



Housing Committee

Wednesday, 8 March 2023 at 7.30 pm

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

Members of the Committee

Councillors: J Gracey (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), D Coen, M Cressey, M Darby, R Davies, S Dennett, P Snow, S Whyte and S Williams

Mrs J Hill for the purposes affecting Council housing tenants

In accordance with Standing Order 29.1, any Member of the Council may attend the meeting of this Committee, but may speak only with the permission of the Chairman of the Committee, if they are not a member of this Committee.

AGENDA

Notes:

- 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.

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19. Review of External Façade of Specific Housing Properties	102 - 106
	This report contains exempt information as defined by 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 disclose the information would put the council at a commercial disadvantage.

20. **Appointment of Contractor to Deliver Windows and Doors Replacement**

107 - 109

This report contains exempt information as defined by 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 disclose the information would put the council at a commercial disadvantage.

Runnymede Borough Council**Housing Committee****Wednesday, 11 January 2023 at 7.30 pm**

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J Gracey (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), D Coen, M Cressey, R Davies, S Dennett, P Snow, S Whyte and S Williams.
J Mrs J Hill (Runnymede Council Residents' Association Representative – co-opted non-voting member)

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor M Darby.

425 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2022 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

426 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

427 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

428 Housing Service Area Plan 2023/24

The Corporate Head of Housing provided an update on the delivery of the 2022/23 Housing Service Area Plan, with 19 of the identified 28 actions in the service plan completed and a further five to be completed by the end of the quarter.

Key service activities for 2023/24 had been identified, some of which would require growth, and business cases for these would be brought to future Committees.

A service mission statement had been established in consultation with both staff and the chair and vice chair of the Committee, which was hoped was both tangible and accessible.

In response to a Member's question about environmental improvements including insulation, AV confirmed that a number of environmental initiatives would be presented to future Housing Committees.

Resolved that –

i) Members approved the 2023/24 Housing Service Area Plan

ii) Members noted any business cases requiring growth were subject to approval by Housing Committee (or full Council depending on sums).

429 Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2023/24

The Senior Accountant advised Committee that the setting of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates was largely based on the assumptions included in the HRA business plan unless specified in the report. The proposed 7% increase in rents was consistent with Government guidance and also ensured that the Council would not be penalised through the loss of Rent Rebates subsidy entitlement.

The large increase in the Housing Repairs budget was the continuation of a multi-year programme reversing many years of low expenditure and includes deferred expense for the current year.

Committee were advised that in the current year's budget a provision was included to enable the transfer of up to £30,000 of HRA funds to help top up the DHP contribution received from the DWP. It was proposed that the Council continued to increase the DHP contribution by a sum of £30,000. Members were advised that any contribution from the HRA could only be used to help HRA tenants who required assistance, and this assistance was granted using the same criteria as set out in the Council's DHP policy.

Although considerable balances remain in the Housing Revenue Account, consideration was needed to cover current and future spending plans plus the need to service the £100m of borrowings over the next 20 years.

The Senior Accountant concluded that whilst the estimates only covered the next financial year, an updated 30-year finance plan would be presented to the March Committee.

The Committee Chair added that despite the backdrop of financial pressures the Council was facing, the Housing service was still making plans for delivery of services having identified risks, along with strategies to manage those risks.

The Committee Vice Chair expressed concern about the provision of £20,000 to help households in financial difficulties not being sufficient, but was reassured by the proposed increase to the Housing discretionary fund. It was added that further means to support tenants would be kept under review and proposals brought back to Committee if necessary.

Resolved that –

i) the draft revenue estimates for 2023/24 were approved and the Full Council were requested to make provision accordingly; and

ii) the proposed changes in rents and charges (including those for Housing General Fund services) for 2023/24 were approved to be effective either from the first rent week of April 2023, or 1 April 2023 as appropriate.

430 **Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy: Annual Update**

As part of the annual update on tenant and leaseholder engagement, the Corporate Head of Housing advised that significant progress had been made in a number of areas of tenant engagement, including consultation activities from policies, the creation of a consultation planner, engagement toolkit, and improvement to tenants' newsletters and web pages.

These activities had been successful in engaging a high percentage of tenants, meeting regulatory standards in the process and ensuring their views were heard. However work remained ongoing and a number of actions remain, including accreditation from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

The Corporate Head of Housing went on to praise the role of the Runnymede Council Residents' Association (RCRA), however as it was no longer operating within its constitution due to dwindling membership numbers and alternative ways of seeking engagement, the Council would be seeking to end its relationship with the RCRA this financial year.

A number of Committee members praised the positive and insightful work of Mrs Jenny Hill

of the RCRA for providing a voice for Runnymede tenants, adding that a nomination would be put forward for a community award to highlight her work over a number of years.

Resolved that –

i) Members noted the progress made against the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy Action Plan.

431 Parkside Regeneration

Following full Council's approval of the budget to progress the Parkside regeneration project from RIBA stage one to RIBA stage three, the Housing Development Manager advised that on progress since then, which included a detailed invitation to tender that had received significant interest from a multitude of nationally recognised consultants.

The deadline for tenders was later in January, which would be followed by an assessment period. It was hoped to appoint consultants on around 1 March 2023.

The Housing Development Manager stressed the importance of a robust communications plan, which included the launch of a dedicated webpage and in-person and online events with residents.

An indication of cost of removal of the overhead power lines had been received from UK Power Network, whilst external legal support was in the process of being appointed.

The Housing Development Manager concluded that regular updates would be brought to Committee, and it was anticipated that reporting on the first stage of surveys would take place in autumn 2023.

The Committee Chair stressed the importance of the project to the local area, highlighting that the area was the poorest quality and most energy inefficient housing stock in the borough, with a large number of properties currently long-term void.

A Committee Member was extremely keen to ensure that lessons were learned from the previous, aborted regeneration exercise in the area. The Committee chair confirmed that the terms of the agreement would be much more closely drawn than previously, and the necessary scrutiny would be applied throughout the project.

432 Continuing the Stepdown Scheme

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning advised that in March 2021 Housing Committee approved participation in a pilot scheme to be funded by the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) to provide accommodation either with care on site, or where a short-term agency package could be provided through Adult Social Care. The pilot scheme had seven properties, including two from Runnymede.

Following a successful first year, the scheme was approved for a further year from April 2022, and the ICP had now requested the continuation of the scheme as it had proven beneficial in providing accommodation for patients who no longer need medical care but did not have a suitable home to be discharged to.

There had been a variety of reasons for placements and the team would work to identify a move-on solution prior to the placement to ensure that the bed blocking had not just been moved out of the hospital and where necessary they will liaise with Local Authority homelessness sections on their duties.

The utilisation of two properties for Step Down in the borough did not have a significant

impact for people on the Housing Register waiting for IRL where access was relatively quick. Should the situation change the use of these properties would be reviewed.

Whilst acknowledging the need to focus on Housing matters, a Member was keen to use the information and data to highlight to government the impact of bed-blocking.

Resolved that –

i) Members approved the continued use of two IRL flats for Step Down Accommodation; and

ii) the Use of IRL properties for Step Down would be reviewed in three years, or sooner at the request of the Corporate Head of Housing or the Chair of Housing Committee.

433 **Update on Engagement Activities with MCP (New Repairs Contractor)**

Following the appointment of a repairs contractor at a previous Housing Committee, the Head of Housing Technical Services advised Committee that pre-mobilisation was on track ahead of their commencement in April, with a number of meetings held to look at tenant engagement opportunities, track key timelines, identify risks and ensure IT integration.

No new risks had been identified, and should any arise Committee would be appraised. It was asked that if any ward councillors became aware of any issues during the transition that they were fed back to officers.

Resolved that –

Members noted the content within the report.

434 **Update on position with the Regulator of Social Housing**

The Corporate Head of Housing provided Committee with a timeline of the Council's activity with the Regulator of Social Housing, following the notice being served on the Council in October 2019. A request was made in March 2022 for the notice to be withdrawn based on significant progress on electrical safety and fire safety actions.

This request had been declined based on the Council's need to achieve 75% Decent Homes Standard. The Council was now at 76% Decent Homes Standard, whilst a series of Health & Safety audits had yielded positive results, and a response to a request made before Christmas asking for the withdrawal of the Notice was currently awaited from the Regulator. The Corporate Head of Housing would update Committee once a response had been received.

Resolved that –

i) Members noted the request made to the Regulator of Social Housing to review Runnymede Borough Council's Regulatory Notice.

435 **Complaints and Compensation Annual Update**

Following approval of a new Compensation Policy by Committee in September 2022 Officers agreed to monitor compensation payments as well as the level of CPI.

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning reported that CPI rose by 11% in the 12 months to October 2022, up from 10% in September 2022 and it was therefore recommended that Committee approved an increase of 10% on the amount of

compensation payable under the Housing compensation policy. This would not have any budgetary implications due to the small quantity of pay-outs.

Whilst the number of complaints had increased last year it was viewed as a positive step towards making the complaints process accessible and transparent.

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning clarified a small error in the report, which stated that eight complaints had been upheld last year when the correct figure was five. No specific trends or consistent service failures had been identified, and a lessons learnt exercise took place after all complaints to try to identify improved communication or processes.

The Committee Vice Chair added that the 10% increase ensured consistency with the Housing Ombudsman's standards.

Resolved that –

i) Members noted the information on complaints and compensation.

ii) Members approved an increase of 10% to the compensation payable to service users.

436 Safer Streets Funding

The Corporate Head of Housing advised Committee that the Council had made a bid of £321,000 to the Home Office under Safer Streets funding to provide improvements to the Garfield Road estate, along with additional security measures and youth diversion activities. The report had already been to Community Services Committee earlier in January, and details on implementation of the fund would be brought back to both Committees in March.

The Committee Chair highlighted the positive example of partnership working, and thanked officers from both services.

437 Balcony Safety Policy

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning advised that several Council-owned blocks within its Housing Revenue Account possessed individual balconies, which amounted to some 200 homes. A public consultation was being sought on a draft policy to ensure that these were properly maintained and utilised.

The emerging policy was considered by the Housing Member Working Party on 13 December 2022, where the impact of smoking on a balcony was discussed. The draft policy includes a choice of alternative clauses relating to smoking.

Should the consultation come back in favour of banning smoking on balconies it may be necessary to provide smoking areas on estates, which would be difficult to enforce and may prompt complaints. The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning emphasised the importance of resident feedback on the policy.

Committee acknowledged the matter was a sensitive and divisive issue, and there was concern about the Council's ability to enforce a no smoking policy, whilst the potential for it to cause local issues amongst residents was also acknowledged.

All current tenants with a balcony would be consulted as part of the exercise – with officers prepared to go door-to-door if necessary to ensure an appropriate level of feedback, and a final version of the policy would be brought back to Committee after the consultation had

concluded and the final policy had been to a further Member Working Party.

Resolved that –

- i) Members approved an 8-week consultation with residents with a finalised policy to be brought back to this Committee with the results of the consultation.**

438 **Estate Improvement Budget Policy**

The Corporate Head of Housing reported that funding had been identified for environmental improvements across the Council's estate for the coming year. Proposed projects and expenditure suggestions included CCTV, pathways and recycling facilities.

Following discussion at the Housing Member Working Party on 13 December a number of additions to the draft policy had been made, including having a pipeline of projects reported to Housing Committee, the level of ward member involvement and ensuring there was a fair split in expenditure across the borough. Permission was now being sought for a public consultation exercise, with the results coming back to a future Housing Committee.

The Corporate Head of Housing concluded that the work was considered good news as it would address both Decent Homes and improving the environment of the Council's estates.

Resolved that –

- i) Housing Committee approved an 8-week consultation with residents with a finalised policy to be brought back to this Committee with the results of the consultation.**

(The meeting ended at 8.59 pm.)

Chairman

Damp & Mould consultation response update, (Private Sector Housing, Kuda Zireva)

Synopsis of report:

To provide members with an update on the response submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) following a letter from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, in the wake of the tragic and avoidable death of Awaab Ishak.

Recommendation(s):

None: This report is for information.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 In November 2022, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, wrote to all Local Authority Chief Executive and Council leaders, following the tragedy of Awaab Ishak, who died at two years old as a direct result of mould in his family home.
- 1.2 In his letter, the Secretary of State directed all local housing authorities to carry out three actions in line with their duty under section 3(3) of the Housing Act 2004. These actions were to:
 1. Have particular regard to high scoring (bands D and E) category 2 damp and mould hazards, as outlined in the guidance 'Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) enforcement guidance: housing conditions;
 2. Supply the department with an assessment of damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in their area, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards; and
 3. Supply the department with an assessment of action they have identified that may need to be taken in relation to damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in their area.
- 1.3 The Secretary of State also requested information on the specific activity taken over the last three years to address damp and mould hazards in the private rented sector (PRS), with specific questions covering the amount and nature of remediation and enforcement activity, Civil Penalty Notices and prosecutions. He also asked for details of plans in place to prioritise the enforcement of housing standards more generally, with a particular focus on how the authority will ensure adequate enforcement capacity to drive up standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

2. Report

- 2.1 The Runnymede Borough Council initial response to DLUHC highlighted the following:
- 2.2 With regards to proposals on addressing damp and mould issues in the private rented sector, our private sector housing enforcement policy aligns with the Housing

Act 2004 - The Council has a duty to take action in respect of category one hazards and discretion to take action in respect of category two hazards. Runnymede plan to continue to make use of the appropriate enforcement measures available to address any assessed hazard identified, whether it is a category 1 or 2 hazard, namely;

- Hazard awareness notices
- Improvement notices
- Prohibition orders
- Emergency prohibition orders

2.3 The Private Sector Housing (PSH) team additionally plan to review the current measures available to the private rented sector which are as follows:

- In the first instance, landlords are responsible for addressing defects in their properties, enforcement is undertaken in line with our enforcement policy. The PSH team will review our policy to ensure we are adequately addressing category 2 hazards and in particular damp and mould hazards.
- Minor non-means tests grants (up to £5,000) are available to address property repairs impacting on fuel poverty. Funded by the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant utilising the same qualification criteria as within the existing DFG process. £100,000 of funding is available – the PSH team will review the associated processes and ensure that these grants are available for any tenants with repairing responsibility.
- Runnymede BC operate a loan Scheme through Parity Trust for those who may struggle to access high street lenders – the PSH team will review whether this scheme can be extended to private sector landlords.
- Green Homes Grants and the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme Rented (private or social) subsidy - not to exceed £5000 per property. Minimum of 1/3 to be paid by the landlord.

2.4 The Council also proposes to take the following action specifically in relation to 'Damp & Mould'

- Provide advice on damp and mould in our borough-wide magazine to residents, including signposting to the measures available to assist.
- Provide a training session on damp & mould at the next Landlords forum.
- Where there are underlying health issues with asthma, signpost residents to a new project by the Surrey Heartlands Asthma Network [Asthma Toolkit - Healthy Surrey](#) who provide support and also direct concerned residents to charities

2.5 Within the DLUHC return the PSH team also highlighted concerns with regards to fuel poverty and its effect on damp and mould:

“We are also concerned where the root cause of condensation resulting in mould in properties is due to fuel poverty. Most of our damp & mould complaints turn out to be condensation and we provide advice (as per above) on how to deal alleviate issues in a property. Sadly, the majority of these cases the issues arise due to due to fuel poverty as occupants are not able to adequately heat their properties due to the costs involved particularly in instances where they are on pre-payment meters. We anticipate that we

will encounter more damp and mould concerns this winter due to the current economic climate and rise in energy costs. We make use of the limited tools available to us to assist in these cases such as to direct them to the current cost of living benefits and to charities. We would appreciate some clarity from the department on these matters”

2.6 A link was provided by DLUHC in which to submit our response and a copy is attached as Appendix A to this report.

3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 Access to safe and affordable housing is a key determinant of health and identified as a priority in the RBC Corporate Business Plan.

4. **Resource implications/Value for Money**

4.1 None identified

5. **Legal implications**

5.1 All legal implications including enforcement powers are covered in the body of this report.

6. **Equality implications**

6.1 There are no equality implications.

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

7.1 Encouraging and supporting landlords to insulate rented homes will reduce the amount of fuel required for heating.

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

8.1 RBC's Housing Service was also required to report back to DLUHC on its position in relation to damp and mould in December 2022. The response uploaded via an electronic form is included as Appendix B.

8.2 There are various ways in which a council tenant could request action from Runnymede Borough Council to damp and mould issues within their home.

- 1 Via a repair request
- 2 Two via the Council's complaints process – and ultimately via the Housing Ombudsman
- 3 Via a Disrepair Claim.

9. **Complaints from Housing Association tenants**

9.1 Complaints received by the private sector housing team which relate to accommodation provided by Housing Associations are processed in the same way as complaints received relating to privately rented accommodation. The same enforcement options are available. Additionally, the PSH team contact Housing Associations directly by telephone when complaints have been received regarding their accommodation. This direct telephone contact is usually very effective in

delivering a satisfactory outcome. Where resolution is not achieved, the team will arrange to visit as per the standard procedure.

10. **Conclusions**

10.1 This report is for information only

(For information)

Background papers

Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

Response ID ANON-PEGT-J25C-4

Submitted to Local authority returns form: damp and mould in private rented properties
Submitted on 2023-01-31 11:33:20

Introduction

Details:

1 Please provide the full name of your local authority:

Answer:
Runnymede Borough Council

2 Please provide an email address of a named person we can contact with any further queries:

Answer:
kuda.zireva@runnymede.gov.uk

3 Approximately how many private rented sector properties are in your area currently?

Answer. Please provide a number. If you cannot answer, please write 'NA':
7295

4 What data sources do you normally use to inform your knowledge of the quality and condition of the privately rented stock in your area?

a) Stock condition survey, b) Stock modelling, c) Estimate based on contact with landlords/tenants, d) Estimate based on general knowledge of local housing stock, f) Other: e.g. licensing schemes(s), council tax, please provide details (below)

Answer (option - f):
Mandatory HMO licensing data

5 Approximately what number of full-time equivalent (FTE) do you have in your housing enforcement team? In answering, please provide the number of all staff working on private rented sector standards, enforcement and licensing, including how many FTE Environmental Health Officers are carrying out enforcement, plus those that work in administrative and managerial roles, but not including legal resource. Also please do not include staff who only work on MEES. Where a staff member works on MEES alongside other housing enforcement, please include them in your FTE numbers.

Optional:
2.59

6 Do you run any Selective and/or Additional Licensing schemes in your area?

Neither

7 If you do run any licensing schemes, approximately how many properties are covered by your scheme(s)? Please break down by each individual Selective/Additional licensing scheme

Optional:
415 - mandatory HMO licensing

Prevalence of damp and mould

8 Based on your assessment of damp and mould issues affecting private rented sector properties in your area, approximately what proportion do you currently estimate to have category 1 damp and mould hazards?

%:
0.46%

9 What data sources do you normally use to come to the assessment provided in question 8?

a) Stock condition survey, b) Stock modelling

Other please specify:

10 Based on your assessment of damp and mould issues affecting private rented sector properties in your area, approximately what proportion do you currently estimate to have category 2 damp and mould hazards?

2.33%

11 What data sources do you normally use to come to the assessment provided in question 9?

b) Stock modelling

Other please specify:

12 If you have not collected the information requested or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

Answer:
n/a

Enforcement Questions: complaints

13 Please tell us what steps you take when you receive a complaint about damp and mould from a private rented sector tenant. Where relevant, please refer to or provide links to any enforcement policies you have in place (e.g. on enforcing category 2 hazards) and any guidance you might provide for tenants experiencing damp and mould issues.

Optional:

When clients contact us with damp & mould concerns, we discuss their concerns to get a picture of what the issues are and check if they have notified their landlord of their concerns. If they have and the landlord has not addressed the issues, we will inspect under HHSRS to determine if there is a leak or other sources of penetrating damp. We explain to the client the purpose of our inspection which is to identify any deficiencies that may be affecting conditions in the property and the enforcement action we can take. Issues can be resolved through informal or formal action, in line with our enforcement policy. A large proportion of our damp & mould complaints turn out to be condensation and we provide advice on how to alleviate issues in a property. Sadly a number of cases are due to fuel poverty resulting in not adequately heating properties due to the costs involved and again in most cases they are on pre-payment meters. Where there are deficiencies relating to excess cold resulting in condensation and mould problems, we carry out an HHSRS assessment for damp and mould to address improvements via this hazard in line with our enforcement policy.

14 Overall, how many complaints relating to housing standards have you received in the last three financial years that reference or relate to damp and mould issues in the private rented sector?

Answer - 2019/2020:
35

Answer - 2020/2021:
15

Answer - 2021/2022:
29

15 Of the complaints you received that reference damp and mould in the last three financial years, approximately how many resulted in inspections?

Answer - 2019/2020:
16

Answer - 2020/2021:
3

Answer - 2020/2021:
22

16 If you have not collected the information requested or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:
n/a

Enforcement Questions: category 1 damp and mould hazards

17 Approximately how many inspections have you undertaken overall in the last three financial years?

Answer - 2019/2020:
54

Answer - 2020/2021:

4

Answer - 2021/2022:

47

18 Thinking now ONLY about all of the inspections that you undertook as a result of complaints, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

1

Answer - 2020/2021:

1

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

19 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of licensing, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

20 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

21 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook for reasons other than complaints, licensing or stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

22 If you have not collected the information requested above or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

All inspections are due to complaints received or mandatory licensing inspections.

Enforcement Questions: category 2 damp and mould hazards

23 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of complaints, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

6

Answer - 2020/2021:

1

Answer - 2021/2022:

6

24 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of licensing, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

25 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

26 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook for reasons other than complaints, licensing or stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

27 If you have not collected the information requested above or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

All our inspections are in response to complaints or for mandatory HMO licensing

Enforcement action

28 Please provide the figures for all formal and informal enforcement action taken on damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

8

Answer - 2020/2021:

3

Answer - 2021/2022:

5

29 Please provide the figures for improvement notices issued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

4

Answer - 2020/2021:

1

Answer - 2021/2022:

4

30 Please provide the figures for civil penalty notices issued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

31 Please provide the figures for prosecutions pursued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

32 Please provide the figures for successful prosecutions in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

Wider context

33 Please rank in priority order (1 - the highest impact / 6 - the least impact) how the following have had an impact on enforcement action relating to damp and mould in your area

Optional - a) Capacity of your local authority. i.e. resource and funding hindering capacity to take enforcement action relating to damp and mould.:

3

Optional - b) Experience and expertise in the local authority. i.e. a lack of officers with experience, for example, experience pursuing prosecutions or expertise within the team including, for example, legal expertise.:

4

Optional - c) Strategic prioritisation of private rented sector enforcement. i.e. competing priorities leading to relatively lower prioritisation of enforcement action or proactively enforce.:

5

Optional - d) The regulatory/ legal framework for enforcement activity. i.e. too much complexity in legislation.:

1

Optional - e) Issues with gathering or providing evidence. i.e. tenants reluctant to provide statements or difficulties gathering the requisite evidence for issuing a fine or prosecuting.:

2

Optional - f) Limited data on the private rented stock. i.e. difficulties identifying private rented properties or insufficient resource to map out private rented stock.:

6

34 Please say why you have ranked the items on question 31 in this order

Optional:

35 Does the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) allow for an effective assessment of how serious and dangerous damp and mould is in people's homes?

Yes

36 If not, what changes should be made to the HHSRS, to the system for categorising hazards or to enforcement powers under the Housing Act 2004?

Optional:

37 What other measures would help you to better prioritise addressing housing enforcement issues such as damp and mould?

Optional:

Addressing fuel poverty

Addressing Excess cold hazards – our stock condition shows there are 975 excess cold cat 1 hazards compared to 34 damp & mould

Further guidance on enforcement of hard to heat homes

Concerns regarding inconsistent EPC reports

Retaliatory eviction laws, currently tenants are only protected for 6 months, but landlords can still serve s8 eviction notice.

Prescriptive standards would be helpful for landlords to know from the onset what the minimum requirements are for heating, insulation etc

- Firstly, your approach to assessing the extent of damp and mould issues affecting your properties, including how you assess the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards

Runnymede Borough Council completed a comprehensive stock condition survey in January 2019. Since then, we have undertaken a survey of a 10%+ sample of our stock annually.

Our condition surveys have not categorised hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System traditionally. Although hazards have been identified by our Building Inspectors while undertaking surveys.

More recently all stock condition surveyors within our Housing Technical Services Team have received training on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). We have also built assessments under the HHSRS into the latest round of stock condition surveys.

We assess the prevalent of damp and mould hazards within our properties to be currently zero. We are dealing with several damp and mould reports (3) within our properties and are aware of some property archetypes which are prone to mould in certain circumstances and locations – for example –

1. Property Construction with Concrete ring beams
2. Finlock Gutters
3. Properties that lack adequate daylight and solar warmth

We also utilise intelligence such as disrepair claims and repair requests involving mould to proactively target properties which have been prone to mould in the past.

All our properties are visited annually either as part of gas, electrical servicing, tenancy audits, repair visits etc. Our staff and contractors

have been trained to raise 'concerns' on various issues if any are identified.

Our stock condition information and repair appointments are captured on an integrated IT system (NEC Housing) enabling us to query the system on multiple parameters simultaneously i.e. properties in a specified location, of a specific archetype, where reports of damp and mould have been received over the last 5 years.

We have engaged with our tenants in developing the 'Runnymede Investment Standard' which is a standard which delivers Decent Homes plus to the tenants of Runnymede Borough Council and are working with our tenants to mobilise our new Repairs, Maintenance and Voids contract.

- Secondly, and in the context of that approach, your most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards in your homes, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards

We consider our properties to have zero Housing Health and Safety Rating System damp and mould hazards.

- Thirdly, given those findings, the action you are taking to remedy any issues and hazards, and ensure that your homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

We are working to ensure all our homes reach the Decent Homes Standard.

We are currently reporting 74.8% of our stock as 'decent.' We expect all our properties to be decent by 2025/26 or sooner as discussed with the Regulator of Social Housing.

We are also committed to addressing fuel poverty and enhancing energy performance ratings to enable homes to be heated effectively. For example; we expect all our properties to have reached a C energy performance rating by March 2026.

- Lastly, tell us how you ensure that individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively when raised by tenants and residents.

We have a comprehensive Damp and Mould procedure which is part of our ISO 9001 accredited suite of procedure documents. The procedure details the following actions: –

1. Upon receipt of a call from a tenant our Customer Service Centre raises an inspection request for a Housing Maintenance Inspector to undertake a property survey to address any issues found.
2. If no property defects can be identified our Tenancy Management are asked to work with the tenant to support them to eradicate mould in their home, this can involve installing smart moisture monitoring devices and purchasing moisture absorbing plants. This work can last as long as required.
3. Tenants can raise repairs via an online platform
4. Tenants can access specific targeted information to self-help in addressing low level damp and mould within their home

Review of HRA Business Plan (Housing, Andy Vincent)

Synopsis of report:

The Housing Revenue Account 30-year Business Plan is 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 2023 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 an aim to invest £25 million 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 which is at 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

include obligations include health and safety requirements, tenant engagement, the provision of day to day repairs, investment in tenant's homes, collection of rent, action to tackle anti-social behaviour, support for older people etc.

- 1.4 The Regulator of Social Housing has published new Tenant Satisfaction Measures with 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 fiscal year are articulated within the Housing Business Centre Plan 2023-2024.

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 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 (Equality Impact Assessment) 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)
- Commencement 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 2023/24.

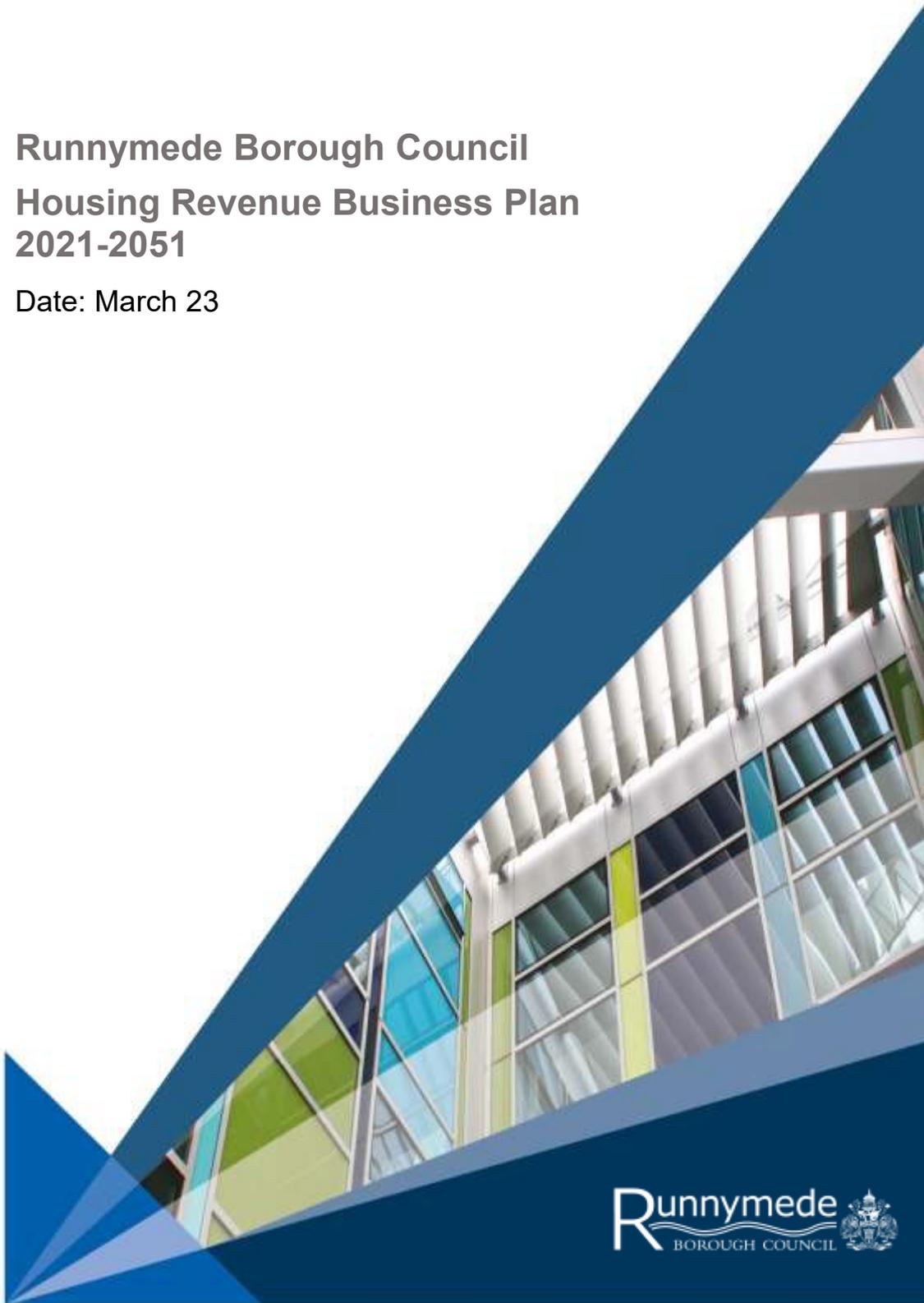
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Background papers

None

**Runnymede Borough Council
Housing Revenue Business Plan
2021-2051**

Date: March 23



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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 2023/24 of £20 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 2023/2024 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. Following Government consultation the approved increase for April 2023 is 7% approved in January 2023.

It was anticipated that the HRA would start setting aside sums of money from rent to repay its borrowings when they became due however the introduction of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 rent reduction and the subsequent rent cap at 2.8% below inflation introduced by the Government for 2023/24 has reduced the funds available for debt repayment other than 1-4-1 receipts. The updated Business Plan starts setting aside money for repayment of these loans from 2031/32 and plans to increase the amount set aside from 2037/38 should the Housing balances not be required for other schemes at that time.

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. This may however change once the proposed Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill has been enacted.

The Council published its current [Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy](#) in 2022 and is committed to reviewing these 2 yearly, to ensure that the tenancies being offered in social housing throughout the borough reflect current legislation and housing need in the area. 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:

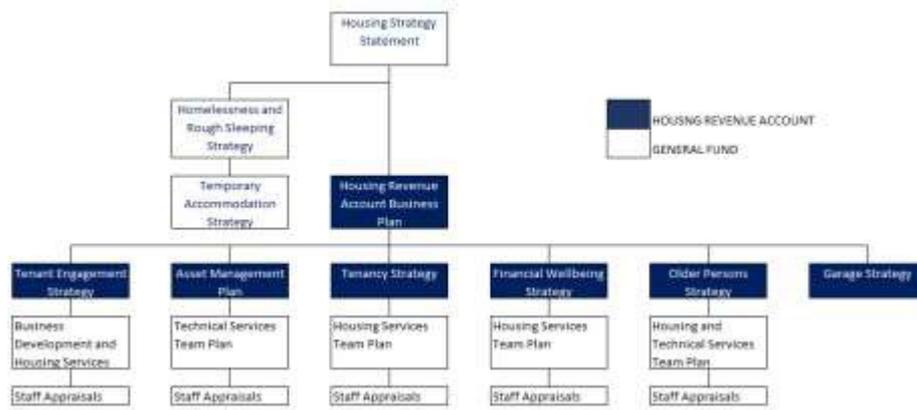
- [Governance and Financial Viability Standard](#)
- [Value for Money Standard](#)
- [Rent Standard](#)

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 published a new Consumer Standard. It is a regulatory requirement that 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	30				98
Flat Low Rise	8	297	88	10				425
Flat Medium Rise		71	34					105
House Detached			1	4	3	1		9
House Semi Detached		3	351	647	77	9		1087
House Terraced		2	102	203	16	2	1	326
House Town House			32	39	11			83
Maisonette			15	90	13			118
Independent Retirement	25	176	8					211
Temporary Accommodation	6	16	23	21				66
Total	39	872	737	1051	120	12	1	2863

Spread of property type

Type	No of homes	% of stock
Flats	694	24%
Houses	1823	64%
Maisonettes	118	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 28% 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	Average weekly rent 2023/24
	£	£	£	£	£
Bedsit	67.5	1.01	68.51	71.32	76.31
1 Bed	92.81	1.39	94.20	98.06	104.92
2 Bed	111.23	1.67	112.90	117.54	125.77
3 Bed	121.57	1.82	123.39	128.40	137.39
4 Bed	132.66	1.99	134.65	140.34	150.16
5+ Bed	155.72	2.34	158.06	158.48	169.57

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 4 years by 9%, with 63% of tenants now receiving Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. This increase and the payment of the housing element of Universal Credit directly 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.

	HB	UC	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%
Feb-23	863	892	1755
	31%	32%	63%

Links to Runnymede Corporate Business Plan 2016-2020

The HRA Business Plan supports all the themes in Runnymede's [Corporate Business Plan 2022-2026](#) and the those in the emerging Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024 delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic:

- Climate Change – Good Quality Homes – improving energy performance Economic Development – I Strategy
- Empowered Communities – Increased resident engagement
- Health and Wellbeing – Good Quality Homes in Well Managed Neighbourhoods

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 2023 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.

Our Financial Wellbeing Strategy seeks 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 2023/24 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 is the Runnymede Standard as approved by Housing Committee. The current Decent Homes Standard is undergoing a comprehensive sector wide review. The Runnymede Standard exceeds 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 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 was carried out in 2022 and this has informed 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 was approved by the Housing Committee in 2022 .

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 the years 2022-2024, 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.

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 has carried 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.

- Inflation
- Limits placed on future borrowing by the proposed levelling up and regeneration Bill
- Increased rates of interest on replacement loans for maturing borrowing
- Increased turnover of properties
- Challenges of Welfare Reform, capped households, universal credit
- 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 has achieved Registered Provider status with Homes England in order to access grants for newhomes 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 achieved ISO accreditation for its repairs, improvements and compliance 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.

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.

Financial Position to Support the HRA Business Plan

Current position as reported to January 2023 Housing Committee:

Assumptions within the Financial Forecast

Data	Position
Opening housing stock	2,863
Opening Debt Allocation	£100,000,000
Rental & Investment Income year 3 (2023/24)	£20,564,000
Indicative additional borrowing capacity	£25,000,000
Indicative additional units	125
Reserves at 31 March 2023	£34,627,000

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

Current Loan Schedule and Interest Rates

Principal sum	Term	Interest rate	Annual interest	Maturity	Payment	Year
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 2023 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	£0.0
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	£100.0

Major Works Commitment Approved 2023/24

Major Works budget for 2023/24	
	£000
Major Structural Works	
Surrey Towers lift replacement	100
Asbestos Survey – Including costs of asbestos removal works	220
Internal Works Programme	
Re-provision of commercial boilers in IRL's	200
Electrical Rewires	200
Kitchens & bathrooms	1,700
Boiler and central heating	1,160
External Works Programme	
Replacement windows and doors	750
Housing estate paths	200
Replacement Fire Doors	400
Replacement roofing, chimneys, and rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes etc)	3,350
External wall finishes	500
Supervisory Costs	
Building Services Consultancy	600
Total Special Works budget in 2023/24	9,380

Right to Buy Sales Capital Income / Revenue Loss

Average sale price	250000	
Paid to government	92,500	37%
Debt redemption	57,500	23%

repairs budget and therefore set out below is the composition of the major works budget for 2023/24

Table 2 – Major works budget for 2023/24	
	£000
Internal Works Programme	
Kitchens & Bathrooms	1,700
Boiler replacement	1,160
Electrical Rewires	200
Fire Door replacement (including Surrey Towers)	400
External Works Programme	
Replacement windows and doors	750
Roofing, Chimneys & rainwater goods (Gutters, downpipes etc)	3,350
External Wall finishes	500
Total Special Works budget in 2023/24	8,060

3.3 As a consequence of the large increase in the level of major works and improvements to our Housing stock there will be insufficient funds in the Major Repairs Reserve during

Retained for 1 for 1	100,000	40%
Assume 4 sales p.a.	1,000,000	
Retained for 1 for 1	400,000	

Summary of 30 year forecast as of February 2023

	1	2	3	4	5
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'
Income					
Rent Income (net of voids)	(17,526)	(18,787)	(19,993)	(21,298)	(22,004)
Other Income	(528)	(538)	(549)	(560)	(571)
Investment Income	(849)	(1,239)	(398)	(160)	(89)
	(18,903)	(20,564)	(20,941)	(22,018)	(22,664)
Expenditure					
Supervision & Management	5,571	5,925	5,934	6,050	6,171
New developments	1,025	1,025	1,125	1,235	0
Repayment of PWLB Debt/new borrowings	0	0	0	-5,000	5,000
Less aside from RTB receipts	0	0	0	0	-2,500
Housing repairs					
Cyclical Repairs	652	652	669	688	707
Responsive Repairs	797	797	819	841	864
Void Repairs	873	552	567	582	598
Disabled Adaptations	200	200	206	211	217
Major works	8,335	12,380	9,105	9,355	9,613
Capital charges	3,379	3,379	3,379	3,554	3,428
	20,831	24,909	21,803	17,516	24,098
Net (Surplus)/deficit	1,928	4,345	863	(4,501)	1,434

Options Appraisal of Independent Retirement Living heating systems (Housing, Andy Vincent)

Synopsis of report:

This report considers the business case for the installation of different types of communal heating systems in two Independent Retirement Living accommodation settings.

The current heating systems are at or past the end of their expected life.

The report also considers the carbon reduction achieved via the different systems.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Members consider the merits of the three heating options appraised and select a preferred heating type to be installed in each of the two Independent Retirement Living schemes.

1. Context and background of report

1.1 Runnymede Borough Council manages 5 Independent Retirement Living Schemes: -

1. Beomonds boiler upgraded in 2015
2. Darley Dean electric heating system
3. Floral House
4. Grove Court electric heating system
5. Heatherfields

1.2 At two schemes (Floral House and Heatherfields) the communal gas boiler is past The end of its expected life.

1.3 A budget exists to replace these boilers with modern like-for-like replacements which would have a life expectancy of between 20-25 years.

1.4 Runnymede Borough Council have published a Climate Change Strategy. It commits the authority to; "*reduce Carbon emissions from Council operations to Net Zero by 2030.*"

1.5 It is calculated that the existing heating systems at Floral House and Heatherfields produce 105.7 tons of emission annually through heating individual flats (this information is taken from the Energy Performance Certificates of the properties – an example is provided in Appendix A). Data currently does not exist for emissions produced in Independent Retirement Living communal spaces.

2. Heat System Appraisals

2.1 Three different heating options are considered within this report to heat the flats and communal spaces in Floral House and Heatherfields. Other options such as electric space heaters exist for the flats and communal areas – they would not rely on the

existing pipe infrastructure to heat the building. They are also likely to produce significantly more emissions than an air or ground source heat pump and cost significantly more to heat the accommodation.

2.2 The three options are: -

1. Communal gas boilers
2. Communal air source heat pumps
3. Communal ground source heat pumps

2.3 Table 1 provides a summary of the appraisal of each option.

	Gas Boiler	Air Source Heat Pump	Ground Source Heat Pump
Installation cost (the cost is divided equally between the two schemes – the work is to the plant room only)	£200,000	£500,000	£850,000
Emissions from individual flats (annually) Emissions are based on the energy performance certificate – other estimates project slightly higher emissions	Floral House 1.3 tons per property – total for the scheme = 76.7 tons Heatherfield 1.0 tons per property – total for the scheme = 29 tons	Approximately 0.5 tons per property – total for the scheme = 29.5 tons 0.4 tons per property – total for the scheme = 11.6 tons	Approximately 0.4 tons per property – total for the scheme = 23.6 tons 0.3 tons per property = 8.7 tons
Heating costs for tenants and Runnymede Borough Council for communal areas	10.33p per kwh for gas 90-95% efficient	50.54p per kwh for electricity 350% efficient Potential for 40-50% increase in fuel bill	50.54p per kwh for electricity 400% efficient Potential for 10-20% increase in fuel bill
Life expectancy of system	20-25 years	15 years	20 years
Maintenance costs		Increased from current system	Increased from current system

3. Analysis of the systems

3.1 The system replacement costs spread over their 'best case' life expectancy, equate to: -

- Gas System £8,000 per year
- Air source heat pump £33,333 per year
- Ground source heat pump £42,500 per year

- 3.2 This can be broken down per property per year for each scheme

Gas Systems

£137.93 for Heatherfields

£67.79 for Floral House

Air Source Heat Pump

£1,149.43 for Heatherfields

£564.97 for Floral House

Ground Source Heat Pump

£1,465.51 for Heatherfields

£720.34 for Floral House

- 3.3 The potential for heating costs to rise should air source or ground source heat pumps be installed is based on the cost of a kilowatt hour for gas and one for electricity (if these costs change relative to each other than this equation will change).

10.33p per kwh for gas. 50.54p per kwh for electricity.

- 3.4 The gas system is 95% efficient each hour of heating would therefore cost 10.84p. The air source heat pump is 350% efficient so each kwh unit of electricity generates 3.5 kWh of heating – equating to 14.44p per hour. The ground source heat pump is 400% efficient so each kwh unit of electricity generates 4.0 kWh of heating – equating to 12.64p per hour.
- 3.5 The major benefit achieved by the transition to an air source or ground source heating system is the carbon reduction achieved.
- 3.6 How the electricity is generated will impact on the carbon generated by the systems. The carbon emissions in this report are based on a mix of various power sources generating the energy – wind, solar, gas turbines etc. The government produce carbon emissions factors each year based on this mix. The carbon emissions used in the report are based on the 2021 BEIS Carbon emission factors published by Defra, including Scope 3 Transmission and Distribution and Well to Tank emissions. All CO₂ values are CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e).
- 3.7 The air source pump uses less than a third of the power of a gas system and a ground source heat pump a quarter.
- 3.8 This equates to 41.1 tons of carbon per year for an air source system and 32.3 for a ground source system being produced should they be installed in the two Independent Retirement Living schemes a reduction from 105.7 via a traditional gas heating system.
- 3.9 The installation of a new communal heating system will require affected flats to have their energy use individually metered. The Heat Network (Metering and Billing) Regulations revised in 2020 introduced a building classes that requires some heat suppliers with unmetered networks to install metering devices in the buildings they serve. This is likely to reduce energy use; resident's usage will directly impact on their charged amount.

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Services has committed to ensuring all the council owned social housing units within the borough achieved a C energy efficiency rating by 2030.
- 4.2 The flats within the Independent Retirement Living schemes at Floral House and Heatherfields are currently C rated.
- 4.3 Runnymede Borough Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030 strategic objective 1, commits the authority to; "*reduce Carbon emissions from Council operations to Net Zero by 2030.*"

5. **Resource implications/Value for Money**

- 5.1 Resources are in place to fund the installation of a replacement gas heating system. Capital growth is required to fund the installation of air source or ground source heating systems.
- 5.2 The installation of air source heat pumps would require £300,000 of additional expenditure.
- 5.3 The installation of ground source heat pumps would require £650,000 of additional expenditure.
- 5.4 Runnymede Borough Council's bid to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund budgeted energy efficiency work at the following rates: -

Solar panels £7,000
Cavity wall insulation £2,520
External wall insulation £9,000

£300,000 could therefore achieve 42 solar panel installs
£650,000 could achieve 92

6. **Legal implications**

- 6.1 As indicated in the body of the report the Council provides heating to a number of units occupied by tenants. The systems which provided that heating are approaching end of life and the Council has to consider the replacement of those systems.

7. **Equality implications**

- 7.1 None – all social housing properties owned by Runnymede Borough Council will receive work to improve their energy efficiency.
- 7.2 This programme of work is set out in the Council's Housing Asset Management
- 7.3 The issue of replacement boilers in Independent Retirement Living is identified within the Housing Asset Management Plan under Heating Types on page 11.
- 7.4 The purpose of this report is to consider what is the appropriate system to install.

8. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

8.1 This report has significant environmental implications. Replacing a gas heating system with an air source or ground source heat pump could result more than in 64 tons of carbon savings each year.

9. **Other implications**

9.1 This report has implications for the heating costs faced by residents of two Independent Retirement Living schemes Floral House and Heatherfields.

9.2 These implications are set out in section 2.2 of this report

10. **Timetable for Implementation**

10.1 Following a decision on how to proceed with the installation of a new boiler at Heatherfields and Floral House the service will move quickly to procure a contractor to install a new system in the two schemes.

11. **Conclusions**

11.1 Replacing communal gas boilers with a system which produces fewer carbon emissions has implications for Independent Retirement Living residents, in that they will pay higher fuel bills if a new system is introduced.

11.2 Installing a heating system in Independent Retirement Living which reduces significantly the level of carbon emissions produced in heating the schemes is a key step towards carbon reduction. Without this it is unlikely Runnymede Borough Council will produce zero emissions from its operations by 2030.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

Corporate Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030

<https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/downloads/file/1533/climate-change-strategy>

Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026 (item 9 on the agenda)

[Agenda for Housing Committee on Wednesday, 21st September, 2022, 7.30 pm – Runnymede Borough Council](#)

[Commercial Heat Pump system | The Renewable Energy Hub](#)

Appendix A

Sections from Energy Performance Certificates for accommodation at Floral House and Heatherfields

Floral House

This property's current energy rating is C. It has the potential to be C.

[See how to improve this property's energy performance.](#)

Score	Energy rating	Current	Potential
92+	A		
81-91	B		
69-80	C	74 c	74 c
55-68	D		
39-54	E		
21-38	F		
1-20	G		

Properties are given a rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient).

Properties are also given a score. The higher the number the lower your fuel bills are likely to be.

For properties in England and Wales:

the average energy rating is D
the average energy score is 60

Primary energy use

The primary energy use for this property per year is 213 kilowatt hours per square metre (kWh/m²).

Environmental impact of this property

This property's current environmental impact rating is C. It has the potential to be C.

Properties are rated in a scale from A to G based on how much carbon dioxide (CO₂) they produce.

Properties with an A rating produce less CO₂ than G rated properties.

An average household produces 6 tonnes of CO₂

This property produces 1.3 tonnes of CO₂

This property's potential production is 1.3 tonnes of CO₂

By making the [recommended changes](#), you could reduce this property's CO₂ emissions by 0.0 tonnes per year. This will help to protect the environment.

Environmental impact ratings are based on assumptions about average occupancy and energy use. They may not reflect how energy is consumed by the people living at the property.

Heatherfields

This property's current energy rating is C. It has the potential to be C.

[See how to improve this property's energy performance.](#)

Score	Energy rating	Current	Potential
92+	A		
81-91	B		
69-80	C	75 c	76 c
55-68	D		
39-54	E		
21-38	F		
1-20	G		

Primary energy use

The primary energy use for this property per year is 231 kilowatt hours per square metre (kWh/m²).

Environmental impact of this property

This property's current environmental impact rating is C. It has the potential to be C.

Properties are rated in a scale from A to G based on how much carbon dioxide (CO₂) they produce.

Properties with an A rating produce less CO₂ than G rated properties.

An average household produces 6 tonnes of CO₂

Properties are given a rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient).

Properties are also given a score. The higher the number the lower your fuel bills are likely to be.

For properties in England and Wales:

the average energy rating is D
the average energy score is 60

This property produces 1.0 tonnes of CO₂

This property's potential production 1.0 tonnes of CO₂

By making the [recommended changes](#), you could reduce this property's CO₂ emissions by 0.0 tonnes per year. This will help to protect the environment.

Environmental impact ratings are based on assumptions about average occupancy and energy use. They may not reflect how energy is consumed by the people living at the property.

Support with Moving Policy (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

In order to facilitate best use of stock and access more properties suitable for adaptation for larger households, a Support with Moving Policy will provide financial incentives to tenants giving up larger homes and additional support with the logistics of a move where required.

This report provides members with the feedback from the consultation approved by this committee in September 2022

Recommendation:

Members approve the Support with Moving Policy (Appendix A) for implementation.

1. Context

- 1.1 In December 2021 the Housing Member Working Party discussed a policy to provide residents with additional support to facilitate moves. A draft policy was brought to this Committee in September 2022 where a consultation exercise with stakeholders was approved.
- 1.2 Social Housing landlords have historically paid incentive sums to tenants to move to smaller properties as housing need has increased. Runnymede has historically provided financial assistance and practical support with moving to residents downsizing. A large proportion of the Council housing stock is underoccupied by older tenants, many of whom live alone. Our data indicates that over 30% of older Runnymede Borough Council tenants are under-occupying their home. Across all tenures 67% of older people are estimated to be under-occupying their home.

“Under-occupation is particularly high among the 65+ cohort as 67% of older owner-occupier households in England are currently under-occupying, implying that there is plenty of opportunity for older households to downsize.” [Downsizing is socially desirable – and saves money on bills - Intergenerational Foundation \(if.org.uk\)](#)
- 1.3 There is an increasing need for larger family properties, specifically those with two downstairs rooms that can be adapted to provide downstairs accommodation for a person requiring level access facilities.
- 1.4 The Social Sector Size Criteria which reduced the amount of benefit payable by 14% for one empty room and 25% for two, does not apply to people of pensionable age and so has had no impact on the level of under occupation in the borough. Most people only decide to downsize when they can no longer manage physically within their home and then request incentives which are not applicable as they want to move.
- 1.5 For older people on a low income with no capital, the cost of moving can be prohibitive or for those without a support network the prospect of managing a move can be daunting.

2. Report

2.1 Residents giving up a larger property will receive a payment to mitigate the cost of moving. Where a property has major adaptations or specific features that are no longer required and this is needed for another household, the Council will consider approaching the tenants and offering an incentive equivalent to the Statutory Homeless payment to secure this home. This payment will be significantly less than it would cost to adapt a family home for a disabled person requiring level access facilities.

2.2 Schedule of Payments

Number of rooms giving up	Incentive up to a maximum of	Authorisation level
One bedroom	Ten times weekly rent	Manager
Two bedrooms	Fifteen times weekly rent	Manager
Three bedrooms	Eighteen times weekly rent	Corporate Head of Housing
Move due to adaptation required	The statutory home loss payment	Corporate Head of Housing & Head of Housing Services & Business Planning

2.3 Eligibility for the scheme will be subject to criteria and acceptable management of the current tenancy.

2.4 Where a tenant requires adaptations, and they can be accessed by a mutual exchange, the Council will consider financial assistance with a move subject to a means test.

2.5 Where a tenant is in receipt of a low income and has no capital to support a move additional support can be accessed from the Housing Discretionary Hardship Fund.

2.6 Council officers can provide practical support with the move, including arranging removals and packing, assisting the tenant to arrange flooring, cooker connections, utility supplies. Subject to assessed need and where there is no support network. Housing staff will liaise with other agencies and charities to access support for the tenant where appropriate.

2.7 Consultation on the Draft Policy

The consultation included:

- A dedicated web page
- Email to those we have addresses for, with altered content depending on the audience
- A simplified version of the policy was sent to potentially over occupying tenants, with multiple ways for them to share their views, including paper survey, QR code, and contact number
- Telephone calls to those who have downsized to understand their experience and where they think we could improve for future residents.

The targeted audience:

- Potentially over-occupying tenants

- Tenants on the waiting list to downsize
- Tenants who have downsized

2.8 We consulted to understand tenants' views on what support the council should provide for those who may need help moving to a smaller home. This included how we could improve the way we currently provide support, and how we can help overcome barriers that tenants perceive stop them from moving.

2.9 Although there was limited response to the general communications the telephone calls provide some clear insight into what tenants would like and 20 people completed (although some only partially) a brief survey. There was overall support for the policy with discussions with residents highlighting that assistance with the logistics of a move will be as important as the financial benefits.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
Assistance with furniture removals	64.29% 9	35.71% 5	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	14
Assistance with changing utility suppliers	57.14% 8	21.43% 3	21.43% 3	0% 0	0% 0	14
Post redirection	57.14% 8	21.43% 3	14.29% 2	7.14% 1	0% 0	14
Help with Benefit changes	38.46% 5	38.46% 5	23.08% 3	0% 0	0% 0	13
Organise carpets	71.43% 10	21.43% 3	7.14% 1	0% 0	0% 0	14
Reconnect cookers and other white goods	66.67% 10	33.33% 5	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	15
Apply for additional moving funds	64.29% 9	14.29% 2	21.43% 3	0% 0	0% 0	14
Help arrange contents insurance	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	0% 0	14

2.10 As a result of the feedback the following amendments have been made to the policy:

- Extending the policy offer to help tenants move to social housing outside of the Borough
- Tenants said a financial incentive before moving would be useful, so the costs don't cause difficulties. The Council will where appropriate pay contractors directly to ease the pressure.
- Residents said they would prefer a personal touch, rather than letters or phone calls. We will offer in-person meetings and will encourage a friend or family member to be there too

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 The following Strategies and Policies will be supported by the incentives available within this policy:

- Housing Strategy Statement
- Disabled Adaptations for Council Tenants Policy
- Decant Policy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Mutual Exchange Policy

- Disabled Adaptations Policy

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 The Council has a Disturbance Budget which should cover this scheme. If there are a significant number of moves arranged to access adapted properties resulting in higher payments a supplementary estimate for additional funds will be brought to this Committee.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Paragraph 2 of Schedule 18 Housing Act 1996 grants a local housing authority the power to make payments to or for the benefit of a tenant or licensee of a dwelling-house within its Housing Revenue Account with a view to assisting or encouraging that person to move to qualifying accommodation. Qualifying accommodation means a dwelling-house made available to the person concerned as tenant or licensee by any of the following—

- a) the local housing authority making the grant or any other local housing authority;
- b) a private registered provider of social housing; or
- c) a registered social landlord.

6. Other implications

- 6.1 Housing's Engagement and Inclusion Officer managed an 8 week consultation period which combined general consultation communication with residents and some focussed conversations with service users who have recently or potentially might downsize.

7. Equality implications

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Screening found there is no evidence that tenants with any of the nine protected characteristics will be negatively impacted by this policy.
- 7.2 It is therefore considered that the Council will comply with its Public Sector Equality duty when endorsing this Policy and a full impact assessment is not required at this stage.

8. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 8.1 None identified

9. Timetable for Implementation

- 9.1 Following approval the Policy will be fully implemented within four weeks to arrange training and literature for residents.

(To resolve)

Background Papers

[Committee report September 2022](#)

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Support with Moving Policy

DRAFT

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 The demand for Council housing in Runnymede outweighs the supply. It is essential to make the best use of the social housing stock. This in turn should help the wider housing agenda of reducing problems of overcrowding and homelessness.

1.2 Under occupation arises where a household lives in a property that is deemed too large for its needs. For example where tenants have been allocated a home based on their children being part of the household but as the children have grown up and left the property is then considered larger than the tenants' need.

1.3 The Government introduced the "Social Sector Size Criteria", colloquially referred to as the 'bedroom tax'. This means a reduction in housing benefits for tenants of social housing where they are classed as having any spare bedrooms. Therefore, many social housing tenants who are under occupying are required to pay for additional rooms or consider moving to another property. This measure does not apply to people of pensionable age.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to:

- Promote best use of the Council's limited housing stock through support and incentives.
- Ensure tenants occupy a home that suits their needs including adaptation
- Increase accessibility to the scheme
- Set out the eligibility criteria
- Reduce the number of tenants who are under and over occupying council homes
- Identify households who are under occupying and support a move at the earliest suitable opportunity so that the downsizer can live in accommodation suitable for their needs
- Outline financial support available

3. Eligibility

3.1 To qualify for the scheme applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- Hold a secure tenancy with Runnymede Borough Council
- Under occupy their home by at least one bedroom. Tenants will not be eligible for assistance if under occupation has occurred as a result of making former household members homeless
- No housing related debt with Runnymede Council. This is current/former rent arrears, council tax arrears, use and occupation charges, overpaid housing benefit, outstanding court costs, rechargeable repairs, and repayable rent deposits. If there is a housing related debt it is the manager's discretion whether the Support with Moving payment can be used to clear this.
- Kept to the terms of tenancy agreement
- Not subject to any legal proceedings for breach of tenancy conditions
- Give vacant possession of current home
- Have maintained their home in a satisfactory condition

- Want to move to another Council or Housing Association property in Runnymede or out of the borough
- Where Runnymede Borough Council offers a move to a household instead of providing adaptations in their current property they can qualify for 'downsizing' incentive payments.
- Secure tenants living in an adapted property can qualify for an incentive payment to move home.

3.2 The following tenants are excluded from the downsizing scheme:

- Tenants moving through mutual exchange
- Fixed-term tenants who are required to move to a smaller property upon renewal of their tenancy
- Tenants moving from one bedroom to a studio property
- Tenants subject to a Possession order or who have been served with a Notice of Seeking Possession for anti-social behaviour.
- Tenants subject to anti-social behaviour proceedings
- Tenants who have not maintained their garden will not receive an incentive to move to another property with a garden.

3.3 Those who do not meet the eligibility criteria for this Support with Moving scheme but are still under occupying their property may still apply for a transfer and mutual exchange once they have successfully completed any Introductory period.

4. Incentives

4.1 The Council recognise that the idea of moving home can be daunting, and the Council will provide support where appropriate.

4.2 The financial incentive will depend on the size of the property being vacated

Number of rooms giving up	Incentive up to a maximum of	Authorisation level
One bedroom	Ten times weekly rent	Manager
Two bedrooms	Fifteen times weekly rent	Manager
Three bedrooms	Eighteen times weekly rent	Corporate Head of Housing
Move due to adaptation required	The statutory home loss payment	Corporate Head of Housing & Head of Housing Services & Business Planning

4.3 Payments are to support the household to successfully downsize or to move out of an adapted property.

5. Payments

5.1 We aim to make payments within 28 days of the start of the new tenancy if all the necessary information is available. Where necessary payments can be made directly to suppliers for items such as removals and flooring if the tenant does not have the funds to pay this in advance of the payment from the Council.

5.2 Payments to tenants with a new social landlord, cannot be made without confirmation from the landlord of the number of bedrooms in their new home and that the property is occupied.

5.3 Payments will be made to the tenant. Only in exceptional circumstances, with prior written reasoning would the payment be made to anyone else.

6. Practical Support

6.1 Where a tenant does not have a support network or the capability to manage a move themselves additional support can be provided.

6.2 A multi-agency approach will be taken, working with Adult Social Care and any agencies that are already engaged with the resident to access practical support for them.

6.3 Housing staff can help to arrange removals, carpets, cooker reconnection etc for the tenant. Subject to a means test an application can be submitted by the Area Housing Manager to the Housing Discretionary Hardship Fund or charities, if necessary, for instance, if they do not have the capital for floor coverings and these cannot be relocated.

6.4 Independent Retirement Living properties are let in good decorative order so if a resident does not have the funds or ability to carry out redecoration, they will be advised to apply for an IRL property.

6.5 Tenants will be able to have home visits to support them with this process and it is recognised that digital methods of communication will not be appropriate for some applicants who will require face to face discussions and support with a known officer.

7. Complaints

7.1 Complaints about the quality of service, the behaviour of staff or failure to adhere to this policy should be made in line with the Housing Complaints Policy

8. Monitoring and performance management

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

8.2 The Area Housing Manager will coordinate incentive payments and record who incentives have been given to on NEC Housing in order to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and identify whether the incentives have resulted in more moves.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 In producing this document an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out.

9.2 An EIA is a way of assessing the impact, or likely impact, that a particular policy, procedure or decision will have on particular groups. This is used to assess whether in making the decision whether the Council has complied with its public sector equality duty under S149 of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) to; eliminate discrimination and any other conduct that is prohibited under this act and to advance equality between those who share a protected characteristic.

9.3 The screening found that a full impact assessment was not required.

10. Related strategies/Documents

Housing Complaints Policy
 Decants Policy
 Tenancy Strategy
 Mutual Exchange Policy
 Disabled Adaptations Policy

11. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	August 2022	First draft reformatted and updated with comments		Luisa Cantore-Norris	
V2	February 2023	Amended to reflect the Consultation on the policy		Maggie Ward	

Tenants Satisfaction Survey (Housing, Angela Horsey)

Synopsis of report:

This report advises Members of the proposal to undertake a Tenants' Satisfaction Survey as required by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Recommendation:

Members note the plans for undertaking the next Tenants' Satisfaction Survey, as required by the Regulator of Social Housing.

1. Context of report

- 1.1 In October 2022 Runnymede Council tenants took part in a satisfaction survey, which provided a baseline for future surveys and has informed an action plan for improvements.
- 1.2 The Regulator of Social Housing has recently introduced the requirement to collect Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The data used to generate perception TSMs must be collected as part of a survey which is compliant with the prescribed methodology.

2. Report

- 2.1 As reported at the November 2022 Committee, throughout October 2022 Runnymede Council tenants had the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey, to give their views on the landlord services provided by the Council. The digital survey did not meet the technical requirements of a full STAR (the social housing Survey of Tenants and Residents) survey, but the feedback gave a clear impression of the views of tenants and sets a baseline for future surveys.
- 2.2 At Appendix A Committee is informed of the Satisfaction Survey Action Plan which identifies the areas of concern raised in the survey responses and sets out steps which aim to improve the services that are a priority for tenants.
- 2.3 The Social Housing Regulation Bill is currently going through Parliament, with implementation of the new consumer regulation due to start from April 2024. The Regulator of Social Housing has already introduced the TSMs which social landlords must start collecting from April 2023. The TSMs are made up of a total of 22 measures. Ten of the measures are Management Information, as found in the Performance report at item 15 in this agenda. The twelve Tenant Perception Measures must be collected through a tenant survey which is compliant with the prescribed TSM methodology. To meet the regulatory requirement of 95% confidence with a +/-4% interval, for example, Runnymede Council would need a minimum of 496 valid responses. There are further requirements on statistical accuracy, weighting, representativeness, surveys question wording and response options. Guidance states that surveys can either be done in-house, or carried out by an external provider.
- 2.4 Members will recall that, prior to the digital survey opportunity, the Council had

planned to undertake a STAR survey in 2022, using consultants to complete the fieldwork and analysis. The TSM perception survey will be very similar to STAR surveys undertaken by many social landlords in recent years. The staffing resource, specialist skills needed and the strict regulator's requirements mean that a consultant is needed for this exercise. All registered providers must ensure that their data is accurate, reliable, valid and a transparent reflection of performance. It will also be important to publish the findings in a timely, clear and easily accessible way for tenants; and to be able to benchmark the results against other social landlords as well as comparing – where possible – with the results of the previous survey.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Officers plan to procure a consultant in line with the Council's procedures during March, with a view to survey field work being undertaken in late spring. Subject to the advice of the consultant, a 'census' survey will be posted to all tenants, giving everyone the opportunity to have their say and for the Council to explain the steps being taken to genuinely listen to tenants' views and to act on them. It will also be an opportunity to collect contact preferences for future surveys and to encourage tenants to sign up to the new Housing Online customer portal.
- 3.2 Findings from the survey will be compared with results of last year's survey and presented to this Committee in the autumn. The results must be submitted to the regulator by the end of March 2024. The regulator will publish the TSM results for all landlords with more than 1,000 homes in autumn 2024. The results must also be published for tenants, with details of how the survey requirements have been met.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that, going forward, the majority of transactional surveys (for example following the letting of a new home or after a complaint of anti-social behaviour) can be completed through the portal. Subject to take-up, it may also be possible to undertake digital TSM perception surveys in the future.

4. Policy framework implications

- 4.1 In order to provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance, the Regulator of Social Housing has introduced the TSMs which all social landlords need to collect and report on.
- 4.2 The RBC Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy Action Plan, as reported to Committee in January, includes a commitment to deliver the TSM perception surveys.

5. Resource implications

- 5.1 £15,000 for an engagement survey is included within the Housing Service annual budget.
- 5.2 No additional staff resources are required to manage, deliver and report the outcome of the survey exercise.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The Regulator of Social Housing is a non-departmental public body that regulates registered providers of social housing to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs.

- 6.2 The Regulator of Social Housing sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached.
- 6.3 The government's 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper', published in November 2020, set an expectation that the Regulator of Social Housing would bring in a set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) on issues that matter to tenants. From 1 April 2023 all registered providers of social housing need to collect, report on and publish their TSMs.
- 6.4 Setting clearly defined, universal requirements on TSMs creates a valuable tool allowing tenants to scrutinise and compare their landlord's performance, giving insights to landlords on where they might look to improve their services, and providing a source of intelligence to the regulator on whether landlords are meeting the regulatory standards.

7. Equality implications

- 7.1 No specific equality implications have been identified but the stated aims TSMs and the Social Housing Regulation Bill is to improve social housing standards for all tenants. The calculated satisfaction scores to be submitted to the regulator must be representative of the tenant population.

8. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity/Other implications

- 8.1 No environmental, sustainability, biodiversity or other implications have been identified.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Committee is advised that a consultant will be procured to undertake a Tenants' Satisfaction Survey in 2024 which is compliant with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

[Tenant Satisfaction Measures Technical Requirements \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[TSM Tenant Survey Requirements \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix A

Area of Concern	Action	Target
ASB Case handling	Review of ASB Policy & Procedure	Sep-23
	Customer Guide to ASB service	Oct-23
Dealing with RBC's Service	Housing OnLine (HoL) portal	Apr-23
	Information in Braille & other languages	Summer 23
	More regular newsletters	On-going
	Enable tenants to text/Whats App	Autumn 23
	Manage expectations – clearer communication	On-going
	Repairs handbook	Spring 23
	Tenants handbook	Spring 24
	Customer Service Guides	Complete
	NEC Customer Services Module	Jan-24
	Complaints training	Apr-23
Communal Areas	Estate Improvement Policy	Jun-23
	Clearer Comms about "communal areas" & ensure survey questions are specific	On-going
	Sign off cleaning checks - part of review of estate cleaning	TBC
	SLA for Grounds Maintenance	Apr-23
	Use "Go Mobile" capability for estate walkabouts	TBC
	Estate Action Days (seasonal)	On-going
	Additional CCTV	Programme by April 23
	Estate Caretaking – service charge	Oct-24
Listening to tenants views	Tenant Engagement Strategy Action Plan	On-going
	Training for all Housing staff on Customer Service	Apr-23
	Upload photos and issues to HoL	Summer 23
	Consult tenants on new estates cleaning contract	Jan-24
	Establish Social Value contribution	Summer 23
Repairs and Maintenance	Recruitment of MCP	Sep-22
	New repairs contact centre	Apr-23
	First Contact repair scheduling	Apr-23
	Post inspections of works	Enhanced from April 23
	Online ordering of minor repairs	Apr-23
	Recharge Policy implementation	May-23
	Improve Decent Homes levels	Asset Management Plan 2021-2026
	Communicate FRA process and actions (Building Safety Act)	From Feb 23
	Liaise with Community Services on 'Handyman' service	Apr-23
	Bulky waste removal	Complete

Discontinuation of Runnymede Borough Council's Interaction with the RCRA (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The Runnymede Council Residents Association (RCRA) which was constituted in 2005 is no longer operating within its terms of reference and therefore will cease to be recognised from the end of this financial year.

Recommendation(s):

None. This report is for information

1. Context and background

- 1.1 Formal participation between residents and the Council within Runnymede commenced in February 1999 with the formation of the Tenant's Services Group, who met prior to Housing and Community Services Committee to consider policy and management issues that impacted on Tenants and Leaseholders.
- 1.2 In February 2003 the Government issued its Sustainable Communities Plan. This Required all stock-holding Local Authorities to carry out a full options appraisal by 31 July 2005. As part of this process the Council established a Stock Options Form for tenants and leaseholders to work with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service to fully understand the implications of the process.
- 1.3 In May 2005 it was determined that the stock would be retained and following this to Tenants Services Group amalgamated with the Stock Options Forum to become the Runnymede Council Residents Association (RCRA).
- 1.4 A constitution was adopted by the Runnymede Council Residents Association on 21 June 2005 and from its inception, Mrs Jenny Hill was the Chair of this group, also representing Runnymede residents at the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) and serving as Chair of its Tenants group for a period.
- 1.5 Within the RCRA Constitution there are requirements for representative membership and regular meetings:
 - The RCRA will meet up to 10 times a year and where applicable will meet shortly before the Housing and Community Services Committee. From time to time, it may be necessary to convene extra meetings. The local committees will meet 4 times a year and their meetings will precede the main committee meetings.
 - Membership of the Association will be restricted to no more than twenty one members. All 4 area committees will nominate up to 4 members to the main committee, and 5 spaces will be held for residents from more remote areas. Representation of all areas and estates must be reflected in the membership of RCRA.
 - A quorum of seven members will be required for a meeting.

2. **Report**

- 2.1 Although there have been some local tenant associations established since 2005, they have not been sustained and currently there is no active group within the borough. The RCRA has not met since 2019, there were a small number of active members predominantly from IRL but it had not been quorate for some time.
- 2.2 This reflects a national decrease in traditional tenant participation and it is acknowledged landlords must engage with their residents through a variety of channels. At the January meeting of this committee, Members were updated in the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy showing there is more success in engaging with residents individually and digitally.
- 2.3 From April 2023 the RCRA will no longer be recognised by Runnymede Borough Council. The Council will now focus on building resident engagement with a wide, representative range of residents, on services, policies, contracts etc. In addition, the Council will be surveying residents to collect data on the 22 new Tenant Satisfaction Measures that the regulator now requires social landlords to collect.

3. **Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The Runnymede Council Residents Association is no longer able to operate within its constitution as it does not have sufficient active members to be quorate or representative.

4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1 The Chair of the RCRA receives an allowance to attend Housing Committee to represent tenants' views. This will not be paid in 2023/24.

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6. **Timetable for Implementation**

- 6.1 The Chair of the RCRA will not receive funding from Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service for the next financial year, new budgets are in place for tenant engagement and inclusion.

7. **Conclusions**

This report is for information

Update on Mobilisation of Repairs and Empty Property Contractor (Housing, Simon Allen)

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service has entered a five plus five-year contract with MCP to deliver a comprehensive and digital day-to-day repairs and empty property delivery contract. This report will provide an update as to the status and any risks that have arisen since Committee approved MCP's appointment in September 2022.

Recommendation(s):

None. This report is for information only.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 In September 2022, Housing Committee approved a report recommending the appointment of MCP as the new repairs and empty property contractor on an initial five-year contract with the option to extend for a further five years based upon performance within the initial contract period.
- 1.2 This report will provide Committee with further details in relation to the mobilisation meetings and any additional risks that were not identified within the overall project scope.

2. Report

- 2.1 Since MCP were awarded the contract in late September 2022, the Housing Technical Services Team and MCP have engaged in a service implementation and configuration meeting.
- 2.1 Since January 2023 these meeting have reverted to every two weeks to ensure no slippage of key milestones occurs prior to commencement in April 2023 without any unforeseen issues.
- 2.3 To date, no new risks have been identified and the initial project plan is meeting its key milestones.
- 2.4 MCP are undertaking a round of recruitment for new operatives to cover this contract and have engaged with Runnymede Borough Council to advertise via local avenues. This forms part of the "stay local" mantra in terms of locally sourced recruitment.
- 2.5 Running in tandem to the above operational meetings, MCP have also arranged various other meetings, to review the following:
 1. Tenant Engagement
 2. Public Relations and Press – MCP has sponsored the Sports category at the Runnymede Civic Awards, which are being held at Foxhills Country Club
 3. Digital Services – NEC implementation
 4. Financial

2.6 The new tenants' repairs handbook is well underway and will be ready shortly after the commencement of the contract on 3 April 2023.

2.7 MCP and Housing Technical Services Team will also be holding meet and greet with tenants and sending our official flyers and leaflets to introduce MCP to all Runnymede housing tenants.

3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 Committee agreed the new Repairs Policy in September which will be fully implemented as part of a suite of policies and processes covering the repairs, maintenance, and void management when the new contract commences. Other key policies in accordance with this contract and delivery would be -

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026
- Repairs Policy 2021
- Recharge Policy 2022

4. **Resource implications**

4.1 The contract value listed within the ITT was £1.3 Million per annum which is fully budgeted in the existing Housing Budgets for 2022/23. The successful suppliers cost returns were within budgeted expenditures.

5. **Legal implications**

5.1 The Housing Act 1985 articulates the legal obligations placed on social landlords regarding the provision of a repairs and maintenance service.

5.2 The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations describes how certain repair work must be completed.

5.3 Health and safety legislation and regulations also apply to the provision of this service as repairs will be made to services such as gas appliances, electrical installations, and water systems.

5.4 Provisions relating to working at height and the removal of asbestos must also be complied with in the delivery of this service.

6. **Equality implications**

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed as part of the procurement of the new repairs, maintenance and voids contract.

6.2 Runnymede Borough Council will expect the new contractor to comply with all legal requirements in relation to equalities in the provision of this service. For example: -

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is a statutory requirement and, therefore, must be adhered to by all employers, employees, and contractors irrespective of any protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.
- The Equalities Act 2010 commits public bodies to ensure there are no direct or indirect forms of discrimination in the provision of services. The Repairs

and Maintenance Contractor as an organisation delivering services on behalf of Runnymede Borough Council is required to comply with this provision.

- Runnymede Borough Council through the period of the contract will monitor delivery of the work to ensure that tenants and leaseholders do not suffer any form of discrimination in the type or delivery of the work undertaken.

7 **Conclusions**

- 7.1 Officers ask that Committee note the details within the report for information only.

(For information)

Background Papers

None

Tenancy Agreement Review (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The Council needs to carry out a review of its Tenancy Agreement issued to its tenants. Following the review and a statutory consultation period the new agreement and its conditions will apply to all existing and new tenants.

The tenancy rights of social housing tenants are determined by legislation, but the Tenancy Conditions enable landlords to ensure effective management of their stock.

A project to review the current Tenancy Agreement will commence in March 2023 and will involve a statutory consultation of minimum three months duration with tenants.

It is anticipated that the project including the consultation and external legal review will be completed by June 2024

Recommendation:

Committee approves the review of the Tenancy Agreement issued to tenants of properties held within the social housing stock.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Council last reviewed its Tenancy Agreement for its social housing stock in 2013 and this was in response to the new provisions for social tenancies introduced in the Localism Act.
- 1.2 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Tenancy Agreement governs the relationship between tenants and their landlord (RBC), outlining the roles, rights, and responsibilities of each. Despite the importance of this legal document, the current tenancy agreement has not been updated since it was adopted in 2014, meaning some elements are in significant need of reviewing.
- 1.3 An out-of-date agreement leaves RBC open to legal challenges, and an urgent refresh is required to reflect changes including developments in case law, legislative changes, internal RBC policy changes, and developments in tenancy-related contractual terms.
- 1.4 As such, updated terms are required on matters including but not limited to: rent arrears in relation to flexible tenancies, succession rights, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, damp and mould, and requests for alterations.

2. Report

- 2.1 The current tenancy is legally compliant but needs to be reviewed in line with good practice.

- 2.2 A project group will review the existing agreement, research existing good practice and ensure that the new agreement has provisions to deal robustly with breaches of tenancy.
- 2.3 The Tenancy Agreement Review aims to deliver an updated and modern set of tenancy conditions which reflect current priorities and the economic, legal and societal context in which the Council Housing Service now operates.
- 2.4 The conditions will be clear and enforceable, emphasising the rights and responsibilities involved in taking a Council Tenancy. Whilst most of the proposed changes are around clarity and ability to enforce, they will reflect recent policies approved by this Committee such as new conditions to promote responsible pet ownership and enable better management of pets and animals in our properties. They will also strengthen our rights and tenants' responsibilities in terms of fire safety. Management of rent arrears of tenants with a flexible tenancy will also be addressed.
- 2.5 Following an internal review including the Council's legal department and consultation with stakeholders a draft agreement will be submitted for an independent specialist legal review.
- 2.6 There will be a statutory consultation with residents, this is required under Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 and it is anticipated that this will be for a period of 3 months. Although there is no intention to make significant changes to the Tenancy Agreement, any change to a Council tenancy is important to the holder. It is therefore essential that the consultation is meaningful and timely, and that it uses a variety of engagement methods:
 - Online surveys
 - Face-to-face consultation events
 - Dedicated web-pages
 - Social media updates
 - Inclusion in the Tenants Newsletter
 - Email, letter and texts

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 The Housing Service Area Plan 2023/24 identifies the following action: -

Legislative/ Regulatory Change	Housing and Neighbourhood Services	Refresh the 2014 RBC tenancy agreement. This will involve updating clauses, reflecting best practice, independent legal advice & extensive consultation	A compliant and effective tenancy agreement £10K is requested as a one off to support a refresh
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4. Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 The £10k required for the review has already been incorporated within the 2023/34 budgets.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Tenancy Agreement is the legal document which governs the relationship between the Council, as landlord, and its tenants. Over time there will be changes in legislation and case law which will require that document to be reviewed to ensure it reflects the current legal position. Changes to the document will have an impact on the relationship between the Council and its tenants and therefore it is appropriate that tenants are consulted on any proposed changes. Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 - Consultation on matters of housing management.

(1) A landlord authority shall maintain such arrangements as it considers appropriate to enable those of its secure tenants or secure contract-holders who are likely to be substantially affected by a matter of housing management to which this section applies—

(a) to be informed of the authority's proposals in respect of the matter, and
(b) to make their views known to the authority within a specified period;
and the authority shall, before making any decision on the matter, consider any representations made to it in accordance with those arrangements.

6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 A review of the Tenancy Agreement is required to ensure it is fit for purpose. The review will consider equality implications within the process, involving the Council's Equalities Group.

7. **Timetable for Implementation**

- 7.1 The project will commence in March 2023 with a target to seek approval to implement the new agreement from this Committee in March or June 2024 depending on the level of changes generated from the external legal review and the consultation.

8. **Recommendation**

- 8.1 Members approve the review of the Tenancy Agreement issued to tenants of properties held within the social housing stock.

(To resolve)

Background Papers

None

Annual Housing Equality Review (Housing, Andy Vincent)

Synopsis of report:

This report assesses the profile of tenants accessing housing services.

The report identifies where the profile of the tenants' accessing services is out of step with the wider tenant or resident population.

The report also looks at who is receiving support from the Housing Service and how the success of this provision is measured.

Recommendation:

Members note the actions identified for addressing the discrepancies in the tenant profiling information.

1. Context and background of report

1.1 A draft of this report was discussed at the Housing Member Working Party on 1 February 2023.

1.2 Objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

1.3 The purpose of this annual review of tenant profiling information and service usage is to identify discrepancies in service take up. Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service can then identify what action it proposes to take to address any areas for concern.

2. Profiling Data

2.1 Runnymede Borough Council has considerable profiling data on the gender, age and ethnicity of its tenant population. This data can be used to assess how services are being accessed. Appendix A highlights: -

- The profile of RBC's tenant population compared to the profile of Runnymede residents.
- The profile of RBC's tenants in rent arrears compared to the tenant and resident population.

- The profile of RBC's tenants using the repairs service compared to tenants in arrears, the tenant and resident population.
- The profile of new RBC tenants since 2010 compared to the tenant and resident population.
- The profile of Runnymede housing applicants compared to the tenant and resident population.
- The profile of RBC's Independent Retirement Living tenant population.

2.2 Analysis of profiling data identifies a number of discrepancies in service usage.

1. More women live in properties owned by Runnymede Borough Council than their share of the resident population.
2. Significantly more women utilise the repairs service than men.
3. The profile of new tenants better reflects the ethnicity profile of the resident population with a lower proportion of 'White British' households taking up tenancies since 2010 than the tenant population as a whole.
4. The profile of tenants in rent arrears is out of step with the wider tenant profile. The 25-39 and 40-55 age groups are much more likely to be in rent arrears than the rest of the tenant population.
5. The profile of tenants using the repairs service diverges from the wider tenant profile. The 25-39 and 40-55 age groups are particularly much more likely to request a repair than the 18-24 age category.
6. The profile of housing applicants diverges from the wider tenant population. Particularly the 25-39 age category is significantly overrepresented on the Housing Register compared to the resident or tenant population.

2.3 Actions

1. Undertake further analysis of the data, particularly rent arrears data to understand the profile of tenants in significant rent arrears (over £1000) to establish if the age trends continue throughout the arrears levels.
2. Undertake some structured qualitative interviews with tenants intensively utilising the rents and repairs services to understand what is driving usage patterns. Under these interviews jointly with the Cost of Living Social Prescriber in Community Services this will also enable support opportunities to be identified.
3. Bring back a report to the Housing Committee in September 2023 seeking to identify further trends within the data and reporting on what is driving usage patterns. Proposals will be included within the report to seek to mitigate a greater intensity of service use by particular cohorts of tenants.

3. **Support offered to vulnerable tenants**

3.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service supports tenants in the following

circumstances: -

- Independent Retirement Living tenants
- Vulnerable 'general needs' tenants
- Households in temporary accommodation

3.2 Appendix A provides a breakdown of the profile of tenants living in Independent Retirement Living, plus a breakdown of the profile of tenants living in 'general needs' accommodation receiving support.

3.3 From 1 March 2023 the Housing Service will implement an additional module within its Housing Management IT system enabling the service to report on the impact of support services in improving the resilience of service users. Alongside this piece of work, we will consider how we are identifying tenants who would be suitable to be on the corporate Vulnerable People Register in case of a borough emergency.

3.4 An illustration of the data available from this module will be provided to a future Housing Committee meeting.

4. **Policy Framework**

4.1 The Housing Service Area Plan 2022/23 identifies the following action

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
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4.2 This report seeks to begin to understand how services are being accessed and what more can be done to support vulnerable people.

5. **Resource implications/Value for Money**

5.1 This report has no resource implications. Evidence gained from this analysis and further research will help drive future service decisions.

6. **Legal implications**

6.1 The Public sector equality duty came in to force in April 2011 (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010) and public authorities are now required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7. **Equality implications**

- 7.1 This report considers how housing landlord services are being accessed.
- 7.2 This report seeks to ensure that the housing landlord service meets its legal obligations as a landlord.

8. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 8.1 This report has no environmental implications.

9. **Timetable for Implementation**

- 9.1 A review of profiling data and service use will be conducted by the Housing Service annually.
- 9.2 The action plan set out within section 2.3 have timescales for implementation.

10. **Conclusions**

- 10.1 Discrepancies have been identified in how housing services are being accessed. Further analysis will be undertaken to look at patterns within the data to seek to explain the discrepancies. Qualitative interviews will also be conducted with households who fall into the 25-39 and 40-55 age cohorts to seek to understand why their service usage is higher than other age categories, plus why women are using the repairs service with greater intensity than men.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

None

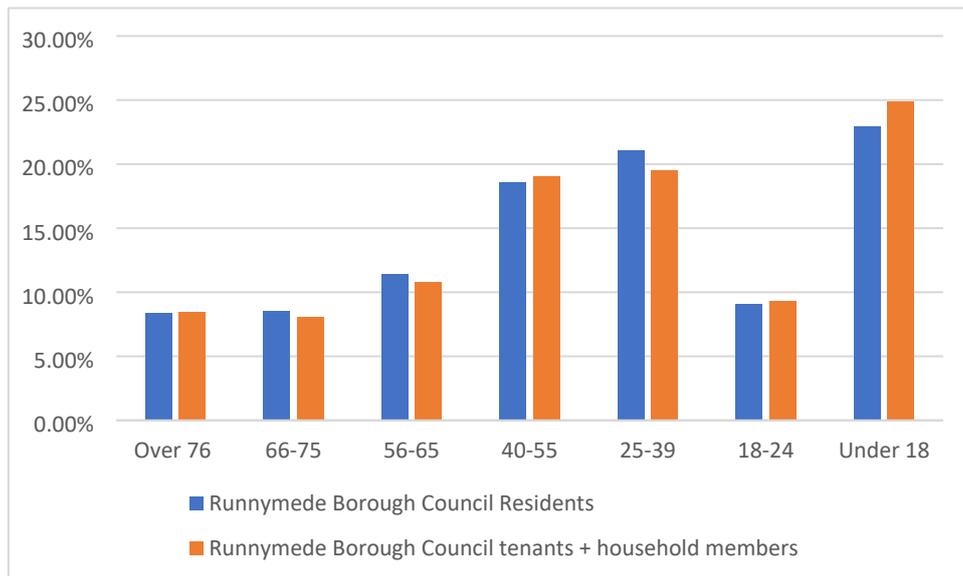
Appendix A – Profile of Residents, Tenants and Applicants

Gender

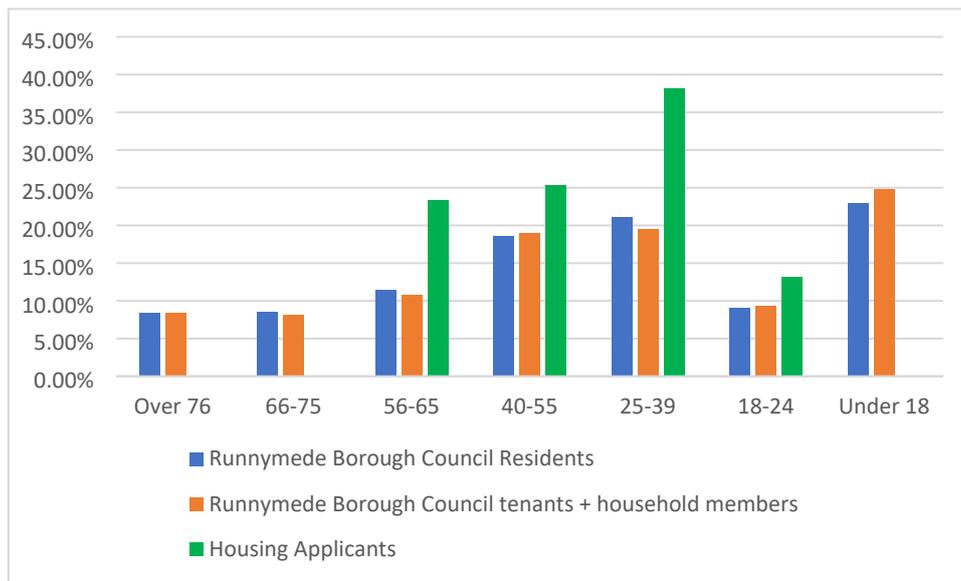


Age

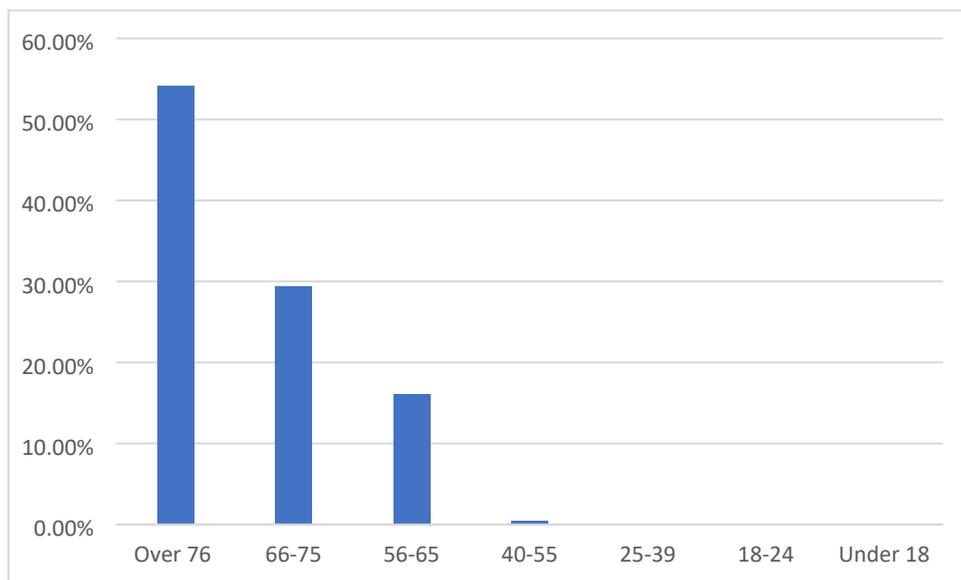
Profile of residents compared with tenants



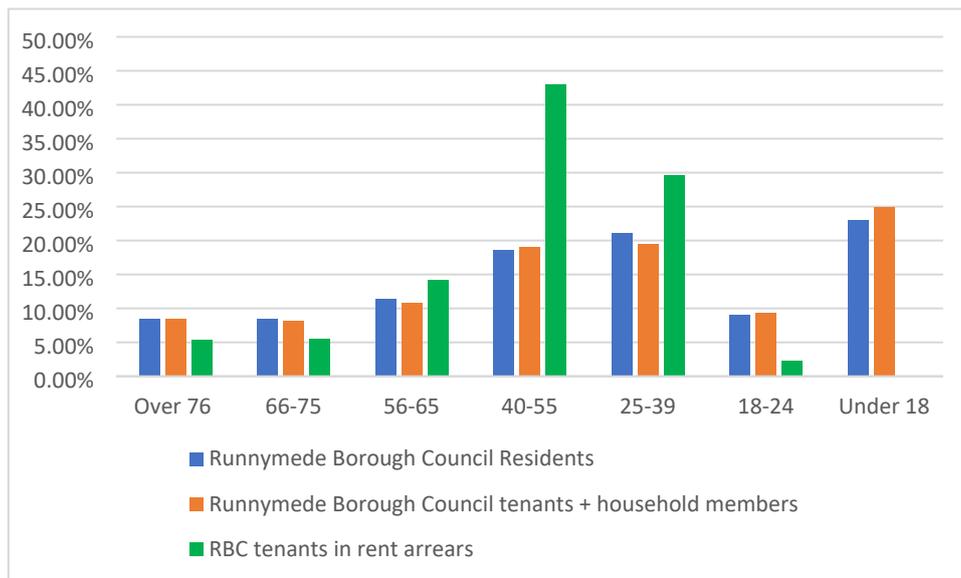
Profile of residents compared with tenants and housing applicants



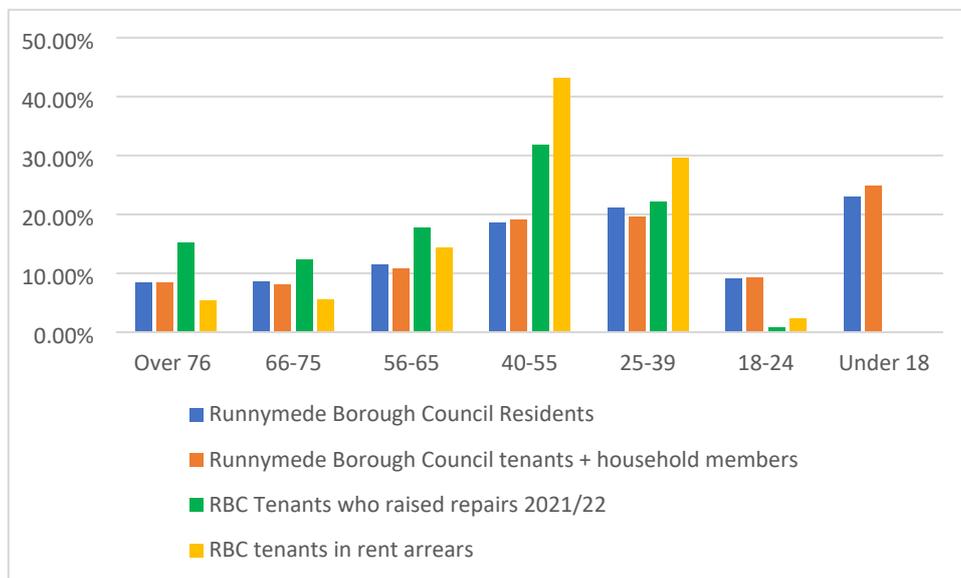
Age profile of Independent Retirement Living residents



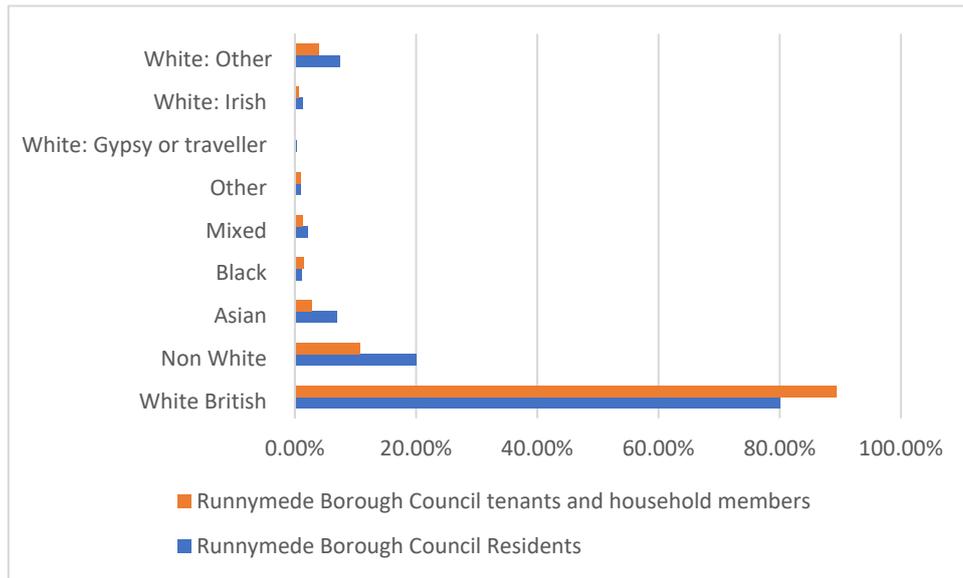
Age profile of tenants in rent arrears



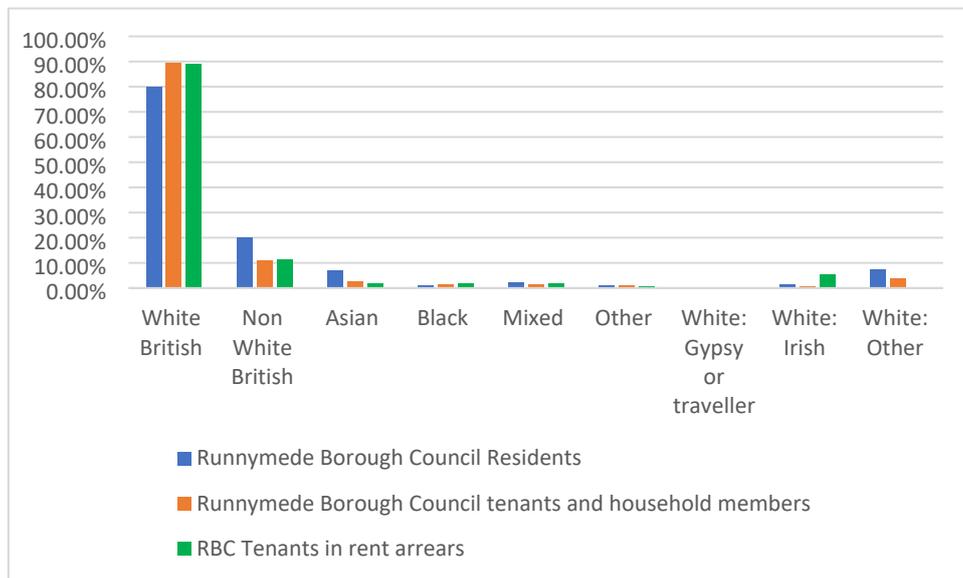
Age profile of Tenants using the Repairs Service



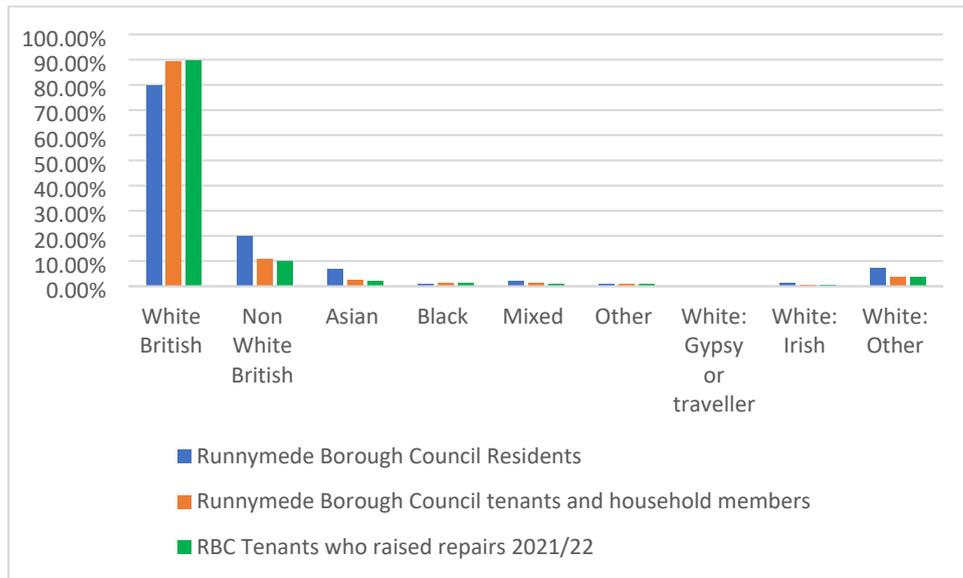
Ethnicity



Ethnicity profile of residents compared to tenant and tenants in rent arrears



Ethnicity profile of residents, tenants and tenants who have requested a repair



Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme – Homes England Audit

Synopsis of report:

Update on the successful outcome of the independent audit carried out by Homes England regarding Runnymede Borough Council's administration of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme grant funding.

Recommendation(s):

That Committee acknowledges the outcome of the report.

1 Context of report

- 1.1 In October 2021 Runnymede Borough Council was awarded £225,000 through the Homes England Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP), also known as Next Steps. The funding was provided to assist the Council in the purchase of three properties that would be specifically used to house rough sleepers.
- 1.2 3 x one-bedroom properties were purchased, one in Egham, another in Chertsey and the third in Addlestone.
- 1.3 The purchase of properties using grant provided by Homes England is subject to certain requirements as set out in the Capital Funding Guide. These include:
 - Ensuring that the grant is used for the purposes stated in the grant agreement,
 - Maintaining proper records which comply with Homes England's terms and conditions of grant,
 - Providing relevant information to Homes England in accordance with the requirements of the grant conditions.
- 1.4 Homes England will typically carry out an audit of at least one scheme/site per year for each grant recipient organisation, especially where it is the first time that a provider has received a grant.

2 Audit and outcome

- 2.1 The Housing Service were notified on 13 June 2022 that Homes England's Compliance Audit Team would be carrying out an audit of one of the properties purchased through the RSAP.
- 2.2 As is required under the agreement, independent auditors were appointed to carry out the audit and report back to Homes England. TIAA, who have completed other work for the Council, were instructed. Comprehensive documentation was provided to TIAA regarding the purchase of the property.
- 2.3 TIAA reported directly to Homes England. A copy of the report from Homes England is included at Appendix A. The Judgement Summary can be found below:

- 2.4 Breaches in meeting the programme requirements and guidance can have a negative impact on providers' ability to access future grants from Homes England.

On review of the evidence provided, the outcome of the audit has shown the provider has complied with all the programme requirements and guidance. A GREEN grade has been assigned and no breaches were identified.

3 Resource implications

- 3.1 None.

4 Legal implications

- 4.1 None.

5 Equality implications

- 5.1 None.

6 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 6.1 Although the audit did not take account of environmental factors, it was a requirement to obtain Energy Performance Certificates for each property. Two of the three have EPC ratings of D, with the third already achieving a C rating. Future works to the properties that are rated D will ensure they meet a minimum of a C rating. This may not have happened were they to remain in private ownership.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The outcome of this audit is positive and ensures future opportunities to access a valuable source of income from Homes England. This will assist the Council in meeting its strategic housing development goals.

(For information)

Background papers

Appendices
Homes England Compliance Audit Report



Compliance Audit Report – 2022/23

43UG – Runnymede Borough Council

Final Grade	Green - Meets requirements
Independent Auditor Organisation	TIAA Ltd
Independent Auditor Name	Peter Harrison

Report Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Compliance Audit report is to confirm that grant recipients have met Homes England's funding conditions and contractual requirements and have properly exercised their responsibilities as set out in the Capital Funding Guide.

We use the audit findings (which are confidential between Homes England and the grant recipient) to inform our future investment decisions and to reassure the Homes England Chief Accounting Officer that public funds have been properly used.

Where findings have been determined as breaches they are then used as the basis for recommendations and final grades for Providers. Grades of green, amber or red are awarded; definitions are provided at the end of this report. Where applicable the Provider is to use the recommendations to prevent similar breaches from reoccurring in the future and to aid good governance for complying with Homes England's policies, procedures and funding conditions.

Information about the audit process and guidance is available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/compliance-audit>

Compliance Audit Grade and Judgement Summary

Final Grade	Green - Meets requirements
Judgement Summary	On review of the evidence provided, the outcome of the audit has shown the provider has complied with all the programme requirements and guidance. A GREEN grade has been assigned and no breaches were identified.



Scheme/Completions details

Scheme ID/ Completion ID	Address/Site ID	Scheme type
1063283	[REDACTED]	Next Steps Accommodation - Capital

Audit Results

Number of Schemes/Completions Audited	1
Number of Breaches Assigned	0
Number of High Severity Breaches	0
Number of Medium Severity Breaches	0
Number of Low Severity Breaches	0

Provider's Acknowledgement of Report

The contents of this report including all recommendations must be acknowledged by your Board's Chair or equivalent. Confirmation of this acknowledgement must be recorded in the IMS Compliance Audit System by your Compliance Audit Lead no later **than three calendar months** of the report email notification being sent.

Report acknowledged by:

Date:

Confidentiality

The information contained within this report has been compiled purely to assist Homes England in its statutory duty relating to the payment of grant to the Provider. Homes England accepts no liability for the accuracy or completeness of any information contained within this report. This report is confidential between Homes England and the Provider and no third party can place any reliance upon it.

Compliance Audit Grade Definitions

Green Grade	No high or medium severity breaches identified, although there may be low
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	breaches identified. The Homes England audit report shows that the provider has a satisfactory overall performance but may identify areas where minor improvements are required.
Amber Grade	One or more medium severity breaches identified. The Homes England audit report will shows that the provider has failed to meet some requirements but has not misapplied public money. The provider will be expected to correct identified problem(s) in future schemes and current developments.
Red Grade	One or more high level severity breaches identified, the Homes England audit report shows that the provider has failed to meet some requirements and there has been a risk of misapplication of public funds.

Performance Report Q3 (Housing, Angela Horsey)

Synopsis of report:

This report provides the results of the Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures for quarter three.

Recommendation:

None. This report is for information only.

1. Context of report

- 1.1 This report informs Committee of the results of the Key Performance Indicators for the third quarter of 2022/23.
- 1.2 The Regulator of Social Housing has now finalised the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) that social landlords are required to collect. These comprise 12 Tenant Perception Measures and 10 Management Information measures. This report also includes the results of the Management Information measures.

2. Report

2.1 Table 1 Key Performance Indicators: Results for Quarter 3

	Performance Indicator	Target for Q3	Result Q1	Result Q2	Result Q3
H1 (TSM RP02 (a))	Percentage of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	90.0%	94.8%	95.8%	95.2%
(TSM RP02 (b))	Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target timescale		97.47%	97.21%	97.18%
H2	Average number of calendar days to re-let a void property (excludes major works voids).	25	68	37	43
H3	Satisfaction with the overall reactive repairs service received (% of total number of responses returned)	95.0%	95.5%	92.7%	97.5%
H4	Number of households in B&B for more than 2 weeks	4	10	16	8
H5	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	1.75%	2.36%	2.42%	2.34%
H6	Percentage of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	30%	29%	25%	24%
H7	Percentage of stock with valid annual landlord gas safety certification	100%	99.9%	99.9%	100%

H8	Percentage of stock with valid Electrical Installation Condition Report certification	100%	99.8%	99.9%	100%
H9	Number of outstanding high risk Fire Risk Assessment actions	30	34	34	34
H10	Number of reported anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 properties		5.3	8.7	10.4
TSM BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out.		84%	84%	84%
TSM BS04	Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out		100%	100%	100%
TSM BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out		100%	100%	100%
TSM CH02 (Stage 1)	Stage One complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales		91.66%	100%	88.88%
TSM CH02 (Stage 2)	Stage Two complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales		100%	100%	100%

2.2 1,530 out of 1,607 non-emergency repairs were completed with the target time. 241 out of 248 emergency repairs were completed in time.

2.3 Performance on reletting voids has stabilised. Circumstances surrounding two of the 17 properties that were re-let during quarter 3 disproportionately affected the overall result.

2.4 There are currently limited move-on options for people in bed and breakfast accommodation, all of whom have complex support needs. There are no families with children in bed and breakfast accommodation.

2.5 The rent arrears result was pleasing given the current financial climate and compares favourably with the result of 2.76% for benchmarked local authority landlords of a similar size.

3. Resource implications

3.1 No resource implications have been identified.

4. Legal implications

4.1 There are no specific legal issues associated with the matters contained in this report which provides information to Committee on the performance of the Housing Department in relation to a number of the functions it discharges.

5. Equality implications

5.1 No equality implications have been identified.

6. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity/Other implications

6.1 No environmental, sustainability, biodiversity or other implications have been identified.

7. Conclusions

7.1 This report presents the results of the Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures for quarter three.

(For information)

Background papers

None

**Update on the Housing Service’s position with the Regulator of Social Housing
(Housing, Andy Vincent)**

Synopsis of report:

A notice was served by the Regulatory of Social Housing in October 2019 on Runnymede Borough Council’s Housing Service for non-compliance with the Home Regulatory Standard.

A review was conducted of the Regulatory Notice in March 2022. This review recognised the progress that had been made to address concerns in relation to electrical and fire safety – although indicated that further progress was required in meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

A further review was requested in November 2022. The Regulator has concluded the review, accepting that Runnymede Borough Council’s Housing Service is now compliant with the Home Standard and removed the notice.

Recommendation(s):

- i. Members celebrate the removal of Runnymede Borough Council’s Regulatory Notice and thank those involved for achieving this outcome.**

1. Context and background of report

1.1 Runnymede Borough Council was sent a Regulatory Notice from the Regulator of Social Housing in October 2019 identifying the following areas of concern: -

- a) Runnymede Borough Council has breached the Home Standard;
- b) As a consequence of this breach, there was the potential for serious detriment to Runnymede Borough Council tenants.

The concerns specifically related to: -

- 1 Periodic electrical testing
- 2 Management of Fire Risk Assessment recommendations
- 3 Insufficient recent data on our housing stock to confirm that all properties comply with the [Decent Homes Standard](#)

1.2 A review of Runnymede Borough Council’s Regulatory Notice was conducted in March 2022. This review recognised the improvements the council had made in addressing fire safety actions and electrical safety performance, but also noted the improvements required to the percentage of the Council’s homes reaching the Decent Homes Standard.

1.3 A further review of the notice was requested by Runnymede Borough Council in November 2022. The Regulator has agreed that Runnymede Borough Council has met the requirements of the Home Standard and as a result the notice has been withdrawn.

- 1.4 The following extract was taken from the letter from the Regulator of Social Housing to Runnymede Borough Council.

“We will now move to remove the regulatory notice which set out the Council’s previous breach of the consumer standards. To confirm this is scheduled for Wednesday 25th January 2023.

In the meantime, I wanted to record my sincere thanks to the Council for the positive and constructive engagement we have had throughout the period of our engagement and for their transparency and openness as this case has progressed.”

2. Communication to members

- 2.1 The news of the withdrawal of the Regulator Notice was sent to all Councillors by the Chair of this committee on 22 January 2023.

3. Policy Framework

- 3.1 Runnymede Borough Council’s Housing Service has a strategy suite and annual improvement plan (service area plan) which ensures continuous improvement.
- 3.2 Progress in delivering the strategies and service area plan is regularly reported to the Council’s Housing Committee.
- 3.3 Runnymede Borough Council’s Housing Compliance Performance indicators are reported to the Housing Committee four times per year (at the end of each quarter) and set stretching targets for improvements in service delivery.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 Resources are in place in place to maintain compliance performance and to deliver 100% Decent Homes Standard performance.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Regulator of Social Housing is an independent body, responsible for setting standards that all registered providers of social housing must meet and holding landlords to account for compliance with these standards. The Regulator considers whether landlords are meeting the standards at an organisational, or systemic, level. This means looking at the landlord’s performance in the round and making sure they have the appropriate systems and processes in place to meet the standards. The Regulator’s standards cover both economic issues (such as governance and financial viability) and consumer issues (such as ensuring homes are decent and safe, that complaints are managed effectively and that tenants are listened to and provided with opportunities to engage).
- 5.2 Providers of social housing are required to comply with various pieces of legislation regarding gas, electrical and fire safety.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 Equality implications are considered when undertaking Decent Homes work.
- 6.2 Refusals are monitored and followed up to promote uptake.

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

- 7.1 A significant proportion of the work be undertaken to achieve the Decent Homes Standard will improve the energy performance of our homes.
- 7.2 This will both reduce carbon emissions and help address fuel poverty – addressing two key objectives of the Housing Service.

8. **Conclusions**

- 8.1 Removing the Regulatory Notice is a key public milestone in the improvement of Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service.
- 8.2 Further improvements are required to achieve the service vision of providing "*quality, empathetic and compassionate housing services.*"

(To resolve)

Background papers

Link to the removal of the notice on the Regulator of Social Housing's website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-judgement-runnymede-borough-council/regulatory-notice-runnymede-borough-council-30-october-2019>

Paper to January Housing Committee setting out the progress made in achieving the Home Standard - [DRAFT AGENDA REPORT COVER SHEET \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#)

Link to the definition of the Home Standard [Home Standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Parkside Regeneration Update (Housing, Mark Bawden)

Synopsis of report:

1. Update regarding the procurement of consultants for the Parkside Regeneration project.
2. A high-level explanation of the current construction cost estimates.
3. Update regarding the Communications Plan and actions taken.

Recommendation(s):

None. This report is for information only.

1 Context of report

- 1.1 On 18 October 2022 Housing Committee resolved to recommend that Full Council approve the budget to appoint consultants to progress the Parkside Regeneration project through RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stages 1 to the completion of stage 3. On 20th October 2022 Full Council approved the budget.
- 1.2 The full detail of the RIBA stages is set out in the RIBA Plan of Work 2020 (a copy of which has previously been provided to Committee). In summary the RIBA stages are.
 - Stage 0: Strategic Definition
 - Stage 1: Preparation and Brief
 - Stage 2: Concept Design
 - Stage 3: Developed Design
 - Stage 4: Technical Design
 - Stage 5: Construction
 - Stage 6: Handover and Close Out
 - Stage 7: In use
- 1.3 At the completion of RIBA stage 3 it is anticipated that Planning Permission will be achieved and then following that the Council will seek a development partner for the technical design and construction phases.
- 1.4 This report updates Committee on the progress of the project since the last update at Housing Committee held on 11 January 2023.

2 Procurement

- 2.1 The Housing Service, along with colleagues from Corporate Procurement, have worked with STAR, a procurement consultancy. STAR have helped to develop a tender specification and have advised regarding the potential costs of employing a multi-discipline building construction consultancy (MDBCC) to work through the RIBA stages 1, to the completion of stage 3. A mini competition was held through the Crown Commercial Services procurement framework for construction professional services, a Public Contract Regulations 2015 compliant framework.
- 2.2 The MDBCC will provide the following services:

- Procure the required surveys and reports on behalf of the Council,
- Advise the Council regarding the results and procuring further surveys and reports as appropriate,
- Provide advice regarding sustainability and Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) elements of the scheme with a focus on carbon reduction,
- Act as Lead Consultant,
- Act as Principal Designer as well as providing Health and Safety advice in relation to The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015,
- Provide cost advice, financial planning, and viability assessments,
- Architectural services (built form, landscaping and place making),
- Arranging and supporting consultation with the public and stakeholders.
- Preparing and submitting the planning application(s).

2.3 At the time of writing, the assessment of the bids received from the MDBCCs is still underway. It is envisaged that the appointment of the consultancy will have been achieved by the date of the Committee and therefore a verbal update on the process will be provided then.

3 Construction Cost Estimates

- 3.1 The cost of the MDBCC services are charged as a percentage of the total cost of construction. As has been widely reported, construction fees (labour and materials) have gone up significantly in recent years. For this reason and because it is not yet clear what will be possible on the various sites, it is not currently possible to predict with certainty what the cost of any scheme will be.
- 3.2 A more detailed cost analysis will not be available until the site has been fully assessed and outline plans for the new homes established. The intended aims are ambitious, and the site is constrained by the flood risk, electricity pylons and other issues such as working around the existing road network and increasing occupation density with a scheme that is still in keeping with its surroundings. Whilst efforts will be made from the earliest stages to mitigate the risks/issues, delivery of the total cost of the regeneration may exceed the current estimates.
- 3.3 The current construction cost estimates are high level and are intended to inform members and help to predict the potential cost of the MDBCC. Example illustrative cost breakdowns are included in Appendix 1. At this stage of the project the cost of building the new homes is estimated on a £ per m² basis. This is a common practice pre-feasibility stage for a project of this size, before further information is available regarding the specific circumstances of the site.
- 3.4 The three example illustrations in Appendix A are explained below. It should be noted that these are provided to evidence the potential influence certain elements will have on the cost of the project and figures will be subject to change following further investigations by the Council's appointed specialists. These illustrations do not represent options that are put before the Committee at this time but should be viewed as early estimates of possible considerations that will be put forward in the future.

Illustration 1. Total construction costs £130m

- Includes a modest build cost of £4,000 per m².
- The average size of the homes at 70m² would include a larger number of smaller properties and fewer large family homes/ houses for people with physical disabilities.
- This illustration omits the option to remove the overhead powerline and pylons.

- An alternative to the Ground Source Heat Pump is also included, which might be cheaper but would increase the carbon footprint of the development over its lifetime.
- A modest allowance for flood mitigation is included.
- Demolition is set at £5,000 per property.
- An allowance for Biodiversity Net Gain and improvements to the park is set at a low level.
- Works to the protect and/or improve the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area are set within a budget of £500,000.
- In this scenario the community building is not included.

Illustration 2. Total construction costs £175m

- Includes a build cost of £4,100 per m².
- The average size of the homes at 75m² would allow for a greater number of family homes/ houses for people with physical disabilities when compared to Illustration 1.
- The cost of the removal the overhead powerline and pylons is included, set at the rate UKPN have indicated.
- An estimate of the potential cost of the Ground Source Heat Pump is included although it should be noted that this system could provide an income.
- The allowance for flood mitigation is increased as it is known much of the regeneration area is within a flood zone 3a.
- Demolition is set at £7,500 per property.
- The allowance for Biodiversity Net Gain and improvements to the park is increased from Illustration 1.
- The estimated costs of works to the protect and/or improve the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area are increased.
- A modest budget for a community building is included.

Illustration 3. Total construction costs £200m

- Includes a slightly higher build cost of £4,200 per m² but with an increase in the number of new homes to 500.
- The average size of the homes at 75m² would allow for a greater number of family homes/ houses for people with physical disabilities when compared to Scenario 1.
- The cost of the removal the overhead powerline and pylons is included, with an uplift to allow for inflation.
- An estimate of the potential cost of the Ground Source Heat Pump is included although it should be noted that this system could provide an income.
- The allowance for flood mitigation is increased further as it is unknown what will be required to address the flood risk.
- Demolition is set at £10,000 per property, an increased allowance that allows for hazardous materials and ecology.
- The allowance for Biodiversity Net Gain and improvements to the park is increased from Scenario 1 but set at the same level as scenario 2.
- The estimated costs of works to the protect and/or improve the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area are increased again.
- The budget for a community building is increased, although at this stage no firm specification for this building has been agreed.

3.5 When RIBA stage 1 has been completed the results of the MDBCC's stage report will be presented to Housing Committee. This will include information regarding what will be possible and therefore how much the regeneration project could cost.

4 Communications Plan

- 4.1 Involving the community in the Parkside Regeneration project is accepted to be key to its success. It is acknowledged that the regeneration will have a greater effect on some people more than others.
- 4.2 Although at this early stage many questions regarding the regeneration are yet to be answered, residents of the area have been informed that the regeneration is being explored.
- 4.3 The first of the quarterly Parkside Newsletters has now been sent to those people that asked to receive them. In total 120 newsletters were sent out via e-mail (71) and post (49). The next Newsletter will be sent in May.

5 Resource implications

- 5.1 None. This report is for information purposes only.

6 Legal implications

- 6.1 The procurement utilises the Crown Commercial Services RM6165 Construction Professional Services framework which has been set-up in accordance with the Public Contract Regulation 2015 (PCR 2015). Any call-off contract as a result of the further competition is compliant with the PCR 2015.
- 6.2 Legal Services have assisted in the procurement process and the drafting of the consultant appointment contract.
- 6.3 Legal Services are assisting Housing in the procurement of external legal advice on the areas listed below.
- Due Diligence
 - Land Assembly
 - Planning
 - Compulsory Purchase Orders (if required)
 - Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Energy Generation and Management
 - Construction and Procurement

7 Equality implications

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed prior to engagement with the public.

8 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 8.1 Policy EE9 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan sets out when biodiversity net gains are required.
- 8.2 A balance would need to be sought between the cost of construction and the energy performance of any new development.
- 8.3 It is intended that the development would replace poor housing stock with modern, fit for purpose homes.

- 8.4 A large part of Site B (Parkside) is within a flood zone 3a (high probability of flooding). Specialist flood consultants will assess the regeneration area to mitigate flood risks.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 The regeneration of the Parkside area of New Haw is progressing in line with expectations.

(For information)

Background papers

Appendices

Early High-Level Construction Cost Estimates

Appendix A
Parkside Regeneration
Early High-Level Construction Cost Estimates

Illustration 1 - £130m

Residential Construction Costs				
Number of New Homes	Average Size (sqm)	Average £/sqm	Cost per unit	Total
450	70	£ 4,000	£ 280,000	£ 126,000,000

Additional Costs	
Removal of Pylons	£ -
Ground Source Heat Pump	£ -
Flood Mitigation	£ 1,000,000
Demolition	£ 1,250,000
Allowance for BNG/ Park	£ 1,000,000
Allowance for Canal	£ 500,000
Total	£ 3,750,000

Community Building	£ -
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Total Construction	
Total	£ 129,750,000
Cost per unit	£ 288,333

Appendix A
Parkside Regeneration
Early High-Level Construction Cost Estimates

Illustration 2 - £175m

Residential Construction Costs				
Number of New Homes	Average Size (sqm)	Average £/sqm	Cost per unit	Total
450	75	£ 4,100	£ 307,500	£ 138,375,000

Additional Costs	
Removal of Pylons	£ 7,900,000
Ground Source Heat Pump	£ 9,000,000
Flood Mitigation	£ 7,500,000
Demolition	£ 1,875,000
Allowance for BNG/ Park	£ 5,000,000
Allowance for Canal	£ 1,000,000
Total	£ 32,275,000

Community Building	£ 3,500,000
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Total Construction	
Total	£ 174,150,000
Cost per unit	£ 387,000

Appendix A
Parkside Regeneration
Early High-Level Construction Cost Estimates

Illustration 3 - £200m

Residential Construction Costs				
Number of New Homes	Average Size (sqm)	Average £/sqm	Cost per unit	Total
500	75	£ 4,200	£ 315,000	£ 157,500,000

Additional Costs	
Removal of Pylons	£ 8,500,000
Ground Source Heat Pump	£ 9,000,000
Flood Mitigation	£ 10,000,000
Demolition	£ 2,500,000
Allowance for BNG/ Park	£ 5,000,000
Allowance for Canal	£ 3,000,000
Total	£ 38,000,000

Community Building	£ 5,000,000
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Total Construction	
Total	£ 200,500,000
Cost per unit	£ 401,000

**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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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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