No	No	Head of Neighbourhood Services	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing Solutions Service	Implement the Outcome STAR	This is a prerequisite for the implementation of the support services module in Northgate/NEC	Must - the initiative has to be done	Community Services	No	Jul-21	Jun-22	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing Solutions	
Legislative/ Regulatory Change	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Prepare for introduction of Building Safety Bill •Fire Strategies •Fire Case	An understanding of the requirements of the Building Safety Bill and the measures necessary to ensure that Runnymede Borough Council delivers and where possible exceeds them	Must - the initiative has to be done	Legal Services	Not known	Jan-21	Mar-23	Health and wellbeing	Yes - to add list of prog of work	No	Head of Housing Technical Services	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Business Development & Policy Section	Roll out of ISO 9001 to the remaining parts of the Housing Service	An audit of the Compliance and Repairs and Maintenance is being conducted in February 2022. Work is required to roll the accreditation out to: - Housing Advice and Allocations Housing Services Independent Retirement Living Planned Work Adaptations Development	Should - the initiative should be done	Human Resources Legal Services Project Management	No	Mar-21	Mar-24	Organisational Development	No	No	Business Development Manager	
Staff / Resources	Business Development & Policy Section	HRA Business Plan – annual review	An annual review of the 30-year Business Plan to reflect the HRA's financial commitments and wider strategic direction. Enables effective fiscal planning and supports the Council's strategy for development of more social housing with surpluses / borrowing.	Must - the initiative has to be done	Finance	No	Mar-22	Mar-23	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Corporate Head of Housing	
Staff / Resources	Business Development & Policy Section	Annual review of progress against all Housing Strategic documents: - Asset Management Plan Financial Wellbeing Strategy Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Older Persons Strategy Tenant Engagement Strategy	An annual review of each of the housing strategies provided to Housing Committee updating members on the progress in delivering the agreed strategic aims	Should - the initiative should be done	No	No	Mar-22	Mar-23	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Strategy leads	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Business Development & Policy Section	Review and refresh the Housing Section of the RBC website	A clearer structure of the Housing part of the RBC website. More RBC relevant content - more generic traffic driven to other websites, such as gov.uk	Could - the initiative could be done if time/resources allow	Digital Services Communications	No	Mar-22	Mar-23	Organisational Development	No	No	Business Development Manager	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Development of a garage strategy to identify opportunities to consider alternative use of the sites or ensure that the site receive the appropriate level of investment	The garage stock managed by the Housing Service are in good condition. Where garages are in poor condition or in low demand – alternative use is considered.	Must - the initiative has to be done	Commercial Assets Finance	Yes	Nov-21	Jul-22	Prosperous Economy	Yes - to add list of prog of work	Yes - new tender	Corporate Head of Housing	

Service Area Business Plan for Year 2022/23

Business Unit: Housing



Type of initiative	Service Area	Description of initiative	Outcomes/ Deliverables	Priority	Additional resources required from outside department	Additional growth required?	Anticipated start date	Anticipated completion date	Corporate Theme (s)	Is this identified as/in a MWG programme?	Is Procurement required?	Who is leading on the project	Guidance
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Provide additional clarity to staff on the provision of services to leaseholders	Production of a Leasehold procedure will enable all staff to access and understand the services supplied to homeowners within HRA stock. This will improve customer service to this group of residents and ensure consultation on planned work and communal maintenance is consistent and customer focussed.	Should - the initiative should be done	No	No	Mar-22	Oct-22	Organisational Development	No	No	Head of Neighbourhood Services	
Income generation	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Implement Service Charges for new caretaking services	New services funded through income. Services established then consultation with residents prior to implementation of charges next financial year.	Should - the initiative should be done	Finance	No	Nov-22	Mar-23	Prosperous Economy	No	No	Head of Housing and Business Planning	
Legislative/ Regulatory Change	Housing Solutions Service	Develop and launch the new Housing Allocations Policy	The Housing Register and Allocations Policy need to be built within Northgate - this also includes an online housing application form and homeless application	Must - the initiative has to be done	Digital Services	No	Nov-21	Jun-22	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing Solutions	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing Solutions Service	Develop and implement a Homelessness: No Second Night Out Policy	Ensures that homeless individuals or families are not sleeping rough or in their car for more than one night. Demonstrates a commitment from the Local Authority to support homeless people	Should - the initiative should be done	No	No	Mar-22	Jun-22	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing Solutions	
Legislative/ Regulatory Change	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Recruit a consultant to commence plotting and zoning trees on HRA land	Will provide a systematic process for effective maintenance of the Council's tree assets and mitigation of risk from dangerous trees.	Should - the initiative should be done	Green Spaces Team	Yes - additional resources will be needed to manage the trees proactively	Jan-22	Mar-23	Health and wellbeing	No	Yes - new tender	Head of Housing Technical Services	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing Solutions Service	Homelessness Prevention Toolkit – links to the work of the Housing Navigator	Ensures that Housing staff consider all options available to prevent a homeless presentation. This minimises the impact on the family's life chances - and reduces costs to the authority	Must - the initiative has to be done	No	No	Mar-22	Aug-22	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing Solutions	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Business Development & Policy Section	STAR (Survey of Tenants & Residents)	Enables management and politicians to understand the views of tenants and their priorities. Enabling future improvement plans to be developed	Should - the initiative should be done	No	No	Mar-22	Mar-23	Empowering Communities	No	Yes - new tender	Business Development Manager	
Legislative/ Regulatory Change	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Work Corporately to develop a Domestic Abuse Policy	Be clear that Runnymede does not tolerate domestic abuse and is committed to supporting individuals who are suffering. Also achieve White Ribbon accreditation	Should - the initiative should be done	Community Services Corporate Assets	No	Jan-22	Mar-23	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing and Business Planning	
Legislative/ Regulatory Change	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Clarification of Housing's climate change commitments and progress	A report to the Housing Committee	Must - the initiative has to be done	Corporate Climate Change Officer	No	Jun-22	Jun-22	Environmental Sustainability	No	No	Corporate Head of Housing	
Service/ efficiency improvement	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Vulnerable Persons Strategy	Enables the service to consider what more we can do to support vulnerable people. Be that with gardens, tenant support, advise on becoming a council tenant, resettlement etc	Could - the initiative could be done if time/resources allow	Community Services	No	Mar-22	Mar-23	Health and wellbeing	No	No	Head of Housing and Business Planning	

PESTLE Analysis - Opportunities and Threats that may impact service provision or delivery

PESTLE	Political	Economic	Sociological	Technological	Legal	Environmental	Organisational (not covered in PESTLE)
PESTLE description	Political factors at local, regional and national level	Economic factors at local, regional and national level	Emerging trends that impact on professional or lifestyle	Impact of technological advances or adaptations	Legal regulations, considerations, relevant case law at National or International	Environmental factors at local, regional, national or global level	
Whole organisation impact	Political stability and make-up of the Council	COVID-19 Recovery	Population demographics and local profiles	Digital Transformation	Local Authority Act	SCC Climate Change Strategy	Contract Standing Orders and the Constitution and Financial Regulations provide the governance and business processes which must be abided by
	DLUHC's Local Government Reorganisation agenda		Health consciousness	Agile working	Public Contract Regulations 2015	RBC Climate Change Strategy and policies	Procurement policies
	County level decisions and delegations	Economic Development Strategy	Lifestyle choices		Local Government Transparency code 2015		HR policies
	Changes in neighbouring Boroughs/Districts and consequences		Cultural and ethnicity considerations		Employment laws and RBC policies		
			Health and Welbeing corporate strategy		Health and Safety Laws		
Service impact	Government and Homes England housing policy including: - Rent setting Widening the remit and strengthening the powers of the Social Housing Regulator The introduction of the Building Safety Bill The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy and Fuel Poverty Strategy The anticipated review of the Decent Homes Standard	Local housing market conditions	Age distribution of team and succession planning	Digital Transformation of service area IT systems	Building Safety Bill	Housing Section of the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy	Service area strategies and policies
	Welfare Reform particularly Universal Credit.	Housing Developers' viability concerns	Significant drive - lead by the regulator for engagement with tenants and an approach where tenants are partners in moving forward service improvement	Further automation of IT systems and the use of analytics	Requirement to report against a range of performance measures likely to be put in place for financial year 2023-2024		
			Benchmarking with peer organisations - to demonstrate if Runnymede is out of step with peer organisations				

Housing

To support the identification of required change or initiatives for the following year, a review of service area risks and issues may be useful.

Business Unit: Housing

Ref	Risk/ Issue description	Impact/ consequences if the risk were to happen or the issue materialises	Impact classification	(Pre-control measures)			Control Measure(s)	(Post control measures)			Owner
				Probability	Impact	Risk Rating		Probability	Impact	Rating	
Corp1.1	Loss of key members across the Teams due to pandemic or other uncontrollable aspects	Function not delivered	Life and limb, F	3	4	12	Business Continuity plans. Staff trained to cover. Contractors sourced for emergency cover	3	2	6	
Corp1.2	Data collated/ reported may be inaccurate.	Inaccurate data has the risk of misleading Members, Officers, the public and other stakeholders, and could potentially result in alternative decisions being made.	Delivery of serv	3	4	12	Data quality standards will be addressed in the Information Governance Strategy and Policy and departmental procedures. Consideration will also be given to whether business centres/teams have any other data quality risks specific to their area and if so these will also be included in the relevant Business Centre/Team Plans.	2	4	8	
Corp1.3	Disclosure of personal data to someone who is not entitled to that data e.g. via telephone conversation or email	Financial sanctions imposed by the Information Commissioners' Office for failure to comply with legal obligations. Loss of confidence in Council by other parties in respect of its ability to manage information properly. Adverse publicity	Delivery of serv	3	4	12	Compliance with Council's adopted Information Governance Strategy and Policy. Adoption of measures to ensure that the Council complies with its obligations under the GDPR. Compliance with Council's various existing policies which relate to management of information. Provision of training to staff on requirements of GDPR. Appointment of Data Protection Officer by Council to oversee compliance with GDPR.	2	4	8	
Corp1.4	Loss of Council owned device containing personal data results in disclosure of personal data	Financial sanctions imposed by the Information Commissioners' Office for failure to comply with legal obligations. Loss of confidence in Council by other parties in respect of its ability to manage information properly. Adverse publicity	Delivery of serv	3	4	12	Compliance with Council's adopted Information Governance Strategy and Policy. Adoption of measures to ensure that the Council complies with its obligations under the GDPR. Compliance with Council's various existing policies which relate to management of information. Provision of training to staff on requirements of GDPR. Appointment of Data Protection Officer by Council to oversee compliance with GDPR.	2	4	8	

Housing

Corp1.5	Unauthorised access to Council systems which allows access to personal data	Financial sanctions imposed by the Information Commissioners' Office for failure to comply with legal obligations. Loss of confidence in Council by other parties in respect of its ability to manage information properly. Adverse publicity	Delivery of services	3	4	12	Compliance with Council's adopted Information Governance Strategy and Policy. Adoption of measures to ensure that the Council complies with its obligations under the GDPR. Compliance with Council's various existing policies which relate to management of information. Provision of training to staff on requirements of GDPR. Appointment of Data Protection Officer by Council to oversee compliance with GDPR.	2	4	8
Corp1.6	Failure to dispose of documentation containing personal data in a secure fashion results in disclosure of personal data	Financial sanctions imposed by the Information Commissioners' Office for failure to comply with legal obligations. Loss of confidence in Council by other parties in respect of its ability to manage information properly. Adverse publicity	Delivery of services	3	4	12	Compliance with Council's adopted Information Governance Strategy and Policy. Adoption of measures to ensure that the Council complies with its obligations under the GDPR. Compliance with Council's various existing policies which relate to management of information. Provision of training to staff on requirements of GDPR. Appointment of Data Protection Officer by Council to oversee compliance with GDPR.	2	4	8
Ho1	Housing Revenue Account Income forecast not met.	Potential increase in rent arrears. Increase in homelessness Drain on bad debt provision KPI for rent arrears affected	Financial, Delivery of services	4	5	20	Key performance indicators – monitored by Housing Committee Systems and procedures in place - including Rent Analytics and escalation policy Annual review of Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	3	4	12
Ho2	Reduction in the number of existing and new PRS opportunities to place households in private rented sector	Increased strain on homelessness provision. Increased pressure on Housing to source alternative options with potential increase in costs	Delivery of services, Reputational, Financial	5	4	20	New PRS Offer developed with additional resources being directed to this area. Entering into innovative partnerships with private owners to make more properties available for our nominees at Local Housing Allowance rents. New member of staff and additional funding obtained	3	3	9

Housing

Ho3	Failure to comply with regulator's code	Reputational damage to the Council if inspected by the regulator Financial consequences for not being compliant Concern regarding the quality of service being delivered to tenants and leaseholders	Reputational , Financial, Delivery of services	4	5	20	KPI framework ISO 9001 policy and procedure framework Key strategic documents Housing Committee oversight	2	4	8
Ho4	Claims for disrepair from tenants against the Housing Service	Tenants living in homes which are in poor condition Financial compensation to tenant paid Reputational damage to the Council	Financial, Reputational , Delivery of services	5	3	15	Key tenders in place Effective IT systems – audit trail of repair work Programme of tenancy audits and property inspections in place Damp and Mould procedure developed to limit risks	3	3	9
Ho5	Health and Safety requirements are not met within the Housing stock relating to fire risk control, asbestos, legionella, gas and electrical safety, lifts and safe working practices within the housing stock.	Failure to meet Council's responsibilities leading to death or injury and we are held liable for this or damage to property	Life and limb, Reputational , Financial, Legal	3	5	15	Contract in place and further resources agreed if required. Monitoring in place Policies and Procedures and places Part of ISO 9001 process Additional challenge in relation to the Building Safety Bill	3	4	12
Ho6	Failure to achieve compliance on electrical testing within the year commitment	Risk of properties which have not been tested	Reputational , Financial, Legal	2	4	8	Contract in place and further resources agreed if required. Escalation process established if access cannot be achieved at a tenanted property Monitoring weekly - full compliance expected	1	3	3
Ho7	Ensure that vulnerable customers are protected from exploitation	Vulnerable customers living in Council owned homes are exploited – negatively impacting on their life chances	Reputational , Legal	3	5	15	Ensure support plans are in place in IRL In temporary accommodation and where tenants are considered vulnerable, they are receiving sustainment support Essential to ensure staff have received safeguarding training	2	5	10

Housing

Ho8	Contracts are not properly procured	Liability for breach of contract law and breach of EU procurement rules. Complaints from contractors/prospective contractors. Non-compliance with health and safety legislation with potentially fatal risk to residents and staff. Breach of RSH regulations. Accusations of collusion. No value for money audit.	Life and limb, Reputational, Financial, Legal	3	4	12	Project plan in place for all procurement - most of the Decent Homes procurement is now in place The Repairs, Maintenance and Voids procurements is almost complete - also being supported by an external consultancy	2	4	8
Ho9	Regeneration of HRA stock not achieved	Properties not being maintained - and deteriorating.	Reputational, Financial, Legal	3	4	12	Asset Management Plan in place Contracts procured for Decent Homes work Spend on capital monitored through KPI regime	2	4	8
Ho10	New development not achieved	New, additional provision not delivered. Abortive costs Increased need for TA if suitable housing offers cannot be made 1-4-1 money not used within government timescale	Reputational, Financial, Legal	3	4	12	Development Manager recruited to lead programme Development Strategy in place Forward plan being developed with SMART timescales	3	4	12
Ho11	New IT system not functioning effectively	Current system not fit for purpose and it will not be possible to carry out planned service improvements	Reputational, Financial, Legal	3	4	12	Part of the Corporate Digital Transformation Strategy with input from procurement and additional resources. Project in place for enhancing the IT system (phase 2) Housing working alongside Digital Services - reporting regularly to Transformation Board, Housing Committee and the Transformation Member Working Group	2	4	8
Ho12	Council Garages not maintained	Rental income falls and asset depreciation	Financial, Life and limb	4	3	12	Garage Strategy in place - prioritising stock condition surveys and redeveloping non-performing sites	3	3	9
Ho13	Asset Management Plan is not fit for purpose	Operational and financial decisions are based on poor/incorrect data	Reputational, Financial, Legal	3	3	9	Stock condition survey data captured. Enhancement to the Asset Management System due in 2022. Better integration of the day-to-day repairs data with the asset data	1	3	3

Housing

Ho14	TA portfolio does not reflect current need	Increased expenditure on B&B (General Fund). If too many properties, rent loss If properties are too large under there will be under occupation	Reputational , Financial	3	4	12	Monitoring of need and usage. More one-bedroom properties to be brought into use and 3 beds put back into stock.	2	3	6
Ho15	A third caretaker is not appointed. Caretaking is not extended to 12 additional blocks.	Inadequate contingency for caretaking in the event of staff absence, and caretaking functions are not performed with the potential for accident or injury. Additional service charges (if introduced as at H21) not utilised as proposed.	Life and limb, Reputational , Financial, Legal	3	2	6	Recruitment changed to full time post because part time and temp roles have failed to attract applicants. An Estates Team Leader has been recruited - commenced in January 2022	2	3	6
Ho16	Allocations scheme is not fit for purpose	Council is unable to fulfil its statutory duties. Potential judicial review. Best use is not made of social housing stock in the borough.	Reputational , Financial, Legal	3	4	12	The scheme will be updated in line with legislation A revised policy has been developed and approved by the Housing Committee in July 2021	1	3	3
Ho17	Failure to implement Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Resources (including staffing and housing stock) are not used most effectively. Use of B&B and TA increase. Non-compliance with legislation and/or statutory guidance. Potential judicial review.	Reputational , Financial, Legal	3	4	12	Regular monitoring of performance against Business Unit Plan objectives is carried out and reported to the Housing Committee A number of Performance Indicators indicate direction of travel in support homeless households	2	2	4
Ho18	Fraud increases/is not tackled	Unnecessary resources lost to fraudulent activity. Perceived failure to tackle results in increased fraud	Reputational , Financial	2	3	6	Tenancy Audit function Checks made at application stage National Fraud Initiative checks of existing tenants	1	3	3

Risk matrix When assessing a risk for the first time you should assume there are no controls already in place. The subsequent assessment is completed with the controls in place. The assessor should assign values for the identified 'likelihood' of occurrence (A) and the severity of the 'Impact' (B). By multiplying 'A' and 'B' together you get the rating score, which gives an indication of how important the risk is. The thick black line is the "line of tolerance". Those risks that are plotted above the line (score 10 – 25) are "out of tolerance" and will be referred to the Corporate Risk Register for further oversight and support. For project risks not in this document, you should also flag to Applied Resilience any risks within Project Initiation Documents that are above the line (this should be done at the time of the PID being approved).

LIKELIHOOD (A)	Certain 5	5	10	15	20	25
	Probable 4	4	8	12	16	20
	Possible 3	3	6	9	12	15
	Unlikely 2	2	4	6	8	10
	Highly unlikely 1	1	2	3	4	5
		Negligible 1	Small 2	Noticeable 3	Serious + Significant 4	Critical + Considerable 5
IMPACT (B)						

Likelihood of Occurrence (A)	Severity of Impact (B)
1 – Highly unlikely to happen	1 – Negligible impact
2 – Unlikely to happen	2 – Only a small effect
3 – Possibly will happen	3 – Noticeable effect
4 – Probably will happen	4 – Serious problem with significant impact
5 – Certain to happen	5 – Critical issue and considerable impact

Green = Low risk, Amber 9 = Medium risk, Amber 10 –12 high risk, Red = High risk

Housing Committee approves if funds come from HRA (does not need to go to CMC)

Financial Governance Approvals (see relevant sections of the Councils Financial Regulations)

Financial Value	Within Budget Request	Growth Request	HRA Growth Request Only
>£5,000 -10,000	Asst Chief Executive approval as Virement	Service Committee recommends to Corporate Management Committee to approve	Housing Committee approves if funds come from HRA (does not need to go to CMC)
>£10,000- 100,000	Service Committee to approve	Service Committee recommends to Corporate Management Committee to approve	Housing Committee approves if funds come from HRA (does not need to go to CMC)
>£100,000 - 250,000	Service Committee recommends to Corporate Management Committee to approve	Service Committee recommends to Corporate Management Committee to approve	
>£250,000	Service Committee recommends to Corporate Management Committee which recommends to Full Council	Service Committee recommends to Corporate Management Committee which recommends to Full Council	

Housing Revenue Account Recharge Policy (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The Housing Revenue Account has made limited use of recharges to tenants where neglect or damage has resulted in additional work. This new Recharge Policy seeks to widen the scope of recharges, enabling tenants to access repairs that are their responsibility through the Council's contractors.

The objective of the policy is to assist tenants to maintain their homes to a good standard, to ensure repairs that are the tenant's responsibility can be carried out immediately if there is a health or safety risk even if the tenant does not have the funds.

Where tenancies are ended and the property is not left in a reasonable condition the tenant will be recharged.

This policy will include discretion so that in line with our Financial Wellbeing Strategy tenants can be supported to sustain their tenancies.

A draft Recharge Policy was considered by the Housing & Enabling Member Working Party on 12th October 2021 and was subsequently brought to this committee in November 2021 where approval was given for a consultation exercise, the results of which are summarised within this report.

The consultation showed a high level of support for recharging tenants for neglect and damage but within a context of considering individual circumstances and vulnerabilities.

Recommendation:

Members approve the Housing Revenue Account Recharge Policy, Appendix A.

1. Context

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account can make recharges where tenants are in breach of their repairing responsibilities or essential repairs are needed that are tenants' responsibility. This has been done historically on a limited basis, but officers are now seeking to widen the scope of the Recharge policy to enable tenants to access repairs and to facilitate the emerging Financial Inclusion Strategy and our tenancy sustainment work.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Recharge Policy will ensure that the Council is able to:

- Recover costs incurred due to tenant damage or neglect
- Provide a service to tenants to access repairs that are their responsibility, but they are not able to arrange.

- Ensure that the actions of a small number of tenants do not impact disproportionately on the funds available for managing and maintaining other tenants' homes.
- Recover costs of reletting properties that are left in a poor condition or not cleared of possessions when a tenancy is ended and if this is not paid restrict access to the Housing Register in future.
- Ensure that tenants can access health and safety repairs which are their legal responsibility, but they do not have funds to organise this.
- Assist a next of kin or executor to clear properties where a tenant has gone into a nursing home or passed away
- Ensure that tenants are encouraged to report repairs in their homes without being concerned this will draw attention to issues they have failed to manage or indicate potential neglect or domestic abuse.
- Support a wholistic approach to repairs and tenancy management.

2.2 The policy will be proportionate and will have links to the emerging Financial Wellbeing Strategy

2.3 Recharges will be at the Schedule of Rates Code payable to the contractor with an administration charge for arranging, managing the repair, and collecting the charges. Where applicable to the repair VAT will be charged.

2.4 The draft Recharge Policy was considered by the Housing & Enabling Member Working Party on 12th October 2021 and Housing Committee on 10th November 2021.

2.5 The Recharge Policy will be provided to all tenants at the start of their tenancy and through Housing Online Accounts, and on our web pages in a user-friendly format for tenants.

2.6 Charges for repairs will be raised within a Rechargeable Repairs Account linked to the Rent Account within the main NEC Housing system enabling tenants to pay by direct debit over a period if financial circumstances require this.

3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 Under all Tenancy Agreements issued by Runnymede there are landlord and tenant responsibilities and the tenant must keep the property in good condition including the garden and exterior of the property. Recharges will be made in line with this legal agreement.

4. **Resource implications/Value for Money (where applicable)**

4.1 In order that Housing staff can ensure that the appropriate charges (linked to Schedule of rates & prevailing VAT rates) are recharged, and that Tenants are repaying the charges in line with agreements this income will be detailed against tenants Housing accounts within the Northgate system.

4.2 Periodic outputs from the Northgate system will enable the appropriate sums (vat) to be passed onto Customs & Excise.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Tenants were consulted extensively when the current agreement was introduced in 2014. Section 5 of the Tenancy Agreement sets out obligations in relation to: Repairs, improvements and alterations to your home. The proposed Recharge Policy introduces the facility to allow tenants in certain circumstances to have work completed to assist them to comply with their obligations and to pay for this either fully in advance or where appropriate by incremental payments. The Tenancy Agreement states:

1 (f) If this agreement says that we will charge you, for example to carry out work or clear rubbish, we will do so in line with our recharge policy which will be summarised in your tenancy handbook.

4.3 You must also pay any rent or other charges you owe us. Payments made by you will first be made to pay off any former debts from previous tenancies such as rent arrears or rechargeable repairs and finally rent for the property to which this agreement relates.

- 5.2 The policy complies with the existing Tenancy Agreement but provides additional access to repairs for tenants.
- 5.3 If tenants fail to pay their recharges this can be enforced subject to management approval as a breach of tenancy. In all instances a proportionate approach will be taken with repayment options available in line with the financial circumstances of the tenant. However as with other breaches of tenancy the sanction will be applied if the tenant refuses to engage and meet their obligations.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been carried out and the Council's Equalities Group have determined that a full assessment would not be required. All potential issues would be covered within a robust procedure and with regular monitoring to ensure that charges and discretionary relief are applied consistently.

7. Environmental Implications

- 7.1 Properties that are not maintained impact on the local area and cause distress for neighbours. When gardens have been allowed to overgrow or have been used for waste items, they cannot be used safely for children and this policy will enable the Council to arrange for works to be carried out for tenants to ensure that the matter is resolved.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The Consultation was open from 11th November 2021 to 1st February 2022. An easy-to-read version of the draft recharge policy was published on the Council's website. This contained the full policy and an online survey. A dedicated email address was available for tenants to communicate directly on the policy. Emails were sent to 1,841 tenants to ask for their views on the policy directing them to the webpage and online survey.
- 8.2 The RCRA were consulted on the policy, and it was posted on their social media. Six tenants emailed the Listening inbox with their views on the recharge policy, who were all replied to with their questions answered.

8.3 A summary of the 80 responses received is attached at Appendix B showing that there was very strong support for the use of recharges but concern that this should be proportionate, flexible and the individual circumstances of tenants should be taken into consideration.

9. **Conclusions**

9.1 A new Recharge Policy will ensure costs are recovered where appropriate but tenants can also benefit from the wider scope of accessing rechargeable repairs that they can pay for or for which they can get discretionary assistance.

9.2 Members are asked to approve the Housing Revenue Account Recharge Policy for implementation

(To Resolve)

Background papers

None

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Recharge Policy

DRAFT

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 A key activity of the housing service is to maintain our stock to the highest standard possible by managing the repairs & maintenance budget and using the rent we collect effectively. We recognise that most tenants act responsibly and maintain their homes to a satisfactory standard and condition but on occasion circumstances lead to repairs being required which would otherwise be the tenant's responsibility. When this happens, we may need to act to prevent the property from deteriorating further by undertaking the repair and then recovering the cost from tenants.

1.2 Whilst the majority of tenants do keep their homes in good condition there are others who do cause damage deliberately or through neglectful acts. When repairs are required we call these rechargeable repairs. We do not want tenants who look after their homes to share the cost of repairs for those who do not.

1.3 Tenants should be encouraged to report accidental damage or health and safety matters to the Council even if it is the tenant's responsibility if they are unable to resolve this themselves. The Council will take a proportionate approach with the primary aim of ensuring that tenants live in homes in a good state of repair.

1.4 This Policy covers the subject of recharging for repairs and other reasons associated with housing management. This policy is intended to apply to all Council tenants (where the Council accepts that it is the tenant's direct landlord) of whatever legal tenure they occupy their premises at the time when any damage to the Council's property (to include land as well as premises) is caused.

1.5 The Recharge Policy to tenants for repairs undertaken at their former or current property and will be provided to tenants at the start and at the point of notice to end the tenancy either by the Council, the tenant, or their representative. Unless the tenant has been approved for written communication documents will be available to them through their online Housing Account.

1.6 This policy will not provide a comprehensive list of potential rechargeable repairs but outlines the approach that the Council will take to ensuring that properties are well maintained and safe, that tenants comply with their obligations to maintain their home under the tenancy agreement and where this is not done the Council has the ability to enforce compliance and ensure homes are not allowed to deteriorate. At all times the Council will balance our statutory obligations with our role as a social landlord and take into consideration the needs of individual residents.

1.7 A user friendly version of the policy will be produced and will be available on request, on the Council's website and through Housing Online accounts when launched.

2. Aim

2.1 The Council aims to deliver 'Value for Money' services and ensure maximum and efficient use of Housing Revenue Account funds.

- We will be consistent and fair in the treatment of all tenants and leaseholders
- We will aim to raise recharges promptly and accurately with the minimum of administration cost.
- Recharges will be set to ensure that tenants are covering the cost of carrying out these “additional” repairs including staffing costs for raising, managing, post inspecting and invoicing the item, this will be monitored to ensure that this service is self-funding but does not result in the tenant paying more than the true cost to the Council.
- We will ensure that tenants with a disability will not be unfairly penalised under this policy
- Tenants who are suffering from financial hardship will be able to access repairs to their homes with incremental payments.
- Tenants who are the victims of crime or domestic abuse will be able to access repairs such as lock changes and repairs to doors to ensure their home is secure.
- Tenants will be encouraged to report repairs even where they are caused by neglect or wilful damage and work with the Council to restore their home to an acceptable condition.

3. Potential Recharge Reasons

3.1 The general circumstances where repairs are likely to be recharged are:

- The repair is caused by neglect, wilful/malicious damage, misuse, and accident
- Repairs for Tenant’s Obligations following Notice to Vacate/Possession Order/ Eviction
- Repairs for Tenant’s Obligations in connection with Mutual Exchanges
- Repairs for Tenant’s Obligations in connection with Transfers
- Repairs that are the tenant’s responsibility, but they are unable to carry them out and for health and safety / safeguarding reasons the Council agrees to carry out the works and recharge.

4. Rechargeable Repairs

4.1 Runnymede aims to promote a culture of providing homes with rent levels which remain affordable and in return we expect our tenants to act responsibly and look after their homes.

4.2 The following list are repairs which would attract a charge to the current or former tenant of the Council property where damage or neglect necessitates additional repairs.

- Wilful damage e.g., replace broken door damaged by someone in the household or a visit,
- Remedy work carried out by the tenant which has damaged the fabric/ structure of the Property

- Neglect e.g., repairs required further to rubbish removal, missing keys (including windows locks),
- Clear blocked sink, drain, bath and toilet of e.g., nappies, toilet fresheners, etc. removal of fire doors, frozen/burst pipes, etc
- Misuse - e.g. – replace tiling, repair damage to walls (graffiti), allowing water damage through failure to report a leak, broken kitchen units.
- Damaged decoration (related to start of tenancy)
- Accident - e.g. – damage or loss of function to a fixture and/or fitting that occurs suddenly as a result of an unexpected and non-deliberate external action e.g., broken sink or bath due to an item being dropped in it.
- Tenants will also be responsible for work that may be required when moving out of their home in order to bring it up to an acceptable standard for it to be re-let. This includes cleaning of the property, replacing missing fixtures and fittings, clearing gardens.

4.3 The Council understands that from time-to-time repairs may be required that are not the landlord's responsibility and this may be difficult for some tenants to organise or pay for. One of the aims of this policy is to ensure that tenants are able to access good quality repairs and maintain their homes so that they are complying with their Tenancy Agreement. Tenants in breach of their repairing and maintaining obligations may be offered the services of a rechargeable repair and if they fail to remedy the defect will be served a Notice

5. Garden Maintenance

5.1 Tenants are responsible for maintaining their gardens (where they are part of the tenancy, not communal spaces). This means keeping plant growth under control so that it does not encroach onto neighbouring properties. Trees must be safely maintained, and water features should be safe for pets and small children.

5.2 Lawns should be maintained, and growth must not be allowed to cause damage to fences, windows, wastewater pipes, drains or pathways etc. Maintenance of gardens is a tenancy condition and in exceptional circumstances where tenants are unable to manage their gardens the Council can arrange for a contractor to carry out the work on payment by the tenant of the relevant charges. Tenants will be encouraged to move to a more manageable home.

5.3 Where Health and Safety concerns are raised about the condition of a garden the Council may carry out works and recharge the tenant if the item is their responsibility.

6. Recharges – Housing Management General

6.1 Recharges may also be appropriate for other reasons associated with housing management

- Damage identified following routine property inspections
- Mutual exchange inspections
- Unauthorised alterations identified during routine property inspections
- Rubbish, fly tipping, blocking refuse chutes
- Excessive hoarding of items within the property
- Damage to fences and gates to car parks
- Damage to controlled access systems
- Damage to TV aerials
- Gas servicing access difficulties that result in forced entry and/or a lock change being requested
- Recharges by gas contractor when called out to calls that result from no meter credit, turned down thermostat, tenant damage to heating system fixtures and fittings
- Dog fouling within or upon the demised premises and communal areas
- Graffiti within or upon the demised premises and communal areas
- Misuse of recycling bins
- Garage evictions (to include clearance costs and lock change costs)
- Removal of garden shrubs and trees
- Removal of garden rubbish
- Tidying of gardens where it is the responsibility of tenant(s)

7. Hoarding

7.1 Hoarding can be a complex issue to manage, tenants will be supported to gradually reduce hoarding and officers will have discretion to recharge a proportionate amount for clearances if the resident is on a low income without savings. The primary concern will be for the welfare of the resident and agreeing a manageable reduction in the problem.

8. Charges on Termination of a Tenancy

8.1 When the Council receives or gives notice to end a tenancy, before the end date of the tenancy a technical or management officer will arrange to visit and carry out an inspection which will be photographed and all rechargeable repairs will be identified and the tenant put on notice that if they are not carried out to an acceptable standard will be done by the Council at the end of the tenancy and will be recharged to the tenant or their estate. This will be known as a "Notice Inspection" All properties should be inspected before the tenant leaves and where the tenant is transferring to another social housing tenancies the new home will be held or withdrawn if the level of rechargeable repairs is unacceptable.

8.2 When a tenant signs the tenancy agreement for a new property, they will be provided with a condition report including photographs of each room. The Council has a Void Standard to which each property will be brought. On termination of the tenancy the tenant must return the property to the Council in the same condition, other than reasonable wear and tear. A check out report will be completed in the same format and any additional cost caused by tenant, neglect, unreasonable condition of the property or damage will be recharged to the tenant. This will include recharges to the estate of a

deceased tenant. Their representatives will be notified on receipt of the death certificate that the estate should not be disposed on until such time as the Council confirms any applicable charges.

9. Charging Policy

9.1 Where any work is carried out by the Estate Services staff, it will be at the actual hourly cost to the Council (per operative time allocated and cost of material) plus a % (or fixed rate) admin fee. This may be to external areas, communal areas or within an individual property.

9.2 Where works require an external or internal contractor, the total costs incurred by the Council will be invoiced and will be re-charged in full with an admin fee.

10. Estate Services Staff

10.1 Where any work is carried out by the Estate Services staff or a contractor, it will be at the actual hourly cost to the per operative and cost of material) plus a % (or fixed rate) admin fee. This may be to external areas, communal areas or within an individual property.

10.2 Where works require an external contractor, the total costs incurred by the Council will be invoiced and will be re-charged in full with an admin fee.

10.3 Examples of works that Estate Services staff may carry out for which the fee above will be levied are:

- Rubbish removal
- Graffiti cleaning,
- General cleaning after rubbish removal,
- Cleaning of carpets (Temporary Accommodation)
- Additional refuse collection due to contaminated recycling
- Dog fouling
- Cleaning of communal areas in shared houses.
- Bulk items left in communal areas or refuse areas. Only general household refuse is covered by the Waste service funded though Council Tax. Bulk items must be removed like any other resident of the borough.

10.4 Unless there are exceptional circumstances such charges will be paid in full prior to the work being carried out.

11. Recharge Categories – Current Tenants

11.1 When a repair is requested that is not the landlord responsibility arranging a rechargeable repair will fall into two categories

11.2 Category 1 Health & Safety where the Council may arrange the repair once the tenant has contracted to pay the recharge and has set up a direct debit

11.3 Category 2 Non urgent items which can wait until the charge is paid or depending on the item following a financial assessment when 25% of the charge has been paid.

11.4 The Recharge procedure will outline repairs that can be carried out without the full cost being paid, where the ability to carry out a normal life with the property is hindered, e.g., broken door to a bedroom.

12. Insurance

12.1 Runnymede Borough Council are only responsible for undertaking any necessary repairs to the building; tenants are strongly advised to take out a comprehensive contents policy to insure their private possessions and belongings and to cover damage caused by overflowing sinks, defective washing machines etc which will be the responsibility of the tenant.

12.2 Damage caused to another property such as to a property below will be the financial responsibility of the causing tenant, e.g., repair of decorations to a flat where a washing machine has leaked into the ceiling of the property below.

13. Accidental Damage

13.1 Where damage has been caused to a property accidentally and where rechargeable Repair is agreed, an officer may give due consideration to the incident and the tenant's account of the incidents before recommending discretion to a senior officer.

14. Fair Wear and Tear

14.1 Where damage has been caused to a property and where a rechargeable repair is appropriate, provided that the damage was only caused further to the reasonable use of the premises by the tenant and the ordinary operation of natural forces (i.e., the passage of time), an officer may give due consideration to the tenant's account of the cause of the damage before consulting with their Line Manager to decide whether the Council would apply discretion and not levy any charges for the Rechargeable

15. Discretion

15.1 Runnymede Borough Council may decide not to recharge in certain instances. This will not always be applicable and if the following circumstance apply but if the tenant is in receipt of additional benefits and has funds available discretionary assistance will not be given solely on the basis of a disability or condition:

- Those with Learning Disabilities living alone
- Registered Physical Disability that prevents tenant carrying out their obligated repairs and they live alone.
- Debilitating Medical or Mental Health condition, and living alone
- Households that have been the victim of crime or Domestic Abuse (where the perpetrator is not living in the property)

- In addition, an officer may recommend a relaxation of the recharge policy for a tenant who has an excellent record of conduct during their tenancy

15.2 All potential rechargeable items will be identified on the housing system. When a recharge is applied or waived the system will require the reason for this to be recorded. Recharges will be monitored to ensure that they are being applied and waived with consistency and are not being disproportionately levied on any particular cohort of residents.

16. Former Tenants

16.1 Action will be taken to recover recharge debts from former tenants, the debt will be considered a Housing related debt and will be considered in assessing future applications under the Housing Allocation Scheme. Debts will be subject to the Corporate Debt Recovery Procedure ensuring that residents with multiple debts and a low income are able to make management payment plans.

17. Recovery

17.1 There will be a recovery policy for debts to the Housing Revenue Account, this will cover recharges, court costs, rent and any other sundry debts which are outstanding.

17.2 Appeals against decisions to levy Rechargeable Repairs can be made to the Head of Housing and Business Planning or Head of Housing Technical Services. Appeals will be considered where the policy has not been adhered to, and financial hardship will not necessarily result in charges being waived on tenant responsibilities.

18. Human Rights

18.1 The Human Rights Act 1998, made the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) directly enforceable in UK law. The operation of the recharge policy must be compatible with the Articles of the ECHR, most notably Article 8 by which everyone has the right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence. The Council will continue to take this into consideration in determining whether to carry out rechargeable repairs.

19. Equalities Implications

19.1 In producing this document an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is available as a separate document.

19.2 An EIA is a way of assessing the impact, or likely impact, that a particular policy, procedure or decision will have on particular groups.

20. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	February 22	First draft		Maggie Ward	

DRAFT

Feedback on Recharge Policy

Information

80

Total Responses

Dates:

Date Opened: 11th November 2021

Date Closed: 1st February 2022

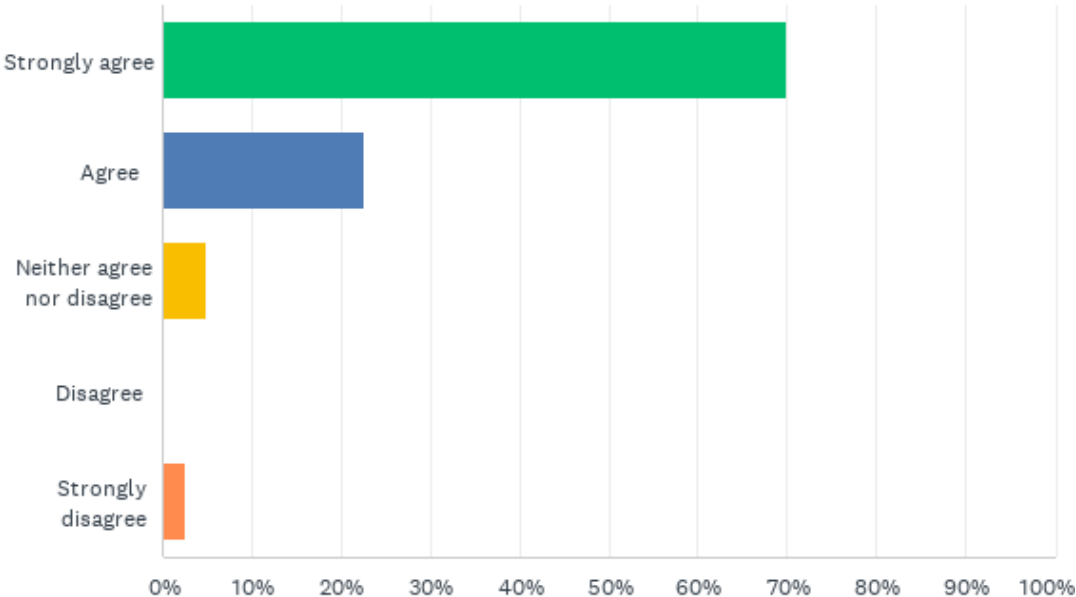
We produced an easy-to-read version of the draft recharge policy on our website. This contained the full policy, the dates the consultation was open, an email address for tenants to consult with directly, and an online survey.

We emailed 1,841 tenants to ask for their views on the policy and directed them to the webpage and online survey.

RCRA were consulted on the policy, who posted it on their social media.

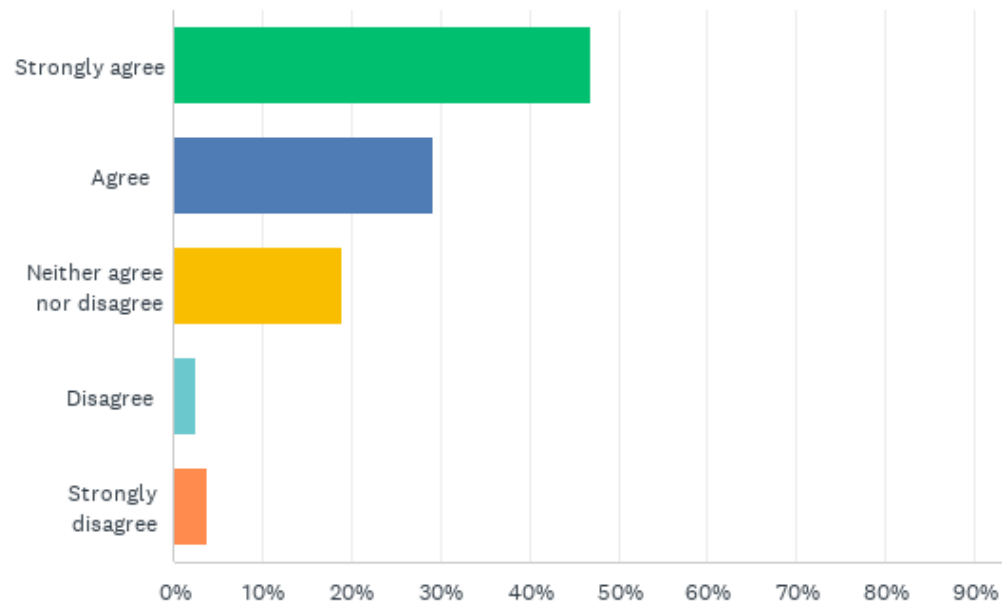
6 tenants emailed the Listening inbox with their views on the recharge policy, who were all replied to with their questions answered.

Q1: To what extent do you agree that tenants should be recharged for neglecting or wilfully damaging their home?



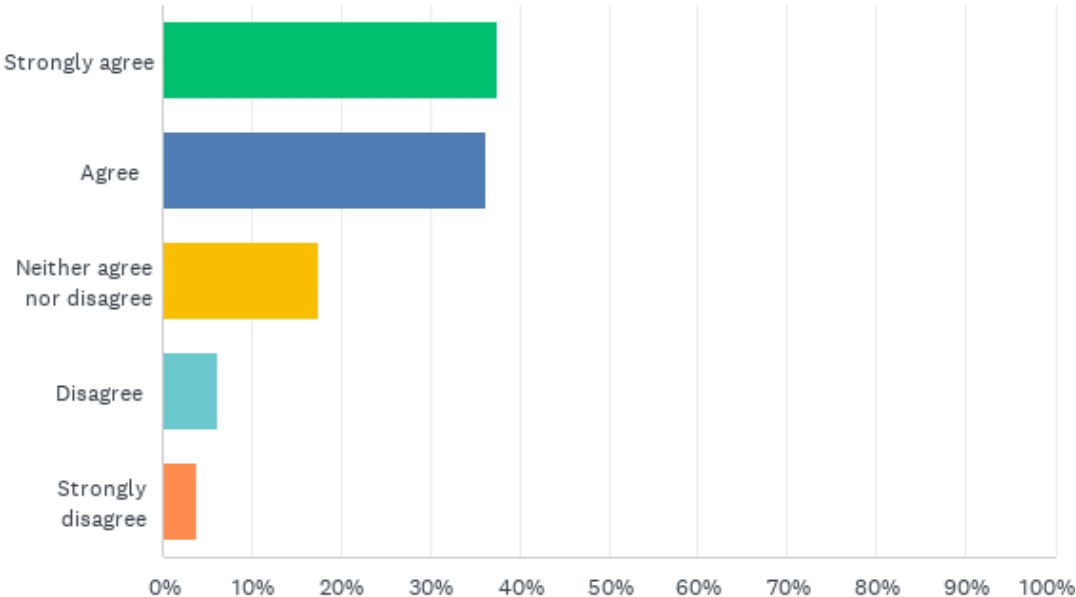
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	70.00%	56
Agree	22.50%	18
Neither agree nor disagree	5.00%	4
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	2.50%	2
Total Respondents: 80		

Q2: To what extent do you agree that tenants should be recharged if they do not maintain their garden?



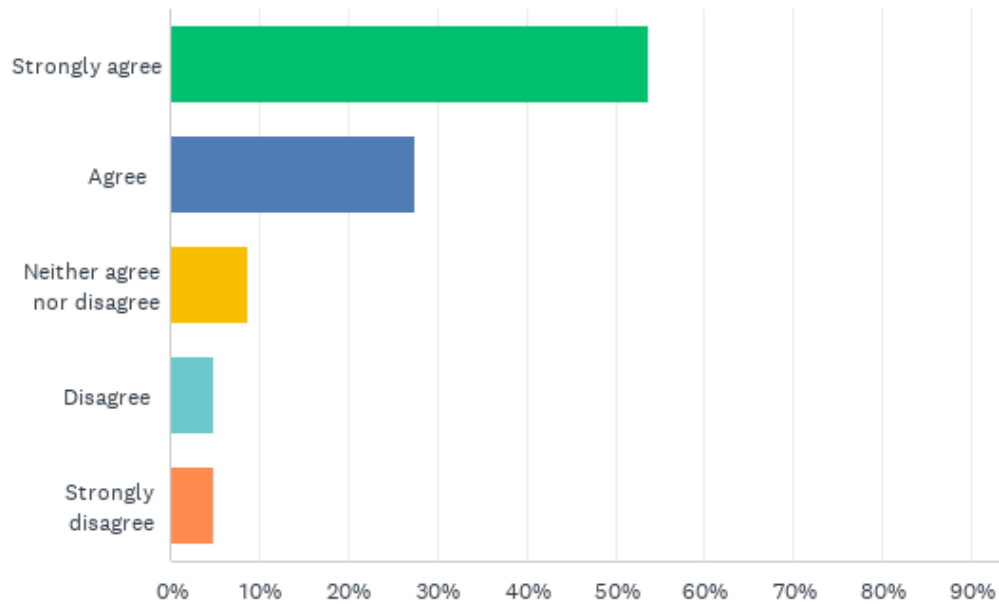
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	46.84%	37
Agree	29.11%	23
Neither agree nor disagree	18.99%	15
Disagree	2.53%	2
Strongly disagree	3.80%	3
Total Respondents: 79		

Q3: To what extent do you agree that the Council should offer a service for tenants who struggle to organise or pay for a repair that the tenants are responsible for, where the Council would organise the repair for the tenant and recharge them?



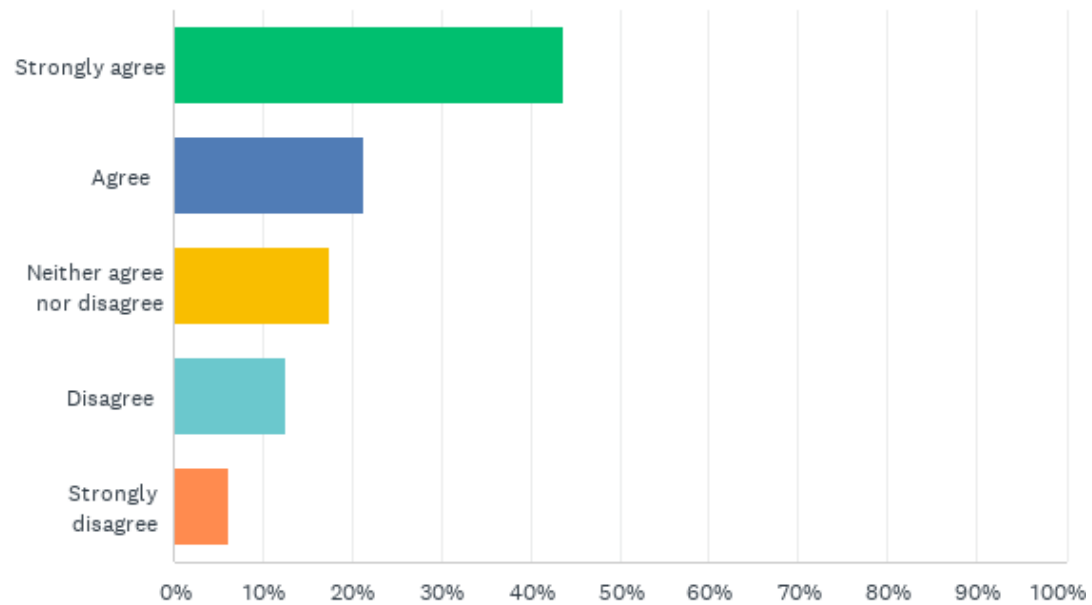
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	37.50%	30
Agree	36.25%	29
Neither agree nor disagree	17.50%	14
Disagree	6.25%	5
Strongly disagree	3.75%	3
Total Respondents: 80		

Q4: To what extent do you agree that tenants should be recharged for alterations and DIY that has damaged the fabric/structure of the property?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	53.75%	43
Agree	27.50%	22
Neither agree nor disagree	8.75%	7
Disagree	5.00%	4
Strongly disagree	5.00%	4
TOTAL		80

Q5: To what extent do you agree that when tenants move to a new social housing property, their new home should be withheld until they have paid for the rechargeable repairs?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	43.75%	35
Agree	21.25%	17
Neither agree nor disagree	17.50%	14
Disagree	12.50%	10
Strongly disagree	6.25%	5
Total Respondents: 80		

Are there any comments that you would like to add in regards to the Recharge Policy?

- If tenants struggle to pay due to mental/emotional/health/disability problems they should not be recharged.
- Each case needs to be treated differently - some people may be unable to arrange help etc - however more needs to be done for dirty messy homes inside and out
- All things need to be thoroughly investigated before a recharge is given, there maybe underlying issues that need looking in to i.e. depression, mental health and physical health problems.
- If people damage or neglect a council property that they can call home. They should pay. If it's not their fault or if there is a valid reason then maybe they should be excused
- It depends of the health and wealth of a tenant, not all tenants understand everything....I had help from family and not everyone has family to fall back on as I don't now.
- It's not all so black and white. I think the individuals who struggle should be helped out. If they are deliberately causing damage repeatedly then I think they should be charged and next property held until it is sorted out
- If house is neglected ie elderly person, then they should not be charged they should be supported for house and garden. However able bodied tenants should pay or be given support to show them what to do.
- In some of the questions it depends on the circumstances of the tenants.

Suggestions

- Regarding point 3; If someone is unable to pay for a repair, they're unlikely to be able to pay the recharge, unless you're able to contract it out significantly cheaper or offer instalments. Regarding point 5; Wouldn't this risk leaving people in poverty, homeless? If someone is outright refusing or intentionally causing the damage etc, then I agree entirely. Some people need protecting, and you play a significant role in that.
- Yes I would like an inspection made of properties inside and out....
- If more "problem" tenants were visited i.e. without a date/time then hopefully reducing the neglect of properties...
- It mentions that tenants would be recharged for blocked toilets etc - there are a huge number of phone calls through to Customer Services with tenants reporting blocked toilets and the tenant's never get recharged for this. This could prove some 'grey area' if the council start saying tenants need to be recharged for blocked toilets but the tenants saying they have never been charged for an unblock of a toilet. Personally I think that blocked toilets should be the tenant's responsibility any way as it seems a bit of a waste of money, time and resources to keep sending out contractors to unblock a toilet when all it needs is for the tenant to use something to push through the blockage.
- Please confirm that on vacating the property - where stating - leaving in good condition - please make clear whether this includes redecoration of the property concerned. Where work has to be undertaken on behalf of the tenant - by offering this service - please ensure that the costs for this work to be carried are reasonable and in line with the tenant's ability to pay.
- [...]I would like to see more reuse and recycling of unwanted objects

Sample of tenants agreeing

- Tenants are made aware when taking on a property the rules laid out by the council and should be held accountable when they break that contract in any way.
- this should all be chargeable... so yes they should be charged and not expect the council or new tenants to bear the cost.
- Properties should be left at least in the same state as given by the council. If this will be done it would make the process a lot easier for everyone?!
- It's important that people are responsible for and take pride in their property I have noticed that when gardens are cleared items are removed i.e. sheds that may be of use to the next tenant I would like to see more reuse and recycling of unwanted objects
- In order for Tenants to appreciate, and respect their homes, they should have more responsibility for them, and be held accountable, the Recharge policy is necessary

Sample of tenants disagreeing

- This policy is disgusting and yet another example of the council seeking to punish tenants, make them the enemy and to make yet more money out of them. I strongly disagree with every point. This policy represents no benefit to the tenant and yet more advantage and power given to the council. Shameful.
- This policy targets the most vulnerable tenants as it is those Tenant's that do not have the insight or ability to manage their homes to your standards. I feel they have done the best they can as we all have. There are complex reasons why people live in social housing, some not obvious. I feel the cost should be absorbed by the many rather than punishing the unfortunate few.

Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The proposed Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to meaningful engagement. With an action plan and examples of engagement methods to be adopted, it will provide an additional mechanism for continuous service improvements, with the aim of increasing tenant and leaseholder satisfaction.

Recommendation:

That Members approve the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy for tenants and leaseholders (Appendix A) for immediate adoption.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 At its meeting on 10th November 2021, this Committee approved the request for Officers to consult on a Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy. The consultation took place between 12th November 2021 and 14th January 2022. This report presents the findings of this consultation and recommends that Members approve the Strategy for adoption.

2. The Purpose of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy

- 2.1 The proposed Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to listening to tenants and leaseholders and to take account of their views. Registered social landlords are required to demonstrate they have sought out and considered ways to improve tenant engagement and tailored their engagement for their local circumstances. One of the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (detailed in the performance report at item 15 on this agenda) is that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them. In addition to the new regulatory requirement, there is a strong business case for meaningful engagement with customers as the information obtained leads to targeted investment, more effective processes, efficiency savings, better services, increased satisfaction and motivated staff, all part of a cycle of continuous improvement.

2.2 Consultation on the Draft Strategy

- 2.2.1 Consultation on the draft Strategy took place between 12th November 2021 and 14th January 2022. A new 'Have Your Say' page on the Council's website was developed, with the purpose and a summary of the Strategy presented to encourage feedback. The web page also contained the full draft strategy and a new dedicated email address for engagement called 'Listening@Runnymede.gov.uk'

- 2.2.2 The other consultation methods were:

Email to 1,841 tenants signposting to the website. 1,138 tenants opened this email, 182 clicked to read more.

203 letters posted to IRL residents (arrangements for workshops cancelled due to Covid restrictions)

Letters sent with confirmation of repairs raised and rent statements, with a QR code to the website
RCRA Facebook post
All housing staff email 'signature' highlighting the strategy consultation
Forum of Engagement Officers with other Registered Provider landlords
Survey emailed to all Housing Committee Members

2.2.3 The full results of the consultation are presented at Appendix B, but can be summarised as:

	Satisfied or very satisfied
1. How satisfied are you that the draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy will improve the way the Housing services at Runnymede Borough Council listens to your views?	51.62%
2. How satisfied are you that the draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy will improve the way the Housing service at Runnymede Borough Council will keep you informed about things that might affect you as a resident?	64.52%
3. How satisfied are you with the opportunities of involvement available to tenants and leaseholders, to participate in the housing services decision-making process?	64.52%
4. Overall, how satisfied are you with the draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy?	61.29%

2.2.4 A number of comments highlighted a perception that the Council needs to not only involve and listen to residents, but also communicate and demonstrate that we are doing so. This approach will be adopted as the Strategy, if approved, is rolled out.

2.3 The initial draft Strategy was presented to Housing Committee in November 2021. The new Engagement and Inclusion Officer has launched a number of new initiatives and learning from this and from the consultation informed a review of the draft strategy. The following amendments have been made:

- Added new actions to the Action Plan to help meet specific objectives, e.g. Involvement in reviewing policies and input on transactional survey questions.
- To demonstrate the action taken in response to engagement, the website will have pages dedicated to project and consultation results so residents can view feedback and next action steps.
- Tenants using the 'Listening@runnymede.gov.uk' address will receive both an initial response and an update on how to view the results of consultation they contributed to.
- As focus groups have proved difficult to recruit to so far, opportunities for one-to-one discussions and qualitative interviews will also be available.
- As some tenants indicated they would like more information before getting involved, we will provide more specific information on the menu of opportunities, e.g. terms of reference, responsibilities and likely commitment required.
- More convenient engagement opportunities that require less time commitment e.g. RCRA Facebook group, 'Be Heard from Home' surveys, Digital Champions, Resident Reader etc.
- Proposals for digital skills training and promotion of Housing Online.

2.4 The draft strategy is at appendix A.

2.5 Members are invited to approve the Strategy for immediate adoption.

3. Monitoring of Delivery and Next Steps

3.1 If approved, the Strategy will be adopted immediately. A Steering Group has already met and will continue to drive the implementation of the Strategy's action plan. The Strategy will be launched on the website, the new Housing Online portal, social media and upcoming consultation events. It will be featured in the tenants' annual report in September and in newsletters. It will also be launched to leaseholders, with the new and enhanced Northgate modules expected to make engagement with this group more effective.

3.2 Performance against the targets in the strategy will be reported to the Council's Housing Committee as part of the annual review of the implementation of the strategy. The strategy will be reviewed within the next three years.

4. Policy framework implications

4.1 The Corporate Plan commits the Council to empowering communities to enable them to make decisions which impact on their future. This strategy supports and facilitates tenants and leaseholders in shaping the Council's services to meet their needs. Implementation of the Strategy is included as a project in the Business Centre Plan 2022 – 23.

5. Resource implications/Value for Money

5.1 When approving the HRA budgets for 2022/23 at the January meeting, this Committee approved an increased provision in the Tenant Participation budget to include additional engagement costs including a STAR survey. The appointment of the Engagement and Inclusion Officer was approved by this Committee in March 2021, and the annual budgets already include an ongoing annual provision for sending out newsletters and the annual report to tenants.

6. Legal implications

6.1 This Strategy arises from the 'Tenancy Involvement and Empowerment Standard', as one of the 'Consumer Standards' against which the Regulator of Social Housing assesses Registered Providers, including this local housing authority.

6.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty, under the Equalities Act 2010, requires public authorities in exercise of their functions to:

- Eliminate discrimination.
- Foster good relations
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons protected under the Act and those not.

The Strategy can be seen as implementing, in particular, the last of these by aiming to extend meaningful engagement opportunities to groups who have been underrepresented.

7. Equality implications

7.1 The Equality Impact Assessment screening of this Strategy found that it aims to remove the barriers of engagement for groups who have been underrepresented -

including young people and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds - and create meaningful engagement opportunities for them to raise concerns and issues that impact them. It is expected to have a positive impact on all tenants and leaseholders.

8. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

8.1 There are no identified environmental, sustainability or biodiversity implications associated with this strategy.

9. Other implications

9.1 The Strategy will promote social inclusion. Data Protection issues will be addressed in line with legislation and best practice. Communications plans for the launch of the strategy and for specific events and initiatives will be agreed in consultation with the Head of Public Relations and Marketing.

10. Timetable for Implementation

10.1 If approved, it is proposed that the strategy will be adopted immediately.

11. Conclusions

11.1 Following a period of consultation, the new draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy sets out an Action Plan to improve meaningful engagement. Implementation of the strategy is expected to lead to service improvements that deliver increased customer satisfaction and better value for money.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None

Appendix A

Runnymede Borough Council

Listening and Accountable:

D R A F T

Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement

Strategy 2021– 2026

Contents

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Understanding more about our tenants and leaseholders	4
Measuring Achievements	5
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Introduction

At Runnymede we want to improve our approach to listening to and working with tenants and leaseholders. We aim to create a culture that values tenant and leaseholder engagement and places the voices of our customers at the centre of the Council's strategic direction and priorities. We understand that listening to tenants and leaseholders gives us the best insight into their priorities and the quality of our services. This enables us to make improvements that deliver increased customer satisfaction and better value for money.

We want our Council tenants and leaseholders to recognise that we are really listening and trying to improve. We are committed to demonstrating how we are achieving this, and we will show how services have developed as a result of us engaging together.

Aims

1. A culture that recognises and values tenant and leaseholder engagement
2. Improved customer satisfaction as we learn from service user feedback
3. Better value for money as we focus on tenants' and leaseholders' priorities
4. Increasing number of tenants and leaseholders engaging with us, especially from groups currently underrepresented
5. Removal of barriers to engagement and increased diversity of residents who chose to engage
6. A more focused engagement approach developed through customer insight.

Context

The Regulator of Social Housing Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard requires landlords to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the development of policies, decision making, scrutiny, right to manage and agreeing local offers. This strategy aims to ensure that all aspects of the standard are incorporated into the delivery of our housing services. The forthcoming Consumer Standard will also see the Regulator focus on the level of engagement between landlords and tenants – such as how complaints are handled and the role that social landlords play in making information available to their tenants.

The Building Safety Bill is expected to legislate for better information and a stronger voice for residents of high rise buildings.

The Equality Act 2010 says public authorities must consider the need to advance equality of opportunity. This strategy aims to extend meaningful engagement opportunities to groups who have been underrepresented, including young people and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. By demonstrating the value of really listening to our customers, it will also celebrate diversity and help to address the stigma experienced by some social housing tenants.

The Corporate Plan commits the Council to empowering communities to enable them to make decisions which impact on their future. This strategy supports and facilitates the tenant and leaseholder community within Runnymede to shape the services that meet their needs. It has been developed in consultation with council tenants, leaseholders and Local Councillors.

The Council's Housing Strategy aims to work with partners to deliver:

1. Access to affordable housing for local people

2. Good quality affordable housing for local people
3. Increased provision of affordable housing including low-cost home ownership
4. Specialist housing to meet the identified needs of local people.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan contains the following themes and ambitions:

1. Optimising Income and Efficiencies
2. Good Quality Housing
3. New Council owned homes
4. Review and modernise provision for older tenants
5. Well managed neighbourhoods.

Objectives

The Council is committed to showing how we listen to tenants and leaseholders and take account of their views. We will do this by:

- Providing a range of opportunities to engage, with appropriate support systems to meet the diverse needs of tenants and leaseholders and by removing barriers to engagement
- Encouraging as many tenants and leaseholders as possible to participate, particularly from groups who are underrepresented
- Demonstrating that we welcome feedback, sharing results, explaining decisions and giving examples of where we have learnt from engagement and made changes, and ensure this information is easily accessible
- Named staff acting as engagement champions
- Supporting solutions devised by the community without our involvement
- Create opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be empowered
- Co-creation of policies and services
- Improving insight into tenants and leaseholders experience of our services,
- Collecting feedback to measure how successful we have been in achieving these ambitions.

Better value for money by focusing on customer priorities

Investing in our tenants and leaseholders' priorities will increase customer satisfaction. We will undertake a regular Satisfaction of Tenants and Residents (STAR) survey and introduce a range of transactional and perception surveys of customers using our housing services to identify where our strengths and weaknesses are. We will be pro-active in gaining understanding of our customers' priorities and their views on how our services are developing by using methods such as one-to-one interviews and focus groups. These interactions will use the most appropriate channels including digital and social media.

Understanding more about our tenants and leaseholders

Traditional forms of involvement can result in a 'one size fits all' approach that fails to gather useful data and can be expensive for the landlord to administer. In addition to perception surveys required by regulation, we want to ask recent service users about their experiences to enable us to collect good quality data on what is working well and what is not. We also want to ensure we proactively contact tenants and leaseholders from traditionally under-represented groups, using the most appropriate methods.

To do this we need good quality profiling and contact information. We have started to identify gaps in our current data and seek to complete them within two years from the publication of this strategy, by maximising all the opportunities to interact with our customers. We will then ensure all data is protected and kept up to date.

Measuring Achievements

We will set targets to demonstrate that we are increasingly reaching a larger proportion of residents and gathering a cross section of views. These will include:

- Number of contacts we have with our tenants and leaseholders designed to improve our services, for example satisfaction surveys
- Number of tenants and leaseholders who open an online account for transactions
- Percentage increase in engagement with under-represented groups
- Number of customers interacting with our social media platforms
- Number of tenants and groups actively involved in improving their estates and neighbourhoods
- Publishing the outcomes of consultation on the Council's website.

A dedicated system will help monitor whether tenants and leaseholders receive the information they need for meaningful engagement, to the degree they want and in the most appropriate way.

Performance against these targets and the Action Plan on page 5 will be reported to the Council's Housing Committee as part of the annual review of the implementation of our strategy. This strategy will be reviewed within the next 3 years.

Related Strategies

Financial Wellbeing Strategy

Digital Transformation Programme

Next Steps

A Steering Group will implement the Action Plan below:

Action Plan

Aim	Where we are now	What we are going to do to make a difference	Where we will be in 2024
<p>A culture that recognises and values tenant and leaseholder engagement</p>	<p>Traditional methods of tenant involvement offer limited insight into satisfaction with the services provided</p>	<p>Transparency and honest information sharing to build trust and sustain relationships</p> <p>Ensure projects consider engagement early in the design process, with sufficient priority for it to influence outcomes.</p> <p>Ensure all policy and procedure reviews consider tenant involvement in the early design process.</p> <p>Staff training, briefings and staff engagement champions so all staff have a clear understanding of the benefits of engagement and how their role should listen to residents' voices.</p> <p>Promote digital engagement, with traditional methods as appropriate.</p> <p>Carry out an annual review of the implementation of this Strategy and report progress to Housing Committee.</p> <p>Inform staff of the outcome and influences of engagement throughout and after each project, as a frequent reminder of its importance and value.</p>	<p>Tenant and leaseholder engagement embedded in service provision.</p> <p>Staff Engagement Champion in each service area.</p> <p>TPAS accreditation.</p>
<p>Improved customer satisfaction as we learn from feedback</p>	<p>Very limited data on satisfaction</p>	<p>Surveys of the customer experience following a transaction e.g. repair.</p> <p>Focus groups of customers who have used a service e.g. renewal of bathroom/kitchen, in a variety of formats including online and social media.</p> <p>Undertake STAR and other perception surveys</p> <p>Maintain a log of rectified complaints and use it as a tool to learn from our mistakes.</p>	<p>Regular reporting on a suite of indicators with targets (for example 90% satisfaction with landlord, 20% of our tenants completing surveys, attending focus groups etc.)</p> <p>Achieving targets for engagement with harder-to-reach groups such as younger people</p> <p>40% of customers signed up for Housing Online.</p>

Aim	Where we are now	What we are going to do to make a difference	Where we will be in 2024
		<p>Promote use of the complaints procedure and demonstrate to residents the service improvements made as a result.</p> <p>Set performance targets for satisfaction with operational services.</p> <p>Regular feedback to residents to demonstrate the value of their input, providing examples of where we have learnt from engagement and made changes, for example 'you said, we did.'</p> <p>Annual Report to tenants and leaseholders will include satisfaction measures and outcomes from engagement.</p> <p>Involve residents in the design of surveys to ensure we collect feedback on the areas that are important to them.</p> <p>Include webpages dedicated to project and consultation results where tenants and leaseholders can view feedback and next action steps.</p> <p>Tenants who have contacted our dedicated engagement email address will be responded to and regularly updated on the project they contributed to.</p>	<p>Programme of regular STAR surveys.</p>
<p>Better value for money as we focus on tenant and leaseholder priorities</p>	<p>Business decisions do not routinely consider tenant and leaseholder priorities</p>	<p>Promote use of cost-effective digital engagement methods including social media.</p> <p>Residents to scrutinise performance measures.</p> <p>Budget for estate improvements identified by tenants.</p> <p>Promote resident-let groups.</p> <p>Consult with tenants on the scope for local offers, for example service charges for communal areas.</p> <p>Benchmark against other landlords and learn from best practice.</p>	<p>Monthly Estate inspection programme.</p> <p>Scrutiny Panel to explore in detail issues of concern</p> <p>Co-creation of policies and services</p>

Aim	Where we are now	What we are going to do to make a difference	Where we will be in 2024
<p>Increased number of tenants and leaseholders engaging with us, especially from groups currently underrepresented</p>	<p>No data on engagement</p>	<p>Evaluate success against targets</p> <p>Launch and promote Housing Online.</p> <p>Remove barriers to engagement, for example training to support digital uptake and by providing information in plain and appropriate language.</p> <p>Support RCRA and recruit new members.</p> <p>Support residents' groups in Independent Retirement Living (IRL) schemes</p> <p>Develop a menu of opportunities so residents can get involved in a way that suits them and is relevant to them, including options for those with limited time availability (e.g. 'Be Heard from Home' and Digital Champions).</p> <p>Promote any resources made available to support engagement and ensure they are fairly allocated.</p> <p>Use targeted methods of engagement for example social media.</p>	<p>Meeting targets for digital engagement.</p> <p>Costed proposal for online chat facility to further enhance digital engagement.</p> <p>Residents signing up for engagement that suits their circumstances: High, medium, low or one-off commitment</p>
<p>Develop a more focussed engagement approach</p>	<p>Traditional methods of tenant involvement</p>	<p>Develop a menu of opportunities available, each with terms of reference to clarify purpose, responsibilities and likely commitment required.</p> <p>Creative and appropriate use of methods, language and tools to form a clear view of our customers' priorities and our progress in addressing them.</p> <p>Establish liaison groups for shared interests or experiences (e.g. IRL representatives).</p> <p>Appropriate use of the most effective methods of engagement including face-to-face, digital and social media.</p> <p>Use of appropriate language, style and presentation.</p>	<p>Able to demonstrate service improvements made as a result of resident engagement.</p> <p>Analysis of most effective forms of engagement</p>

Aim	Where we are now	What we are going to do to make a difference	Where we will be in 2024
		Inclusive engagement that complements digital engagement.	
Business and strategic decisions informed by customer insight	Limited profiling data on tenants available. Very limited profiling data on leaseholders	Initiate a project to collect and refresh profiling data as part of investment in the IT system functionality; and using all available interactions with customers.	Gaps filled and contact data complete for all tenants and leaseholders with procedure in place to keep data up to date. Accurate profiling data available.

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[Runnymede Borough Council LinkedIn](#)

www.runnymede.gov.uk

Second Draft: February 2022

Draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy

Information

31

Total Responses

Dates:

Opened: 12th November 2021

Closed: 14th January 2022

We consulted on the new strategy we plan to put in place, which is designed to improve the way we listen to and work with tenants and leaseholders.

We created an easy-to-read version on our website of the strategy, explaining the purpose, what we are doing differently, and how tenants can get involved.

How we engaged:

The Council emailed 1,841 tenants, informing them of the strategy and directing them to the website. [1,138 tenants opened this email, 182 clicked to read more on the proposal]

Set up 2 online focus groups. All tenants received an invite, but no attendees.

203 letters were sent to the IRL schemes. This was originally to be a workshop, but Covid restrictions were in place due to the new variant meant this was to be cancelled.

Each tenant received a letter attached to their repairs confirmation and their rent statements, informing them of the new strategy, a QR code that would direct them to the website, the URL, a phone number to the Engagement and Inclusion officer, and the listening email address.

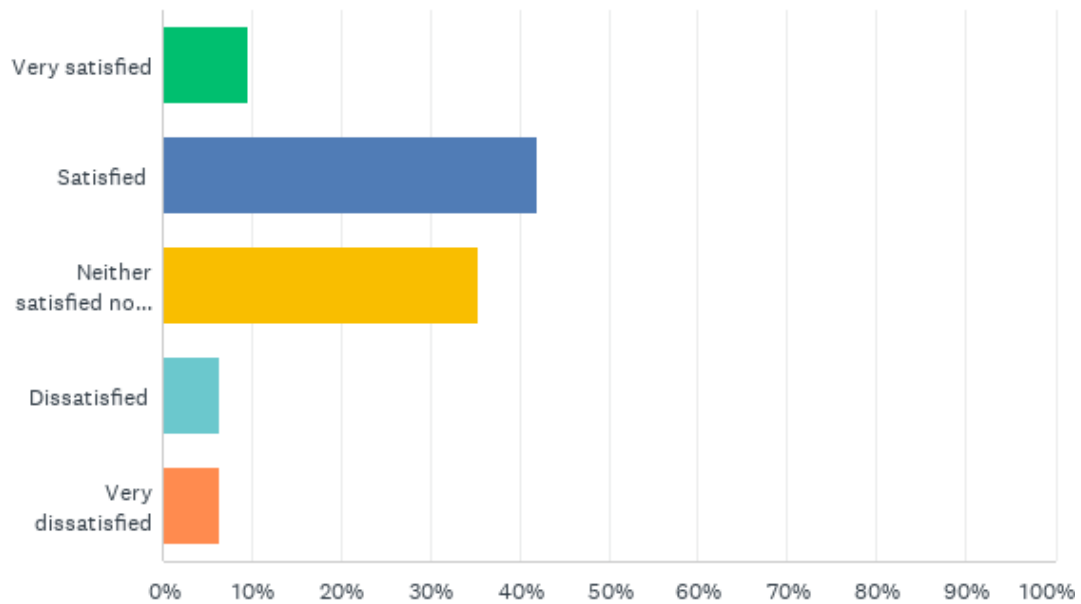
RCRA posted on their social media a simplified version of the strategy.

All housing staff adopted a email signature so all emails would inform tenants of the consultation and strategy

A different survey was emailed to Councillors to ensure their responses did not interrupt the tenants and leaseholders feedback. This can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/r/LraW6e3JKd> None replied.

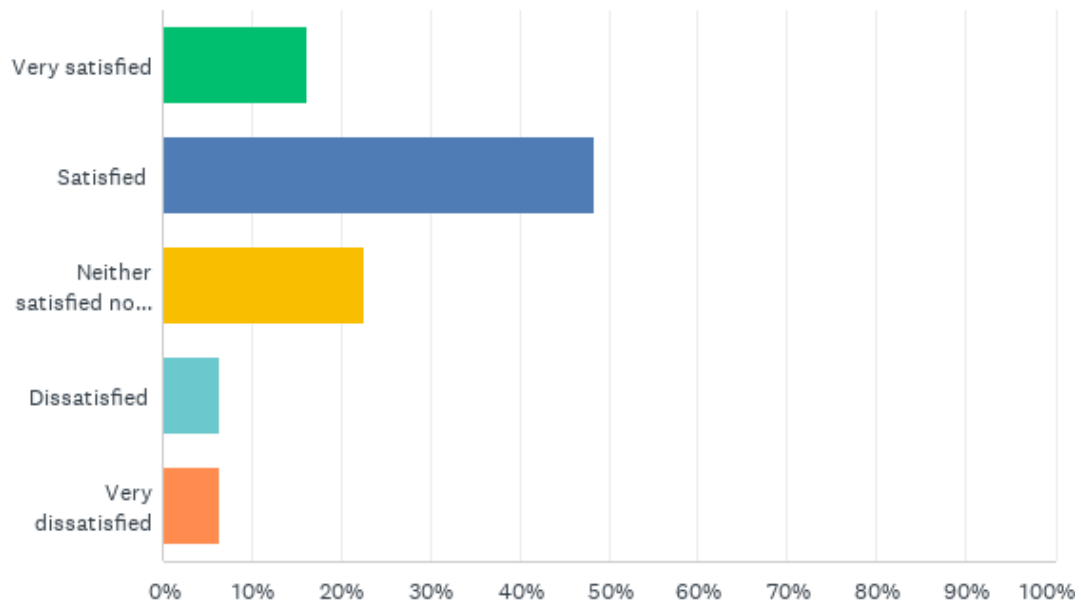
The Council emailed a forum of other engagement officers in other Housing Associations and Councils. Feedback can be found on the last slide.

How satisfied are you that the draft Engagement Strategy will improve the way the Housing services at Runnymede Borough Council listens to your views?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very satisfied	9.68% 3
Satisfied	41.94% 13
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	35.48% 11
Dissatisfied	6.45% 2
Very dissatisfied	6.45% 2
Total Respondents: 31	

How satisfied are you that the draft Engagement Strategy will improve the way the Housing service at Runnymede Borough Council will keep you informed about things that might affect you as a resident?

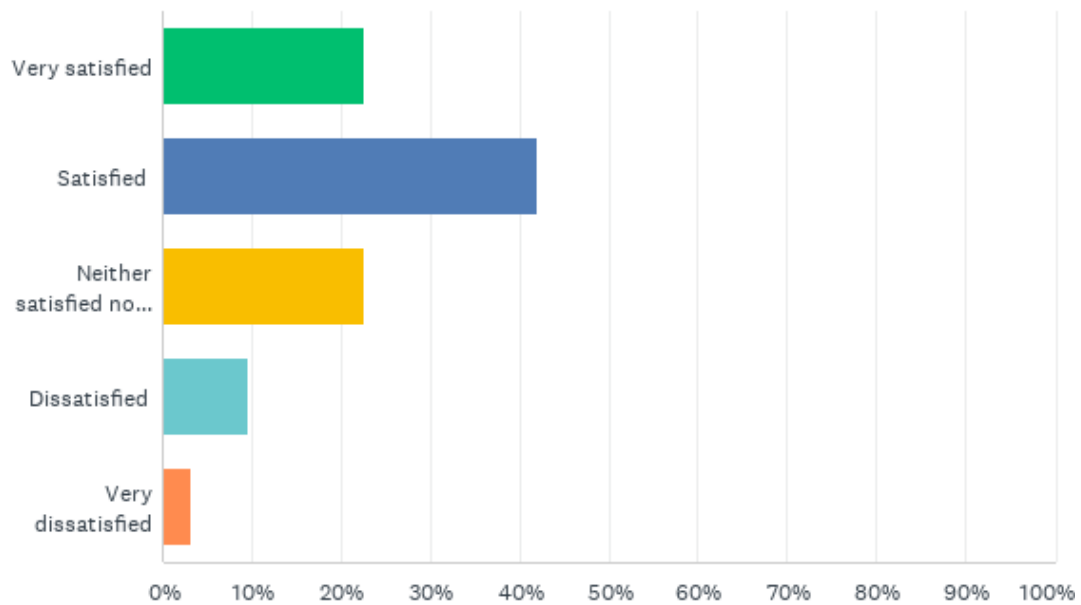


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very satisfied	16.13%	5
Satisfied	48.39%	15
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22.58%	7
Dissatisfied	6.45%	2
Very dissatisfied	6.45%	2
Total Respondents: 31		

What comes to mind when you hear the term 'Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement'?

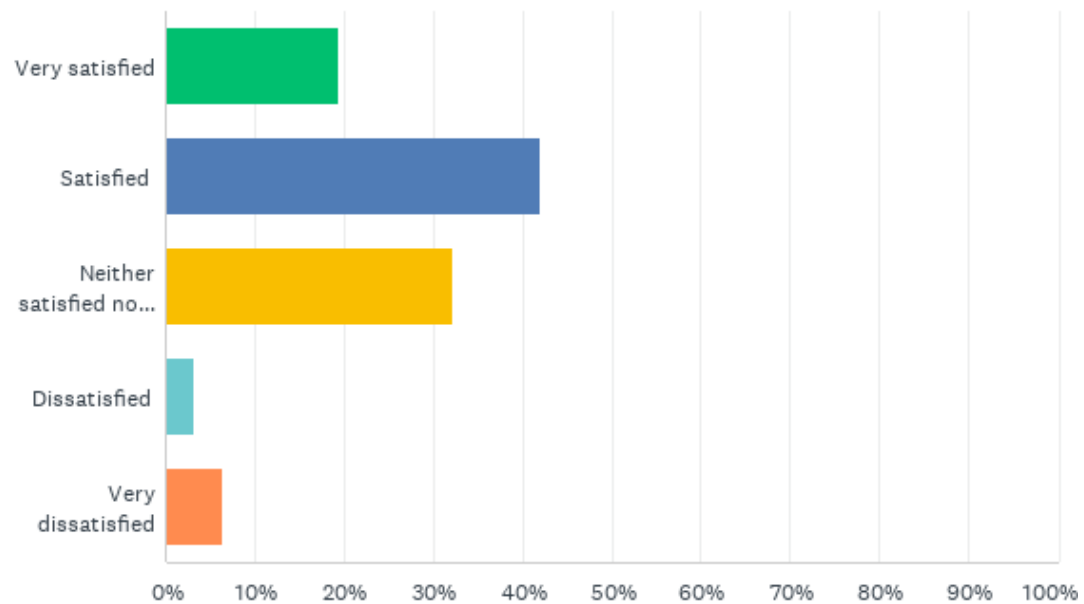
- working together
- That you will listen to the tenant and leaseholders concerns
- Improved communication and recognition of tenants with additional needs
- Better communication and explanation
- Invite for participation
- Communication between all.
- That you will listen and sort things out with us who live here and I can get involved!
- You will make us aware of what's going on
- Hopefully a change in the way the tenant/leaseholder and his views are taken on board without the current negativity being projected onto the tenant/leaseholder.
- Empowering tenants and leaseholders
- That our views are being sought and considered,
- I have no confidence with my council at the moment as there is absolutely no communication with them to resolve a ongoing problem I've had this year

How satisfied are you with the opportunities of involvement available to tenants and leaseholders, to participate in the housing services decision-making process?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very satisfied	22.58% 7
Satisfied	41.94% 13
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22.58% 7
Dissatisfied	9.68% 3
Very dissatisfied	3.23% 1
Total Respondents: 31	

Overall, how satisfied are you with the draft Engagement Strategy?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very satisfied	19.35%	6
Satisfied	41.94%	13
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	32.26%	10
Dissatisfied	3.23%	1
Very dissatisfied	6.45%	2
Total Respondents: 31		

Do you have any comments, feedback, or suggestions?

- There's no communication at the moment so any plan to resolve this problem is good but I have no confidence that it'll make any difference
- The council needs to make it easier to contact the right department. And your problems dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- Recognition of the diverse needs of individual households. Especially if this is documented with evidence from, for example the NHS This will improve communication foster a stronger working relationship and allow Reasonable Adjustments to be recognised in line with the Equality Act
- Long overdue welcome this new era of tenant/leaseholder engagement. Look forward to the new experiences.
- How are you going to come to any conclusion in a place like this (Heatherfields) when so many people have varied opinions.

Summary

After consulting with tenants, it is clear that we need to build better relations with them and improve their trust in us as their landlord.

In a number of paper surveys returned from IRL residents, they selected 'Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' and added 'I haven't seen anything done yet'. This highlights that the Council needs to improve the relationship with residents by not just involving and listening to them more, but proving and communicating that we are.

As engagement shapes, the more confidence our tenants and leaseholders will have in us as their landlord, and a clearer understanding they have on our services.

Request to Approve Implementation of the Housing Services Tree Management Policy (Housing, Simon Allen)

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service has identified that whilst departmental policies relating to Tree Management are in place, a policy specifically relating to Trees within Housing Services was required.

The Housing Services Tree Management Policy identifies what Housing Services need to do to ensure tree stocks are management effectively and in line with best industry practices.

The policy clearly identifies roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels of the Housing Service and at Senior Management level of Runnymede Borough Council.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to approve the implementation of the Housing Services Tree management Policy, Appendix A.

1. Context of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to clearly communicate what the Council will do to ensure that our portfolio of trees is managed effectively, safely and adopt a best practice approach.
- 1.2 The Housing Service has produced this document to ensure those affected by our undertaking understand what the Council liabilities are and what works will be undertaken to proactively manage our tree stocks.
- 1.3 The policy clearly details what the Council are liable to maintain and provides clear text on tenants' responsibilities.
- 1.4 The policy takes a best practice approach and by doing so, confirms that we will map and zone our trees based upon their likelihood to cause damage or death. Given that the majority of trees located on HRA lands are likely to be close to houses and pathways, it is envisaged that Housing will have a higher proportion of trees needing cyclical annual surveys or bi-annual as opposed to every three to five years. Whilst this will clearly have a greater resource impact and an increased annual tree management budget, it is recommended to take this approach based upon managing and mitigating the Council's risks in a proactive manner.

2. Housing Services Tree Management Policy

- 2.1 Enclosed with this report is the draft Housing Services Tree Management Policy (Appendix A). This document was reviewed by the Housing and Enabling Member Working Party on 2 February 2022.
- 2.2 It is proposed that this policy will be implemented with immediate effect subject to approval by Housing Committee Members.

- 2.3 It is also proposed that once the Council has one overarching policy that covers all tree management aspects that this policy will cease, and Housing Services will adopt an approach that sits within the “one Council” approach.

3. Policy Framework Implications

- 3.1 The Housing Services Tree Management Policy is one of a suite of policies that will link into the key Housing Services Health and Safety Policy
- 3.2 In addition to duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act (HSWA) there are a number of reasons why local authorities (as duty holders) and others may want to manage their tree stocks, for example responsibilities under other legislation and the risk of civil liabilities to:
- Prevent foreseeable personal injury caused by trees, for example from, uprooting or from falling limbs, from trips and falls on footways disturbed by tree roots, or from obscured sightlines on the highway.
 - Reduce the risk of property damage from subsidence, or from contact with trees and prevent damage to other third-party property for example vehicles.
 - Maintain stocks to preserve their amenity, conservation, and environmental value.
- 3.3 For these and other reasons, some duty holders may undertake inspection of trees beyond the reasonably practicable requirements of the HSWA.
- 3.4 Other legislation relevant to the management of trees includes, for example.
- The Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984,
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW),
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981,
 - As well as legislation relating to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, planning issues and Tree Preservation
- 3.5 This policy will help Housing Services to ensure the safety of staff, contractors, and residents.
- 3.6 This policy will assist Runnymede Borough Council in ensuring compliance with current legislative duties.

4. Resource implications (where applicable)

- 4.1 It is practical to assume that once the policy is approved, the Housing Technical Services Team will need to undertake a full stock audit of the trees located on HRA lands. Once this has been completed, it will then be known the liabilities, tree inspection schedules and frequencies, which will then drive the level of resourcing needed. Once this has been achieved, a further report will come back to Housing Committee to provide further clarity.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The authority's main duties in relation to the management of its trees, are owed to employees and members of the public under the Health and Safety

at Work Act 1974. The report, in paragraph 3, details other legislation, which imposes responsibilities on authorities concerning trees.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is statutory and, therefore, must be adhered to by all employers, employees, and contractors irrespective of any protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The Council has an obligation as the landowner to manage its tree portfolio in a manner that reduces risks. Within the context of the policy, the Council will only remove trees that are decayed and or posing a serious detriment to property or persons. Therefore, by adopting a pragmatic approach this policy will retain the environmental and biodiversity characteristics of the open spaces in which trees are thriving and providing natural habits.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 Approval of this policy will give further assurance to the regulator for social housing and, also forms part of a limited assurance audit undertaken in late 2020.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Services Tree Management Policy will assist the department in reducing and mitigating our risks and ensuring that we actively manage our tree portfolio in line with industry standards.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

None

Appendix A

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Tree Management Policy

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Review due:

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the principals for the maintenance of the Council's trees standing on land managed by the Housing Department, primarily trees in housing managed open spaces, estates, and within rented residential properties.

It is intended to be supplement the wider policy for the maintenance of trees across the Borough's land ownership.

The policy describes the intension and methodology of the tree risk management and the general tree management the Department undertakes. It details how trees will be maintained in relation to the safety of persons and property and how other works are prioritised.

The Departments approach to tree management aims primarily to ensure that Council owned trees are kept in a 'safe' condition. In addition to this the Department aims to maintain and encourage biodiversity; maintain and improve landscape quality; help mitigate the effects of climate change; through these elements it is hoped to improve the quality of life for tenants, the public, and visitors to Runnymede, now and in the future.

2. Aim

2.1 Runnymede has both urban and rural landscapes and trees provide significant amenity for the residents, and visitors to the area. We consider trees to be of high importance accordingly their management and maintenance is geared towards the retention and protection of the Departments tree population but with the proviso that safety to persons and property has overriding importance.

2.2 The policy is guided by industry best practice and designed to for fill the duty of care placed on tree owners in respect of the way they control the risk from the hazard posed by their trees. This duty is defined in such legislation as the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Highways Act 1980, Country and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, Compensation Act 2006.

3. Objectives

3.1 The objectives of the Departments tree management are;

- To ensure Safety (persons & property)
- To help our tenants have healthier lives.
- To improve visual amenity & landscape value providing an attractive place to live and work.
- To improve wildlife and enhance biodiversity.
- To retain the heritage of Runnymede.

4. The Values of Trees

4.1 Trees enhance the quality of life, especially in the urban environment, and form an integral part of its character, quality, and diversity. Amongst the benefits Runnymede's trees offer are the following:

- They can enhance the character and appearance of urban areas and can add value to surrounding properties.
- They provide a habitat for wildlife and provide a source of food for bees and other pollinators.
- They produce oxygen and improve air quality by absorbing pollutants.
- They help to reduce the rising temperatures caused by climate change and can mitigate the risk of flooding by moderating the effects of heavy rainfall.
- They cool urban areas by providing shade and reducing heat radiating from hard surfaces.
- They deflect, and therefore reduce noise.

5. Management of the Department's Trees – Routine Inspections

5.1 To achieve the objectives of the policy a program of inspections and remedial work will be undertaken. Inspections and work will be carried by personnel suitably qualified and experienced for the task they undertake, using the VTA (Visual Tree Assessment) method outlined in *The Body Language of Trees: A handbook for failure analysis* – C. Mattheck & H. Breloer

5.2 To enable these inspections and manage the work, specialised tree management software will be used to keep records of the Department's trees.

5.3 The routine inspection programme is designed to assess the tree's condition and health. The inspection highlights any that work which is required on a risk basis to ensure that the tree is retained in 'safe' condition. All works necessary to keep the trees in a 'safe' condition at least until the next inspection will be identified, ordered, and completed within 3 months of being recorded, quicker if the risk requires.

5.4 All tree works will be carried out according to the British Standard BS3998: 2010 *Tree Work – Recommendations*. Types of tree work and their effects are listed in Appendix 1: Types of tree work and their application / effects.

In addition, minimal proactive works may be noted and may be undertaken where appropriate and proportional to the resources available. This proactive work is intended to improve the trees, ensure continued clearance of structures, and enable future access along highways and paths etc. It is intended to pre-empt foreseeable requests for action from the public, members, officers, and tenants and therefore reduce time spent by the Council processing and undertaking works as individual requests. An example of the works types that can be included in these proactive works is given in Appendix 2 Types of Proactive works. The scope of the work may vary as resources dictate.

5.5 The details of all inspections and work will be recorded on the tree management system to produce a dated inspection record including images where appropriate, details of the tree(s), condition of the tree(s), a record of the remedial work if needed, a record of the works ordered, its completion, and schedule date for the next inspection.

6. Proposed enabling work

6.1 To achieve the desired inspection program the following are required.

- Purchase of tree management software and hardware – completed in 2020.
- An inventory of the land holding of the Department.
- Creation of digital spatial information defining the boundaries of the areas, to be installed on the tree management software and corporate GIS.
- Zoning of those areas of land identified. See Appendix 3, Zoning.
- Undertaking an initial tree inventory, recording the data on the tree management software.
- Assessment of tree data quantifying the risk and defining the resources required to manage that risk in a legally compliant way.
- Finalise the frequency of the tree inspection program required to be, compliant with legislation and the departments wider goals in respect to trees.
- Secure suitable budget to for fill the ongoing program of inspections and work.

7. Requests for tree work from Tenants or the Public

7.1 When a request to carry out tree works is received, we will consider it on its individual merits in accordance with the priorities of this policy. Our first consideration is public safety, our legal obligations and then the impact upon the community (tenants, the public, residents, and visitors to the Borough).

7.2 We will carry out tree works:

- Where there is a significant risk of harm; or damage (for instance subsidence or physical impact from branches). This includes removal of dead trees, removal of significant dead wood within crowns of trees, removal of diseased/decayed trees, which have exceeded limits of acceptable risk.
- Where it is necessary to enable free passage, where parts of a tree are below statutory heights over footways and carriageways (or block sightlines or the view of road signage is obscured).
- Where it is required to remove coniferous hedges that have grown beyond the size that is it reasonable for the tenant to maintain and they have caused or have the potential to cause, a legal nuisance such as property damage, or where in all probability the department will be liable for their removal during void work.
- Where it is required to discourage antisocial behaviour by providing a view across or into a site.
- Where it is required to maintain a tree that is of such amenity and quality that if it was on private property, it would be subject to tree preservation order.
- Where in accordance with good arboricultural management the removal of tree(s) is to be carried out to benefit the long-term development of adjacent better-quality trees.

7.3 We will not carry out works where, and notwithstanding the above situations: That work would cause a significant loss to the community or would be contrary to maintaining a healthy tree population. For example, works that damage a tree to the extent it would shorten lifespan.

7.4 We will not carry out works, without exceptional reason, for the following:

- To achieve clearance of a telephone line.
- Improved television reception
- To enable full sunlight or an individual's view.
- To reduce leaf fall.
- To prevent seasonal blocked drains.
- To prevent fruit fall.
- To prevent bird droppings or honeydew from aphids.
- To remove branches solely because they overhang into a property.
- To resolve unsubstantiated allergic reactions.
- To prevent children climbing trees.
- Because a tree has not been pruned recently.
- To maintain lapsed coniferous hedges.

8. Tree works that are not for safety reasons

8.1 To manage the Departments trees within our financial means, we prioritise works to ensure that the budget provides the most benefit for the money spent and deals with those matters of high importance. We will as a priority maintain the trees in as safe condition as is proportional to the budget available. Therefore, works requested for reasons other than safety will be of a low priority.

A more detailed explanation of factors considered in the decision of whether to do work to a tree is expanded in Appendix 4: Common problems causing request for tree work, considerations, and appropriate actions.

9. Tree Planting

9.1 To help maintain a continuity of tree cover we will undertake the planting of new trees where suitable opportunities arise. We will endeavour to plant trees on the Departments land to maintain a viable tree population with a range of maturity, to help improve the visual amenity of the Borough and provide a tree population for future generations. Priority will be given to sites where trees have been removed and re planting is appropriate. The intension is to plant the right tree in the right place to remove the need to prune in later years.

10. What the Council requires of residential tenants.

10.1 Council tenants are responsible for maintaining certain parts of their property this includes: Gardens and their contents (sec 8.3 of the lease).

10.2 This would include but not limited to, grass cutting, trimming of hedges, maintenance of trees, control of weeds, etc, in essence those actions which are necessary to maintain the garden in a safe, tidy, and accessible state.

10.3 These works will be those that the tenants can be reasonably expected to be capable of undertaking themselves and those works they can be reasonably expected to afford to employ someone else to do.

11. Monitoring and performance management

11.1 We aim to review this policy in three years to ensure it reflects current legislation and latest examples of best practice.

11.2 Overall monitoring and review of this policy will be undertaken in consultation with staff, the Runnymede Council Residents Association, Surrey County Council ASC, Runnymede Community Services team and other relevant partners and stakeholders.

12. Equalities Implications

12.1 In producing this document an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is available as a separate document. If you would like to see a copy of this please request this directly by emailing housingsolutions@runnymede.gov.uk or contacting Housing Solutions on 01932 838383.

12.2 An EIA is a way of assessing the impact, or likely impact, that a particular policy, procedure or decision will have on particular groups.

13. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1		First draft		Simon Allen	

Appendix 1: Types of tree work and their application / effects.

Below are details of the most common types of work with comments upon where and when they are normally applicable and the impact they have upon the tree and the benefits of that work.

We aim to maintain trees in line with the current industry guidance (for instance BS3998: Recommendations for tree works, BS 5837: Trees in relation to design demolition and construction, recommendations). We will not do any tree works that does not comply with these recommendations.

Formative pruning

This task is normally carried out on young trees to improve their structure, form, and remove parts of a tree that could develop into future weak point.

Removal of dead wood

Normally the removal of dead is limited to removing larger material which could cause injury if it fell. It will include removing dying or diseased branches, broken and or hung-up branches, stubs when these are of significant size.

In infrequently accessed areas (woodlands), we try to retain deadwood to help retain valuable habitat for nature conservation reasons.

Crown lifting / raising

This is the removal of the lowest branches in the tree's canopy to create an appearance of 'lifting' the trees canopy. These works are normally carried out to allow access beneath the canopy of a tree for pedestrians or vehicles on a carriageway and the extent of crown lifting will depend upon the reasonable use of the land beneath the trees canopy but would not normally exceed 50% for the trees height.

Crown thinning

This involves removing some small secondary branch growth to create a less dense canopy. It is carried out by preferentially removing the dead, dying, diseased and damaged / broken branches first with branches that run parallel or overlapping one another secondly. Crown thinning is normally specified as a percentage (of the foliage area) and is carried out to produce to alleviate concerns of light and stability of a tree. However, crown thinning works are often unsuccessful to alleviate these concerns because the amount of branch wood it is possible to remove without harming the tree is insufficient to significantly improve to significantly improve light levels or wind passing through the tree's canopy

Excessive crown thinning can be of detriment to the tree by changing the mechanical loading upon the branches increasing the potential for branch failure.

Crown reduction and Tip reduction

Crown reduction is the reduction of the complete outline dimension of the tree or specific dimensions e.g., just the height or the spread. These works are normally carried out to reduce the potential for failure on a tree worthy of being retained. These works are not normally carried out on a tree in good condition (physiologically and structurally) without good reason as there is a higher probably of branch failure from any re-growth and a crown reduced tree is normally aesthetically less attractive.

Excessive crown reduction can be of detriment to the tree through introduction of wounds which can allow pests and diseases to enter the tree, removal of leaves (energy production parts of the tree) reducing the amount of energy available for the tree, removal of stored energy in the branches. Crown reduction can excessively increase the energy expended by the tree to recreate the lost canopy reducing the amount of available energy for other tree processes. Crown reduction can increase the potential for branch failure as re-growth often has a weak branch attachment. For

these reasons crown reductions can predisposed the tree to a premature decline and therefore crown reductions are normally carried out and only where it is necessary to correct a known structural or physiological problem.

Tip reduction is the localised reduction of a branch. It is frequently carried out to clear an adjacent structure. Normally a clearance of between 1.0 to 2.0m is carried out to prevent damage to the structure (for instance a house or garage) to clear branches that obstruct the view of CCTV cameras etc. This is preferable to crown reduction as it will minimise the long-term exposure of the tree to damage and infection / colonisation by detrimental organisms.

Overhanging branches above / outside this 1.0 to 2.0m distance are normally retained.

Pollarding

This is normally the cyclic removal of new shoots from the pollard knuckle (point where previous pollarding works have pruned back to). Generally, the shoots are removed on a 3-to-5-year rotation. These works are not normally carried out unless the tree has previously been managed as such.

Felling

Healthy trees are not normally felled. Where is unavoidable the reasons for felling a tree can include:

- The tree is in a poor structural or physiological condition.
- It is part of planned management for the site.
- The tree has caused damage, or is likely to cause imminent damage, to adjacent structures, and where pruning is not an option.
- The tree's roots have damaged the path or road causing potential hazards, and where root pruning is not an option.
- The tree needs to be removed to allow other trees nearby to develop.
- The tree/hedge is a species which is known to ultimately outgrow where it is planted, resulting in it unreasonably restricting the use of the area.
- The benefit or view of the tree is so limited by where it is that the inconveniences it causes outweigh all arguments in favour of keeping it.
- The tree stands in the way of essential development work (for instance site improvements like play areas).

Stump grinding

Stumps are ground out when there is a high probability of them being a trip hazard, to allow grass cutters to pass over the stump, to allow reinstatement of a footway or to plant another tree. Additionally, stumps may be removed where it would be a resource for decay fungi

Where these reasons are not applicable, the stumps are normally left in place to allow the most effective use of the budget.

Coppicing

Coppicing is the removal of all the growth of a tree or shrub to a point close to the ground with the objective of producing a quantity of vigorous new growth from the retained stool.

Root pruning

Occasionally, tree roots can damage footpaths and pavements. In these cases, we can prune the roots. However, if root pruning threatens the tree's health or stability, felling may be our only alternative.

Cutting Ivy

Ivy is good for wildlife in terms of being a source of nectar in the late summer months and shelter. It does compete with trees for water and nutrients. When ivy grows into the upper canopy, it can shade out leaves and act as a 'wind sail' over the winter months. Ivy also obscures inspection of

the trees for structural defects. Normally where ivy growth is undesirable it will be cut at near ground level to achieving killing it so that it falls from tree over time. Removing live ivy will be time consuming and would only be undertaken in cases where it is necessary to enable inspection because the condition of the tree is suspect.

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Appendix 2 ‘Types of Proactive works that may be identified during scheduled inspections.’

Each tree in the inspection program will be considered for the following works to prevent future complaint or improve tree development, Removal of epicormic growth, severing ivy, Crown lifting over footpaths and roads, clearing of signs, streetlights and buildings, Cultural and formative pruning of young and newly planted trees, Adjustment of existing stakes, removal of stakes no longer required.

Where it is appropriate to undertake the work, it will be completed as described below:

Remove epicormic growth

Remove all basal and epicormic growth up to 3 metres or crown break whichever is more suitable.

This should be carried out with hand tools wherever possible, (loppers, hand saw, secateurs) and a clean finishing cut left.

Cuts of larger growth should not be flush to the stem or branches but should be to the branch bark collar where possible.

Care should be taken not to damage the bark of the tree.

Severing Ivy

Where cutting ivy is indicated on works schedule consideration will have been given to environmental benefits of ivy before instructing the work.

Where ivy has infested the crown, a severing cut should be made low on the trunk and a section removed around the circumference of the trunk. The ivy in the crown will be left to die; normally removal will only be carried out if needed to enable inspection.

During ivy removal care should be taken to ensure that the bark and cambium of the tree is not damaged.

Crown lifting

Lifting crown of the tree to specified height – 3m over footpaths and grass if mown by the Council, 5.2m over roads

Wherever possible remove whole branches back to the stem of the tree or a suitable larger limb.

If whole branches cannot be removed cuts should be made to a suitable side branch or growth point, stubs should not be left.

The balance of the crown should be maintained.

Clearing of signs, streetlights, buildings

Pruning branches and growth clear of signs to give a clear line of sight to road users, cutting back from streetlights to allow illumination, pruning clear of buildings to prevent damage.

Where possible whole branches should be removed as long as the crown of the tree is not unbalanced or removal of such would be drastic and unnecessary.

1m clearance from buildings and street furniture required as minimum.

Where whole branches cannot be removed pruning should be back to suitable points.

Cultural/Formative pruning

Pruning of young and newly planted trees to include where required the removing secondary stems, co-dominant leaders, crossing branches, any diseased wood and basal growth.

This is to produce healthy, well-formed specimens and remove potential failure/weak points.

Restaking/removing stakes

Adjusting of existing stakes and tree ties to prevent damage to bark whilst maintaining support for the tree.

Removal of tree stakes and ties that are no longer needed to support the tree.

All tree work should be carried out in accordance with BS: 3998 Tree Work – Recommendations (2010).

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Appendix 3 Zoning

This method is now being used by many Local Authorities. The method is to:

1. Identify areas of sites that are high risk and require surveying more frequently
2. Identify areas of sites that are low risk therefore reducing the inspection frequency of these areas. We believe most of the housing departments trees be classed as high risk and will require a frequency of inspection of 1.5 years.

* Zoning – The following extract is copied from the ‘Common Sense Tree Risk Management’ by the National Tree Safety Group Common sense risk management of trees - Forest Research

‘Zoning is a practice whereby landowners and managers define areas of land according to levels of use. This practice prioritises the most used areas, and by doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach to tree inspection, focusing resources where most needed. It contributes to sensible risk management and a defensible position in the event of an accident.

It may be a reasonable outcome of the zoning process to decide that no areas require inspection. Classifying levels of use in this way requires only a broad assessment of levels of use. Typically, two zones, high and low use, may be sufficient. High use zones are areas used by many people every day, such as busy roads, railways and other well-used routes, car parks and children’s playgrounds or where property may be affected. While owners and managers may deem it appropriate to use a more sophisticated approach, designating three or more zones, in the event of an accident whichever system is adopted may require justification according to the standard set.’

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Appendix 4: Common problems causing request for tree work, considerations, and appropriate actions.

Shade

Shading and low light to gardens and property is an emotive issue and we receive frequent enquiries concerning light and shading. In many instances people believe they have, a 'right to light'.

Factors that we consider in relation to pruning for light are:

The Condition of the trees -overall health, potential life span and general crown structure could mean that other works are necessary which may also assist with increased light.

The species – for instance some broadleaves allow dappled light through the canopy in winter when not in leaf; certain species have smaller and less frequent leaves which allows dappled shade in summer.

Impact - Consideration will be given to the potential impact any such works would have upon the condition of the tree and the amenity that it (they) provides. The potential reaction of the tree to the work, certain trees will regrow rapidly and more densely if pruned.

Location – the position of the tree(s) has a bearing on the degree of shading may occur, the closer a tree is to the area the greater the amount of shade is likely to be cast. In addition, the tree often provides screening that benefits many other properties and their residents.

Character of the locality – whether an area has a 'woodland' or 'wooded' nature or if the tree is a specific feature in the locality of is part of a group which are all have similar effect on adjacent properties and would pruning be desirable if all the trees were to be pruned.

Relative ages of the trees and property – it may be unreasonable to prune trees that were present at the time of construction of a property. The tree landscape evolves over time and the growth of trees is a natural feature that needs consideration when making the decision to occupy a property or not.

Summary of the law in respect to light

GARDENS - Shading by deciduous trees There is no legal 'right to light' or guidance upon the amount of sunlight or sky light for gardens. However, the high hedge's legislation does give guidance in respect of shading by hedges to a garden (and some rooms).

PROPERTY - The 1832 Prescription Act this is best summarised as follows.
An opening into a building (for example a window) acquires a 'right to light' if it has had uninterrupted enjoyment of a given amount of skylight for a period of at least twenty years. However, the restriction of the 1832 Act excludes trees it was in essence intended to protect a householder from persons erecting a structure such as a wall directly in front of their window thus blocking light. Trees slowly grow to restrict light therefore it would not be able to say the window has had continuous unrestricted light for the preceding period of 20 Years.

In summary, we rarely carry out works due to light or shade. Any tree works carried out are normally instructed due to other reasons, for instance the condition of the tree, to reduce the potential for damage to adjacent structures, etc. these works may have the associated benefit of reducing the shade concerns of the individual.

Falling debris (branches, twigs, leaves/ needles, flowers, seed/ fruit, honeydew)

We do remove dead, dying, disease and dangerous branches from our trees where there is a high possibility of harm or damage occurring.

We do not prune trees because they shed twigs, leaves / needles, flowers or seed / fruit as part of their natural processes.

Honeydew sap drop is a result of aphids feeding upon the tree. The amount produced can vary depending upon the weather and levels of predation. There are often no practicable ways of managing such issues reasonably, without removing the trees. As such, honeydew is not normally sufficient reason to prune a tree.

Basal growth (sucker / epicormic growth)

This is the growth at the base of the tree and sometimes up the main trunk and is common with mature Lime trees. Where this growth causes obstruction or blocks sightlines then it will be removed and in some cases it is desirable to remove the re-growth periodically for aesthetic reasons.

Overhanging branches

We would prune low overhanging branches to allow for reasonable access beneath the canopy. We do not normally prune branches that overhang adjacent properties above normal access requirements.

Common law rights to carry out tree works

Adjacent property owners can exercise their common law right and prune branches where they extend across their boundary, back to their boundary. There is no right to enter the property in which tree is growing or prune any part of the tree outside the overhung property. Work that will cause significant damage to the tree or leave the tree in an un-safe condition is not permitted.

The Council encourage people to dispose of the arrisings / debris themselves if they decide to take such action.

Where trees are subject to a tree preservation order or within conservation area permission from the Council is required before any pruning is undertaken (with some exceptions).

Size/'overgrown' tree.

The height and size of a tree is not normally sufficient reason alone to prune a tree if the tree is in good structural and physiological condition. Trees without problems do need pruning periodical. Pruning is a response to achieve a specific aim and many trees will never need pruning.

Drains

Blocked drains are a significant concern. Tree roots will access drains through faults that cause a leak from the drain. The roots are attracted by what has leaked out. The roots will progress to grow inside the drain and can block it. It is rare that roots are the cause of the break in the drain that results in the leak. Roots from other vegetation can also cause blockages, consequently the solution is to stop the drain leaking and not removing the tree.

Transmitted signal reception

The Council will not remove, or continually prune, a tree to enable transmitted signal (TV) as there is no legal right to a transmitted signal. Often there are a variety of other means to obtain a service, and these provide a more permanent solution (sometimes the simplest solution can be to move the position of the aerial or dish to a new location). In the majority of cases the tree would have been an established feature of the landscape prior to its growth causing disturbance to a signal. Tree pruning may be undertaken if it is a single treatment, and the works would not be detrimental to the tree's health and amenity of the area.

Allergies

With wind borne pollen and scent it is often difficult to determine where the origin for the trigger to an allergic reaction originates. In most situations there is a variety of vegetation in the

environment making it difficult to determine the specific cause of an allergic reaction. It will be therefore unknown the degree a specific tree will have in causing a reaction. It would not realistic or feasible to carry out tree works in such situations where it is not known if this would significantly alleviate the symptoms. Consequentially we do not normally prune or remove trees to address unsubstantiated allergic reactions.

Children climbing trees

We do not carry out works to prevent children climbing trees unless there is an exceptional circumstance and other factors are involved such as the enabling of illegal access or ABS. We would then only carry out works to prevent easy access into the tree where appropriate.

Research shows that children should be exposed to a certain amount of risk, and it is an important part of growing up and learning. It is a normal part of life for children to want to climb trees and we do not wish to hinder this involvement with the natural environment unless there are specific and exceptional concerns.

Adjacent buildings

Where Council trees are adjacent to buildings, we will normally maintain a branch clearance of up to 1.0 to 2.0m to prevent the tree branches from damaging the building, for instance dislodging roof tiles. Branches outside this 1.0 to 2.0m distance will normally be retained (this includes branches which overhang a property, i.e., above the roof).

Subsidence and Heave

Subsidence is a complex interaction between the soil, building, climate, and vegetation that occurs on highly shrinkable soil (normally clay). When the soil supporting all or part of a building dries out and consequently shrinks, it results in the unsupported part of a building moving downwards. Trees lose water from the leaves through transpiration that is replenished by water taken from the soil by the roots. If the tree takes more water from the soil than is replaced by rainfall the soil will gradually dry out. Trees have a large root system, and they can dry the soil to a great depth, sometimes below the level of foundations. The amount of water trees can remove from the soil can vary between different species.

The opposite of subsidence is a process called 'heave' and this occurs as a shrinkable soil re-hydrates (re-wets) and begins to increase in volume exerting upward pressure. Heave can also cause damage to buildings and is just as undesirable as subsidence.

Trees are not the only factors that can cause building movement. For example, natural seasonal soil moisture changes, localised geological variations, lack of flank wall restraint, over loading of internal walls, internal alterations reducing the load bearing capacity of the original building, installation of replacement windows without proper support, loft conversions, settlement and land slip, amongst others. Settlement is common but is frequently unrelated to the presence of nearby trees.

We recognise our responsibilities for the trees we own or protect. We expect any request for removal of our trees to be supported by sufficient evidence to show that the tree in question, on the balance of probabilities, is an influencing cause in the subsidence.

Presuming a tree has been identified as a cause we would also look towards engineering solutions that avoid the need to remove tree.

Although the level of evidence required will differ on a case by case basis, the Council will normally require an engineer's report, including an accurate survey, a history of damage and precise level monitoring information to demonstrate that the tree is responsible for the damage. In addition, the request should include a report from an arboriculturist to support the tree work proposals, including arboricultural options for avoidance or remediation of indirect tree-related damage. If this evidence is not sufficient, the Council may require further information

including crack monitoring, soil analysis, foundation details, root analysis and drain surveys to be submitted.

DRAFT

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Update (Housing, Andy Kefford)

Synopsis of report:

To update Members on the progress of Runnymede Borough Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24.

As part of the Strategy's commitment to ending rough sleeping in Runnymede, Officers have developed a policy to ensure that rough sleepers are offered accommodation and do not have to spend a second night sleeping out. This is known as the Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy.

Recommendations:

- i) Members to approve the Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy**
- ii) Members note the progress of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.**

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every local authority to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy. This is to set out how the local authority intends to tackle and prevent homelessness in their area.
- 1.2 The Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 was presented to this Housing Committee in March 2019 and was approved.
- 1.3 Officers undertake an annual review of the progress the Council has made against the objectives and update the Strategy and action plan in accordance with emerging legislation, case law and housing need in the borough. In 2020 the title of the Strategy was renamed the "Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy" to link into the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy and Central Government's commitment to end rough sleeping.
- 1.4 The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is available on the [Council's website](#).

2. Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy update

- 2.1 The Strategy set out four key overarching objectives, with sub-objectives under each theme to achieve over the 5-year life of the document:
 - Early intervention for homeless prevention
 - Ensuring sufficient supply of accommodation
 - Partnership working and holistic support
 - Meeting the needs of those in temporary accommodation
- 2.2 The Council achieved a number of the objectives in the Strategy in the first year, such as the re-modeling and introduction of two shared houses for single homeless individuals (objective 2.1). This initiative significantly reduced bed and breakfast (B&B) placements and provided accommodation in the

borough for those that may not ordinarily have qualified for housing assistance. An overview of the successes in year one is attached at Appendix A.

- 2.3 The implementation of some of the objectives for year two were significantly impacted by the global pandemic and the challenges that this brought with it. However, the department responded and ensured that all front-line services continued to be delivered, albeit some of them remotely. The team worked extremely hard to make sure that lettings of both social and private rented properties were made so that void times were minimised and so that households were able to successfully secure alternative housing before they became homeless. Despite the challenges, including implementing the Government's "Everyone In" Scheme, which at short notice placed a requirement on local authorities to accommodate all homeless households, the department still achieved a number of the objectives in the strategy, such as keeping B&B spend to a minimum, making successful bids for funding and starting the thorough review of the Housing Allocation Scheme. An overview of the second year is attached at Appendix B.
- 2.4 The third year continued to be impacted by the pandemic and emergency Government priorities, such as the requirement to "Protect and Vaccinate" which was announced on 22 December 2021. This was a request from Government to accommodate all homeless households in the borough and to encourage and support them to access the Covid-19 vaccine should they have wished to do so, however, the department have continued to make significant progress against the objectives within the strategy. An overview of the third year is attached at Appendix C.
- 2.5 One of the biggest highlights of the review is the successful external funding bids that the department have made. Objective 2.12 of the Strategy was to bid for relevant funding to implement new initiatives that would fulfil our objectives in the scheme, prevent homelessness and lead to better outcomes for customers. The department have been successful for eight bids in the last two years and the total grant of these is **£553,897**. In the last year, **£488,607** of the total grant was achieved. The Table on the following page shows the breakdown of the grant funds and the purpose of these.

Fund	Description	£
Covid Rough Sleeping Fund	A grant for up to a maximum of £1,650 in response to the pandemic. Maximum grant awarded and used to get emergency accommodation ready to let.	£1,650
Cold Weather Fund	Application made for £1,000 for the charity justahelpinghand , who provide rucksacks with essential items to rough sleepers. £200 for The Salvation Army to provide food and towels to users of the pods. £5,300 external funding to cover the costs of B&B.	£6,400
NSAP (Next Step Accommodation Programme)	Purchase of two emergency sleep pods in partnership with The Salvation Army, including installing CCTV. Additional funding to cover staff costs. Additional funding for Magna Carta Lettings to arrange 5 private sector tenancies for rough sleepers	£52,240
Protect Plus	A grant up to £5,000 maximum. Full grant awarded to facilitate an additional 5 moves into the private rented sector through Magna Carta Lettings.	£5,000
RSI (Rough Sleeper Initiative)	A bid for a "Housing Navigator" role to respond to reports of rough sleepers, to build rapport and arrange pathways for them to come in off of the streets, including the development of a rough sleeping: no second night out scheme. Funds for a Housing First style scheme that provides housing to a rough sleeper and then wraps around support in a holistic way to address all their ongoing needs. A personalisation budget that homeless individuals have been able to access for essentials i.e. a mobile phone to contact the Council, food, bedding and access to funds for transport for education, employment and property viewings.	£130,000
AFEO (Accommodation for ex-offenders)	A joint Surrey wide bid for funds to enable ex-offenders to access accommodation in the private rented sector. This includes additional financial incentives to landlords to encourage them to accept an ex-offender when they may not have done otherwise. Provision for accommodation for 5 ex-offenders.	£18,607
RSAP (Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme)	To purchase 3 one-bedroom properties on the open market and to be used for rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs. This links into the RSI bid and the housing first element. £40,000 of the fund will go towards the provision of additional support for the individuals housed.	£265,000
Surrey CC	In support of the RSAP bid, Surrey CC have contributed and will play a role in ensuring the health needs of anyone accommodated in this scheme are adequately addressed.	£75,000
		£553,897

- 2.6 In addition, the Council has also received Government grants of £72,696 to support vulnerable renters in the private rented sector that fell into rent arrears due to Covid-19 restrictions, and a further £11,573 to implement the Government's Protect and Vaccinate program. These funds have enabled the Council to reduce rent arrears for tenants in the private rented sector, which has resulted in positive homeless prevention outcomes and reduced the risk of homelessness for many renters that had previously been struggling to pay their rent.
- 2.7 The Strategy has a specific focus on ending rough sleeping, objective 2.11 and preventing homelessness. The successful funding bids have enabled the team to make huge strides in achieving this objective and ensuring there is a route out of homelessness for those unfortunate to experience it.
- 2.8 We have purchased and implemented two emergency sleep pods, which are solar powered and have chemical toilets. These were delivered in partnership with The Salvation Army, who we have worked with before to install a shower in their building for rough sleepers to access. This initiative has enabled the Council to build rapport with rough sleepers who ordinarily wouldn't be interested in engaging with the Council, whilst also taking them off the streets and sheltering them from harm. This has also enabled us to reduce B&B use and creates an additional interim housing option.
- 2.9 The funding has enabled us to appoint a Housing Navigator who has started to establish clear and up to date pathway plans (objective 1.10) so that there is a route out of prison or hospital into accommodation rather than to the streets. This role will be responsible for implementing the Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Scheme, see section 3 of this report. The role has also

relaunched the homeless task group, also known as FUSE (Facilitate, Understand, Support, Empower), which is local services, organisations and the voluntary sector pulling together for a united approach to ending rough sleeping in the borough (objective 3.2). This includes supporting local charities to provide rucksacks with essential items for the homeless.

- 2.10 The successful RSAP (Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme) bid through DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities) and Homes England, has enabled the Council to make offers to purchase three properties on the private market, including buying back two former Council homes. These three properties will generate an income for the general fund, whilst also providing accommodation for individuals with complex and multiple needs. We will provide wrap around intensive support to these individuals to enable them to manage their tenancy and start to overcome the difficulties in their lives.
- 2.11 Another key objective for the housing department is to minimise the use of B&B (objective 4.1). This is because placements are often out of the Council area, expensive and unsuitable for homeless households in the short or long term. The team take a proactive approach to resolving all cases that go into B&B to ensure rapid move on where possible. With the additional external funding generated, it is extremely likely that we will have minimal B&B spend this financial year and will come in significantly under budget.
- 2.12 The department have achieved a number of objectives over the life of the Strategy so far and despite the impact of Covid-19, we remain on track to achieve the objectives set out in the 5-year plan. However, we remain realistic that there are still a number of objectives outstanding and there is work still to be done. These remaining objectives have been built into the Team Workplan over the next 12 months and will be kept under regular review. The up-to-date objective tracker is attached at appendix D.

3. **Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy**

- 3.1 When a person makes a homeless application to the Council, we are required by law to carry out an assessment of their needs (s.189A) and we will consider whether they are classed as a priority need (s.189). For individuals that are not classed as a priority, there is no duty on the Council to provide interim accommodation and if they have nowhere else to go, this can result in a person becoming a rough sleeper.
- 3.2 The Council take part in an annual rough sleeper count, coordinated by HomelessLink for Central Government. This estimate/count is based on the number of rough sleepers identified on one night of the year in autumn. This is to give a snapshot figure only. The recent returns for Runnymede are:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
8	6	2	13	3	5	4	4	2	2	2

- 3.3 Rough sleepers are people who sleep or bed down in the open air, such as on the street, in tents, doorways or bus shelters etc. There is evidence to suggest that the longer a person sleeps on the streets, the greater the risk of harm that may come to them. In Runnymede we are fortunate not to have a large

number of people that have to sleep rough in the borough, however, we feel that even one person is one too many.

- 3.4 The Council are committed to ending rough sleeping in Runnymede in accordance with our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, and the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Council propose to introduce a Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy, attached at Appendix E, to assist with this aim.
- 3.5 The intention of the scheme is to identify those at risk of rough sleeping before they become homeless and provide interventions to prevent them from becoming homeless, in effect a "no first night out". However, we anticipate that there will be individuals that we are unaware of and therefore unable to intervene with at an early stage, it is these people that this policy will support in terms of a no second night out on the streets. The Policy will enable Housing Staff to offer emergency accommodation to individuals that we would not ordinarily owe an interim housing duty to. This will enable us to safeguard the person's welfare and remove them from the risk of harm posed by remaining on the street.
- 3.6 The Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out model is not a statutory requirement, but it is considered good practice and has resulted in multiple successes elsewhere in the Country, including reducing the risk of rough sleepers dying on the street. We have provision of two emergency sleep pods with access to food, showers and rucksacks with essential items and a personalisation budget. These facilities enable the Council to build a relationship with the rough sleeper and subsequently enable us to provide a details personalised plan to support them into longer term suitable housing and to address any other long-term needs.

4. **Policy framework implications**

- 4.1. The Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy, links to the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy and sets out our commitment to ending rough sleeping. This policy will complement our existing work within the Housing Solutions team and the statutory homeless prevention casework.

5. **Resource implications (where applicable)**

- 5.1 The Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy includes provision of emergency accommodation for those that may not ordinarily qualify for it, and therefore this could increase the financial cost to the Council. However, these costs are anticipated to be minimal. Through the successful NSAP bid we have installed the two emergency sleep pods and we have resources such as the shared houses. In some circumstances we may provide B&B, however all three of these options are eligible for housing benefit recovery and therefore, providing accommodation for this small number of people would have minimal additional cost to the Council. It is anticipated that any costs for B&B unrecoverable from housing benefit would come out of the existing B&B budget for the homeless team and no additional resources are being requested.
- 5.2 Given the success of No Second Night Out schemes nationally and the proven impact that these have on the health and lifestyle of rough sleepers, the benefits of providing this scheme will have significant cost savings to the

wider public purse as there are likely to be less hospital admissions, fewer ambulances call outs and/or police attendance. These benefits as well as positive outcomes for individuals outweigh the minimal costs that may be incurred by the Council.

6. Legal implications

6.1 There is no statutory requirement to provide a Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Scheme, however it is considered best practice. The Council are able to exercise their discretion to provide emergency accommodation under existing powers.

6.2 In cases of no recourse to public funds, the Council has the discretion to offer emergency accommodation under Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006.

7. Equality implications

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed during the drafting and consultation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 and continues to be kept under consideration at each of the yearly reviews and when any relevant legislation or case law is passed.

7.2 The Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy has undergone an equality impact assessment screening and Officers have concluded that a full EIA is not required.

8. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

None

9. Other implications (where applicable)

9.1 None

10. Conclusions

10.1 The overview of the successes of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is for information only.

10.2 The Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Policy is for approval.

(To resolve)

Background Papers

None

Appendix A

Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 ongoing review

Introduction

The Homelessness Strategy was approved by Housing Committee in March 2019 and came into effect on 01 April 2019. The strategy set out four main objectives, with multiple sub-objectives the Council aspire to achieve over the five year life of the document.

The Council are committed to reviewing the progress the authority has made towards the ambitious targets set in 2019 and adapting to any challenges that may impact on our ability to meet our goals.

Year One: 2019/20

The first year of the Homelessness Strategy has seen the Council continue to embed and embrace the significant changes the Homelessness Reduction Act introduced. In order to improve the service the Council provide to our customers, with member approval, the Housing Team have undergone a restructure to ensure that customer service and preventing homelessness are at the forefront of our approach.

Successes

During the first year there have been a number of objectives set out in the action plan that have successfully been implemented, such as:

- 1.3: Partners notifying RBC of potential housing issues so that proactive work can be undertaken to prevent homelessness
- 1.5: Focus on Sustaining homes and keeping people in their existing homes as appropriate
- 2.1: Set up a shared house for single people
- 2.4: Review nomination agreements
- 2.5 Focus on reducing tenancy and social housing fraud
- 2.11: Develop support for rough sleepers
- 3.1 Enhance Personalised Housing Plans (PHP)
- 3.2: Develop the FUSE group to give meaningful assistance to vulnerable groups
- 3.5: Continue and improve strong partnership relationships
- 4.1 Ensure B&B use is minimal

1.3: Partners notifying RBC of potential housing issues so that proactive work can be undertaken to prevent homelessness

Whilst there is a statutory duty for particular public bodies to refer customers to the Council if they are at risk of homelessness, there is no statutory duty on all agencies. The Council have therefore encouraged partners to follow in the spirit of the statutory duty to refer so that customers are provided with housing advice at an earlier stage.

As part of the Councils Homeless Task group and FUSE group, all partners have been briefed on the legislation and the support available to households at risk of homelessness. This has led to referrals and households have been able to remain in their existing homes.

Whilst the Council are under no illusion that this referral mechanism needs to continue and improve if more households are to be able to retain their homes, it is a promising start.

Action: A further step the Council will take during 2020/21 is to improve the website. This will include introducing a 'report of a rough sleeper' link so that anyone sleeping rough in the area is reported to the Council quicker.

1.5: Focus on Sustaining homes and keeping people in their existing homes as appropriate

As part of the Housing Team's restructure the Sustainment Officers handed over the management of temporary accommodation in order to develop a detailed, tailored sustainment package to those at threat of homeless and to give greater support to those in temporary housing needing to move on.

The new Sustainment role has been in operation since January 2020 with access to reporting through the Council's data system. The service are taking new referrals and proactively working in partnership with partners, both internal and external to target households that may require assistance. For example, Sustainment have linked into the benefit department so that anyone subjected to a welfare capping are offered advice to ensure they can maintain their home. The benefit department are also drafting a new Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) response that advises DHP applicants of the sustainment function regardless of if they are successful for a DHP or not.

Whilst this service is relatively new and is still currently in a transition stage, there have already been some positive outcomes for customers. For example, a customer moved into a new home but didn't have the financial means to connect the cooker. Sustainment were able to locate a grant to pay for the connection of the cooker to enable the family to eat.

2.1: Set up a shared house for single people

The first of two shared houses went live during May 2019 and the second in December 2019. The introduction of these shared houses, 8 bed spaces over the two properties, has undoubtedly contributed to a number of the objectives within the Homelessness Strategy. The scheme has reduced B&B placements, developed options for single people and has contributed to reducing rough sleeping.

The scheme has provided a safe space for single people that the Council may not have ordinarily owe an accommodation duty to but the short term placement gives them some respite and an opportunity to engage with the Council to secure alternate suitable longer term housing.

The share house has already had successful move on with customers housed into supported housing through transform following their stay in the shared house and others into the private rented sector.

2.4: Review nomination agreements

In order to ensure officers have housing solutions available to prevent homelessness, the Council have met with our partners whom we have nomination agreements with; Life Housing, Riverside Housing and Transform to ensure that we are receiving the correct number of vacancies.

In order to ensure the team utilise these options, these partners have attended team meetings to explain the service and role each partner has in reducing homelessness and this in turn has increased the volume of successful referrals and outcomes.

Case Study:

Ms X had been living in a Council owed property but terminated the tenancy due to being detained in prison whilst serving a custodial sentence. On Ms X release from prison she had no where to live and ended up staying wherever she could but this increased her risk of relapse into drink and drugs.

The Council were able to nominate Ms X to Riverside housing who offered her a space in one of their shared houses. Since Ms X has been in the property she has actively engaged with her support network, avoided the group of people she had previously associated and has maintained her tenancy there.

2.5 Focus on reducing tenancy and social housing fraud

The joint partnership with Reigate and Banstead has been established to give the team access to fraud advice and detection for all customers applying for the housing register and as homeless. This service has enabled staff to make quicker enquiries into applications and informed decision making to ensure that only those that qualify for assistance access it.

The service has detected suspected fraudulent cases and held interviews under caution. This has led to a couple of applicants withdrawing their applications and a few applications declined on the basis of false information declared. This helps to reduce the risk that limited social homes are offered to those without a housing need.

2.11: Develop support for rough sleepers 3.2: Develop the FUSE group to give meaningful assistance to vulnerable groups 3.5: Continue and improve strong partnership relationships

The activities of the FUSE group play a large role in the support for rough sleepers in Runnymede. For example, justahelping hand provide rucksacks with supplies, two local shower facilities have opened to enable rough sleepers a place to shower and dress.

The sustainment service have proactively began to work with the foodbanks and East Well Spend Less to educate people how to cook on a budget will benefit those in need. The sustainment team will continue to target those who may need

assistance and will start to support people to become independent of foodbanks when appropriate.

3.1 Enhance Personalised Housing Plans (PHP)

The PHPs have been expanded to include general signposting advice to a holistic range of services including how to register for a GP or Dentist, how to manage money and health support links. Officers are asking trigger questions to ensure that customers in need are given a full service with signposting support to relevant services, rather than just focussing on housing issues.

4.1 Ensure B&B use is minimal

The team have worked hard to ensure that B&B use has been kept to a minimum. For a number of weeks throughout the year there have been zero customers in B&B accommodation, which is a fantastic achievement.

For the year 2019/20 to date, the team have made on 11 B&B placements. Against the backdrop of national B&B numbers increasing, this is a major success of the first year of the Homelessness Strategy.

One of the contributing factors of this has been where possible the team have referred the customer to the shared house rather than place a person in B&B, which is often outside of the borough. This has multiple benefits for the organisation and for the customer.

Next Steps

Now that the first year of the homelessness strategy is drawing to a close, the Council have taken time to reflect and review any changes in Government direction and policy to ensure that our objectives are aligned to that of central government. The Government, as set out in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, are committed to reducing rough sleeping. The ambition is to half the number of rough sleepers by 2022 and to end it all together by 2027.

This is an ambition that is shared with Runnymede Council and is a target that we will strive to achieve within this strategy timeframe. During 2018 we reported an estimate of 4 rough sleepers on a particular night in November. During the same reporting period of 2019 we reported 2. This reflects a reduction of half from the year before but we will do more to end it.

As outlined above, the development of the Council website will include more information for Rough Sleepers and a reporting mechanism for customers to notify the Council of anyone bedding down outside. We will continue to develop the shared house and the support available to rough sleepers through FUSE.

Action: It is therefore important that as part of the review of this strategy that this key objective is reflected within the document and we propose to rebrand it the 'Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy'.

The Council will continue to work towards the remaining objectives within the Homelessness Strategy.

Appendix B

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 ongoing review

Introduction

The Homelessness Strategy was approved by Housing Committee in March 2019 and came into effect on 01 April 2019. The strategy set out four main objectives, with multiple sub-objectives the Council aspire to achieve over the five year life of the document.

The Council are committed to reviewing the progress the authority has made towards the ambitious targets set in 2019 and adapting to any challenges that may impact on our ability to meet our goals.

Year Two: 2020/21

The Homelessness Strategy was rebranded Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy in early 2020 to reflect the Government's commitment to ending rough sleeping.

The progress in the second year of the Strategy has been complicated by the global pandemic, Coronavirus, however despite the impact and challenges this brought, good progress has been made. Covid-19 had a huge impact on service delivery we were required to quickly adapt to home working. Despite the speed of the change to service delivery, the Housing Solutions team have continued to provide a frontline and back office service throughout this year.

There were multiple staffing changes which also impacted on the team with some new members of staff having never worked in housing, having to pick up and learn the role quickly. Despite the challenges, during this year the team have continued to work towards the goals in the Strategy:

- 1.1 Improve awareness and public knowledge
- 1.3 Early referrals for homeless cases
- 1.9 Redesign the website
- 2.3 Review the Allocations Scheme
- 2.8 MCL funding
- 2.11 Develop support for rough sleepers
- 2.12 Apply for relevant funding
- 4.1 Ensure low B&B use

1.1 Improve awareness and public knowledge

The team actively engaged with Communications to ensure regular social media campaigns were ran to inform the public of the sustainment services and support we could give to those at risk of homelessness as a result of the pandemic. We continued to deliver private rented sector and social housing lets as well as sign up to temporary accommodation.

The team also continued to build relationships with partners, such as The Salvation Army and Citizens Advice through meetings, joint training and regular communication.

1.3 Early referrals for homeless cases & 1.9 Redesign the website

We redesigned the housing pages on the website to ensure that we were legally compliant i.e. explaining how to make a homeless application. We reviewed all content to make sure it was relevant and useful as well as moving this to the corporate website and away from the out of date Living&Homes site.

This included updating the pages for rough sleeping and Duty to Refer as well as simplifying the form and making it easier to use for partners to ensure referrers are not deterred from completing.

2.3 Review the Allocation Scheme

A thorough review of the current Allocation Scheme and the last few years data has been carried out. This involved reviewing (but not limited to) number of lets, number of refusals, number of people not bidding, number of reviews, types of people on the list i.e. by bedroom size, band, age, ethnicity.

All housing solutions staff were invited to give comments on what they wanted to see in the new scheme, what works, what doesn't, what is too ambiguous. A set of proposed changes were presented to Housing Committee on 06 January 2021 who approved these for consultation. Formal consultation commenced on 21 January 2021, including a questionnaire for the public which was sent to all members of the housing register. A further meeting with Members was held on 11 February 2021 to discuss these proposals further.

Once the consultation period ends, the data will be analysed and used to form the new scheme which will then be drafted and shared with RPs and legal services. The final scheme will be presented to Housing Committee in June 2021, with a view to commencing 01 July 2021.

2.11 Develop support for rough sleepers & 2.12 Apply for relevant funding

We have been successful for four Government funding bids which provided funding towards PRS access and initiatives for rough sleepers and single no PN customers. We were able to purchase and implement two emergency sleep pods in partnership with The Salvation Army which gives us another interim housing option as part of our rough sleeping delivery plan and winter provision.

We were successful for a grant for The Salvation Army and justahelpinghand and for a part time Sustainment Officer post.

Action: There are additional funding rounds available due to the pandemic and supporting those that are vulnerable. The Council will bid for additional funds as appropriate to support our rough sleeper delivery plan.

4.1 Ensure low B&B use

We have continued to keep B&B numbers low by utilising our own stock as TA, using a proactive preventative approach to support customers to stay in their existing homes or into alternative accommodation.

Despite the Government announcing an “Everyone In” scheme which required local authorities to provide accommodation to all those sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, we were able to support the majority of people into our own stock as TA. We took a homeless application for all and engaged in a relief duty to give them the support needed to move onto suitable, settled housing.

In the first Lockdown there was just one single male that occupied B&B for an extended period, however this was due to lack of suitability for other housing tenures. This applicant was successfully supported into a PRS property by the team.

Next Steps

The pandemic is far from over despite the progress made with the vaccination rollout programme and this will continue to impact on the housing service i.e. delivering services remotely until safe to do otherwise.

There has been some excellent progress over the last year despite these challenges and options such as the Emergency Sleep Pods provide us with an additional resource to keep people off of the streets.

Whilst we have met some of the objectives, such as maintaining low B&B numbers, this remains an objective for the remaining years of the strategy and there is a lot of work still needs to be done to ensure that we create opportunities for move on, that our new Allocation Scheme lets social homes to the right people at the right time and that our services are joined up with relevant partners such as health.

Appendix C

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 ongoing review

Introduction

The Homelessness Strategy was approved by Housing Committee in March 2019 and came into effect on 01 April 2019. The strategy set out four main objectives, with multiple sub-objectives the Council aspire to achieve over the five year life of the document.

The Council are committed to reviewing the progress the authority has made towards the ambitious targets set in 2019 and adapting to any challenges that may impact on our ability to meet our goals.

Year Three: 2021/22

The pandemic continued to have a significant impact on delivering the Housing Solutions Service as well as some further staffing changes during this year. However, despite these additional pressures there have been some fantastic achievement in meeting objectives within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, such as:

- 1.1 Improve awareness and public knowledge
- 1.4 Improved links with social services
- 1.9 Review of website content
- 1.11 Providing monitoring information
- 1.12 Sustaining tenancies
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1.1 Improve awareness and public knowledge

The Housing Solutions team successfully submitted a bid for external funding (see 2.12) to appoint a Housing Navigator (see 2.11). This role has increased awareness of the services we provide across the voluntary sector and has re-launched the homeless task group, known as FUSE. This group brings together the Council with partner agencies and the voluntary sector to provide support to those at risk of homelessness. We have purchased and installed two emergency sleep pods in partnership with The Salvation Army

The sustainment team have met with the Foodbank, Citizens Advice, justahelpinghand to build relationships and have achieved good outcomes for customers through joint working.

1.4 Improved links with social services

Surrey County Council have launched a programme known as SAM (Surrey Adults Matter) which is a multiagency approach to individuals with severe and multiple complex needs. The Housing Navigator attends these meetings to see how we can support this cohort of people to address any housing needs, whilst other agencies support with other issues such as addiction.

1.9 Review of website content

The Corporate website has been refreshed and the data housing provide has been reviewed and refreshed to ensure that it is up to date and accurate, including contact details for services to refer households to us and for individuals to approach for support themselves.

1.11 Providing monitoring information

The Government have required weekly, monthly and quarterly returns throughout the pandemic which have always been completed on time. Additional reporting measures were introduced as part of the Governments “Everyone In” campaign and as a result of successful bids for funding.

By capturing and having up to date data we were able to identify trends and demonstrate to the external funders how we could utilise funds to improve our services.

1.12 Sustaining tenancies

A key role within the team is the prevention of homelessness and a method of doing so is by sustaining tenancies. Across the whole housing solutions team there is a join effort of negotiating with landlords, mediation between families and supporting tenants i.e. explaining tenancy rights, has led to some fantastic outcomes for individuals.

The Government announced a funding package, of which Runnymede were awarded £72,696, to support tenants in the private rented sector to reduce any rent arrears that have accrued due to the pandemic. Collectively the team have worked closely with landlords, tenants, partners including the Citizens Advice, to enable private renters to bring their rental accounts up to date and eliminate the threat of homelessness. This has been a fantastic effort by the team and they will continue to do so until the end of March 2022 when the fund needs to be spent by.

2.2 Making best use of housing stock

The Housing Allocation team have been short on staffing for large periods during this year, due to circumstances out of our control i.e. predominantly sickness. However, they have supported the Council to reduce void period and have

prioritised lettings which enables those in housing need to secure accommodation, whilst ensuring the Council's income is not reduced by long void periods.

2.3 Review the Housing Allocation Scheme

A thorough review and consultation programme was carried out and a new Housing Allocation Scheme was presented to Housing Committee in June 2021 and given approval. The refresh of the scheme ensures that it is lawful and includes all legislative changes since the previous scheme was adopted. A number of the proposals will improve the service the team provide to the public.

2.4 New Units

A number of new units have been developed over this year including a 34 unit affordable housing scheme with Accent in Egham, a 9 unit scheme with Optivo at St Peters hospital and the use of Parkside in partnership with Accent to initially provide 12 properties to prevent homelessness.

2.5 Fraud prevention

The contact with Reigate and Banstead Council has been extended and this has resulted in some good results. A case that tried to deceive the Council during a homeless review was quickly identified and is being put forward for prosecution. The links with fraud have resulted in a few applications for social housing being rejected due to false and misleading information which helps to protect the limited housing stock and ensures that it is only let to those that qualify for it in accordance with the Allocation Scheme.

2.8 Magna Carta Lettings

Like in the first two years, in this third year we have been successful with further funding. This gives the Council more scope to assist those we may not ordinarily have a duty to house and as such, reduces the likelihood of someone having to sleep rough.

The team have worked hard to reduce rent arrears within Magna Carta lettings tenancies and will continue to sustain tenancies and keep debts low.

2.11 Rough Sleepers

The Council has taken huge strides in its objectives to support rough sleepers. Whilst the number of people that sleep rough in Runnymede is minimal, we believe that one person is too many, which is why we have delivered considerable outcomes over the last few years. Following on from the successful bid and delivery of two emergency sleep pods in Year Two, we have received funds in Year Three to appoint a Housing Navigator. This role is to identify anyone sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and intervene so that they don't have to.

A No Second Night Out Policy will be presented to March Housing Committee which is so that we can exercise our discretion to provide housing when we

wouldn't ordinarily be required to be statute. This should trigger engagement and enable us to source longer term outcomes for rough sleepers. The Navigator is actively building pathways for individuals to overcome issues i.e. referrals into addictions services, support for victims of domestic abuse, ex-offenders etc.

We also secured funding to purchase x3 1 bedroom properties to be used as part of a housing led scheme i.e. a rough sleeper with complex needs is provided with housing and a support package with external services is then wrapped around the person to enable them to succeed.

2.12 External funding bids

This year the Council have bid successfully for **£488,607** and have also been awarded £72,696 and £11,573 (**£84,269**) for initiatives to prevent homelessness. This funds are for:

- Securing accommodation for ex-offenders in the private rented sector
- Provide accommodation and support vaccination of the homeless population
- Appointment to a Housing Navigator role
- Development of housing first/housing led scheme
- Purchase of x3 1 bedroom properties
- Payments to prevent homelessness

3.3 Winter provision

Winter provision in a night shelter was deemed unsuitable by the Government due to Covid-19, so this initial objective has been re-vamped. Rather than provide accommodation during the winter to those at threat of homelessness, we intend to implement a No Second Night Out Scheme so that we can accommodate rough sleepers at any time of year. Through the work of the Housing Navigator we will build pathways and provide support to break the cycle so that no one has to return to the streets.

4.1 B&B usage

The Council has continued to ensure that B&B use is kept to a minimum and will come in well within budget again this year. This has been through utilising the emergency sleep pods, improving move on from temporary accommodation and ensuring better engagement to achieve better outcomes. Additional funding has been obtained which should cover the majority of B&B costs for this year.

Next Steps

Whilst the pandemic has played a role in how the Housing Solutions team have delivered services, with a lot of them being provided remotely, the team have achieved some excellent outcomes, both in terms of meeting objectives within the Strategy but also for individuals.

Now that we are over the half way stage of the Strategy, we will reflect and ensure that the objectives that have not been completed are factored into our team plans for the year, whilst also managing business as usual activities and any other initiatives that come our way or changes in legislation.

Appendix D – Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
Objective One: Early intervention for homeless prevention				
1.1	Improve awareness and public knowledge of housing shortages and options to prevent homelessness	<p>Awareness raised through events, websites and general public.</p> <p>Improve health links i.e. by host housing surgeries in GPs to ensure early referrals from health partners</p> <p>Introduce housing advice and budgeting skills presentations into schools</p>	<p>Year Two – Updated and improved content on the website ensuring that we are legally compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act.</p> <p>Advertised and marketed the sustainment services to support those financially impacted by COVID-19.</p> <p>Year Three – appointment to the Housing Navigator role to increase awareness across the voluntary sector, including the re-launch of the Homeless Task Group.</p> <p>Successful Rough Sleeper Initiative bid (RSI) to appoint a social prescriber specialising in housing.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Introduce housing advice programme to schools. Pandemic reduced ability to deliver.</p>	On track
1.2	<p>Introduce a landlord route to notify us of issues with tenants</p> <p>Use web based technologies to support landlords and tenants to sustain their homes</p>	Landlord route or referral process in place to allow early notification of a housing issue	<p>Year Three – Updated corporate website designed and easier accessibility for landlords to notify the Council of available private properties to rent.</p> <p>Increased social media presence, advertising the need for landlords on social media channels through the Communication team</p>	Ongoing

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			<p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Introduction of a landlord portal through new Northgate module if system able</p>	
1.3	<p>Partners notifying RBC of potential housing issues early so that proactive work can be undertaken to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Introduce a referral mechanism to enable early identification</p>	<p>Early notification received into the Council by expanding on the duty to refer to non-statutory partners</p> <p>Joint working and joint projects with partners to resolve housing issues early</p>	<p>Year Two - Attendance at the Strategic MAPPA Board, weekly COVID-19 meetings with health partners, improvements to the Duty to Refer form and general website information.</p> <p>Year Three – Successful RSI bid and appointment to Housing Navigator role, joining up services and relaunch of the Homeless Task Group (FUSE).</p> <p>Additional Gov funding to reduce arrears within the private rented sector awarded Oct 2021. Joint working with Citizen Advice to clear arrears and prevent homelessness.</p> <p><u>To do:</u></p> <p>Establish a training programme for Housing officers to receive detailed guidance about negotiating with landlords to maximise opportunities for successful prevention outcomes.</p> <p>Improved joint working protocols in place for Hospital Discharge, Care Leavers, Prison</p>	
1.4	<p>Improve links with social services to meet the needs of households</p>	<p>Social Services involved early to support households in need</p>	<p>Year Three – Positive case working for a couple of complex homeless households to resolve complex and</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
		<p>Referral pathway for homeless households who may be intentionally homeless so that social services can support to relieve homelessness</p> <p>Attendance and development of the Council's health and wellbeing group</p>	<p>multiple needs, including attendance at SAM (Surrey Adults Matter).</p> <p>Meetings held with Children Services managers and point of contact agreed for any shared cases, including those in temporary accommodation facing eviction.</p> <p><u>To do:</u></p> <p>Invite Social Services representatives to Housing meetings to get a mutual understanding of the challenges faced by both and establish ways of greater collaborative working.</p>	
1.5	Focus on sustaining homes and keeping people in existing accommodation, where appropriate	<p>Package developed to keep young people at home, such as mediation</p> <p>Expand on budgeting advice and debt management.</p> <p>Ensure DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) is used to resolve housing issues, including improving discharge from hospital services. DFG policy to be reviewed to achieve value for money and short timescales in procurement of DFG works.</p>	<p>Year One – Amendments to operational procedures to remove TA management from sustainment to ensure Sustainment Officers can focus on sustainment work.</p> <p>Sustainment away day held 20 August 2019 to focus on sustainment role</p> <p>Year Two – Updated information on the website, Council newsletter, social media campaigns to encourage engagement and awareness. Despite working remotely, the Sustainment Team built up good working relationships with the Foodbank, StepChange, Salvation Army, Helping Hands, CAB, both jobcentres, Children's Services and internal teams including Family Support, Social Prescribing, Housing Benefit and Council Tax. Work was also done to encourage referrals from other teams within Housing Solutions. This has all raised</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			<p>awareness of the service and encouraged referrals to be made.</p> <p>Linkage between MCL and sustainment, including a referral to sustainment services to support new tenants at the start of their private rented tenancies (known in the team as ‘tenants who find’. All direct let tenancies are also referred to Sustainment to ensure that the tenant has the best start to the tenancy and to ensure that the good relationship with the landlord is maintained. Any complex managed MCL tenancies are also referred to Sustainment where additional input is needed.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Leaflets and fliers have been started with the communications team, to finalise and distribute.</p> <p>Develop NEC Support Services Module.</p> <p>Introduce a “settling in service”</p> <p>Investment in software that identifies households who are not claiming all the benefits they are entitled to and helping them to do so, in order to maximise income</p>	
1.6	Ensure there is a saving scheme option available to households so that they can plan towards rent in advance, deposits, furniture	Ensure an easy to use and accessible saving option is available to homeless households	Personalised Housing Plans are constantly kept under review and kept up to date in accordance with the legislation. This includes signposting and advising applicants to appropriate services, including for budgeting and savings.	Action required

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
		<p>Explore joint matching savings up to a certain value to encourage savings</p> <p>Improve awareness through Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) and advice to household's approaches of the costs associated with housing and moving.</p>	<p><u>To do</u></p> <p>To review the advice we give on saving money now that tenants are not staying in TA for as long and include an option for a saving scheme</p> <p>Introduce an incentives scheme to encourage tenants to keep their rent accounts up to date and to save for move on.</p>	
1.7	<p>Grow the sustainment package, support with budgeting advice, ensuring households are in receipt of the correct benefits, signposted to debt services, encouraged into work, training, volunteering or education</p>	<p>Customers are provided with a holistic service when approaching for housing advice, this will include detailed advice in the PHP</p> <p>Expand support to customers placed through Magna Carta lettings, regular viewings and support for both the tenant and landlord</p> <p>Produce leaflets and handouts explaining how to sustain their tenancy</p> <p>A pathway to assist homeless households into work, training and volunteering is established</p>	See 1.5	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
1.8	Improve the availability of good quality, easy to understand information	<p>Leaflets and handouts produced</p> <p>Improved and details advice included in PHPs</p>	<p>Year One – PHPs have been amended to provide greater advice around holistic support such as smoking cessation advice</p> <p>Year Two – Improved the quality and layout of homelessness decision templates and improved access to contact details</p> <p>Year Three – The Housing Navigator has started to draft and develop pathways and referral routes for rough sleepers.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Northgate implementation</p> <p>Produce handout and leaflets</p>	
1.9	Redesign website to include self-serve tools	<p>Updated website to reflect legislative changes, easy to use referral mechanisms for duty to refer and early notification of housing issues</p> <p>Website that provides advice so that customers can self-serve</p>	<p>Year One - Work has started to identify issues with website content</p> <p>Year Two – Complete review of all information on the website and redesigned pages, moving all content onto the corporate website, away from Living&Homes.</p> <p>Year Three – Further review of detail and information on the website to ensure content is up to date and accurate.</p>	
1.10	Establish clear and up to date pathway plans within the area	Pathway plans are clear, up to date and in place in Runnymede for referrals from	Year One – Prison leaver approach procedure in place. Hospital discharge procedure in place. Duty to refer inbox in place and monitored daily.	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
		hospitals, prison, care leaving services	<p>Year Two - Procedures established for every aspect of Housing Solutions (Homelessness) work including referrals to supported housing providers, B&B procedure etc</p> <p>Regular meetings between Housing and Looked After Children/Leaving Care as well as attending Age 17 Accommodation Panel has led to an improved working relationship.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>To keep these under review and up to date.</p>	
1.11	Monitor, review and evaluate data to predict future trends of homelessness	Regular data collection through HCLIC and internal reporting mechanisms	<p>Year One – H-CLIC data captured quarterly and submitted to Government through Delta. A</p> <p>Monthly performance data for housing solutions collected</p> <p>Year Two & Three - Weekly and monthly reporting on rough sleepers and the Government's everyone in scheme.</p> <p>The monthly performance data has enabled us to make several bids to Government funds which have been successful.</p> <p>Year Three – Additional funding awarded for Protect and Vaccinate in response to COVID-19. All Government returns submitted on time.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			Invest in software which helps to track and map trends in use of temporary accommodation, breakdown of applicants to ensure targeted intervention	
1.12	Sustain tenancies at threat due to financial difficulties through a Prevention Fund provided by RBC from the Flexible Homelessness Grant	Households assisted to remain in their current home where it is suitable for their needs.	<p>Year One - Prevention budget agreed £20,000</p> <p>Draft prevention budget procedure and money monitoring spreadsheet created</p> <p>Year Three – Government grant of £72K provided to assist those in rent arrears due to Covid-19 to reduce rent debt and prevent homelessness. Officers improving early referrals to prevention funds, discretionary housing funds (including the introduction of a DHP sign off recommendation sheet) and applying for the Household Support Fund.</p> <p>Refreshed the prevention fund scheme, updated the procedure and application form.</p>	
Objective Two: Ensuring Sufficient Supply of Accommodation				

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
2.1	Set up shared houses for single homeless people	<p>Two shared house projects set up and operational, one for males and one for females</p> <p>Support to move on and provide a holistic service to single homeless and rough sleepers</p> <p>Explore a pilot for housing first model – providing accommodation and low level support.</p>	<p>Year One – The first shared house has been set up and let to tenants and tenants have successfully moved on from the accommodation.</p> <p>Year Two – Second house successfully set up. Model has been recognised by MHCLG as an example of good practice</p> <p>The shared houses are now a key part of our provision for single people and those that we may not have a full duty towards. They also play a valuable role in our winter provision for rough sleepers as well as being a key tool in keeping B&B numbers low.</p>	
2.2	Continue to make best use of existing housing stock	<p>Mutual exchanges</p> <p>Downsizers</p> <p>Reciprocals</p> <p>Improve the perception of IRL to attract active downsizers. (Independent Retirement Living)</p>	<p>Year Two & Three - Thorough review of historical data and development of a new Housing Allocation Scheme.</p> <p>Good work by the Housing Allocation Team to prioritise voids and ensure households on the housing register are accommodated in accordance with the written scheme.</p> <p>Initial work started on an Older Persons Strategy</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Improve incentives for downsizing. Explore a mobility scheme within Surrey in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021</p>	
2.3	Review Allocation Scheme	New/updated Allocations Scheme in place and effective in ensuring households in need are given priority and	Year One - Schedule for reviewing the policy starting to be devised	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
		<p>there is access to Social Housing through the Register so as to not incentivise homelessness.</p>	<p>Year Two - Full review of the existing scheme undertaken, drafting of the new scheme and a list of proposals developed. Consultation commenced, including member workshop and public questionnaire.</p> <p>Year Three - Full scheme taken Housing Committee in June 2021 and received approval for implementation</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Ensure new system in Northgate is fit for purpose to deliver the Scheme. Complete thorough reregistration exercise and encourage applicants to use the online portal.</p>	
2.4	<p>Review nomination agreements and maximise opportunities for future development</p>	<p>Regular monitoring of nominations agreements</p> <p>Maximum Affordable Housing achieved in all Section 106 agreements</p> <p>New social housing</p>	<p>Year Three – New units of social housing bought on board including 34 units of Affordable Rent at Egham Gateway with Accent. 9 units of Affordable Rent accommodation at St Peters, provision at Parkside in partnership with Accent.</p> <p>We have reviewed and recorded the nomination agreements for new schemes to ensure we are receiving our entitlement at re-lets.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>To carry out a review of all existing nomination agreements and to set up regular reporting of nomination agreements to ensure we receive 100% of voids we are entitled to in accordance with the nominations</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			agreement, are provided to the Council from registered providers	
2.5	Focus on reducing tenancy and social housing fraud	Expand existing fraud prevention and detection work for housing cases	<p>Year One – RBC has entered into a contract with RBBC to assist with fraud prevention work. This has been successful to date.</p> <p>Year Two – The Housing Allocation Team and Fraud department meet regularly to discuss timeframes for assessments and the quality of the service provided to ensure that it meets with the service requirements. A good working relationship has been established.</p> <p>Year Three - An applicant provided a fraudulent document which was identified during a section 202 homeless application review and the case is being prepared for prosecution. Publication in Council newsletters of our stance on fraud has been published.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Improve technology through NEC and I@W to ensure all documents are adequately checked for fraud and to launch additional awareness campaigns, including anonymous reporting/no sanction returning of accommodation obtained fraudulently.</p>	
2.6	Explore estate regeneration	Regeneration started of estates within the borough	Year Three – Parkside properties returned to use through a lease agreement with Accent to enable successful homeless prevention.	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			Appointment to the Housing Development Manager position.	
2.7	Implement the Tenancy Strategy	<p>Tenancy strategy implemented and being used by registered providers</p> <p>Tenancy policy introduced for RBC tenancies</p>	<p>Tenancy strategy written and approved at Committee</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>This falls within the Housing & Neighbourhood Services team and is being presented to Housing Committee.</p>	
2.8	Expand and develop Magna Carta Lettings	<p>Explore new incentives for landlords to assist tenants such as those without access to a guarantor or 6 month's rent up front</p> <p>Explore options for those found to be intentionally homeless</p> <p>Expand the service to meet the needs of more households and to get new landlords on board</p>	<p>Year One - Successfully applied for grant aid funding previously provided to Rent Start to provide a service for single homeless through MCL, adding £20,000 per year to the budget.</p> <p>Year Two - Two successful Government funding bids approved to the value of £17,691 for no priority covid applications to enter the PRS.</p> <p>Year Three - A successful bid for £18,607 to the AEFO fund. Advertising and engagement with landlords as part of the £72K rent arrear reduction grant has led to successful outcomes and new landlords joining the scheme.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Review the scheme to ensure that we mitigate the financial risks of the scheme to the Council, whilst ensuring the package remains attractive to landlords.</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
2.9	Focus on tenancy sustainment package and improve relationships with landlords	<p>Continue to host landlord forums and events</p> <p>Provide information to landlords of the services we can provide encouraging early notification of issues to sustain tenancies.</p> <p>Introduce tenancy training for tenants and ensure tenants are ready for move on before securing accommodation</p>	<p>Year One – Landlord forum hosted on 30 July at RBC, 25 landlords attended. New landlord folders and leaflets have been ordered.</p> <p>Year Two – Research has been undertaken into the types of tenancy training available. The findings suggest that online training may work best and is financially viable compared to face to face.</p> <p>Year Three – Development of a support star module and NEC Support Services system to capture progress made against defined objectives.</p> <p><u>To do:</u></p> <p>Introduce tenancy training and/or educational videos. Provide a “settling in service” to new tenants.</p>	
2.10	Explore shared ownership housing and access to within the borough	<p>Explore the opportunity of matching a tenant’s deposit to buy a home up to a certain limit by way of an interest free loan</p> <p>Encourage customers to prevent their homelessness by exploring home ownership offers</p>	<p>Options for a Council loan towards a deposit for shared ownership have been discussed internally but so far this has not been achievable.</p> <p><u>To do:</u></p> <p>Develop the shared ownership model including provision for First Homes – a Government scheme to provide home ownership with a 30% reduction in sale price up to £250K.</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
2.11	Develop support for rough sleepers	<p>Introduce shared house scheme for single homeless</p> <p>Explore a model of donation point to fund towards FUSE activities.</p> <p>Introduction of access to a shower for rough sleepers</p> <p>Access to food, clothing, health checks.</p> <p>Developing links with charities such as Haircuts4Homeless on a local scale.</p>	<p>Year One – Shared houses now introduced. The availability of showers now in place through Bessom and The Salvation Army</p> <p>Year Two - Successful Government funding bid to install two emergency sleep pods approved and installed.</p> <p>Year Three – Further successful funding bids for a Housing Navigator to develop pathway plans for rough sleepers. Successful bid to purchase 3 properties and deliver a housing led service for rough sleepers.</p> <p>Bids made for additional funding to extend the Navigator post and scope of the role.</p>	
2.12	Continue to apply for relevant government funding for new initiatives	<p>Funding bid submitted for all relevant government funding or other funding streams to improve the homeless service</p> <p>Successful bid achieved and implemented including monitoring of outcomes.</p>	<p>Year One - Funding bids previously applied for prior to the strategy commencing have been determined and unfortunately no funds were awarded to RBC</p> <p>Year Two - Four funding bids approved by MHCLG, for sustainment officer, covid response, B&B costs, emergency sleep pods, PRS incentives. Total: £65,290</p> <p>Year Three - Further bids made and approved, AEFO, RSAP, RSI, Surrey CC. Total £488,607</p> <p>To date a total grant award of £553,897 has been generated.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			Continue to implement the initiatives we have successfully bid for and to continue to bid for further funds in year four as they become available.	
Objective Three: Partnership Working and Holistic Support				
3.1	Enhanced Personal Housing Plans, incorporating more than just housing advice	Enhanced PHPs produced and given to households facing homelessness. These to include information about health, gambling advice, drink, drug and smoking secession. To include signposting to debt and credit unions and to generally give more information than just housing advice	<p>Year One - PHPs have been updated to take into account other factors.</p> <p>PHPs have been drafted to be used by the sustainment team as well as housing officers.</p> <p>Year Three - Further improvements to PHP including local services to help provide a holistic and targeted package of advice for applicants such as Youth Hub details</p>	
3.2	Develop the FUSE group to give meaningful assistance to vulnerable groups	<p>Introduce access to showers for homeless</p> <p>Set up a winter shelter (action 3.3)</p> <p>Research best practice Nationally and abroad to develop our own projects</p>	<p>Year One - Regular FUSE group meetings are now in place, this included providing a presentation on the HRAct on 16 July 2019</p> <p>Covid-19 significantly impacted the frequency of these meetings.</p> <p>Year Three - Appointed a Housing Navigator to relaunch the group with first meeting held and regular meetings set up for the future.</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			<p>Closer partnership working with key stakeholders including monthly meetings with emergency pod facilitators</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Continue to explore initiative and measures that the Council and the community and local services can work together to improve the lives and opportunities for those that are at risk of or become homeless.</p>	
3.3	Introduce a winter shelter within the borough	<p>Winter shelter set up and operational</p> <p>Develop a package of move on support available to those in need of a winter shelter</p>	<p>Year Two - Winter shelters were not appropriate due to Covid-19, but we have introduced two emergency sleep pods and eight bed spaces across the two shared houses.</p> <p>Year Three – Covid-19 has meant that shelters continue to be inappropriate and go against government guidance, so we have not continued with this objective. Instead, we have developed a year round options for rough sleepers rather than just for winter, including the drafting of a No Second Night Out Scheme and move on pathways through the Housing Navigator.</p>	
3.4	Work with foodbank to give support to the users so that they can become independent of this resource	<p>Develop a package to include budgeting advice and support to households in need of foodbank support</p> <p>Signpost to services to support affordable and healthy eating</p>	<p>Work started on this with the Sustainment Service meeting with organisations such as “Eat well spend less” and helped to run the course but the pandemic paused these initiatives as face to face contact stopped.</p> <p>Sustainment officer has been set up as a superuser on the food voucher system and works closely with the service. Have also built a good working relationship with justahelping hand who provide rucksacks to the</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
			<p>homeless. We have successfully bid for £1000 for this charity and have access to a supply of rucksacks for rough sleepers we support.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Relaunch this work through the sustainment team</p>	
3.5	Continue and improve strong partnership relationships	<p>Continue to work together and develop services for the benefit of our mutual client groups</p> <p>Develop new incentives and projects to best meet the needs of households</p>	<p>Year One – Work with Citizens Advice has commenced to review the SLA and to improve working relationships</p> <p>Year Two - Better partnership facilitated through inviting partners to disseminate information about their services and strategies improved collaborative working. See 1.5.</p> <p>Year Three – Relunched FUSE group</p>	
Objective Four: Meeting the needs of those in temporary accommodation				
4.1	Ensure B&B use is minimal	<p>Set up of shared houses for single people</p> <p>Maintain low levels of B&B usage by earlier intervention to prevent homelessness</p> <p>Ensure efficient move on from B&B to more sustainable housing</p>	<p>Year One – We have kept B&B usage to a minimum and well within budget with B&B use.</p> <p>Year Two – B&B use has continued to remain low despite “Everyone In” scheme requiring all rough sleepers be moved off of the street. B&B funding bid approved to cover some costs of B&B placements.</p> <p>Year Three - Better utilisation of emergency sleep pods, shared houses and early intervention at Prevention stage</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
		Assess levels and trends of homeless approaches to ensure appropriate levels of housing are available, both private, social and temporary	to keep B&B usage low. Additional funding secured to cover B&B costs, minimal cost to the Council Better engagement and move on plans for those who are placed in B&B, thus reducing the length of their stay.	
4.2	Provide realistic advice to those entering TA	Develop PHPs to provide advice and assistance going beyond just housing advice. Ensure households are aware of limited social housing and that they need to explore all housing options such as private rental Ensure households are ready to move at short notice	Year One – PHPs amended and subject to regular review. Realistic advice being provided to customers that they need to consider all options. This is quality checked by the Housing Solutions Manager Year Three - Greater emphasis on move on plans and working actively with the applicant to identify suitable PRS properties for move on We have started to develop licenses for those that go into temporary accommodation, instead of non-secure agreements and will enable us to give realistic advice about how long the license will last in every outcome of a case. <u>To do</u> Further improvement in the reduction of time spent in TA, savings for rent in advance, rent arrear reduction and settling in scheme support.	
4.3	Introduce tenancy training and life skills to those in need in TA	Explore the opportunity to provide tenancy training	Year One - Pre tenancy training working group organised and working on this. Year Two – Housing & Neighbourhood Services started work on tenancy videos.	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
		<p>Explore the opportunities for online training for tenants to prepare them for a tenancy</p> <p>Assess income and expenditure to provide budgeting advice</p>	<p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Develop modules in NEC to ensure these can be actioned.</p>	
4.4	Ensure TA households are ready and prepared for move on and households are moved on promptly	<p>Tenants are supported to save towards the initial costs needed to move i.e. rent in advance, this could be through a credit union</p> <p>Tenants in debt will be signposted to debt advice services to help manage their debts and provide budgeting advice</p> <p>Tenants are given the advice and tools to be able to look for their own housing solution i.e. in the private sector or home ownership</p>	<p>Tenants are supported to maintain their temporary accommodation and prepare for move on</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Applicants to have access to saving scheme for rent in advance.</p> <p>Support services module implemented to provide tailored advice and support plans, as well as measuring success through the support star</p>	
4.5	Ensure rent arrears are kept to a minimum and addressed effectively when they occur	<p>Active monitoring of rent payments and support for customers to ensure their rents are paid in full and on time.</p> <p>Efficient action taken when rent arrears form to ensure</p>	<p>Year One - Management of TA day to day functions and arrears moved into Housing & Neighbourhood Services team.</p> <p>Year Three – we have started the drafting of a temporary accommodation license to be used instead of non-secure tenancy agreements, these licenses will enable much</p>	

Ref	Objectives	Measure of Success	Year/Progress	Status
		<p>they are supported to clear their accounts</p> <p>Regular visits to TA to give support and assistance to ensure there are no tenancy breaches</p>	<p>greater control of temporary accommodation stock and the ability to take action against rent arrears.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Potential to move the management of temporary accommodation back into Housing Solutions and to utilise the rent analytics to keep on top of rent arrears and refresh the eviction escalation procedure.</p>	
4.6	<p>Provide a Solutions approach, not just housing. I.e. support to get people back to work, education, training or volunteering. Signposting to relevant service such as debt and health</p>	<p>Households supported into employment, volunteering and training</p> <p>Households receive a benefit assessment to ensure in receipt of all appropriate benefits and supported to register for those entitled to but not receiving.</p>	<p>Year One - Customers signposted where appropriate. Development of a directory of services and charitable fund in process to ensure all options are known and utilised by all officers.</p> <p><u>To do</u></p> <p>Ensure applicants are assessed against the support star, ensure correct benefits are in place, supported with education, employment and volunteering.</p>	

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Rough Sleeping No Second Night Out Policy

Approved:

Review due:

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1. Introduction & Aims of the Policy

- 1.1 A person is generally considered homeless if they do not have settled accommodation that they are legally able to occupy, or that their accommodation is considered 'not reasonable'¹ to continue to occupy. Homelessness is a very complex issue that is caused by a range of factors and can result in individuals sleeping rough on the streets.
- 1.2 Rough sleepers are people who sleep or bed down in the open air, such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, bus shelters and parks or sleep in buildings that are not designed for habitation. The longer a person sleeps rough on the streets, the greater the risk that they will come to harm. This may be in the form of deteriorating physical and mental health, temptation to commit crime, drug and alcohol abuse or harm from other members of the public.
- 1.3 Whilst there is no legal protection for people sleeping rough who do not have a priority need² for accommodation, tackling homelessness is at the centre of Runnymede Borough Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24. No one should have to sleep out on our streets in the 21st century, which is why we are committed to ending rough sleeping in the Borough of Runnymede. As stated in the Strategy, '*a single rough sleeper without access to accommodation or assistance is not acceptable*'.
- 1.4 The implementation of this No Second Night Out Policy aims to ensure that no one who sleeps rough in Runnymede will spend more than one night on the streets. Runnymede Borough Council will also ensure proactive prevention methods are in place so that rough sleeping is not an option for any individual.
- 1.5 The aims of the policy are to ensure no one spends more than one night in the street, by:
 - Quickly identifying those that are sleeping rough in Runnymede through notification
 - Rapid response to notification of rough sleepers
 - Ongoing support and assistance for anyone that has slept rough in Runnymede
 - Intensive engagement to break the cycle of homelessness and secure positive housing outcomes
 - Introduce preventative measures to reduce the need to sleep out

¹ **Homelessness:** Housing Act 1996, Section 175(3) provides that a person shall not be treated as having accommodation unless it is accommodation which it would be reasonable for them to continue to occupy.

² **Priority Need:** Housing Act 1996, Section 189(1) Sets out the persons who have a priority need, this could be if someone is vulnerable as a result of their health, age, leaving an institution etc.

2. Notification and Identifying Rough Sleepers

- 2.1 Early notification of a rough sleeper can make a huge difference to the outcome for that person. If a member of the public becomes aware of a person or persons who is sleeping on the streets of Runnymede, we urge them to notify the Council so that we can attend the reported sleeping site and offer support and assistance to the individual(s). To inform Runnymede Borough Council of a rough sleeper, you should either:
- Call the Housing Solutions Team on 01932 838383
 - Email roughsleeping@runnymede.gov.uk
 - Log the details on <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/> and the details will be passed to us
- 2.2 As part of this policy, through our Housing Navigator, we will conduct monthly rough sleeper counts and estimates. This will involve actively searching the Borough for evidence of encampments or people who are sleeping rough. We will also gather intelligence through our partnership working with local organisations, police, charities, and churches.
- 2.3 The Council also take part in the annual rough sleeper count that is carried out across the Country every autumn. The official street count is a snapshot figure of who is sleeping rough on one single night, giving a nationwide picture. Whilst this is important, our regular reporting and monitoring will provide a more accurate picture of rough sleeping within Runnymede over the year

3. Response to notification of a Rough Sleeper

- 3.1 On receiving notification or having identified a rough sleeper we will undertake an initial assessment of their needs. We aim to provide a rapid and consistent approach to all reports of a rough sleeper and therefore we are committed to visiting and completing an assessment of the rough sleepers needs within one working day of receiving notification.
- 3.2 A homeless application will be taken in all instances, other than where the Council have already taken a homeless application and determined the

duties, if any, are owed to that person. Where a homeless application has already been concluded, unless there is ground for a fresh application, there may be no further duty on the Authority other than one to provide the person with advice and assistance.

- 3.3 During the initial assessment we will determine whether the rough sleeper has a local connection³ to the borough of Runnymede. If they do not, we will take steps to reconnect them to the borough of their origin, (see 3.13-3.15 reconnection).
- 3.4 As part of the homeless application process the Council will support the individual in accordance with the legislation and accept any subsequent duties that may arise, for example this may include a relief duty⁴ and a personalised housing plan⁵.
- 3.5 Alongside the initial assessment, should the applicant be a verified rough sleeper, we will offer emergency accommodation to prevent a second night of rough sleeping. This offer of accommodation will be regardless of whether we have reason to believe that the person has a priority need, however it will not be made to those where the Authority has determined no duty applies. The emergency accommodation may be an offer of B&B, a placement in our Emergency Sleep pods or within temporary accommodation. A risk assessment will be carried out when considering what accommodation is suitable for the individual.
- 3.6 In the event of an emergency or severe weather, the Council may be able to provide emergency accommodation to those where no duty is owed. See SWEP (3.10-3.12).

No Recourse to Public Funds

- 3.7 In some instances, a rough sleeper may be a person from abroad and have an eligibility status of “no recourse to public funds”. In accordance with the

³ **Local Connection:** Section 199(1) Housing Act 1996 (as amended) provides that a person has a local connection with a District where a person has resided in the area for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years, or where they are employed in an area, or where they have a close family member who has resided in the area for the last 5 years. Some special circumstances may also apply.

⁴ **Relief duty:** Section 189B requires housing authorities to help people who are homeless to secure accommodation

⁵ **Personalised housing plan:** The Section 189A duty is to assess an applicant’s case and to develop a personalised housing plan with reasonable steps for the Authority and the individual to take in order to enable the person to positively resolve their housing situation.

legislation⁶, they would not be eligible for homeless assistance or benefits and as such, would not qualify for emergency accommodation. However, we are committed to ending all rough sleeping in Runnymede. Therefore, we will still offer emergency accommodation under this policy to those that have no recourse to public funds.

- 3.8 This discretionary offer of emergency accommodation will be made under Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 – a duty that is capable of permitting the provision of temporary accommodation by a Council as a step for improving the health of people in the area. This offer of accommodation will not be indefinite, and the person will need to demonstrate that they are engaging with the Housing Solutions team to find a solution to their difficulty. Failure to engage will result in the accommodation provided being brought to an end.
- 3.9 The Housing Navigator will support the individual to apply for eligibility status, discuss returning to their country of origin if safe and reasonable to do so, liaise with the Home Office regarding their documentation status as well as whether they qualify for National Asylum Support Services (NASS) assistance and where appropriate, support the person to obtain employment so that they are self-sufficient.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

- 3.10 Runnymede Borough Council operate a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol to safeguard the wellbeing of those rough sleeping during periods of severe weather, especially in winter months. There is no single definition of severe weather, as any weather that could increase the risk of harm to people sleeping rough can be classed as severe. Typically, SWEP is triggered when the temperature a night is set to be 0c or below for three consecutive nights.
- 3.11 If a rough sleeper does not qualify for support through this Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out scheme and the weather is considered to be a risk to the health and wellbeing of a rough sleeper, we may be able to offer emergency accommodation for a short period until the severe weather improves.
- 3.12 A copy of Runnymede Borough Council's SWEP is available at request.

⁶ **Eligibility:** Section 185 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended)

Reconnection to originating borough

- 3.13 Rough sleepers who do not have a local connection to the borough of Runnymede, but who do have a local connection to another local authority, will be reconnected with that authority if it is safe to do so. Accommodation will be provided whilst the reconnection is made so that the person is not left on the streets.
- 3.14 If the conditions for a referral are made, a reconnection will be made formally under Section 198, Housing Act 1996 (as amended), which allows a local authority to refer a case to another housing authority. Runnymede Borough Council will be under no further duty towards this person, even if they refuse the reconnection.
- 3.15 In some instances, Runnymede Borough Council will be able to cover the costs of travel to enable a rough sleeper to return to the area with which they are connected.

4. Ongoing Support for Rough Sleepers

Help getting off the streets

- 4.1 Rough sleepers will be provided with support by the Housing Solutions team to ensure that they do not need to return to the streets now or in the future. Rough sleepers will be put onto 'pathway plans' to guide them through the process. The plans are tailored to the individual and are categorised as: Addiction, Education and Employment, Ex-offender, Domestic Abuse, Ex-armed Forces, Finances and Health. It is possible to utilise more than one category.
- 4.2 With help from the pathways, the Team will support the rough sleeper to find appropriate accommodation. This may be supported housing, private rented accommodation, or social housing. Pathway plans will ensure rough sleepers will have assistance setting up their new home, arranging utilities and paying their rent so that they do not lose their new home.
- 4.3 A small personalisation budget is available to rough sleepers through the Council's homeless prevention grant. This fund can be used to facilitate

transport, provide food, access to a mobile phone or other. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis and sign off for funds will be authorised by the Head of Housing Solutions or Head of Housing & Business Planning.

Reconnection with family

- 4.4 Rough sleepers often have traumatic or chaotic backgrounds where relationships and family life has deteriorated to such an extent that the individual is forced to leave accommodation and end up sleeping rough. Runnymede Council help to negotiate with family members to reconnect that individual, where it is safe to do so.

Access to healthcare

- 4.5 Whilst the Housing Solutions Team primary role is housing, the Officers will signpost and support rough sleepers to access appropriate healthcare. This may include registering for a GP and dentist or a referral to services such as drug and alcohol teams for help with addictions. The Housing Navigator will utilise the resources of the partners working with the Council through the FUSE group (see 5.7 below) to identify, and where appropriate, refer to other health agencies such as dentists, opticians.
- 4.6 Housing Solutions, where possible, will guide rough sleepers to getting vaccinated against Covid-19 should the applicant wish.
- 4.7 Joint working with the social prescribing team will ensure that individuals receive the support they need. For example, through referrals to therapies, mental health services etc.

Help people into work

- 4.8 The housing team will ensure that rough sleepers are able to access all of the benefits that they are entitled to in order to enable them to get back onto their feet. However, we will also work with our partners in the Job Centre to ensure those who are able to work, are provided with the skills and support to access employment, volunteering and education.

Housing First

- 4.9 Runnymede Borough Council have secured funding through the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Two successful funding bids have been granted to implement two schemes:
- a) RSAP (Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme): Funding has been approved to purchase three 1-bedroom properties for rough sleepers.
 - b) RSI (Rough Sleeping Initiative): Funding has been agreed to provide a housing first⁷ type scheme within the three purchased properties.
- 4.10 The intention of these schemes is to provide a rough sleeper with a stable home first and then enlist support services to help the individual learn how to maintain their tenancy and rebuild their lives. This is a popular model of support both nationally and globally, with proven positive outcomes for entrenched rough sleepers. The support services may include health and wellbeing services, tenancy sustainment support and skills development training.
- 4.11 These properties will be let on an initial 12-24 month agreement with move on plans created and put in place to enable the individual to gain the skills needed in order to move on and live independently. Therefore, freeing up the accommodation for another individual with complex needs that is rough sleeping.

5. Homeless Prevention

- 5.1 Rough sleeping can be avoided in many cases if people access the support and accommodation they require at an earlier stage. Runnymede Borough Council focus on homeless prevention as per its duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Section 195 of the Act requires Council's to work with eligible applicants to try and prevent homelessness or secure alternative accommodation.
- 5.2 We do this by recognising the need for early identification of the root cause of homelessness before the applicant sleeps rough on the streets. This may include facilitating mediation and negotiation with family members, where safe to do so. Often parental exclusions are resolved by negotiation, thus

⁷ **Housing First:** Provides intensive, person centred, holistic support that is open ended, giving homeless people with health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives.

preventing a young person from sleeping rough due to a lack of support network or skills to secure and maintain a tenancy.

- 5.3 Runnymede Council will also continue to liaise with support agencies such as mental health groups and addiction recovery services to tackle the root cause of the threat of homelessness before the problems escalate.
- 5.4 The other key prevention tool is tenancy sustainment. This is achieved by ensuring that the person has an income and expenditure assessment so as to identify where excess spending is occurring and re-direct that to rent arrears, for example. Secondly, putting the applicant in touch with employment services or educational services in order to equip them with life skills to maximise income and thus avoid a perpetual cycle of rent arrears.
- 5.5 Other life skill support such as signposting to cooking courses, volunteering opportunities and wellbeing groups is another core prevention feature. This provides the individual with confidence to be in more control of their lives and help reduce the risk of sliding into a pattern not being able to maintain tenancy and potential rough sleeping when they feel there are no other options.
- 5.6 The key to this is responding quickly. Therefore, if you are aware of somebody who is at a threat of homelessness, please contact our Housing Solutions team: housingsolutions@runnymede.gov.uk

Homeless Task Group

- 5.7 The Council host a bi-monthly Homeless Task Group, also known as FUSE (Facilitate, Understand, Support, Empower). This group pulls together local services, charities, churches and organisations who share our ambition to end rough sleeping and improve housing outcomes for individuals.
- 5.8 The agencies that we work with include; Police, Probation, hospital, revenues and benefits, department for work and pensions, Job Centre, Citizen Advice, Look ahead, The Salvation Army, Your Sanctuary, Runnymede Foodbank, iAccess, Richmond Fellowship, Surrey Adults Matter, Christians Against Poverty, social prescribing. This list is not exhaustive.
- 5.9 The joint working of this group will enable quicker identification and notification of a report of a rough sleeper and better joined up services for those individuals that need support moving away from the streets.

- 5.10 If you are an organisation that is interested in being a part of the FUSE group, please contact our Housing Navigator on roughsleeping@runnymede.gov.uk
- 5.11 The forum enables the Council to develop our rough sleeping pathways through joint working. Pathway support being in the form of (but not limited to): Guidance for ex-offenders, support with addiction, mental and physical health, help with maximising income, signposting and guidance into education and employment.

6. Monitoring and performance management

- 6.1 We aim to review this policy every year to ensure it reflects current legislation and latest examples of best practice.
- 6.2 Runnymede Borough Council will continue to work with local partners to tackle homelessness across the borough by meeting regularly, sharing information and good practice. Further, we will conduct monthly estimates and street counts, as well as the annual rough sleeper count.
- 6.3 The Housing Navigator will gather data and use the information captured to monitor and assess ongoing and/or emerging trends so that Runnymede Borough Council are able to be proactive in reducing homelessness and ending rough sleeping in the borough.
- 6.4 The team will monitor data, including:
- Number of people verified and supported off the streets
 - History and backgrounds of those verified to better understand patterns
 - The number of nights a person slept rough in the borough and the reasons why
 - Number of people reconnected and where they were reconnected to
- 6.5 The Council has a plan to end rough sleeping and has set operational targets that we will have 0 rough sleepers on the annual rough sleeper count for 2023, 2024 and 2025.

7. Equalities Implications

7.1 In producing this document an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is available as a separate document. If you would like to see a copy of this please request this directly by emailing housingsolutions@runnymede.gov.uk or contacting Housing Solutions on 01932 838383.

8. Related Strategies/Documents

8.1 In the Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018⁸, they set a commitment to half rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. This policy supports the objective of ending rough sleeping

8.2 The related documents for this policy are:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy



Homeless Strategy
2019-2024.docx

- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol



Severe Weather
Emergency Protocol

9. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1					

⁸ Rough Sleeping Strategy: [Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Integrated Care Partnership Stepdown Scheme Update (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

In March 2021 Housing Committee approved the use of two Independent Retirement Living flats for participation in a pilot “Step Down” scheme to support the NHS in a partnership with Spelthorne, Woking and Elmbridge Councils.

The scheme is to facilitate discharge from hospital for medically fit patients who cannot immediately return home, providing a 6 week placement with a care package to enable their own accommodation to be made ready.

Following a successful pilot, the Integrated Care Partnership has approved funding for a further year to extend the scheme.

The report requests approval for the continued use of two IRL flats for “Step Down” or “Step Up” where a patient needs accommodation with support either before or after a hospital admission.

Recommendation:

Members approve the continued use of two flats in Floral House as part of the North West Surrey Integrated Care Partnership Step Down scheme until such time as the scheme is ended or demand for IRL accommodation outweighs the benefit of the scheme.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Nationally the availability of hospital beds is restricted due to patients who are medically fit “bed blocking” because they are unable to return to their home. In many cases people require adaptations, changes to their home environment or a respite location where they do not have to care for another person.
- 1.2 It is recognised that there needs to be synergy with local services and health and medical provision and as a result Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP) have been established to give people the support they need, joined up across local councils, the NHS, and other partners. It removes traditional divisions between hospitals and family doctors, between physical and mental health, and between NHS and council services. In the past, these divisions have meant that too many people experienced disjointed care.
- 1.3 Runnymede is within the North West Surrey ICP which is made up of Woking, Spelthorne, Runnymede and Elmbridge. Runnymede Community Services have an established and growing relationship with the Integrated Care Partnership Board and are involved in a number of initiatives through their discretionary, prevention and community services in supporting residents to remain living at home.
- 1.4 In March 2021 this Committee approved participation in a pilot scheme to be funded by the ICP to provide accommodation either with care on site or where a short term agency package could be provided through Adult Social Care. These are called “step down” beds as they are an interim between hospital care and full discharge. This is furnished accommodation for up to six weeks whilst the issues with their own home

are addressed. The pilot scheme has seven properties, two each from Woking, Spelthorne (A2 Dominion) and Runnymede and one at Whitely Village in Elmbridge.

1.5 In March 2021 officers undertook to report back on the pilot after the initial year.

2. **Report**

2.1 Two properties at the Floral House Independent Retirement Scheme have been furnished and used under the Step-Down Scheme over the past year. The scheme is managed by a coordinator across the four boroughs who liaises with the NHS hospital Discharge teams and is fully funded by the ICP.

2.2 This interim accommodation is only available to people who have a move on plan in place, it is for a maximum of six weeks so is suitable for pending adaptations, deep clean or decluttering etc. Placements can be for people from any of the four boroughs and location will be determined by availability and the level of care required.

2.3 The scheme has been very successful with mainly positive outcomes where either the client was able to return home within the six weeks or alternative suitable accommodation was secured for them.

2.4 The ICP considers the scheme to have been very beneficial in releasing hospital beds and transitioning patients back into the community. They have committed to funding for a further year, increasing the units to nine across the Boroughs and resources for further staffing.

2.5 Officers recommend that Members approve the continued use of two flats in Floral House as part of the Surrey Heartlands Step Down scheme until such time as the scheme is ended or demand for IRL accommodation outweighs the benefit of the scheme.

3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 Interim lettings to the properties at Floral House are made in accordance with Runnymede's Housing Allocations Policy. Exceptions can be made to the prioritisation criteria and the use of a 'direct let' is available under section 9.6 of the policy (sections b and i are most relevant in this situation).

"The Council may not advertise all properties, and may reserve some properties / nominations for direct letting in the following circumstances:

- a) Assisted Choice for Homeless Households Scheme (see section 13)
- b) Where the property has specific adaptations
- c) To allow the landlord to make the best use of their housing stock
- d) For community safety reasons
- e) For management moves (see paragraph 6.10.10)
- f) For reasons of public protection
- g) Where the move will facilitate a chain of lets releasing another property which the Council has a particular need of (usually involving under occupiers)
- h) Where the property is deemed to be hard to let
- i) Any other reason as authorised by the Service Manager or the Strategic Housing Manager."

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Allocations Policy Section 9.6 Exceptions to advertising properties

4. Resource implications/Value for Money (where applicable)

4.1 The full cost of the scheme is covered by the ICP funding.

5. Legal implications

5.1 To follow.

6. Equality implications

6.1 Although this scheme takes two properties out of use as Independent Retirement living flats, these properties are not currently in high demand. They would be accessed by older people and therefore this group with a protected characteristic are disproportionately impacted by the scheme. However, this is the largest IRL scheme with 75 flats and the properties are in the outer blocks which are less popular with people seeking the security of the scheme. There is a regular turnover of properties so this would not have a significant impact on waiting list times. Most of the patients accessing the scheme are elderly and vulnerable and therefore the benefit of the scheme to Runnymede residents outweighs the potential small increase in waiting time for an individual.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 No Implications have been identified

8. Conclusions

8.1 The Step Down pilot has been very successful, supporting vulnerable residents to be discharged from hospital to a safer environment with care. The Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Partnership has approved funding to extend the scheme for another year and to increase the number of properties available to nine. Members are asked to approve the continued use of two HRA flats in Runnymede.

(To resolve)

Background papers

[March 2021 Housing Committee Report](#)

Refugee Resettlement Update (Andy Kefford, Housing)

Synopsis of report:

To update members on our refugee resettlement commitments to both Syrian and Afghan families.

Recommendation(s):

None. This report is for information only.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Housing Committee approved the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in January 2016. Approval was given to resettle ten families through this scheme.
- 1.2 Approval was given via a Standing Order 42 on 18th August 2021 and a report was presented at November 2021 Housing Committee regarding the Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme for Afghan nationals being relocated to the UK. Approval was given for Runnymede Borough Council to support three households under this provision.

2. Updates of Resettlement Scheme Progress

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

- 2.1 Runnymede Borough Council have housed four of the committed ten households. A fifth property has been identified and offered to the scheme. A family will be arriving within the next six weeks and will be resettled within the Borough.
- 2.2 As agreed by Housing Committee in 2016, the Family Support Programme will provide the support and assistance the family require to relocate and settle in the area. A request for a sixth property has been made for another family to arrive towards the end of October, early November 2022, which the Housing Team will facilitate.
- 2.3 It is therefore anticipated that Runnymede Borough Council will have resettled six of the committed ten households by the end of this calendar year. A further four properties will still need to be identified.
- 2.4 Responsibility for the Syrian Households Resettlement Scheme sat within the Community Development Business Unit. The Housing Service's role was to respond to requests for accommodation, which we did in all cases. Although the Corporate Head of Community Development who managed this process is no longer in post it is understood that there were issues with resources at Surrey Heath who provided the intensive support needed for the initial four households. The responsibility for this scheme is now with Housing and we are committed to ensuring the target of ten households is met within the next three years.

Afghan Local Employed Staff Relocation Scheme.

- 2.5 Of the three households Runnymede Borough Council committed to relocate, one has successfully moved into private rented housing and is settled. The other two households remain in temporary accommodation, whilst the Housing Team look for suitable private rented accommodation to enable move-on and settlement.
- 2.6 Locating move-on accommodation is proving difficult as there is a high demand for larger private rented properties and rental prices are generally unaffordable due to levels of rent being above the local housing allowance and households being subject to benefit capping.
- 2.7 The Housing Team will continue to proactively search for suitable move on accommodation and the two families are also being encouraged, through their Resettlement Coordinator, to find accommodation that is suitable.

Resource Capacity

- 2.8 At the January 2022 Housing Committee, members asked for an update on capacity to increase our commitment to more families being resettled under the Afghan Local Employed Staff Relocation Scheme. The Runnymede and Surrey Heath Resettlement Team, who are supporting the families in Runnymede, may be able to increase their capacity to support an additional two households, to a maximum of five on the scheme in total. However, the main issue is the lack of available private rented properties for families to move-on and resettle into.
- 2.9 Both of the resettlement schemes currently commit to resettling larger families (i.e. 3-bedroom properties), however, the Housing Solutions Team have recently received a higher demand for these larger properties both through requests for housing via our Housing Register and through homeless approaches. We therefore need to carefully balance the requirements of local people in housing need, against any further commitment to resettle additional Afghan families.
- 2.10 If Members wish to increase our commitment to resettle three households to five households, it is recommended that the additional two households are only accepted once all of the first three households have been successfully moved into private rented housing and after they have received the initial intensive support they require when moving in.
- 2.11 It is also recommended that any additional households are accepted once suitable private rented accommodation in the borough has been located and identified, rather than the households moving into temporary accommodation first. This is so that the families are able to move straight into accommodation and be provided with the support they require to settle, rather than settling into temporary accommodation and making arrangements such as school placements for children etc, only to be moved again later on once private rented accommodation is found.

3. **Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The policy framework being utilised to support the LES households relocating from Afghanistan replicates the framework in place for supporting homeless households or households threatened with homelessness.

4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1. Financial assistance to support households relocating to the UK from Afghanistan is provided by central government.
- 4.2. The funding provided by Government can be provided for a three year period, should the family continue to require support. It is envisaged that the level of support each family will need should gradually decrease as they become settled in the country.
- 4.3. The annual financial rate of support for each household member are now as follows:

Description	Tariff (£)
Integration Support Package (per person for 12 months following arrival)	10,500
ESOL (single payment per adult who requires it)	850
12-24 months (per beneficiary i.e. per person)	6,000
25-36 months (per beneficiary i.e. per person)	4,020

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 The UK Government has made a public commitment to aid Afghan nationals who worked for the UK in Afghanistan. Assistance is being provided by allowing such nationals leave to enter the UK initially with a view to them obtaining indefinitely leave to remain.
- 5.2 Any services and assistance that local authorities provide will be under their existing statutory powers.

6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 We are made aware of the makeup of the households Runnymede commit to resettle.
- 6.2 The Resettlement Team will enlist the relevant statutory agency to support with any health concern. Appropriate accommodation will be identified to meet any mobility needs and where required for it to be adapted to meet any long-term needs.
- 6.3 Financial provision is made within the Central Government Funding for the adaptation of any permanent property.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 Consideration will need to be given to the energy performance of any permanent accommodation to ensure that the household are not at risk of fuel poverty.

8. Other implications (where applicable)

8.1 None

9. Conclusions

9.1 The Council has resettled four of the ten committed families under the Syrian resettlement scheme and anticipate a further two families will be resettled before the end of the calendar year. All three Afghan families we committed to resettle are in the Borough, two of which are waiting for suitable private rented accommodation.

(For information)

Background Papers

None

Update on Communication with the Regulator of Social Housing (Housing, Simon Allen)

Synopsis of report:
To advise Members of the recent contact with the Regulator of Social Housing

Recommendation(s):
None. This report is for Information.

1. **Context**

- 1.1 Following the notice served by the Regulator of Social Housing in October 2019 Members requested an update at each Committee on progress with remedying the service failures outlined in the notice.

2. **Report**

- 2.1 The Council continues to have monthly meetings with the Regulator to appraise them of progress with achieving compliance across the stock, issues encountered and to detail improvements to ensure full compliance is achieved.
- 2.2 The Notice was served on the Council on 31st October 2019, and this will remain in place until the regulator is satisfied that the Council has proven that we are managing all risks detailed in the notice and can evidence this.
- 2.3 The Housing Technical Services Team has re-run our asset data and can confirm that we now have a Decent Homes figure of circa 70% decency. Clearly this will increase month on month as we are fully engaged with replacements of kitchens and bathrooms and are also about to enter a five-year domestic boiler replacement programme.
- 2.4 The electrical certification was 99.09% as of 22 February 2022 with 26 tests still to be completed. All 26 have now been referred to Housing Management to proceed with legal actions due to continued non access.
- 2.5 High risk fire safety actions outstanding as reported on the 22 February 2022 are at 34 in total.
- 2.6 It is Runnymede Borough Council's intention to write formally to the Regulator in March 2022 setting out its position to request an end to our continued engagement in respect the served notice. This communication will contain our current position to each area identified as failing in the Regulators issued notice in October 2019.

3. **Legal implications**

- 3.1 The Regulator of Social Housing served a Regulatory Notice on the authority as a Registered Provider, under the powers in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. The Notice, published on 31st October 2019, cited the statutory fire

and electrical safety standards that gave rise to the authority's breach of the Homes Standard.

- 3.2 It remains open to the Regulator to take further formal action if they are not satisfied with the progress towards compliance.

4. Equality implications

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required within the context of this report.

5.0 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 5.1 The ongoing works to deliver programmes and packages of investment to increase and or maintain the Council compliancy with regulatory Health and Safety is paramount and is captured in our commitment to quality procurements undertaken in a timely and effective manner.
- 5.2 Runnymede Borough Council will expect new contractors to make major reductions over the life of the contract to reduce the environmental impact of providing the repairs and maintenance service.
- 5.3 Runnymede Borough Council would expect to see from organisations wishing to tender for the contract initiatives such as: -
- The use of a repairs scheduling system designed to reduce travelling distances between repair jobs
 - A commitment to running an electric fleet
 - A commitment to purchasing items held locally and sustainably sourced
 - A commitment to offsetting some of the emissions produced through the delivery of this service by tree planting locally

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council is continuing to engage with the Regulator monthly, but will in March 2022 write formally to request an end to their engagement with Runnymede Borough Council.

(For information)

Background Papers

None

Housing IT Enhancement Update (Housing, Andy Vincent)

Synopsis of report:

1. **Approval was given by Housing Committee (8th September 2021) and Corporate Management Committee (23rd September 2021) for an additional capital investment of £246,382 into Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Management IT system.**
2. **Phase 2 of the Housing Management IT system enhancement has been identified to include the implementation of the following modules: -**
 - **Asset Management**
 - **Communications Suite**
 - **Mobile Working**
 - **Planned Maintenance**
 - **Risk Management**
 - **Support Services**
 - **Task Manager**
3. **Work has recently been completed on two Phase 1 modules. Rent Analytics (went live 23rd November 2021) and Housing Online (went live 16th February 2022).**
4. **Work is also well underway on the Housing Allocations module.**

Recommendation(s):

- i. **That members recognise the progress being made to implement Phase 2 of the Housing IT system enhancement.**

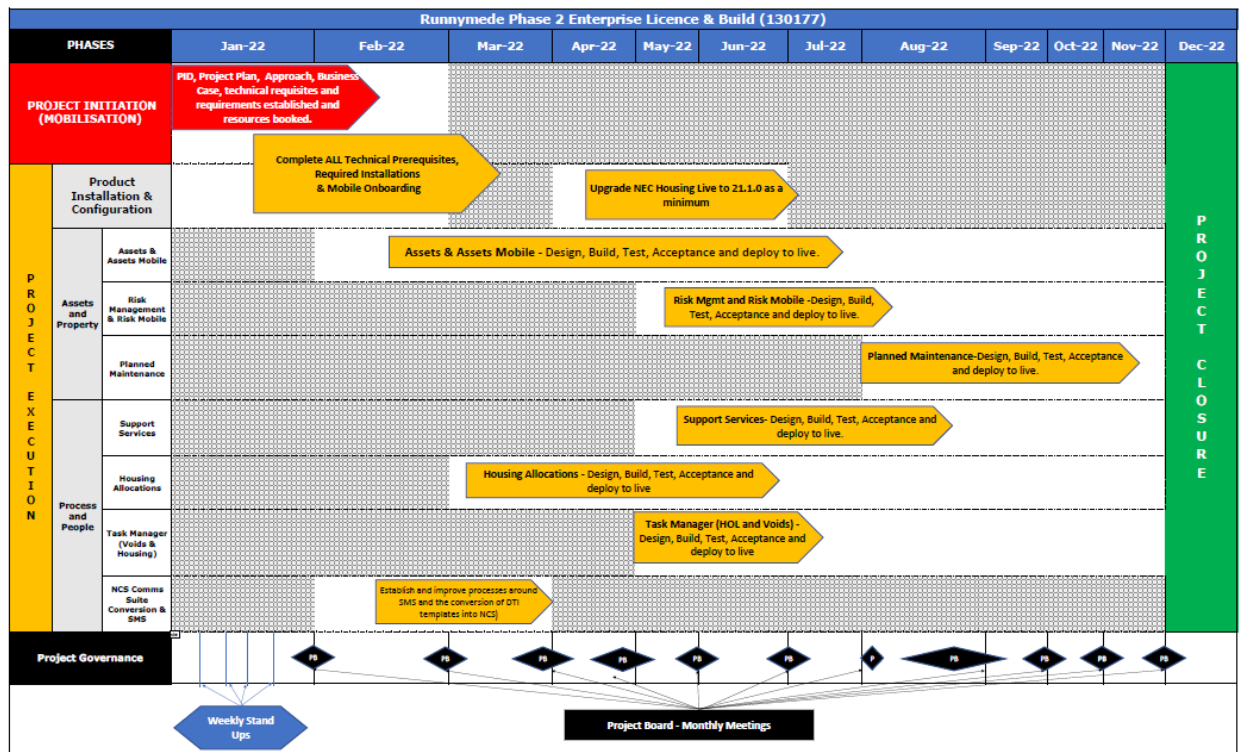
1. Context of report

- 1.1 A report was taken to the Housing Committee and Corporate Management Committee of Runnymede Borough Council in September 2021 requesting permission to implement modules approved in June 2020 and to undertake further enhancement work to the Housing Management IT system.
- 1.2 Approval was given to invest capital of £246,382 in the system to implement the following modules:
 - Asset Management
 - Communications Suite
 - Mobile Working
 - Planned Maintenance
 - Risk Management
 - Support Services
 - Task Manager

2. Progress update

Updating RBC's Contract with NEC/Northgate

- 2.1 To support the work to enhance the Housing Management IT system RBC's Digital Services, Housing and Legal staff have worked with NEC to update the existing Support Services Contract to reflect the full service being offered to Runnymede Borough Council.
- 2.2 The contract variation has now been executed.
- 2.3 A project plan is now in place for the modules – with confirmed start and end dates.

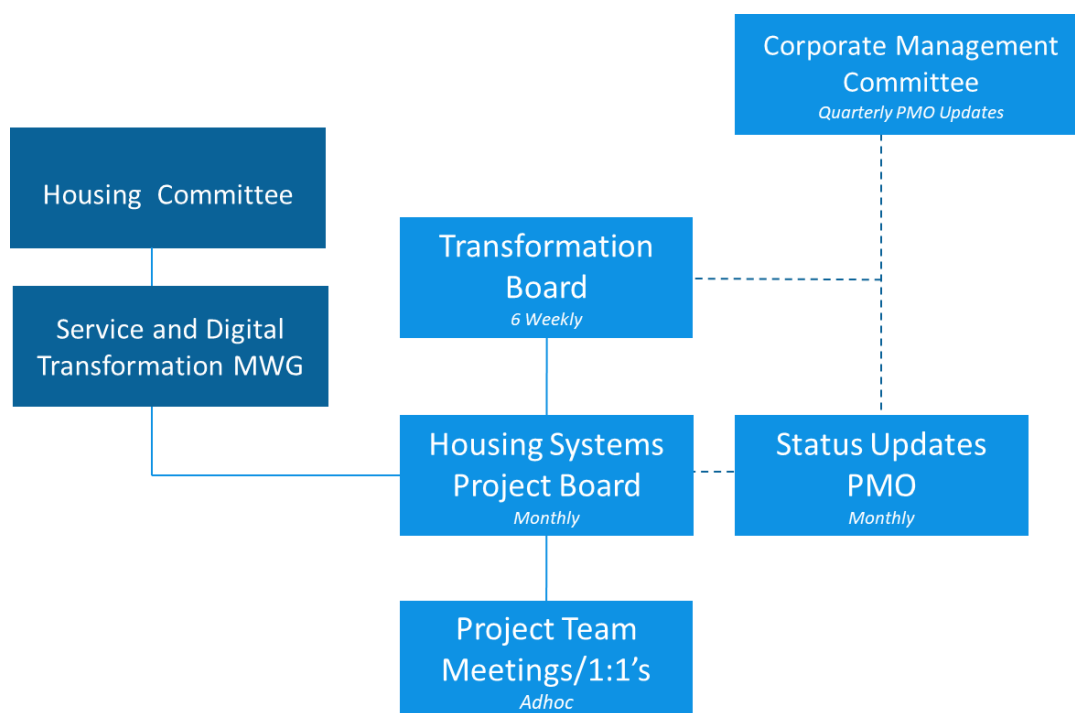


- 2.4 Meetings have been held to commence the implementation of the Asset Management System.
- 2.5 Considerable preparatory work is being done to facilitate the implementation of the Housing Allocations and Support Services modules.

Project resources

- 2.6 The management of phase 2 of the Housing System enhancements are as follows: -
 - Digital Services are leading the project management of phase 2.
 - Project Sponsorship spans Housing and Digital Services
 - The Digital Innovation and Delivery Manager has been identified as the Project Manager
 - NEC will lead the solution design and build of the project
 - Weekly project implementation meetings are held with Housing, Digital Services and NEC
 - Reports are being given to the Transformation Board 6 weekly and the PMO monthly.

- 2.7 Project resources have been agreed within the pre-approved £129,000 capital project implementation costs approved by the Housing and Corporate Management Committees.
- 2.8 The build of the solution will be delivered within a fixed cost and project timeline of a 12-month period – see project plan above.
- 2.9 NEC will be responsible for leading the design and documentation of the individual module solutions, the Council will be responsible for reviewing and approving the system configuration. NEC will then deliver the build. This approach significantly relieves pressure from the Councils Housing Service resources.
- 2.10 A dedicated Project Manager and Project Sponsor from NEC has been allocated to the project, both of which will attend monthly project boards with the Council’s project team to report back on progress and to plan the next month ahead.
- 2.11 A project governance structure has been prepared which includes project reporting across the Council’s decision-making boards.
- 2.12 Housing Committee can expect to receive monthly updates on project delivery.



3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The update to the Housing Management IT system will enable the delivery of a large part of Runnymede Borough Council Housing Service’s improvement

agenda. For example, it will give managers the ability to monitor the delivery of services (outside of repairs and rent collection) is in line with agreed policies and procedures, it will enable Technical Services to accurately oversee the implementation of the Council's Decent Homes Programme, plus also enable our support services to take a significant step forward in modernising their service and evidencing their effectiveness.

- 3.2 The upgrade to the Housing Management IT system is referenced in the Housing Service Business Centre Plan 2021/22

H5	Upgrade the Northgate Housing IT system and implement essential new modules as part of Corporate Digital Transformation Strategy
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4. Resource implications (where applicable)

- 4.1. The resource implications for Phase 2 of the Housing Management IT upgrade were highlighted to the Housing Committee on 8th September 2021.

They remain as follows:

Capital Costs	Totals £
Modules to be implemented from original contract	
Assets	22,230
Communication	3,190
Planned Maintenance	17,545
Support Services	12,760
Task Manager	9,570
Housing Allocations	19,899
Sub-Total	85,194
Discounted cost (-£7000) for bulk purchase	78,194

New modules being recommended	
Mobile Assets	16,000
Mobile Risk Management	16,000
Mobile onboarding	6,500
Sub-Total New Modules	38,500
Total Capital	116,694

Project resources	
Project implementation resource	129,688
Sub-Total human resources	129,688

Total additional capital required	246,382
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Annual Revenue Costs	Totals £
Mobile Assets	6,750
Mobile Risk Management	6,750
Total	13,500

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 In fulfilment of its landlord and statutory duties the Council has to record data on its activities for submission in regular Government returns, to demonstrate compliance with policies if required and to meet regulatory Standards. As the expectations on Social Landlords have increased beyond traditional landlord functions it is essential that the Council has a system capable of recording and monitoring this.

6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 Upgrading the Housing Management IT system will enable data collected by different parts of the service to be shared. For example, currently the Housing Register is held outside of the core housing system – also information on the support needs of residents in our Independent Retirement Living accommodation is also currently held outside of our core housing system.
- 6.2 This improved intelligence will improve our understanding of how services are being accessed and utilised by different parts of the community.

7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 7.1 Upgrading the housing management IT system will enable data to be held on the energy performance of the Council's social housing stock alongside other asset information.
- 7.2 Holding this information in one system will ensure the data is updated organically as improvement work is undertaken to tenanted homes. This will guarantee that up-to-date data on our energy performance is always available.
- 7.3 Holding this data centrally will allow the Housing Service to model work programmes designed to improve the energy performance of our stock to identify the most cost-effective way of meeting the Council's commitment of achieving a C energy efficiency rating as a minimum by 2030.

8. **Other implications (where applicable)**

- 8.1 None

9. **Conclusions**

- 9.1 This project is a key part of the Housing Service modernisation agenda. It will significantly enhance the capabilities of the current housing management IT

system. Provide better intelligence on service provision for managers and committee members. Plus, ultimately drive tangible improvements in customer-facing services alongside cashable and non-cashable efficiencies.

- 9.2 Although this project is in its early stages it will deliver within 12 months – within the budget agreed by Committee.

(To resolve)

Background papers

[Report to the Housing Committee on 8th September 2021 – entitled upgrade to the Housing IT system](#)

Key Performance Indicators, 2021/22, Q3 (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

This report details the results of recent Key Performance Indicators and health and safety compliance indicators. It also informs Members of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures proposed by the Regulator of Social Housing

Recommendation(s):

That Members note the results of performance monitoring and the future regulatory requirement to collect and report on Tenant Satisfaction Measures

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the Key Performance Indicators for the third quarter of 2021/22 and the results of the monthly health and safety compliance monitoring up to the end of January 2022.
- 1.2 This report also details the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures which the Regulator of Social Housing is proposing as part of a new consumer standard. These measures are expected to become a regulatory requirement from April 2023 for all social landlords and this report proposes that the measures will be reported to this committee in future.

2. Key Performance Indicators

2.1

Performance Indicator	Q1 Result	Q2 Result	Q3 Target	Q3 Result
H1: Percentage of dwellings re-let to deadline per quarter	2.8%	9.1%	85%	6.9%
H2: Average number of calendar days to re-let a void property (excludes major works voids)	131	65	25	79
H3: Satisfaction with the overall reactive repairs service received (% of total number of responses returned)	94.9%	95.9%	95%	94.6% (111 surveys)
H4: Number of households in B&B for more than 2 weeks per quarter	3	3	4	4
H5: Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due (cumulative result)	1.72%	1.84%	1.75%	2.29%

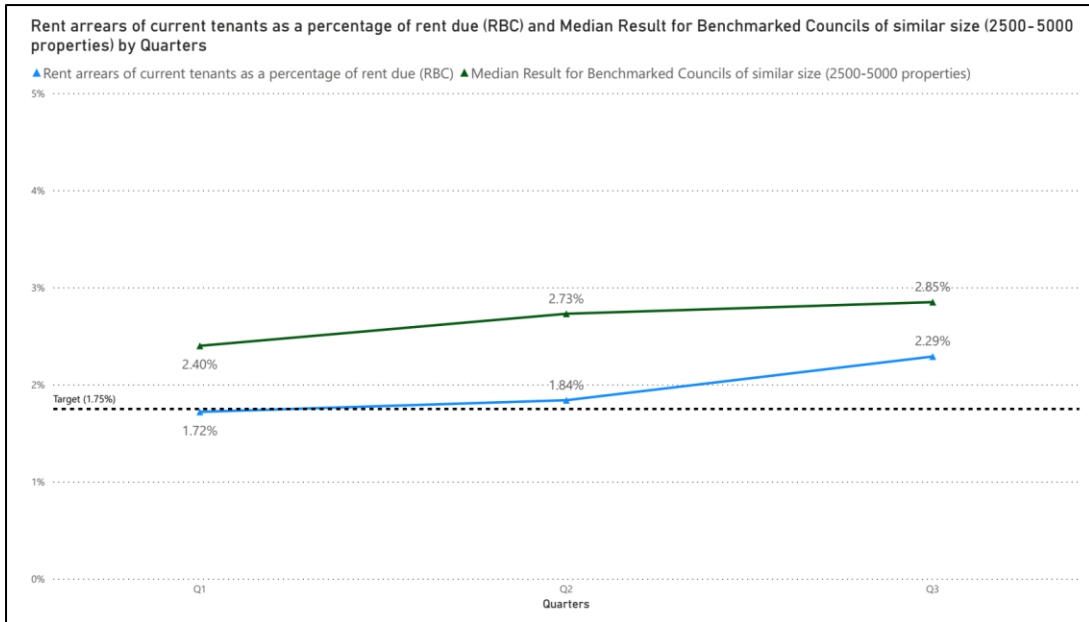
H6: Percentage of tenants with more than 7 weeks rent arrears at the end of each quarter	3.65%	3.85%	4.0%	5.20%
H7: Percentage of stock with a valid annual landlord gas safety certification	99.81%	99.85%	100%	99.31%
H8: Percentage of stock with a valid safety certification Electrical Installation Condition Report	92.4%	93.7%	100%	97.7%
H9: Number of outstanding high risk Fire Risk Assessment actions	87	47	30	44

2.2 Performance on the re-let of void properties has been impacted by problems encountered by our contractors experiencing Covid related staff absences and supply chain issues. In addition to this we have experienced an unprecedented level of vacancies within the department. There is a high incidence of tenancy terminations as a result of death where the tenant has no next of kin or has not left a will and we are required to serve notice on the Public Trustee. In addition to this our Gas contractor continues to experience difficulties resulting in delays in gas checks and boiler installations to empty properties. Whilst ideally a boiler or kitchen installation would be carried out with the new tenant in occupation, we have had a number of properties with kitchens which fail the Decent Homes Standard and cannot be relet. Where the boiler is also scheduled for replacement, it is important that these two upgrades are carried out at the same time to ensure a new kitchen is not affected by a boiler replacement shortly after the property is let. This is a result of the deficit in planned maintenance over recent years and will be addressed moving forward as the kitchen and boiler programmes are rolled out. In addition to staffing problem the gas contractor is also struggling to obtain parts, including essential microchips resulting in boilers having to be replaced outside the programme. Internal processes are being reviewed to improve timescales.

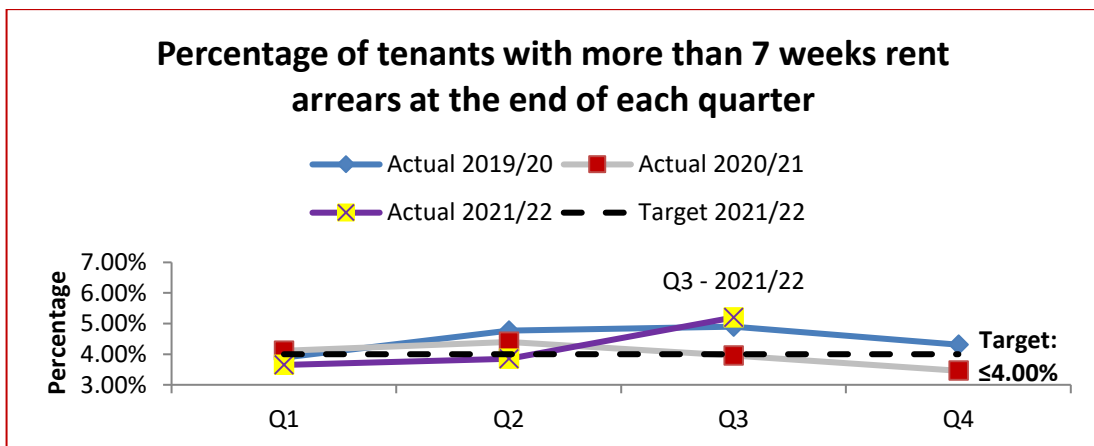
2.3 Void properties as at 26th January 2022:

Total Properties	Properties Empty	Percentage of properties Empty	Percentage of Properties Empty Excluding Redevelopment and Major Projects
2870	82	2.86%	2.13%

2.4 Staff turnover has continued to affect performance on rent collection. The team is currently experiencing a 50% vacancy rate (4 of out 8 staff involved in rent collection) however three members of staff have been recruited and will join the department at the start of March. Information is now available on performance against local Authorities with a similar sized housing stock:



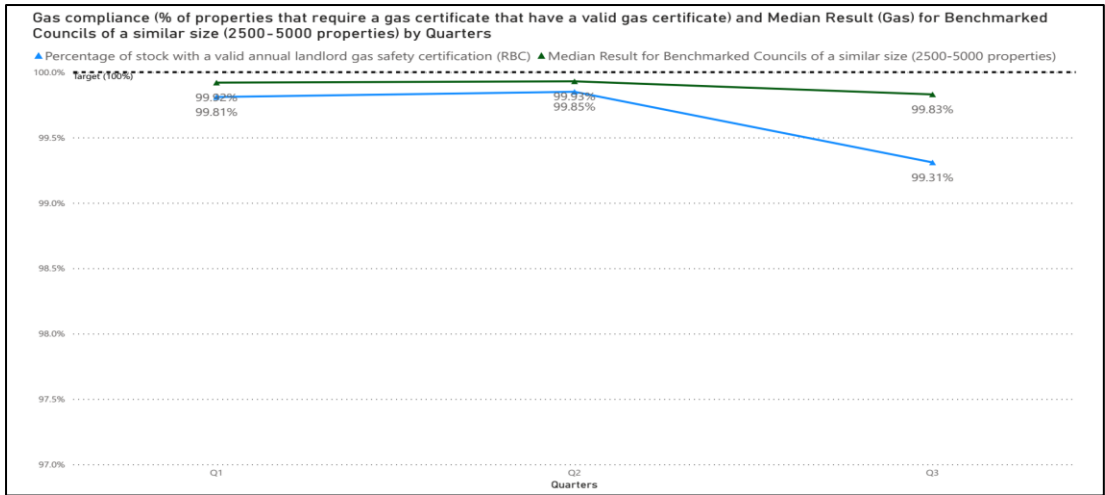
2.5 In line with the national trend and despite early intervention from staff, the number of households with over seven weeks arrears has also increased:



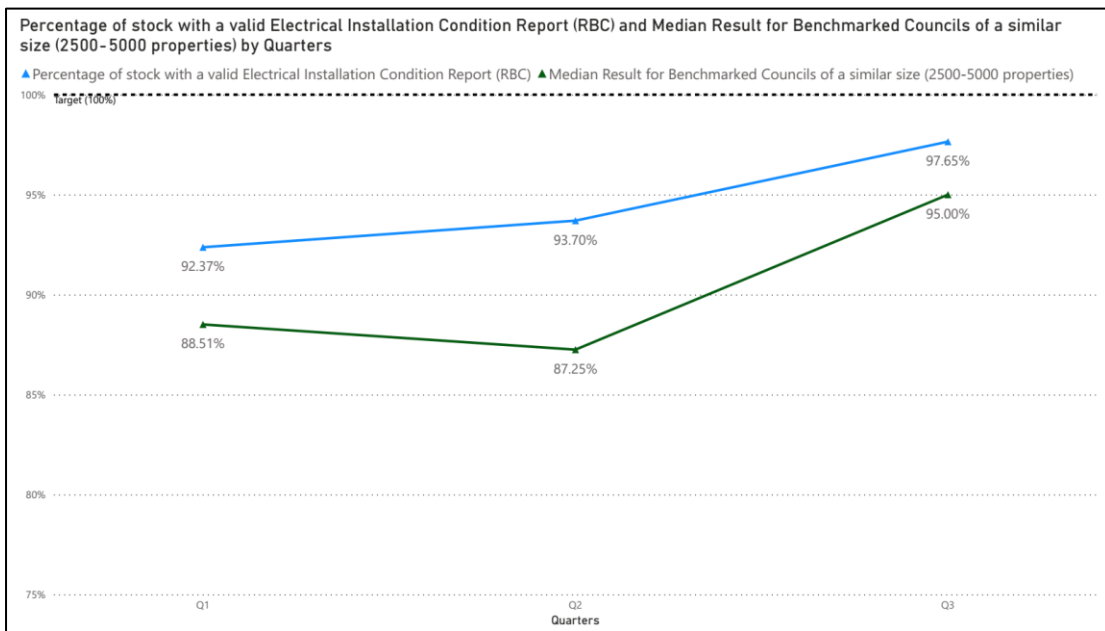
2.6 Analysis of Tenants in Arrears

January 2022	Percentage of tenants	Percentage of tenants in arrears	Percentage of tenants with more than 7 weeks arrears
Tenants on UC	24.6%	39.8%	11.4% (78)
Tenants on HB	35.1%	9.1%	1.2% (12)
Tenants paying full rent	40.2%	15.7%	3.9% (44)

2.7 The percentage of properties complying with gas safety certification fell in quarter three, with 18 properties lacking certificates. This was mainly due to access issues associated with retaining sufficient Gas Servicing Engineers and self-isolation due to Covid affecting both contractor staff and tenants.



2.8 Electrical compliance continued to improve, with 67 properties lacking a certificate at the end of quarter three. Performance had improved again by the end of January.



2.9 It has not been possible to complete as many outstanding high risk fire assessment actions in quarter three as anticipated. Many of the outstanding actions relate to the fitting of new internal fire doors at blocks of flats and require access to individual properties which has proved difficult. 87.5% of high risk actions from the last round of assessments have now been completed.

Fire Risk Assessment: Outstanding Overdue Actions over Target			
	High Risk Factors	Medium Risk Factors	Low Risk Factors
Q3 2021/22	44	527	326

2.10 Complaints resolved between April and December 2021

	Not upheld	Upheld/ partly upheld	
About a member of staff	2	1	
ASB	2		
Condition of communal areas		1	
Condition of property		1	
Confidentiality of data		1	
Empty property		1	
Fence disrepair	2		
Garden Clearance	1		
Housing Management	1		
Housing Register	4	2	
Neighbourhood Dispute (not ASB)	1		
Planned Refurbishment	1		
Repairs (contractor service)		2	
Tree Surgery	1		
Total	15	9	

2.11 Since the engagement with the Regulator of Social Housing, Members have also received the results of the monthly monitoring of health and safety compliance measures. Officers have monthly calls with the Regulator to provide updates on the Council's progress with compliance and share the most recent data, as shown in the following table.

	Result Apr	Result May	Result June	Result July	Result Aug	Result Sept	Result Oct '21	Result Nov '21	Result Dec '21	Result Jan '22
Gas Safety										
No. of CP12 certificates out of target at any given time	3	5	5	3	4	4	6	4	18	27
% of valid CP12 certificates	99.89% (2646)	99.74% (2643)	99.81% (2643)	99.89% (2646)	99.85% (2643)	99.85% (2639)	99.77% (2640)	99.85% (2639)	99.31% (2625)	98.98% (2610)
Electrical										
% of stock with valid safety	90% (2583)	92% (2631)	92% (2639)	93% (2649)	94% (2678)	94% (2679)	95% (2708)	97% (2767)	98% (2788)	99% (2818)

EICR certification										
% of emergency lighting tests completed against target	77%	81%	73%	81%	100%	81%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Water Management										
% of water management inspection test undertaken	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Passenger Lifts										
% of inspections undertaken against programme	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Accidents Reporting										
Number of RBC RIDDOR reportable incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of days lost to accidents and incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Risk Assessment										
% of inspections completed in target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Lightning conductors										
% of works required completed in target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sprinkler systems										
% of annual servicing completed within target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

3. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

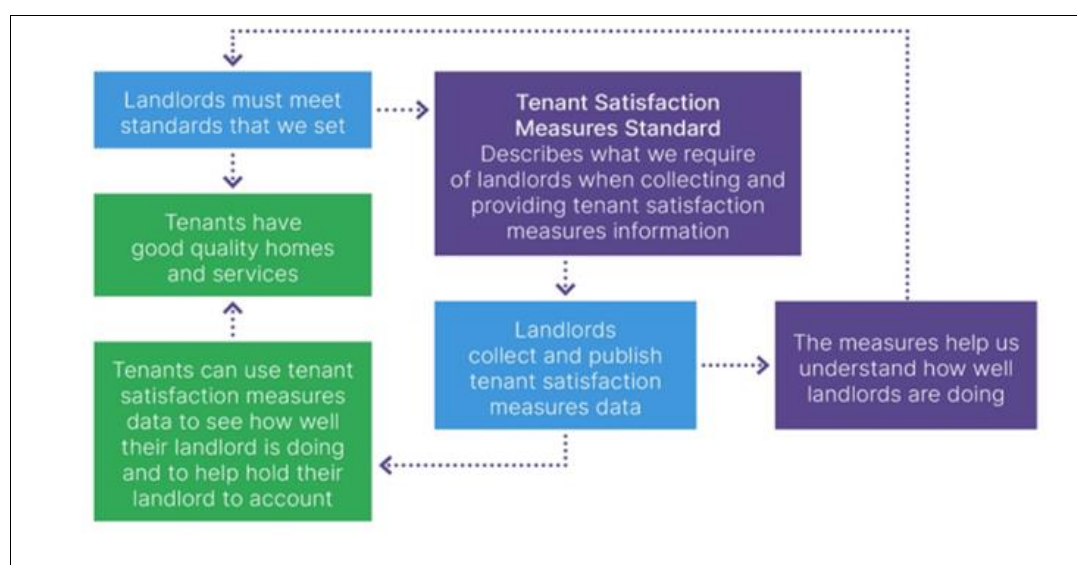
3.1 Further to the Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020), the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has consulted on a new Consumer Standard and proposals for Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). The RSH expects social landlords to collect this data from TSMs from April 2023 and to submit the data from April 2024. It is now vital for Registered Providers, including local authority landlords, to effectively evaluate their performance to ensure the voice of tenants is heard and to demonstrate readiness for compliance.

3.2 The proposed TSMs are designed to provide data about landlords' performance and

the quality of their services. They are intended to help tenants hold their landlord to account and help the Regulator in its future consumer regulation role. The consultation sets out 22 TSMs across the five themes in the White Paper. They include both landlord management information measures (such as health and safety compliance) and tenant perception measures, to be collected through landlords' surveys of tenants. Perception surveys ask a range of respondents about their opinions, while transactional surveys ask tenants about their experience of a specific service they have received (for example the current repairs satisfaction survey). Further measures around electrical safety, fire safety and communal areas may follow.

3.3 The proposed measures are detailed at Appendix A.

3.4 How will Tenant Satisfaction Measures work?



3.5 Along with the proposed TSMs, the RSH has published details of how the information from landlord surveys are to be collected and measured including:

- The TSMs must be collected from perception, rather than transactional surveys
- Requirements about the questions and response scales
- Requirements about the sample size
- The surveys can be undertaken once a year or periodically over the year
- Incentives can be offered.

3.6 The RSH has also published the draft text for the consumer standard which would require landlords to collect, publish and submit information about their performance against the TSMs.

3.7 Officers attended a recent webinar on the proposed TSMs and have submitted a joint response to the consultation with the RCRA (see Appendix B).

4. Next Steps

4.1 The RSH has published the timescales for what it plans to happen after the consultation:

March 2022	We use the responses to help us make the standard and measures work as well as possible for tenants, landlords and us
Summer 2022	We publish the consultation responses and the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard and requirements
1 April 2023	Our new requirements come into force and landlords start collecting data for tenant satisfaction measures
Summer 2024	Landlords send us their first year of tenant satisfaction measures data
Autumn 2024	First year of tenant satisfaction measures data is published

4.2 The results of tenants' satisfaction with repairs, some compliance measures and information about complaints is regularly reported to this Committee. The corporate KPIs are also reported to the Corporate Management Committee. Officers propose to begin reporting on each of the ten new TSMs derived from systems to this Committee as soon as possible, along with any relevant benchmarking data. This will enable Members to familiarise themselves with the new measures and the current performance. Officers will make any necessary revisions to the data needed once the final requirements are published.

4.3 Functionality to undertake surveys through the new Housing online portal and upgrades to the Communications module, which will include a range of methods such as texting, will enable Officers to begin undertaking new and additional surveys as soon as these modules are in place. Additionally, and as detailed in the Business Centre Plan at item six on this agenda, it is proposed to undertake a STAR (satisfaction survey of tenants and residents) during 2022. An update, with detailed proposals for the STAR and other surveys will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

5. Policy framework implications

5.1 In line with the Corporate Business Plan, the Business Centre Plan and the Quality Policy, collecting and reporting on the proposed TSMs will help achieve the goals of delivering cost effective services and having very satisfied customers. The proposal to start collecting and reporting on this data as soon as possible aligns with the aims of the Tenant and Leaseholder Strategy at item eight on this agenda namely:

1. A culture that recognises and values tenant and leaseholder engagement
2. Improved customer satisfaction as we learn from service user feedback
3. Better value for money as we focus on tenants' and leaseholders' priorities
4. Increasing number of tenants and leaseholders engaging with us, especially from groups currently underrepresented
5. Removal of barriers to engagement and increased diversity of residents who chose to engage
6. A more focused engagement approach developed through customer insight.

6. **Resource implications/Value for Money**

- 6.1 No additional resource implications have been identified.

7. **Legal implications**

- 7.1 It is anticipated that it will become a regulatory requirement to collect the proposed TSMs from April 2023 and to report them from April 2024.

8. **Equality implications**

- 8.1 The RSH has carried out an EIA on the proposal to introduce TSMs, the stated aims of which are provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance and to inform the regulator about how the landlord is complying with the consumer standards. No equality implications in collecting TSMs have been identified.

9. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 9.1 No environmental, sustainability or biodiversity implications have been identified.

10. **Other implications**

- 10.1 Officers will liaise as appropriate with the Council's Communications team on a planned programme of perception surveys and on the publication of survey results. No other implications have been identified.

11. **Conclusions**

- 11.1 This report presents the results of Key Performance Indicators for quarter three and the results of the monthly health and safety compliance indicators. The report also informs Members of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures proposed by the Regulator of Social Housing, which will become a regulatory requirement. In anticipation of this Officers propose to begin reporting the measures to this Committee and to put in place arrangements to collect the remaining measures, and to conduct tenant perception surveys, as soon as possible. A report on the detailed arrangements to comply with the new requirements will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

(For information)

Background papers

None

Appendix A

TSMs to be collected from tenant participation surveys

TP01	Overall satisfaction
TP02	Satisfaction with repairs
TP03	Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
TP04	Satisfaction that the home is well maintained and safe to live in
TP05	Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
TP06	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
TP07	Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
TP08	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well maintained
TP09	Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
TP10	Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour
TP11	Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints
TP12	Tenant knowledge of how to make a complaint

TSMs to be generated from landlord management information systems

CH01	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
CH02	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
NM01	Antisocial behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord
RP01	Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
RP02	Repairs completed within target timescale
BS01	Gas safety checks
BS02	Fire safety checks
BS03	Asbestos safety checks
BS04	Water safety checks
BS05	Lift safety checks

Appendix B

RBC and RCRA Joint Response to Consultation on the proposed Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Question 1A

Do you agree that the proposed Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard sets clear expectations for registered providers?

Answer

- Agree.

Question 1B

- Do you agree that the proposed Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard supports the regulator in ensuring that the tenant satisfaction measures provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance (one of the aims of the tenant satisfaction measures in the white paper)?

Answer

- Agree.

Question 2

We are proposing to introduce two tenant satisfaction measures about timeliness of repairs (RP02 Repairs completed within target timescale and TP03 Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair). Do you agree that both RP02 and TP03 should be used to measure timeliness of repairs?

Answer

- Disagree Landlords' timescales vary, making comparison less meaningful. TP03 is more relevant.

Question 3

There are four proposed tenant satisfaction measures under the theme of Keeping Properties in Good Repair (RP01 Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, RP02 Repairs completed within target timescale, TP02 Satisfaction with repairs and TP03 Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair). Overall, do you think they give a well-rounded view of performance under this theme?

Answer

- Yes subject to comments in Q2

Question 4

Do you agree with the proposal to use the individual homes for which the relevant safety checks have been carried out as the basis for the following Maintaining Building Safety tenant satisfaction measures: BS01 Gas safety checks, BS02 Fire safety checks, BS03 Asbestos safety checks, BS04 Water safety checks and BS05 Lift safety checks?

Answer

- Agree

Question 5

There are six proposed tenant satisfaction measures under the theme of

Maintaining Building Safety (BS01 Gas safety checks, BS02 Fire safety checks, BS03 Asbestos safety checks, BS04 Water safety checks, BS05 Lift safety checks and TP04 Satisfaction that the home is well maintained and safe to live in). Overall, do you think they give a well-rounded picture of performance under this theme?

Answer

- Yes.

Question 6

Do you agree with the proposal that TP11 Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints is measured by a perception survey?

Answer

Disagree This should be a transactional survey, as the number of tenants who complain is such a tiny percentage of all tenants

Question 7

There are four proposed tenant satisfaction measures under the theme of Effective Handling of Complaints (CH01 Complaints relative to the size of the landlord, CH02 Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales, TP11 Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints and TP12 Tenant knowledge of how to make a complaint). Overall, do you think they give a well-rounded picture of performance under this theme?

Answer

- Yes. Subject to comments in Q 6

Question 8

There are three proposed tenant satisfaction measures under the theme of Respectful and Helpful Engagement (TP05 Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them, TP06 Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them and TP07 Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect). Overall, do you think they give a well-rounded picture of performance under this theme?

Answer

- Yes.

Question 9

For the tenant satisfaction measure relating to satisfaction with the neighbourhood, we have presented a lead proposal and an alternative option. Do you agree with the lead proposal that TP09 is Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods?

Answer

- This is likely to be the most difficult to interpret of the proposed measures and the issue landlords can least influence and be fairly compared on. A more appropriate measure would be satisfaction that the landlord keeps outside areas safe and clean

Question 10

Do you agree with the proposal that TP10 about satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour is measured by a perception survey?

Answer

- Agree, although a transactional survey is advocated for complaints, a far higher proportion of tenants are likely to have an informed view of their landlord's approach to ASB

Question 11

There are four proposed tenant satisfaction measures under the theme of Responsible Neighbourhood Management (NM01 Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord, TP08 Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well-maintained, TP09 Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods and TP10 Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour). Overall, do you think they give a well-rounded picture of performance under this theme?

Answer

No, see comments at Q9 re. removing TP09

Question 12A

Please tell us your views on the number of tenant satisfaction measures by selecting one of the following options:

Answer

There are too many tenant satisfaction measures in the suite, especially for landlords with a small stock and it is understood there are still more to be added

Question 12B

Do you think there are any tenant satisfaction measures that should be added to or removed from the final suite of tenant satisfaction measures?

Answer

Yes With rents rising for most tenants, a question on perceived value for money or perhaps linked to specific performance such as void re-let times

Question 12C

Overall, do you think the suite of tenant satisfaction measures works well as a whole in providing rounded information to tenants about their landlord's performance?

Answer

Partially – In reality the majority of tenants will not find the results relevant as they cannot switch to another provider

Question 13

Chapter 9 of the consultation document covers some general requirements that apply to all tenant satisfaction measures, which are addressed in more detail in Annex 2 Tenant Satisfaction Measures: Technical Requirements. These include how providers should collect and report the tenant satisfaction measures, the types of homes that should be included, as well as the time period over which data should be reported. Do you agree with these proposals?

Answer

Agree, the proposals are very clear

Question 14

We propose to allow providers to choose the most appropriate survey collection method (e.g., postal, by phone, online etc.) to obtain data for the tenant perception measures TP01–TP12. Do you agree with this proposal?

Answer

Agree There is no 'one size fits all' method and many landlords are already undertaking surveys and know what works well for them. However best practice should be shared by the Regulator and regularly updated so resources are used as effectively as possible

Question 15

Chapter 10 of the consultation document covers some requirements that apply to the tenant satisfaction measures which are tenant perception measures (TP01–TP12). These requirements are addressed in more detail in Annex 3 Tenant Satisfaction Measures: Tenant Survey Requirements. The requirements include survey type, survey timing, response options and who is to be surveyed. Do you agree with these requirements?

Answer

Agree but also see comments at Q 14

Question 16

We propose to tailor our tenant satisfaction measure requirements for registered providers that own fewer than 1,000 relevant homes. This includes not requiring them to submit tenant satisfaction measure data to the regulator, allowing them to collect and report tenant satisfaction measures annually according to a reporting year other than 1 April to 31 March and allowing them to undertake a census tenant perception survey. Do you agree with this approach?

Answer

Disagree This may still prove too onerous/expensive for very small landlords

Question 17

Chapter 13 of the consultation document covers our proposed guidance about the submission of information to the regulator in relation to the tenant satisfaction measures, which is set out in more detail in Annex 4. This includes generally not using tenant satisfaction measure information as a source of regulatory intelligence in isolation, but rather as information we may take into account alongside other sources. Do you agree with this proposed approach?

Answer

Agree, only limited weight should be given to perception surveys

Question 18

Do you agree with our conclusions in the draft Regulatory Impact Assessment?

Answer

- No RPs should only be required to collect tenant perception survey data at least once every two years as this would be less expensive but no less meaningful in terms of results

Question 19

Do you agree with our conclusions in the draft Equality Impact Assessment? The regulator particularly welcomes views on whether the proposals will have a positive or negative impact on people who share one or more protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act 2010).

Answer

No, Not all landlords have adequate data on tenants profiles making weighting and achieving representation difficult/impossible.

Question 20

Finally, if you have anything else that you would like to tell us about the proposals relating to the tenant satisfaction measures, including the detailed requirements set out in Annexes 2 and 3, please tell us.

Answer

This seems a good opportunity to also ask tenants their perception of how their landlord is promoting equality and tackling the stigma experienced by some.

**Exclusion of Press and Public
Officers' Recommendation that –**

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following report under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(To resolve)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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