



Housing Committee

Wednesday, 7 June 2023 at 7.30 pm

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

Members of the Committee

Councillors: M Nuti (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), M K Cressey, M Darby, S Dennett, R King, I Mullens, N Prescott, M Smith and S Williams

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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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 be commercially sensitive and put the council at a commercial disadvantage

Runnymede Borough CouncilHousing CommitteeWednesday, 8 March 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J Gracey (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), M Cressey, S Dennett, C Howorth (In place of D Coen), R King (In place of R Davies), P Snow, S Whyte and S Williams.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors D Coen, M Darby and R Davies.

563 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2023 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

564 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr M Darby.

565 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

566 Damp & Mould Consultation Response Update

The Corporate Head of Environmental Services advised that the response to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) covered three main aspects:

- 1) Hazards, as outlined in the health & safety rating system
- 2) Assessment of damp and mould issues affecting properties privately rented in the borough
- 3) Assessment of any actions identified relating to damp and mould.

Very few premises within the borough had issues based on the criteria set out, however issues had been identified relating to excess cold rather than repair, which had not been drawn out within the assessment.

There was acknowledgment that the Council was generally only in a position to be reactive to complaints against private sector landlords rather than proactive. Whilst Committee was reassured that measures were in place to protect Housing Association residents, it was felt there was currently a gap in protection when it came to the private rented sector, with private landlords not yet subject to Decent Homes standard.

The Corporate Head of Environmental Services added that Councils did not have sufficient capacity or resources to routinely inspect private properties, but would check on the legal framework around the Council's powers to take action in the event of a third party raising concerns, whilst attention would be given to making sure residents were aware of their rights and how to complain about sub-standard living accommodation.

567 Review of HRA Business Plan

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning reported that following approval of the budget estimates for 2023/24, the business plan provided the narrative which accompanied the financial plan.

The plan would be updated annually to reflect the current position and a full review of the HRA Business plan was scheduled for 2026.

A Member was keen to clarify the number of additional units the Housing Service intended to provide by 2026, stating that 125 should be the net figure. The Committee Chair pledged to consider the language used, but did not favour putting uncostered measures into the plan.

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning clarified the figure of 145 additional Council homes, stating that this was an assessment by planners as part of the 2030 Local Plan.

The Committee Vice Chair stated his support for the plan, adding that it encompassed the current legal requirements and provided an emphasis on good quality, safe homes and the importance of engaging with tenants.

The Corporate Head of Housing concluded that the HRA Business Plan would continue to be reviewed annually and would be updated to reflect additional cost pressures and additional expenditure. Whilst there was a legal requirement to prepare the document, it also demonstrated sensible financial management.

Resolved that –

Committee approved the 30-year business plan

568 **Options Appraisal for IRL Heating Systems**

The Corporate Head of Housing explained that the communal heating systems at two of the Council's Independent Retirement Living (IRL) properties were at the end of their life, and provided three options for their replacement.

- 1) A like-for-like replacement of gas communal boiler replacing gas communal boiler
- 2) Gas boiler to be replaced by an air source heat pump
- 3) Gas boiler to be replaced by a ground source heat pump

Options two or three would significantly reduce carbon emissions and assist in moving the Council towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, however the increased electricity use of these options would increase residents' fuel bills, despite residents being individually metered and having more control over usage.

A long debate of the options ensued, and whilst many Committee members initially favoured one of the heat pump options, a number of factors complicated the matter.

The IRL at Heatherfields sits within the proposed Parkside regeneration area, and officers explained whilst it would be technically possible to move a heat pump into a different location should the building be demolished as part of the regeneration, it was unlikely that anyone would be prepared to carry out the work due to invalidating the warranty.

Furthermore, heat pumps are designed for the buildings they serve and were highly unlikely to be effective in a different building, particularly with considerable additional measures required to make it efficient, which would be expensive and disruptive to residents. Officers acknowledged the difficult balance between energy efficiency, use of taxpayers' money and the need to be energy efficient, and believed there would be other

measures that could be taken – such as the investment in solar panels and insulation – that would provide a greater environmental gain.

Officers emphasised the urgency of the work required, with the boilers already past their sell by date and replacement parts increasingly difficult to obtain. It was added that replacement gas boilers would be a significant upgrade on the existing boilers, with SMART systems in place to make them more efficient.

The Corporate Head of Housing confirmed that budget was in place within the Asset Management Plan to replace gas boilers like-for-like, and whilst it was aimed to bring all properties in the borough to an energy C rating by 2026 – four years ahead of target – there were currently no plans or available funding to take properties beyond a C rating.

The Committee Chair confirmed that enquiries had been made about having gas boilers with interchangeable parts to enable a future move to a hydrogen supply, however this technology was still around a decade away.

Committee concluded that they had sufficient information to make a decision on Heatherfield IRL, but asked officers for more information before making a decision on Floral House IRL, which would be heard at a Special Committee. Officers confirmed that delaying the decision by around a month would not have a significant impact on the overall timescale.

Committee asked officers to provide information in a future report for Floral House of the considerations when taking a fabric first approach, including cost, heat efficiency, level of work and disruption, as well as an assessment of other measures that could be used as part of carbon offsetting.

A Member also asked for information on an electric option similar to the solution at Grove Court to be provided within the options.

The Committee Chair asked officers to arrange a retrofit assessment on Floral House. Whilst officers were sceptical that the assessment would prove viable for heat pumps, and the cost of such an assessment was unknown, it was confirmed that the lessons learned from such an exercise could be utilised at future locations.

A named vote was requested on each of the proposed recommendations, and the voting was as follows:

Recommendation 1:

Due to the potential redevelopment of the area and limited lifespan of alternative solutions, Committee resolved to proceed with a gas boiler replacement for Heatherfields IRL.

For (8)

Cllrs J. Gracey, J. Hulley, S. Dennett, C. Howorth, R. King, P. Snow, S. Whyte, S. Williams

Against (0)

-

Abstain (1)

Cllr M. Cressey

The recommendation was passed.

Recommendation 2:

Officers to bring back comparisons for other environmental efficiency measures and

further information on the potential impact on cost for heating options for Floral House IRL.

For (7)

Cllrs J. Gracey, S. Dennett, C. Howorth, R. King, P. Snow, S. Whyte, S. Williams

Against (1)

Cllr J. Hulley

Abstain (1)

Cllr M. Cressey

Cllr J. Hulley wished for it to be recorded that he voted against the recommendation as he did not wish to consider an option that would result in increased fuel bills for residents.

The recommendation was passed.

569 Support with Moving Policy

Following a recent public consultation, the Head of Housing Services & Business Planning presented the final policy for approval and implementation.

The policy aimed to create more movement within the social housing stock to reduce the level of under-occupation and make more family size and adapted properties available to current applicants.

To achieve this, tenants would be able to access support with a move to a smaller property, which included a payment to reflect the number of bedrooms given up, practical support with arranging a move and settling into a new property, and dependent on a means test, additional financial support with the cost of moving and setting up a new home.

Whilst the response to the consultation was limited, targeted phone calls were made to tenants who might access the scheme, and some of their comments and overall points were reflected in the revised policy.

Resolved that –

Committee approved the Support with Moving Policy

570 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The Corporate Head of Housing reminded Committee that from April 2023 social landlords must provide the outcome of a series of tenant satisfaction measures to central government.

There is a prescribed methodology for capturing the tenant satisfaction measures data. Following an initial survey in October 2022 a company would be carrying out a survey on the Council's behalf, the results of which would be reported to a future Committee.

A satisfaction action plan had been devised, which would be closely monitored to establish the impact of this on tenant satisfaction. It was added that improved engagement was likely to lead to increased satisfaction.

A Member queried the relatively high number of responses expected by government. The Corporate Head of Housing advised this was to make the survey valid and representative, and if necessary multiple attempts would be made to conduct the survey to ensure an appropriate level of response was received.

Resolved that –

Committee noted the plans for undertaking the next Tenants' Satisfaction survey, as required by the Regulator of Social Housing.

571 Discontinuation of Runnymede Borough Council's Interaction with the RCRA

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning advised Committee that since 2005 the Runnymede Council Residents Association (RCRA) had been the formal body representing tenants, however in recent times there had not been sufficient engagement to hold meetings, reflecting a national decrease in traditional forms of tenant participation, particularly face-to-face meetings.

Therefore from April 2023 the RCRA would no longer be recognised by Runnymede Borough Council. Instead the Council would focus on other forms of resident engagement, including surveys to collect data on the 22 new Tenant Satisfaction Measures that the Regulator of Social Housing now required social landlords to collect.

The Committee expressed its thanks for the contribution that Mrs Hill has made as Chair of the RCRA since its inception, and this was recognised at the recent Civic Awards where she was given a special award for 'Services to Council Tenants'.

572 Update on Mobilisation of Repairs and Empty Property Contractor

Following Committee's approval of the appointment of MCP to deliver a comprehensive and digital day-to-day repairs and empty property delivery contract, the Head of Housing Technical Services confirmed that regular progress meetings were continuing and everything was on track for the start of the contract in April 2023.

The IT interface would be up and running by the time the contract started, and it was hoped for the transfer to be as seamless as possible for customers. To aid this a series of customer events would be taking place over the coming weeks.

It was hoped that the ability to book repairs online and request a specific time and date would hugely benefit residents. It was confirmed that one of the tendering requirements was the ability to access this service through a smartphone.

573 Tenancy Agreement Review

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning reported that the Council last reviewed its Tenancy Agreement for its social housing stock in 2013, with some elements in significant need of review.

An out-of-date agreement would leave the Council open to legal challenges, and an urgent refresh would commence in March 2023 with a target to seek approval to implement the new agreement in March or June 2024.

External specialist legal advice would be required and budgetary provision had already been approved by Committee.

The Committee Vice Chair highlighted the importance of looking at some of the clauses within the agreement, particularly around access both for repairs and assessing living conditions.

Resolved that –

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

574 Annual Housing Equality Review

The Corporate Head of Housing reported that the Housing Service were committed to carrying out an annual review of how its service were accessed by residents, and would continually evolve.

Further research would be undertaken to understand why some age groups access services more than others, and the results of this analysis would be presented to a future committee, along with options for interventions.

A Member commented that it would be useful to closely monitor any change in the data when reporting was moved online.

Resolved that –

Committee noted the actions identified for addressing the discrepancies in the tenant profiling information.

575 Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme - Homes England Audit

The Housing Development Manager reported that following a Homes England grant in October 2021 the Council purchased three properties in the borough to be used specifically to house rough sleepers.

Following an audit by Homes England, it was found that the Council had complied fully with all programme requirements and guidance. This outcome could also potentially remove a small barrier when applying for future grants through Homes England.

A Committee member highlighted a recent local press article which stated that Runnymede was the only Council in Surrey to record an annual reduction in rough sleeping.

Resolved that –

Committee acknowledged the outcome of the report.

576 Performance Report, Q3

The Regulator of Social Housing had now finalised the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures that social landlords were required to collect. These comprised 12 Tenant Perception Measures and 10 Management Information measures, and would make it clear which measures were being reported to the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Head of Housing Services & Business Planning reported that the performance of rent arrears continued to be outside of target, however the approach remained one of containment with the emphasis on sustainment and support rather than proceeding with legal measures.

The Head of Housing Technical Services confirmed to a Member that the outstanding fire risk assessment actions had remained unchanged for some nine months, however they all related to fire door inspections and were being worked through by a consultant. All remaining actions were expected to be completed by the end of March 2023.

577 Update on the Housing Service's position with the Regulator of Social Housing

Following a request in November 2022 to remove the Notice placed on the Council some three years before, the Corporate Head of Housing advised that the Regulator of Social Housing had now accepted that the issues within the Notice had been addressed, with electrical safety compliance now at 100% and Decent Homes Standard beyond 75%.

A number of positive audits had also been received, as well as external validation via ISO9001. The Regulator had therefore agreed to withdraw the Notice.

The Corporate Head of Housing added that officers remained committed to further improve the service, but the removal of the Notice was a significant step in delivering the housing service's aims of a quality, empathetic and compassionate service.

The Committee passed on their thanks to the entire Housing team for the work in turning the service around, particularly coupled with delivering so many other services and policies during that time whilst having to contend with the backdrop of a pandemic.

Whilst grateful for the work of officers, Cllr King and two other Members opted to abstain from voting on the recommendation due to the word "celebrate" – instead stating that should be reserved for 2025 when 100% Decent Homes Standard compliance was targeted to be achieved.

Resolved that –

Committee celebrated the removal of Runnymede Borough Council's Regulatory Notice and thanked those involved for achieving this outcome.

578 Parkside Regeneration Update

The Housing Development Manager advised that since Committee approval of progression of RIBA stages 1-3 lots of work had gone into establishing a clear and transparent contract, with the price broken down into stages with clear decision gateways.

Assessment of bids for a multi-discipline building construction consultancy to work through RIBA stage 1, to the completion of stage 3 was currently under consideration. Greater detail of the overall project would be known after the completion of RIBA stage 1, which was targeted for autumn 2023.

Keeping residents up to date was a key part of the project, and the first newsletter had recently been published. The Housing Development Manager concluded that the project was currently progressing in line with expectations.

The Committee Chair and ward member highlighted an issue that had arisen locally around the language used as part of the resident update, and the Committee were supportive of reassuring residents in the next newsletter that it was the intent of the Council that no existing community groups would be displaced as a result of the project, with community buildings built around the need of tenants.

579 Exclusion of press and public

By resolution of the Committee, for the reasons set out in the agenda, the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting during the consideration of the remaining matters under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as set out in Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

580 Review of External Façade of Specific Housing Properties

The Head of Housing Technical Services advised that following an invasive survey to the façade of several buildings in the borough defects had been discovered on the original construction design.

It was proposed that the original façade was replaced, and officers proposed foregoing any section 20 consultation with leaseholders as the Council intended to fully fund the works. Specification for the works and draft tender documents were currently awaiting input from the Council's legal team.

Officers pledged to keep ward councillors up to date with works, and a communications plan would be devised to keep residents informed.

Resolved that –

- 1. Committee approved for Housing Technical Services to go out to tender for a suitable contractor to undertake the works set out in the report.**
- 2. Upon tender completion, officers to report back to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Housing Committee for approval to appoint the successful contractor.**
- 3. Committee approved forgoing the section 20 consultation with leaseholders due to the nature of the works and original construction designs.**

581 Appointment of Contractor to Deliver Windows and Doors Replacement

The Head of Housing Technical Services reported that following a thorough assessment of a tendering exercise for door and window replacement programme, a decision notice was proposed for the winning contractor, who would commence this summer for a five-year programme that was fully budgeted for.

It was added that the programme would replace a significant amount of the stock by the time the contract concluded, and obtaining the raw materials for such a large job was generally prohibitive for smaller companies.

The Council would continue to follow a fabric first approach and continue to invest in all properties to achieve Decent Homes standard. However the project would align closely with other projects such as Parkside regeneration to ensure the full picture was taken into account when carrying out the work to avoid replacing stock that was in line to be demolished.

The Head of Housing Technical Services confirmed to a Member that the Council would monitor closely to ensure that windows were correctly installed and insulated, and the contractor had confirmed that the same standard window profile would be applied for the life of the contract.

Resolved that –

- Committee approved the appointment of the chosen contractor to deliver a windows and door replacement programme over the next five years to the value set out in the report.**

Options Appraisal of heating options at Floral House Independent Retirement Living accommodation – Andy Vincent, Corporate Head of Housing

Synopsis of report:

This report considers the business case for the installation of different types of communal heating systems in Floral House Retirement Living accommodation.

The current heating system is at the end of its expected life.

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

The report sets out fabric first measures which can also be installed to reduce emissions from the scheme and reduce energy bills.

Recommendation(s):

- i. that a new gas boiler and additional fabric measures are installed in Floral House to reduce emissions from the scheme and reduce resident's fuel bills.**

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Runnymede Borough Council manages 5 Independent Retirement Living Schemes: -
 1. Bemonds
 2. Darley Dean
 3. Floral House
 4. Grove Court
 5. Heatherfields
- 1.2 At Floral House the communal gas boiler is at 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 produces 76.7 tons of emissions 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 Four different heating options are considered within this report to heat the flats and communal spaces in Floral House.

2.2 They are: -

1. Communal gas boilers
2. Communal air source heat pumps
3. Communal group source heat pumps
4. Electric space heaters

2.3 Table 1 provides a summary of the appraisal of each option. This appraisal is based on installation of the various heating systems without any additional energy efficiency measures to the scheme and utilizing the existing pipe and radiators in the flats and communal areas.

	Current Gas Boiler at approximately 70% efficiency	Gas Boiler – at 90-95% efficiency	Air Source Heat Pump	Ground Source Heat Pump	Electric Storage Heaters (including removal of existing pipework and boiler)
Installation cost	-	£100,000 (£4,000 per year based on 25-year life expectancy)	£250,000 (£16,667 per year based on 15-year life expectancy)	£425,000 (or £21,250 per year based on 20-year life expectancy)	£240,000 (£9,600 per year based on 25-year life expectancy)
Emissions from individual flats (annually)	Floral House 1.3 tons per property – total for the scheme = 76.7 tons	Approximately 54.8 tons at 90% efficiency 49.3 tons at 95% efficiency	Approximately 0.5 tons per property – total for the scheme = 29.5 tons	Approximately 0.4 tons per property – total for the scheme = 23.6 tons	100% efficiency
Heating costs for tenants and Runnymede Borough Council for communal areas	10.33p per kwh for gas 70% efficiency 13.43p per kwh	10.33p per kwh for gas 90-95% efficient 10.84p per kwh	50.54p per kwh for electricity 300% efficient 16.87p per kwh	50.54p per kwh for electricity 400% efficient 12.64p per kwh	34p per kwh overnight for electricity 100% efficient 34p per kwh

Life expectancy of system		20-25 years	10-15 years	20 years	25 years
Maintenance costs			Increased from current system	Increased from current system	Less than 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
- Electric storage heaters £9,600 per year

This can be broken down per property per year for each scheme.

Gas Systems

£67.79 for Floral House

Air Source Heat Pump

£564.97 for Floral House

Ground Source Heat Pump

£720.34 for Floral House

Electric Storage Heaters

£162.17 for Floral House

3.2 The potential for heating costs for the various heating options is considered below (if these costs change relative to each other than this equation will change).

10.33p per kwh for gas. 50.54p per kwh of electricity. 34p for kwh of electricity overnight

The current gas system is 25 years old and is estimated to be 70% efficiency. A new gas system is 90-95% efficient, each hour of heating would therefore cost 10.84p. The air source heat pump is 300% efficient so each kwh of electricity generates 3 hours of heating or 16.87p per hour. The ground source heat pump is 400% efficient so each kwh of electricity generates 4 hours of heating or 12.64p per hour. The electric storage heaters are 100% efficient and are using electricity at 34p per hour overnight.

The major benefit achieved by the transition to an air source or ground source heating system is the carbon reduction achieved.

The air source pump uses a third of the power of a gas system and a ground source heat pump a quarter.

This equates to 16.43 tons of carbon per year for an air source system and 12.3 for a ground source system being produced should they be installed in the two Independent Retirement Living schemes a reduction from 76.7 tons from a traditional gas heating system.

- 3.3 However, the costs of installation of the air and ground source heat pumps (particularly the ground source heat pump) are significant. The installation of the electric storage heaters are equally as high as the Air Source Heat Pump and with the highest anticipated heating bills of any of the 4 systems.
- 3.4 Whilst this increase in heating costs for tenants is significant for any alternatives to a gas boiler based on current prices, on 30th March, the Government published its Powering Up Britain report (see background documents). This reconfirms that the Government has an ambition to phase out all new and replacement natural gas boilers by 2035 at the latest and will further consider the recommendation from the Independent Review of Net Zero in relation to this. This document contains the expectation that in the future, 'People's homes will be heated by British electricity, not imported gas'. The Powering Up Britain Report is also clear that, 'Established technologies, such as offshore wind turbines, need to be deployed at pace to meet our ambitions for decarbonising power and delivering wholesale UK electricity prices that rank among the cheapest in Europe by 2035', with a potential doubling of Britain's electricity generation capacity by the late 2030s. Therefore, the high energy prices currently observed are not expected to remain into the medium and long term with electricity prices appearing likely to fall as part of the Government's net zero strategy. This is considered to be a material factor to weigh in the balance when considering alternatives to installing a gas boiler.
- 3.5 Even in the short term, Ofgem's price cap (which limits the price people pay for their energy. The price cap has been replaced by the Energy Price Guarantee as the cap on consumer energy bills until April 2024) is now predicted to fall below £2,000, based on average typical use, from July, for the first time since 2022 with some experts saying we could see prices similar to what we had back in mid-2022. At the end of February 2023, energy watchdog [Ofgem dropped its latest energy price cap](#) for April - June 2023 to £3,280 - almost £1,000 lower than the January cap. Investec is now predicting Ofgem's energy price cap, which is revised quarterly, will be set at £1,981 for the third quarter onwards. It could fall further in the fourth quarter, with the investment firm predicting a cap of £1,966 for the final three months of the year. This reflects a fall in wholesale energy prices, but it's important to note that this is just a projection at this stage. Energy markets are volatile and further changes are possible¹.
- 3.6 For Runnymede Borough Council as landlord, the electric storage heaters would have the highest heating costs in the communal areas out of the 4 options explored based on current prices, although this could be partially offset by the reduced maintenance costs of this option, with it being the only one of the options explored which is expected to actually reduce maintenance costs. For all the options, as for tenants, the Council is also expected to benefit from falling energy prices should they occur. Furthermore, the Council will shortly sign up to a new energy framework for the 2024-2028 period with

LASER Energy. The current LASER frameworks that the Council is part of, have delivered cost avoidance of £153k pa to Runnymede BC since they commenced. Energy market prices have increased by 1,200% over the past two-years to unprecedented levels. Although this presents a significant budget shock, LASER's flexible procurement strategies have proven highly effective, with achieved basket prices for the current contract year being 50-85% lower than peak market prices. As part of the 2024-2028 framework, it is proposed to move the communal areas from the Council's housing stock, including the communal areas in our IRL schemes into the Council's agreement with LASER. This has the potential to reduce electricity prices being paid for this part of the Council's estate.

- 3.7 In addition, LASER has developed an innovative approach to buying electricity directly from renewable generators from the suppliers' portfolio via the flexible framework agreement. This is known as the Green Basket. Officers will be exploring options for greener energy as part of this framework period to support the Council's ability to achieve net zero for its operations and services by 2030. It is expected that up to 2030, a greater proportion of the Council's electricity supply will be from renewable energy. If the electricity for the heating system at Floral House is, in the future generated via a renewable source, the carbon produced in electricity generation will be zero. This same benefit would not be realised if a gas boiler were to be installed.
- 3.8 The Powering Up Britain Strategy proposes to rebalance the costs of electricity and gas, which some commentators are suggesting will cut the cost of electricity at the expense of gas. As such, whilst in the short term, the costs of installing a gas boiler and the heating costs associated with them are the lower of the alternatives, when looking at the whole life costs of all four of the options set out in this paper, in the longer term, it is considered that there is a distinct possibility that the cost of gas could increase as part of the Country's net zero transition.
- 3.9 It is also considered relevant that whilst the cost of installing the electric storage heaters is equal to that of an Air Source Heat Pump, it is notable that this heating system has the longest expected lifespan of 25 years. Therefore, if the installation cost is considered as an annualised amount, it equates to approx. £9,600 over its lifespan. Whilst this is double the cost of the gas boiler, it is a significantly cheaper alternative to both heat pump options.
- 3.10 The Council needs to act to replace the existing heating system in Floral House. Currently replacing the gas heating system is the cheapest for both the Council and residents, in terms of their energy bills. How energy bills change over time will impact residents. It is predicted that electricity costs will reduce – these prices will need to reduce by over 20% for the cost of running heat pumps to align with a new gas boiler.
- 3.11 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; as 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 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 in the Capital programme. Capital growth is required to fund the installation of air source or ground source heating systems and/or additional energy efficiency measures and a separate provision has been made in the Capital Programme of £500,000 for this purpose subject to the submission of a full business case (appendix C) and committee approval should this be the preferred option.
- 5.2 The installation of an air source heat pump would require £150,000 of additional expenditure.
- 5.3 The installation of a ground source heat pump would require £325,000 of additional expenditure.
- 5.4 It is estimated that cavity wall insulation at Floral House would cost £50,000 and loft insulation £45,000 (information provided by Hamson Baron Smith).

It is estimated that cavity wall insulation would reduce energy usage by 643 kwh for a property not on the top floor of the accommodation (estimated total heating kwh usage 1720) and loft insulation by 908 kwh for a top floor property (estimated total heating kwh usage 2082) – see appendix A and B for Energy Performance Certificates of properties in Floral House.

The installation of cavity and loft insulation would only have a minimal impact on EPC scores and bands. This would leave properties in Band C with a SAP score of 76-79 (See appendix A and B)

The cost of 643 kwh: -

Gas heating at 95% efficiency is £69.70
 Air source heat pump heating at 300% efficiency is £108.47
 Ground source heat pump heating at 400% efficiency is £81.28
 Electric storage heaters at 100% efficiency is £218.62

The cost of 908 kwh: -

Gas heating at 95% efficiency is £98.43
 Air source heat pump heating at 300% efficiency is £153.18
 Ground source heat pump heating at 400% efficiency is £114.77
 Electric storage heaters at 100% efficiency is £308.72

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 system which provided that heating is approaching end of life and the Council has to consider the replacement of those.
- 6.2 The Council is the landlord of the premises and the design of the premises is such that a communal heating system is installed. As landlord the Council is also responsible for the fabric of the building and can install measures which enhance the heat efficiency of the premises.

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 Plan – 2021-2026.
- 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 the current gas heating system with a more modern system could result in more than 27 tons of carbon savings per year; with a ground source heat pump resulting in 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 Floral House Independent Retirement Living scheme.
- 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 Floral House the service will move quickly to procure a contractor to install a new system. Details of the procurement will be presented to Housing Committee in 2023/24.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 Replacing a communal gas boiler with an electronic heating system which produces fewer carbon emissions has implications for heating bills and limits resources available to achieve other requirements – such as Decent Homes.
- 11.2 Installing a heating system in Independent Retirement Living which significantly reduces 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.

- 11.3 It is recommended that a new more efficient gas boiler is installed in Floral House. This will reduce the emissions produced by the existing system and utility bills for residents. It is also recommended that cavity wall and loft insulation is also installed to reduce bills and emissions levels further. The cost to Runnymede Borough Council of these measures (new gas boiler, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation) is approximated at £195,000.

(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](#)

[Powering Up Britain - Joint Overview \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

An article on the future of energy prices: [Will energy prices go down in 2023? | MoneyWeek](#)

Fuel Poverty Strategy for England - [Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Energy performance certificate (EPC)

Flat 15 Floral House Fox Lane South CHERTSEY KT16 9EE	Energy rating C	Valid until: 22 February 2033 <hr/> Certificate number: 0400-8375-0022-1224-3273
---	---------------------------	---

Property type

Top-floor flat

Total floor area

35 square metres

Rules on letting this property

Properties can be let if they have an energy rating from A to E.

You can read [guidance for landlords on the regulations and exemptions](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance>).

Energy efficiency rating for this property

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	76 c	79 c
55-68	D		
39-54	E		
21-38	F		
1-20	G		

The graph shows this property's current and potential energy efficiency.

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

Breakdown of property's energy performance

This section shows the energy performance for features of this property. The assessment does not consider the condition of a feature and how well it is working.

Each feature is assessed as one of the following:

- very good (most efficient)
- good
- average
- poor
- very poor (least efficient)

When the description says "assumed", it means that the feature could not be inspected and an assumption has been made based on the property's age and type.

Feature	Description	Rating
Wall	Cavity wall, as built, partial insulation (assumed)	Average
Window	Fully double glazed	Average
Main heating	Community scheme	Good
Main heating control	Flat rate charging, TRVs	Average
Hot water	Community scheme	Good
Lighting	Low energy lighting in all fixed outlets	Very good
Roof	(another dwelling above)	N/A
Floor	(another dwelling below)	N/A
Secondary heating	None	N/A

Primary energy use

The primary energy use for this property per year is 192 kilowatt hours per square metre (kWh/m²).

Additional information

Additional information about this property:

- Cavity fill is recommended
-

Environmental impact of this property

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

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 1.2 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 0.2 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.

Improve this property's energy rating

Follow these steps to improve the energy rating and score.

Step	Typical installation cost	Typical yearly saving
1. Cavity wall insulation	£500 - £1,500	£88

Paying for energy improvements

You might be able to get a grant from the [Boiler Upgrade Scheme \(https://www.gov.uk/apply-boiler-upgrade-scheme\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-boiler-upgrade-scheme). This will help you buy a more efficient, low carbon heating system for this property.

Estimated energy use and potential savings

Based on average energy costs when this EPC was created:

Estimated yearly energy cost for this property	£639
--	------

Potential saving if you complete every step in order	£88
--	-----

The estimated cost shows how much the average household would spend in this property for heating, lighting and hot water. It is not based on how energy is used by the people living at the property.

Heating use in this property

Heating a property usually makes up the majority of energy costs.

Estimated energy used to heat this property

Type of heating	Estimated energy used
-----------------	-----------------------

Space heating	1704 kWh per year
---------------	-------------------

Water heating	1720 kWh per year
---------------	-------------------

Potential energy savings by installing insulation

Type of insulation	Amount of energy saved
--------------------	------------------------

Cavity wall insulation	643 kWh per year
------------------------	------------------

Saving energy in this property

Find ways to save energy in your home by visiting www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency.

Contacting the assessor and accreditation scheme

This EPC was created by a qualified energy assessor.

If you are unhappy about your property's energy assessment or certificate, you can complain to the assessor directly.

If you are still unhappy after contacting the assessor, you should contact the assessor's accreditation scheme.

Accreditation schemes are appointed by the government to ensure that assessors are qualified to carry out EPC assessments.

Assessor contact details

Assessor's name	Robert McGuinness
Telephone	0203 397 8220
Email	support@propcert.co.uk

Accreditation scheme contact details

Accreditation scheme	Elmhurst Energy Systems Ltd
Assessor ID	EES/006644
Telephone	01455 883 250
Email	enquiries@elmhurstenergy.co.uk

Assessment details

Assessor's declaration	No related party
Date of assessment	23 February 2023
Date of certificate	23 February 2023
Type of assessment	RdSAP

Energy performance certificate (EPC)

Flat 45
Floral House
Fox Lane South
CHERTSEY
KT16 9EE

Energy rating

C

Valid until: **18 December 2032**Certificate number: **8632-9722-2209-0545-2292**

Property type

Top-floor flat

Total floor area

35 square metres

Rules on letting this property

Properties can be let if they have an energy rating from A to E.

You can read [guidance for landlords on the regulations and exemptions](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance)

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance>).

Energy efficiency rating for this property

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		

The graph shows this property's current and potential energy efficiency.

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

Breakdown of property's energy performance

This section shows the energy performance for features of this property. The assessment does not consider the condition of a feature and how well it is working.

Each feature is assessed as one of the following:

- very good (most efficient)
- good
- average
- poor
- very poor (least efficient)

When the description says "assumed", it means that the feature could not be inspected and an assumption has been made based on the property's age and type.

Feature	Description	Rating
Wall	Cavity wall, as built, partial insulation (assumed)	Average
Roof	Pitched, limited insulation (assumed)	Poor
Window	Fully double glazed	Good
Main heating	Community scheme	Good
Main heating control	Flat rate charging, TRVs	Average
Hot water	Community scheme	Good
Lighting	Low energy lighting in 80% of fixed outlets	Very good
Floor	(another dwelling below)	N/A
Secondary heating	None	N/A

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 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.

Improve this property's energy performance

The assessor did not make any recommendations for this property.

[Simple Energy Advice has guidance on improving a property's energy use.](https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/)
(<https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/>)

Paying for energy improvements

You might be able to get a grant from the [Boiler Upgrade Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-may-be-eligible-for-the-boiler-upgrade-scheme-from-april-2022) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-may-be-eligible-for-the-boiler-upgrade-scheme-from-april-2022>). This will help you buy a more efficient, low carbon heating system for this property.

Estimated energy use and potential savings

Estimated yearly energy cost for this property	£339
--	------

Potential saving	£0
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The estimated cost shows how much the average household would spend in this property for heating, lighting and hot water. It is not based on how energy is used by the people living at the property.

The potential saving shows how much money you could save if you [complete each recommended step in order](#).

[Find ways to save energy in your home.](#)

Heating use in this property

Heating a property usually makes up the majority of energy costs.

Estimated energy used to heat this property

Type of heating	Estimated energy used
-----------------	-----------------------

Space heating	2082 kWh per year
---------------	-------------------

Water heating	1723 kWh per year
---------------	-------------------

Potential energy savings by installing insulation

Type of insulation	Amount of energy saved
--------------------	------------------------

Loft insulation	908 kWh per year
-----------------	------------------

Cavity wall insulation	182 kWh per year
------------------------	------------------

Contacting the assessor and accreditation scheme

This EPC was created by a qualified energy assessor.

If you are unhappy about your property's energy assessment or certificate, you can complain to the assessor directly.

If you are still unhappy after contacting the assessor, you should contact the assessor's accreditation scheme.

Accreditation schemes are appointed by the government to ensure that assessors are qualified to carry out EPC assessments.

Assessor contact details

Assessor's name	Robert McGuinness
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Email	support@propcert.co.uk

Accreditation scheme contact details

Accreditation scheme	Elmhurst Energy Systems Ltd
Assessor ID	EES/006644
Telephone	01455 883 250
Email	enquiries@elmhurstenergy.co.uk

Assessment details

Assessor's declaration	No related party
Date of assessment	15 December 2022
Date of certificate	19 December 2022
Type of assessment	<u>RdSAP</u>

Business Case – H009 Boiler replacement in IRLs

Project Initiation Stage

Project/Item Title	Replacement of 2 no. gas boilers in IRLs		Version	1.0
Corporate Head	Andy Vincent	Service Area	Housing	
Service Committee to Approve Budget	Housing			
Anticipated Cost of Proposal (Capital)	£500,000 growth (£250,000 already in capital programme)	Anticipated Cost Proposal (Revenue)		
To be completed for Projects only (H009)				
Type of Project	Replacement	Project Duration	One off replacement work	
Proposed Project Start Date	Mar-23	Proposed Project End Date	Mar-24	

Business Case Context

Background

Describe the purpose of the Business Case, what benefits are expected to be delivered or what problem will be solved (What is wrong with the status quo? What are the drivers for change?). Is the scheme a result of legal/statutory requirements or a stakeholder consultation?

2 IRL communal commercial boilers are passed the end of their expected life and are due for replacement.

£250,000 has been budgeted for a like to like replacement - i.e. a commercial wet system (Mains Gas) - with a newer version.

These gas commercial systems have a 20-25 year life expectancy through correct servicing schedules.

The Housing Service was hoping to be able to apply to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to assist with the cost of replacing the 2 boilers to a system with lower carbon emissions. Unfortunately as the 2 IRL schemes are C energy efficiency rated (the SHDF will only support funding applications for properties D rated or worse) an application to the fund will not be accepted.

Strategic Links - relate this Business Case to RBC Corporate Strategies and Corporate Values

Corporate Strategies	Describe how this Business Case meets / contributes to the Corporate Business Plan through each of the Corporate Strategies. - Delete those not applicable
Climate Change Strategy <i>Reducing Carbon emissions from the Council's operations and the wider Runnymede community.</i>	A reduction in carbon emissions from RBC's IRL stock - a further step towards being a carbon neutral service by 2030. Potential reductions in individual resident's fuel bills.
Organisational Development Strategy <i>Enable Officers and Members to perform their duties to the best of their ability and make Runnymede Borough Council the employer of choice for local people.</i>	This supports the Council's Climate Change Strategy.
Economic Development Strategy <i>Ensuring that the Borough continues to be a leading economy in Surrey and the wider sub-region.</i>	
Empowering the Community Strategy <i>Evidence Based Decision Making, Listening to residents, Enabling Communities to help themselves and to take control of services or plans for their areas, Working effectively with partner organisations, Dealing with inequalities.</i>	
Health and Wellbeing Strategy <i>Support the delivery of a range of services and functions to improve outcomes for residents and their quality of life.</i>	
Corporate Values	Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable
People-focused – we will put people at the heart of what we do and they will be able to deal with us easily.	
Passionate – we will empower our staff to be passionate about all we do.	
Performance driven – we will strive for excellence in all we do.	
Innovative – we will aim to creatively improve our services and be open to new ways of providing services.	
Promoting equality and diversity – we believe in fairness as well as maintaining a diverse workforce so we can draw upon a wide range of views and experiences to meet the changing needs of our communities.	
Delivering excellent value for money – we will strive to be as efficient and effective as possible.	
Collaborative – we will work together and with others to deliver positive outcomes for our communities.	
Transparent – we will be open and honest to all about what we do.	

List your Business Case Objectives, ensuring they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

It is proposed that the two boilers past the end of their life in our IRL schemes are replaced with communal air source heat pumps. Work has been done by an external consultancy F+G to establish the cost of these communal systems.

The Housing Service is able to quantify the reduction in carbon emissions achieved by replacing the two IRL boilers with systems with low carbon emissions. For the individual flats (harder to establish the reduction in carbon emissions from communal areas) in Floral House for example this would equate to a reduction of in excess of 7

Business Case – H009 Boiler replacement in IRLs

Project Initiation Stage

individual flats (harder to establish the reduction in carbon emissions from communal areas) in Floral House for example this would equate to a reduction of in excess of 7 tonnes per annum.

Replacing the two boilers with gas heating systems does not align with the Council's Climate Change Strategy and commitments

List the Constraints or Parameters in which this Business Case will operate

A new boiler would be a wet system and would operate using the existing pipe network within the scheme.

An upgrade of our IRL stock is taking place in 2023/24 and this would align with that work

List the Outcomes and Benefits (including efficiency gains) you expect the scheme to achieve

A reduction in carbon emissions from RBC's IRL stock - a further step towards being a carbon neutral service by 2030

Potential reductions in individual resident's fuel bills

Appraisal of Business Options (must include evaluation of a 'do nothing' option)

Option 1 (preferred option):

Description

Describe the preferred option and why. Describe the current position and the consequences/reasons that do nothing is not a viable option.

The preferred option is to replace the two 'end of life' boilers with communal air source heat pumps rather than gas boilers.

Budget exists to replace the existing boilers 'like for like' i.e. with a replacement gas boiler

Benefits (comparison to other options considered)

Consider any tangible benefits of the Preferred Option, consider benefits such as income generation, savings, great efficiency, compliance with legislation / industry standards – soft benefits, reputation, residents' satisfaction, perception of Council

The key benefit is carbon reductions as a result of the low carbon heating system

There is the potential that residents will also see reductions in their fuel bills

Advantages to Service Area (preferred option)	Disadvantages to Service Area (preferred option)
An asset managed in accordance with its remaining life expectancy	Potential expectations from other IRL schemes that we will do work to upgrade/decarbonise their heating systems
A new boiler - with an extended life	The heat levels achieved by an air source heat pump are similar to a traditional boiler - although residents will require their heating to be 'on' for long periods to achieve the same levels of heat
Other heating options have been considered. I.e. a ground source heat pump. The cost of a ground source pump would be £858K proposed - but would have a longer life, with similar maintenance implications.	
Costs to Organisation (preferred option)	Benefits to Organisation (preferred option)
£500,000 instead of £250,000	Good public relations
	A further step towards meeting the Council's climate change commitments
	Reduced heating costs for the organisation and for residents

Resource Requirements

Staffing Appraisal (preferred option):

Outline the expected staffing / resourcing requirements for the preferred option in the table below, think about resources required in your team and others. This should include job titles, number of hours worked and salary.

Existing Staffing	New RBC Staff Requested	New External Staff Requested
Existing Staffing		

Add any costs into the financial appraisal table.

FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

Finance Appraisal (preferred option) - To be completed with the Finance Department:

Describe the financial and resource implications of this option. See Financial Appraisal below to capture numbers.

How will it be financed? Is a Supplementary Revenue Estimate required? Can it be resourced via a Virement (including areas other than your own)?

Is there other funding available? Has funding been agreed? Demonstrate how the council can receive a return on investment, whether cashable, cost avoidance or quantifying tangible benefits – Seek advice from your accountant. **Business cases will not be considered by the Chief Executive unless a full financial appraisal has been agreed by the Accountancy Team.**

Explain how the cost estimate has been drawn up e.g. based on the costs of a similar project/item; based on quotes from suppliers etc:

The costs are based on a financial appraisal provided by F+G consultancy - where they have also considered the implications of installing a ground source heat pump.

Please explain how you have considered the VAT implications of the project/item:

If this project involves building or refurbishment work within corporate assets has the project/work been consulted on and agreed by the Corporate Head of Strategic Land and Property Assets? Please give details.

This work does not involve a corporate asset

CAPITAL COSTS

Capital Expenditure (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)
IRL boiler upgrade - additional growth in addition to £250K in capital programme	500,000					

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Business Case – H009 Boiler replacement in IRLs

Project Initiation Stage

Total Capital Expenditure	500,000	-	-	-	-	-	
Capital Income (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)	
NIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Capital Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Net Capital Outlay	500,000	-	-	-	-	-	
Estimated Useful Life of the Asset: Where the expected lives of each significant component of the asset are different (i.e. buying a house with a flat roof) you must estimate both the useful life and cost of replacing each component part. Please only include components greater than £20,000 in cost or more than 20% of the total value of the asset.					Estimated Value (£)	Estimated Life (yrs)	
Overall asset	(basis of estimation)						
Component 1: Air source heat pump							15
Component 2 (specify):							
Component 3 (specify):							
REVENUE COSTS							
Revenue Expenditure (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)	
NIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Less: Savings to existing budget (Please specify)							
Total Revenue Expenditure							
Revenue Income (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)	
NIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Revenue Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Net change to revenue budgets	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Business Case / Risks							
<i>Outline the risks (Managerial, Financial, Operational etc.) to RBC if delivering the preferred option. A risk summary only is required here.</i>							
Risk Description	Mitigation / Help needed						
Procurement	Housing Technical Services would need support to write the specification for this work						
Installation	This can be managed in house						
Maintenance	This is a new component to RBC - we would need to check with our Heating Contractor that they can manage this component						
Running costs of the boiler are higher than the existing system	This risk is low - but work needs to be done to ensure they are using fuel efficiently						
Impact							
<i>Consider the impact of the Business Case on the Organisation / Environment / Technology / Commercialisation / Cultural / HR</i>							
A positive environmental impact due to the reduction in carbon emissions							
Authorisation							
Approved by Corporate Head of Finance	Paul French				Date	12/01/2023	
Approved by Corporate Leadership Team	Subject to feedback	Date	23/11/2022	Priority Score	Should		
Committee Report to be presented to:					Date		

**Building Safety Act – Requirements on the Housing Service
(Andy Vincent, Corporate Head of Housing)**

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service is performing well in addressing compliance issues (see Q4 2022/23 performance report).

Recent legislation places additional responsibilities on landlords to ensure building safety and fire safety issues are managed more proactively.

These responsibilities alongside a step change in our improvement/Decent Homes activity cannot be managed within existing resources.

Some provision has been made in the 2023/24 budget for Building Safety Act 2022 costs (£20,000) it is also proposed that savings are made within the Building Consultancy Budget (£400,000 per annum until 2025) to fund a Compliance Surveyor to support work in this area – which will be shared with the Corporate Assets Team (percentage of time with each team yet to be determined).

Recommendation(s):

That Housing Committee members

- 1. Note the additional obligations placed on landlords as a result of the Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022**
- 2. Expect to receive an update on the Housing Service's work to submit a Building Safety Case to the new regulator at the September meeting of the committee.**
- 3. Approve an addition to the Housing staff structure – the appointment of a Compliance Surveyor and request that this is presented to the Corporate Management Committee to agree the new post in June.**

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Housing Committee members approved the Housing Health and Safety Policy in June 2021(see background papers). This policy sets out the Health and Safety obligations of Runnymede Borough Council in provision of services to social housing tenants. A refreshed version of this policy will be presented to the September meeting of the Housing Committee.
- 1.2 Two additional pieces of legislation/regulation have been introduced since the Housing Health and Safety Policy was presented to Housing Committee, these are the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 – to be known in the remainder of the report as the Act and Regulations.
- 1.3 . The purpose of this report is to: -

- update Housing Committee members on the work that the service has done to meet the provisions of the Act and Regulations.
- Identify that the obligations of the Act and Regulations cannot be met within existing staff resources and request that other budgets be adjusted to allow for a fulltime Compliance Surveyor to be appointed to support the compliance activity of the service.

2. Requirements of the additional legislation/regulation

2.1 The Building Safety Act 2022

2.1.1 The Building Safety Act 2022 places particular emphasis on higher-risk buildings (for the purpose of Part 4 of the Act which deals with building safety measures, higher risk buildings are buildings that are at least 18 metres or seven storeys high and contain at least two residential units). These buildings now require an 'accountable person' to undertake an assessment of the building safety risks at regular intervals and, if so directed, at the direction of the newly formed Building Safety Regulator. The accountable person must actively manage building safety risks, by taking reasonable steps to prevent risks from materialising and reducing the severity of any incidents that do occur.

2.1.2 The accountable person is the owner of the legal estate in possession of any common parts of a building (i.e. the structure, exterior or any part of the building provided for the benefit and use of the occupiers of the building) or a person who is under a repairing obligation in relation to any of the common parts. This is usually the landlord, and some buildings will have more than one accountable person.

2.1.3 The Act introduces a new section 30D to the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (LTA 1985), which specifically provides that building safety measures should be treated as a service that can be recovered from tenants under the service charge of a relevant lease (being a lease that is granted for a term of seven years or more or including a dwelling in a higher-risk building and under which the tenant is liable to pay a service charge). Where the lease contains different measures for apportioning costs between tenants, the costs relating to building safety measures are to follow the apportionment method relating to the costs of insuring the building.

2.1.4 In general, a building safety measure would include:

- applying for the registration of a higher-risk building;
- applying for and displaying a building assessment certificate;
- preparing a safety case report and providing it to the regulator;
- establishing and operating a mandatory occurrence reporting system and providing that information to the regulator;
- establishing and operating a system for the investigation of complaints; and
- legal and professional fees, fees payable to the regulator and management costs in connection with taking a building safety measure.

However, costs incurred as a result of any penalty imposed or enforcement action taken by the regulator due to negligence, breach of contract, an unlawful act or in relation to special measures order proceedings are specifically stated to be non-recoverable.

The implied provisions in section 30D of the LTA 1985 cannot be contracted out of and any provision in a lease purporting to exclude, limit or modify those provisions will be treated as void.

2.2 Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

2.2.1 Runnymede Borough Council intends to exceed the requirements of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. The majority of the measures within the Regulations are already in place for all flat blocks owed by Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service.

2.2.2 The inspection requirements of lifts and fire doors which is an additional requirement imposed by the Regulations will be undertaken for all flat blocks in addition to the high-rise building owned by Runnymede Borough Council.

2.2.3 The Regulations require landlords to make the following provisions in high-rise residential buildings:

- **Building plans:** provide their local Fire and Rescue Service with up-to-date electronic building floor plans and to place a hard copy of these plans, alongside a single page building plan which identifies key firefighting equipment, in a secure information box on site.
- **External wall systems:** provide to their local Fire and Rescue Service information about the design and materials of a high-rise building's external wall system and to inform the Fire and Rescue Service of any material changes to these walls. Also, they will be required to provide information in relation to the level of risk that the design and materials of the external wall structure gives rise to and any mitigating steps taken.
- **Lifts and other key firefighting equipment:** undertake monthly checks on the operation of lifts intended for use by firefighters, and evacuation lifts in their building and check the functionality of other key pieces of firefighting equipment. They will also be required to report any defective lifts or equipment to their local Fire and Rescue Service as soon as possible after detection if the fault cannot be fixed within 24 hours, and to record the outcome of checks and make them available to residents.
- **Information boxes:** install and maintain a secure information box in their building. This box must contain the name and contact details of the Responsible Person and hard copies of the building floor plans.
- **Wayfinding signage:** to install signage visible in low light or smoky conditions that identifies flat and floor numbers in the stairwells of relevant buildings.
- **Fire doors:** undertake annual checks of flat entrance doors and quarterly checks of all fire doors in the common parts.
- **Fire safety instructions:** provide relevant fire safety instructions to their residents, which will include instructions on how to report a fire and any other instruction which sets out what a resident must do once a fire has occurred, based on the evacuation strategy for the building.
- **Fire door information:** provide residents with information relating to the importance of fire doors in fire safety.

2.4 Resources in place currently

- 2.4.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service have contracts in place for regular fire risk assessment of flat blocks (the inspection programme is in line with our Fire Policy and is based on risk levels), annual inspections of fire doors and lifts.
- 2.4.2 Housing Services have recently procured a new consultancy (Frankham's Consultancy Group LTD) to commence our risk-based reviews via a specialist fire safety framework which will be in place for the next five years.
- 2.4.3 Six members of staff have undertaken training to certify them to undertake inspections of fire doors. Inspections will commence from June 2023. Fire door inspections are recorded on our Housing Management IT system and work is underway to enable residents to view the history of each fire door via a QR code.
- 2.4.4 A Building Safety Case template has been prepared jointly with the Corporate Assets Team (see appendix 1)
- 2.4.5 A draft tenant engagement strategy on building safety for Surrey Towers has been prepared jointly with the Corporate Assets Team (see appendix 2).
- 2.4.6 The expectations of the Act and Regulations place significant additional requirements on landlords. Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service cannot meet these expectations and the requirements of meeting the Decent Homes Standard within existing resources.

In 2023/24 £20,000 has been identified to support the service to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act. £400,000 has also been budgeted through the Building Consultancy Budget to enable the levels of capital expenditure to meet the Decent Homes Standard to be ramped up.

It is anticipated that only £350,000 of that budget will be required in 2023/24.

It is therefore proposed that £30,000 in 2023/24 is vired to staffing to enable a Compliance Surveyor to be recruited and that a permanent reduction to the budget is included from 2024/25.

- 2.4.7 It is proposed that the duties of this role for the Housing Service would include (the role would also undertake the majority of the functions listed below for the Corporate Assets Team): -
 - Monitoring the Fire Risk Assessment programme and ensuring actions are completed.
 - Undertaking Fire Door inspections and arranging for repair work to be completed
 - Monitoring the smoke alarm inspection programme and ensuring actions are completed.
 - Monitor the performance of RBC's lifts and ensure regular maintenance and servicing is undertaken
 - Check emergency lighting is functioning effectively and arrange repairs/servicing
 - Monitor the use of balconies in line with RBC's Balcony Safety Policy
 - Overseeing asbestos removal work – and ensuring the asbestos register is maintained.
 - Ensuring that work to limit the risk of legionella is identified and completed.
 - Supporting the Compliance Manager with compiling the Building Safety Case
 - Supporting the Compliance Manager with tenant engagement

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The Housing Service Area Plan 2023/24 identifies that work is required by the team to prepare for the implementation of the Building Safety Act 2022.

H001	Legislative/ Regulatory Change	Housing Maintenance and Technical Services	Building Safety Act fund
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- 3.2 A briefing was given to the Housing and Enabling Member working group in September 2022 on the requirements of the new legislation.

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

- 4.1 It is proposed that the costs for the additional staff member be met from a combination of already approved growth for Building Safety costs (£20k) and savings within the existing Maintenance Consultancy budget.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that this post would be on Band 10 (£34,474-£38,276) with on costs up to £49,185.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The legal implications associated with matters dealt with by this report are set out in the body of the report. As highlighted above the Act and Regulations impose a number of obligations on the Council in its capacity as landlord of various premises.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 An Equalities Screening has been completed and no equality implications have been identified from the implementation of the Acts.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 Proposals within this report have significant health and safety implications. Effective management of health and safety risks ensures residents live within an environment that is as safe as possible.

8. Other implications (where applicable)

- 8.1 **Risk Management** – this report is designed to identify and limit the ‘health and safety’ risk to residents.
- 8.2 A risk within the Housing Service Area Plan has been identified in relation to health and safety.
- 8.3 Measures within this report will serve to mitigate this risk.

HR5	Health and Safety requirements are not met within the Housing stock relating to fire risk control, asbestos management, legionella, gas and electrical safety, lifts, safe working practices within the housing stock and building safety in general.
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9. Timetable for Implementation

- 9.1 If the request to recruit a Compliance Surveyor is approved at Housing Committee and Corporate Management Committee the team will seek to recruit as soon as possible.
- 9.2 A review of the Housing Health and Safety Policy is being conducted as a result of the Acts and will be presented to the Housing Committee in September

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service has worked over a number of years to achieve full compliance with current health and safety legislation and regulatory requirements placed on social landlords. We are in a strong position – as is reflected in the Quarter 4 2022/23 Performance Report contained within this agenda pack.
- 10.2 Significant additional responsibilities have been placed on landlords by the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.
- 10.3 We do not have the capacity within our Compliance Team or the wider Housing Technical Services Team to meet these requirements indefinitely within existing resources.
- 10.4 Within the report it is proposed that we reprofile expenditure to recruit a Compliance Surveyor to support the service to meet the expectations of the two pieces of legislation/regulation.

Background papers

Housing Health and Safety Policy – from page 32 of the link [Agenda-9-June-2021-Housing-Committee \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/agenda-9-june-2021-housing-committee)

Housing Service Area Plan 2023/24 - [Housing Service Area Plan 2324 DRAFT v1 3 CLT.xlsm \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#)

Build Safety Act 2022 – Building Safety Case Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive

[Safety case report: Form and content – Building safety – HSE](#)

Appendix 1 - Building Safety Case Template

The Government is expected to detail the structure and content of the Building Safety Case later in 2021. However, the Government have worked on several pilots and with early-adopters, giving us an insight into what the cases should contain:

- A description of the building – including its construction materials, occupants, systems and how fire and structural safety is designed into the building
- A risk assessment of the risks to building occupants, users and those around it – the risk assessment must include the hazards, who will be harmed, the likely impact of the risks
- The individual actions/steps to mitigate and control those risks – evidencing that the Accountable Person is taking all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of major incidents
- The safety management system – this should set out the processes, procedures and systems that will actively manage the risks and mitigation actions on an ongoing basis, including competences, roles, review mechanisms and how residents are involved
- The emergency procedures and preparedness plan – how the risk associated with major emergency events will be managed.

A further example from outside the Housing Sector:

Safety Case Reports Exact contents depends on regulatory environment

The following are key elements of most standards:

- scope
- system description
- system hazards safety requirements
- risk assessment
- hazard control / risk reduction measures
- safety analysis / test
- safety management system
- development process
- justification
- conclusions

Ref Tim Kelly – University of York 2011

Appendix 2 - Example Tenant Engagement Strategy

[Read our new Building Safety Resident Engagement strategy | Network Homes](#)

Establishing a Housing Systems and Revenue Team, (Maggie Ward, Head of Housing & Business Planning)

Synopsis of report:

After many years with limited investment in its IT systems the Housing Business Unit has over the past two years implemented additional modules: Asset Management System, Planned Maintenance, Support Services, Risk, NEC Mobile, Energy Assessor, Account Analytics.

Phase 2 of the IT upgrade which includes moving the Allocations, Housing Advice and Homelessness functions onto the NEC system providing integrated workflows and a single view of service users is currently in progress.

Phase 3 will be the implementation of NEC Customer Services and a new Anti-Social Behaviour module. The Housing Service Plan approved by the Committee in 2023 included an annual IT development budget of £50,000

The staffing resources currently within the Housing Business Unit for NEC system support, rent accounting, leaseholder management, service charge, homelessness, housing allocations and invoice paying are not adequate to support the current business needs and ongoing system maintenance and development. There are a number of single points of failure that present a high risk to the business. This report proposes centralising these functions under a dedicated manager and creating additional posts to ensure that all the modules of the NEC Housing system are adequately supported and the financial functions of the department are appropriately managed.

Recommendation(s):

Members approve:

- i. The business case for:**
 - a. The purchase and implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Customer Service Modules (as contained within the Housing Service Plan for 2023/4 and Capital Programme) to be funded from HRA Revenue Reserves**
 - b. The establishment of a centralised Business System and Revenue function as contained within the Housing Service Plan for 2023/4**
- ii. The release of:**
 - a. £50,000 provision set aside in the Capital Programme and Business Plan for this purpose.**
 - b. £135,000 provision set aside in the HRA Revenue Budget and Business Plan for this purpose.**

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Business Unit is undergoing a digital transformation with significant investment in the NEC system introducing new modules which need system support. Income channels and expenditure are increasing and this needs to be resourced.
- 1.2 It is proposed that a number of existing posts with system and finance duties are amalgamated into a central section with the addition of some new posts, job descriptions and grades subject evaluation by Human Resources.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Housing Service operational activity falls into five distinct areas: -
 1. Housing Advice
 2. Housing Allocations
 3. Tenancy and Leaseholder management
 4. Income Collection
 5. Technical Services which has three defined areas:
 - a. Compliance
 - b. Planned work
 - c. Reactive/repair works
- 2.2 All these areas have their own modules and there are officers in place with system configuration knowledge of the rents, estates and technical services modules however housing advice, homelessness and housing allocations will not have this technical support from existing resources.
- 2.3 With the establishment of a centralised team and cross training between members there will be additional resources to deliver essential improvement activity, revenue collection, resilience and succession planning. Currently there are numerous single points of failure in terms of functionality and knowledge.
- 2.4 Maintaining the security of the system is a significant function and although this is managed by Digital Services in terms of external access, all users need to be given the correct access for their role and this must be updated constantly and within short timescales as staff change roles and enter / leave employment. There is a substantial number of users across Housing and Customer Services to be maintained and trained.
- 2.5 Members have approved over £250,000 of expenditure over 5 years to upgrade the Housing IT system to reflect current operational and regulatory needs. At the end of 2022/23 the following modules will be fully or partially implemented.

Account Analytics	Implemented
Allocations (housing and garages)	In progress
Assets	Implemented
Choice Based Lettings	In progress
Communications Suite	In progress
Contractor Portal	Implemented
Energy Assessor	Implemented
Estates	Implemented
Information @Work	Implemented

Leaseholders	In progress
Mobile Assets	In progress
Mobile Risk Management	In progress
My Portal	In progress
Planned Maintenance	Implemented
Rents	Implemented
Repairs	Implemented
Risk Management	Implemented
Service Charges	In progress
Support Services	Implemented (some staff still training)

- 2.6 The Communications Suite is a new core functionality which is a system for creating and recording all types of communication with residents including emailing and texting directly from the system. All the communication types and templates for hundreds of standard letters must be set up, maintained, and created on a continuing basis. The Council is utilising the NEC Document Management (DMS) system, Information@Work (I@W) the management of documentation for the whole department needs to be a central function ensuring that all items are correctly referenced and a retention procedure compliant with GDPR is in place.
- 2.7 Throughout the day the system is running automated processes and individual jobs run by officers. Jobs need to be scheduled in advance and to be run at the correct sequence and time for the business but staged to ensure that the system is not overloaded. This is a complex system, an external IT failure can result in batch failures which need to be identified and rerun immediately as many processes are sequential, for instance the balancing of rent accounts at the end of the week, raising the new weekly debit, loading of the housing benefit file, recalculation of direct debits for accounts with HB changes and automated issuing of arrears letters. If one of these processes fails to run it can have financial or reputational implications if not identified. There is scheduled monitoring of all the major processes and whilst there are reports in place there is a human element in checking the output is correct. As the system usage increases, this risk must be mitigated with sufficient staff to make these checks.
- 2.8 There is a large amount of data held on our system about applicants, tenants, leaseholders, and household members. System security, accuracy, and ensuing compliance with GDPR regulations is a significant undertaking and needs to be resourced. Managing a business of this size with adequate management data and checks requires a constant updating of the information collected and presented to managers. This is done using a reporting tool called Business Objects (BO) which was designed to work with NEC Housing. Although there are improved reporting capabilities in the NEC road map there are reports running throughout the day giving real-time updates to some sections, checking anomalies within the system and reporting on performance. These reports are written internally and updated as required.
- 2.9 The Rent Accounting functionality and Estates module are currently managed by one officer on MMA with an assistant on Grade 7. This officer is also involved in the implementation of the new modules including building the Housing on-line offering. A significant amount of income is collected by direct debit (DD) to reflect the varied circumstances of our tenants. DDs can be set up on a range of weekly, fortnightly, four weekly, monthly schedules incorporating Monday and Friday collections and several other days of the month. The ability to collect rent on a day which suits the income of each tenant is resource heavy but is an integral part of our income

strategy. Currently one person has responsibility for extracting the direct debit files and providing them to Digital Services for submission to BACS, this is an unacceptable risk and needs to be mitigated by involving a larger team. The files cannot be run too far in advance or there is a risk of requesting funds when the tenant's circumstances have changed and extracting the files too early impacts on the weekly account balancing. In contrast Council Tax only have four payment files per month and sundry debts one.

- 2.10 An annual income of £22m will be received into the Housing system from various sources, direct housing benefit and UC payments, a consolidated bank transaction for non HRA tenants which must be credited to individual accounts, 2 types of DHP payments and online payments, direct debit and standing orders, card payments made over the phone, payments through Paypoints and a card payment mobile terminal used by staff. These are all received into the Council's bank account and then uploaded to the housing system. There is a consistent issue with people making payments using an incorrect reference and paying into the wrong account if they have two accounts. All these payments need to be reconciled and applied to the correct account.
- 2.11 HRA rents and service charges are reviewed annually and an increase or decrease applied, this is a significant project with statutory timescales requiring all tenants to be informed of their charges in time for the annual Housing Benefit mass recalculation. For each new tenancy, the rent should be reviewed and confirmed.
- 2.12 The Rent Accounting function is subject to audit each year due to the complexity and risks inherent within the function. To date and with the latest report in May of 2023, Audit have given the highest rating of Substantial Assurance but as the level of system work in this team increases there will not be adequate resources to ensure this is maintained.
- 2.13 The Housing Technical Services team have two posts, one full-time, and one 23 hours who deal with all their system requirements and invoicing for the reactive repairs service. One post is currently vacant, and there is no cover for these roles, which have specific system and process knowledge but there is no succession planning or supervision with system knowledge to support them.
- 2.14 The Council used the NEC Allocations module until 2010 when it joined a consortium for Choice Based Lettings which procured an alternative system, Locata. When the consortium ended the Council retained Locata and is now in the process of rebuilding the Allocations module so that Choice Based Lettings and allocation of properties will all be managed within NEC and therefore through online accounts. There is currently no expertise in this module and as it is the most complicated module within the NEC system it is essential to have system support. There is a risk with not having technical support available for the Allocations module as failure to let properties in a timely manner or appropriately can have significant costs and legal repercussions. When the NEC system was previously used daily paid consultancy had to be procured for any system changes which is not operationally or financially acceptable.
- 2.15 Where tenants receive the benefit of communal facilities or services such as lighting, heating, caretaking, grounds maintenance etc., service charges are applied. These are updated annually on each account to reflect the actual cost of the service being provided. The Council also has 160 leaseholders whose service charge and repairs accounts are managed within the Accountancy section. It is proposed to move this into Housing and onto the NEC system so that leaseholders can also access everything relating to their account online.

- 2.16 The Council is embarking on a large capital programme, which will involve work to leaseholders' homes and to the communal areas for which they will be charged a contribution. Following statutory consultation, invoices will need to be levied and the costs collected. Whilst this has been done in the past on a limited basis there have been no significant capital programmes for many years and there is insufficient capacity to manage this process for the anticipated spend.
- 2.17 Members approved a recharge policy in March 2022 which will result in increased income for the Council but there is insufficient capacity to manage the collection and offer the wider service of repair to tenants which could be done by an expanded revenue resource.
- 2.18 With the new modules in place the next development phase will be to implement the automated processes for our procedures. This is done by using the functionality Task Manager and Business Flows. Currently Housing do not have capacity to roll this out across the business and then maintain the processes. With the new modules supported by Task Manager and Business Flows there can be business efficiencies for the operational staff, but this will only be possible with a support team with the appropriate IT skills and capacity. Although NEC have been contracted to build the new modules, after launch any consultancy required will be at the usual rate of £1,200 per day plus costs. After initial support Task Manager and Business Flows could be rolled out by an extended team saving a large amount on consultancy and building in house capability.
- 2.19 With the launch of our Housing Online Service the Council aims to move most of our transactions to digital providing faster responses for residents able to self-serve and freeing up capacity for those who need a more bespoke and personal service. This will only be possible if there are processes in place to ensure that enquiries are captured and routed to the correct location. There must be technical support for service users experiencing problems with their account and as each new service is rolled out this will be added to the online system build.
- 2.20 Biannually, the National Fraud Initiative requires a large data extract of all tenants and former tenants, Right to Buy completions with discount and Housing Register applicants which must be collected and formatted ready to run on a specified date so that a national check can be done. The quantity and variation of reports requires several extracts from the system to be then consolidated into a formatted database for upload. Annually, data on our services is submitted to DLUHC for the Local Authority Housing Statistics which takes time to compile and check, and the HCLIC homelessness returns will be submitted from NEC once Housing Advice module is implemented and from 2023 the Regulator of Social Housing will require a range of new performance measures.
- 2.21 Technical Services will spend more than £50m on reactive and planned repairs over the next 7 years and this will be managed within the NEC system. Each contractor must be set up with budgets, pricing policies, and contract terms to enable this to be monitored and managed effectively by the technical staff. The Contractor portal will enable suppliers to vary, complete and invoice works through a link to our system once they are set up to do so.
- 2.22 There are 5 existing posts for which the budget, which will be utilised to create this new section, 2 new posts will be required with an increase in some posts to reflect increased responsibilities.

Figure 1 Current Posts

Job	Grade	FTE	Post No	Top of salary	Budget inc. 28.5% oncosts	Post
Revenues & Systems Officer	MMA	37	E0065	46,558	59,827	Deleted
System Administrator	9	37	E0372	34,474	44,299	Deleted
Technical Assistant	7	23	E0240	27,991	21,873	Deleted
Revenues & Systems Assistant	7	37	E0066	27,991	35,968	Deleted
Housing Solutions Officer	10	37	E0055	38,276	49,185	Deleted
Current Total Costs					211,152	

Figure 2 Proposed posts and costs

Job	Grade	FTE	Post No	Top of salary	Budget (inc. 28.5% oncosts)	
Revenues & Systems Manager	SMA	37	E0065	61,724	79,315	NEW
System & Revenue Administrator	9/10	37	E0372	38,276	49,185	NEW
System & Revenue Administrator	9/10	37	New post	38,276	49,185	NEW
System & Revenue Administrator	9/10	37	New Post	38,276	49,185	NEW
Systems & Revenue Assistant	8	37	E0240	31,065	39,919	NEW
Systems & Revenue Assistant	8	37	E0066	31,065	39,919	NEW
Systems & Revenue Assistant	8	37	New Post	31,065	39,919	NEW
Future Total Costs					346,625	
Additional supplementary estimate required					135,473	

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The establishment of a Housing Systems Team and £50,000 in 2023/24 to enhance the Housing System is proposed within the Housing Service Area Plan.
- 3.2 Effective IT systems support the delivery of all housing policies – including: Repairs, Rents, Homelessness, Housing Allocations, Tenancy, Recharges and the implementation of the Housing Asset Management Plan.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 The 2023/24 budget approved by full Council in February 2023 included a capital provision of £50,000 for the purchase and implementation of the Anti-Social

Behaviour and Customer Service Modules and revenue provision of £135,000 for the establishment of a centralised Business System and Revenue function, subject to a future committee report, including the submission of full business cases for member approval. These business cases are set out in Appendix A.

- 4.2 If Members are content with the detail presented in the report and business case, and the costs presented are within the amount provided for in the growth provision, the Committee can provide their approval to proceed and for the budget provision to be released.
- 4.3 As the budgetary provision has already been agreed by full Council through the budgetary process, the release of this money does not require further referral to the Corporate Management Committee.
- 4.4 Additional resources for IT support within Homeless and Housing Allocations are generated by removing a Homelessness Officer from the staff structure.
- 4.5 Anticipated further improvements in income collection, through rents, recharges and former tenant arrears.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Under the provisions of section 112 Local Government Act 1972 a local authority shall appoint such officers as they think necessary for the proper discharge by the authority of such of their functions. An officer appointed shall hold office on such reasonable terms and conditions, including conditions as to remuneration, as the authority appointing him think fit.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 None identified.

7. Timetable for Implementation

- 7.1 On approval of the required supplementary estimate job descriptions and grades will be confirmed with HR. There will then be a full consultation with the postholders affected by this change following a recruitment to vacant posts.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The current staffing resources are not adequate to support the NEC Housing Systems and ongoing business requirements. Members are asked to approve the release of the resources identified within the HRA's 2023/24 approved budget to enable the establishment of an expanded System and Revenue function within Housing incorporating existing and new posts.

(To resolve)

Background Papers

None stated

Business Case – H010 Staff Resources for Housing Systems Team

Project Initiation Stage

Project/Item Title	Enhancements to the Housing Systems Team		Version	1.0
Corporate Head	Andy Vincent	Service Area	Housing	
Service Committee to Approve Budget	Housing			
Anticipated Cost of Proposal (Capital)		Anticipated Cost Proposal (Revenue)	£135,472 p.a	
To be completed for Projects only (H010)				
Type of Project	Staffing Growth	Project Duration	On-going	
Proposed Project Start Date	Apr-23	Proposed Project End Date		

Business Case Context

Background

Describe the purpose of the Business Case, what benefits are expected to be delivered or what problem will be solved (What is wrong with the status quo? What are the drivers for change?). Is the scheme a result of legal/statutory requirements or a stakeholder consultation?

Members have approved over £500,000 of expenditure over 5 years to upgrade the Housing IT system, there had been minimal investment for decades and the system was not fit for purpose. There is a huge drive to digitalise of our existing services whilst operational responsibilities imposed by legislation and the Regulator of Social Housing are increasing. The resources currently within the Housing Business Unit for NEC system support, rent accounting, leaseholder management, service charges and invoice paying are not adequate to support the current business needs and ongoing system maintenance and development. There are a number of single points of failure that present a high risk to the business. This growth bid proposes centralising these functions under a dedicated manager and create additional posts to ensure that all the modules of the NEC Housing system are adequately supported and the financial functions of the department are appropriately managed. The staffing resources have not been increased to support the current business needs and currently there are only resources within the rent accounting function and technical services which have some element of system support within their roles. These are discreet roles with no cross training or cover during absences. These roles are fully subscribed with existing requirements and additional work is being brought into housing for service charges and leaseholders.

Current roles:

Housing Technical Services - Systems Administrator + Technical Assistant

Housing and Neighbourhood Services - Systems Administrator + Technical Assistant

No provision for IT support is made for Housing Solutions

The Housing Service will continue to work in conjunction with Digital Services in relation to large scale module implementations - as with phase 2 of the Housing System Upgrade these will continue to be facilitated by the IT provider (NEC Housing currently). The Housing Solutions Team has a budgeted post which is currently vacant and with a drop in the number of homeless cases it is proposed to utilise this budget to create a dedicated systems person for the Housing Solutions Service which is implementing 4 new NEC modules which will need support. (Allocations, Choice Based Lettings, Auto bidding and Housing Advice.

Budgeted Posts

Job	Grade	FTE	Post No	Top of salary	Budget inc. 28.5% oncosts
Revenues & Systems Officer	MMA	37	E0065	46,558	59,827
System Administrator	9	37	E0372	34,474	44,299
Technical Assistant	7	23	E0240	27,991	21,873
Revenues & Systems Assistant	7	37	E0066	27,991	35,968
Housing Solutions Officer	10	37	E0055	38,276	49,185
Current Total Costs					211,152

Proposed Posts

Job	Grade	FTE	Post No	Top of salary	Budget (inc. 28.5% oncosts)
Revenues & Systems Manager	SMA	37	E0065	61,724	79,315
System Administrator (Allocations)	9/10	37	E0372	38,276	49,185
System Administrator (Rents & Estates)	9/10	37	New post	38,276	49,185
System Administrator (Technical Services)	9/10	37	New Post	38,276	49,185
Systems Assistant	8	37	E0240	31,065	39,919
Systems Assistant	8	37	E0066	31,065	39,919
Systems Assistant	8	37	New Post	31,065	39,919
Future Total Costs					346,625
Additional supplementary estimate required					135,473

Strategic Links - relate this Business Case to RBC Corporate Strategies and Corporate Values

Corporate Strategies	Describe how this Business Case meets / contributes to the Corporate Business Plan through each of the Corporate Strategies. - Delete those not applicable
Climate Change Strategy <i>Reducing Carbon emissions from the Council's operations and the wider Runnymede community .</i>	Housing will have a fully supported On Line offering with most transactions being carried out through an on line account enabling all tenant interactions to be captured and monitored creating service efficiencies to enable an increased level of home visits, resources for our tenant support services and a face to face focus on the increasingly complex client group. An increased use of data to drive service decisions and improvements will enable us to make more efficient use of staffing resources.
Organisational Development Strategy <i>Enable Officers and Members to perform their duties to the best of their ability and make Runnymede Borough Council the employer of choice for local people.</i>	Improved collection of housing charges - service charges, former tenant arrears and recharges will increase the revenue to the service and enable services to tenants to be enhanced. The extensive capital programme will result in a huge increase in charges to leaseholders which will need to be charged and collected.
Economic Development Strategy <i>Ensuring that the Borough continues to be a leading economy in Surrey and the wider sub-region.</i>	

Business Case – H010 Staff Resources for Housing Systems Team

Project Initiation Stage

<p>Empowering the Community Strategy <i>Evidence Based Decision Making, Listening to residents, Enabling Communities to help themselves and to take control of services or plans for their areas, Working effectively with partner organisations, Dealing with inequalities.</i></p>	<p>This supports the Council's Economic Development Strategy, Empowering the Community Strategy, and Organisational Development Strategy.</p>
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<p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy <i>Support the delivery of a range of services and functions to improve outcomes for residents and their quality of life.</i></p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Corporate Values</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>People-focussed – we will put people at the heart of what we do and they will be able to deal with us easily.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Passionate – we will empower our staff to be passionate about all we do.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Performance driven – we will strive for excellence in all we do.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Innovative – we will aim to creatively improve our services and be open to new ways of providing services.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Promoting equality and diversity – we believe in fairness as well as maintaining a diverse workforce so we can draw upon a wide range of views and experiences to meet the changing needs of our communities.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Delivering excellent value for money – we will strive to be as efficient and effective as possible.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Collaborative – we will work together and with others to deliver positive outcomes for our communities.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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<p>Transparent – we will be open and honest to all about what we do.</p>	<p>Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values - Delete those not applicable</p>
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List your Business Case Objectives, ensuring they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

It is proposed we bring the systems administrators together into one team. It is proposed to add to their functions to administer service charges for tenants and leaseholders within the system - utilising the service charges module designed for that purpose, collection of former tenant arrears, recharges etc

It is proposed to delete a Housing Solutions Officer from the establishment to help fund the recruitment of a Systems Administrator for the Housing Solutions Team.

List the Constraints or Parameters in which this Business Case will operate

This business case assumes all posts within this structure are filled and at the highest salary band.

It should be noted that both systems staff within Housing Technical Services are currently part time - the vacancy within Housing and Neighbourhood Services for a Technical Assistant has been vacant for 8 months

It is therefore not anticipated that the cost to Runnymede Borough Council will be as proposed within this business case

List the Outcomes and Benefits (including efficiency gains) you expect the scheme to achieve

Housing will have a fully supported On Line offering with most transactions being carried out through an on line account enabling all tenant interactions to be captured and monitored creating service efficiencies to enable an increased level of home visits, resources for our tenant support services and a face to face focus on the increasingly complex client group. There is currently no capacity to support tenants with online accounts so in order for these to be rolled out a resource needs to be in place. An increased use of data to drive service decisions and improvements will enable us to make more efficient use of staffing resources.

Improved collection of housing charges - service charges, former tenant arrears and recharges will increase the revenue to the service and enable services to tenants to be enhanced. The extensive capital programme will result in a huge increase in charges to leaseholders which will need to be charged and collected. A high rent collection is essential to fund the service and increased digital transactions will free up more of the Area Housing Manager's time for rent arrears casework.

Appraisal of Business Options (must include evaluation of a 'do nothing' option)

Option 1 (preferred option):
Description
Describe the preferred option and why. Describe the current position and the consequences/reasons that do nothing is not a viable option.

The preferred option is to recruit Housing Systems Staff to support Housing Solutions. If this resource is not increased there is potential for service failure, reduced income and the current investment in the NEC system will not deliver all the potential benefits. Without additional officers the system will be static after each module is implemented with no capacity for continued improvement and introducing new functionality to each module as it is released.

One Housing Solutions Officer post will be deleted to enable this to happen.

The preferred option is also to recruit a Manager for the Housing Systems Team. This service is integral to the work of the whole department and needs to have a strategic and operational lead with the knowledge and capacity to maintain a system that is fit for purpose

There are consequences for the authority of not supporting the Housing Solutions Service. IT systems will not reflect legislation, exposing the authority to the risk of legal challenge.

To accommodate the system not functioning effectively staff resources are being utilised to manually work around the system - making the team less effective and efficient.

Benefits (comparison to other options considered)

Consider any tangible benefits of the Preferred Option, consider benefits such as income generation, savings, great efficiency, compliance with legislation / industry standards – soft benefits, reputation, residents' satisfaction, perception of Council

There are three key benefits:

An IT system that is legally compliant

Business Case – H010 Staff Resources for Housing Systems Team

Project Initiation Stage

Staff efficiency as the IT system is working in a way which supports them and promotes resident self service

Improvements in income collection performance

Advantages to Service Area (preferred option)	Disadvantages to Service Area (preferred option)
More efficient staff working with an IT system which supports them	Cost - although costs can be of set against the advantages
Greater resident/tenant self service	
Improvements in collection performance	
Costs to Organisation (preferred option)	Benefits to Organisation (preferred option)
£135,473 annually	Better self service options
	Reduction in the threat of legal challenge
	Enhanced levels of income collection

Resource Requirements

Staffing Appraisal (preferred option):

Outline the expected staffing / resourcing requirements for the preferred option in the table below, think about resources required in your team and others. This should include job titles, number of hours worked and salary.

Existing Staffing	New RBC Staff Requested	New External Staff Requested
	3 posts as set out above	

Add any costs into the financial appraisal table.

FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

Finance Appraisal (preferred option) - To be completed with the Finance Department:

Describe the financial and resource implications of this option. See Financial Appraisal below to capture numbers.

How will it be financed? Is a Supplementary Revenue Estimate required? Can it be resourced via a Virement (including areas other than your own)?

Is there other funding available? Has funding been agreed? Demonstrate how the council can receive a return on investment, whether cashable, cost avoidance or quantifying tangible

benefits – **Seek advice from your accountant. Business cases will not be considered by the Chief Executive unless a full financial appraisal has been agreed by the Accountancy Team.**

Explain how the cost estimate has been drawn up e.g. based on the costs of a similar project/item; based on quotes from suppliers etc:	Current staffing costs - although salaries would need to be appraised by HR
Please explain how you have considered the VAT implications of the project/item:	
If this project involves building or refurbishment work within corporate assets has the project/work been consulted on and agreed by the Corporate Head of Strategic Land and Property Assets? Please give details.	This does not involve a corporate asset

CAPITAL COSTS

Capital Expenditure (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)
NIL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Capital Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Income (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)
NIL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Capital Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-

REVENUE COSTS

Revenue Expenditure (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)
Staffing costs at top of scale including on-costs at 28.5%	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473
Less: Savings to existing budget (Please specify)						
Total Revenue Expenditure	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473
Revenue Income (specify codes required)	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Year 6 (£)
No direct income but would support improved collection performance						

Business Case – H010 Staff Resources for Housing Systems Team

Project Initiation Stage

Total Revenue Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net change to revenue budgets	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473

Business Case / Risks

Outline the risks (Managerial, Financial, Operational etc.) to RBC if delivering the preferred option. A risk summary only is required here.

Risk Description	Mitigation / Help needed
Not able to recruit to the roles	HR assistance with evaluation of new roles and a campaign around new section opportunities

Impact

Consider the impact of the Business Case on the Organisation / Environment / Technology / Commercialisation / Cultural / HR

Office systems support front line staff to be efficient and effective - commercialisation

Authorisation

Approved by Corporate Head of Finance	Paul French	Date	12/01/2023
Approved by Corporate Leadership Team	YES	Date	19/10/2022
		Priority Score	SHOULD
Committee Report to be presented to:		Date	

Runnymede Borough Council's Home Improvement Policy Report, (Alice Foster, Community Services Manager)

Synopsis of report:

To provide the Committee with an update on the Home Improvement Agency service, delivered in Runnymede Borough Council. This includes gaining approval for the changes to the Home Improvement Agency Assistance Policy and moving to a tenure neutral service.

Recommendation(s):

- **Members approve the proposed Home Assistance Policy (Appendix A) and the move to a tenure neutral service for residents, led by the Home Improvement Agency**

1. Context of report

- 1.1. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) provides a dedicated service for elderly and disabled residents who need extra help to undertake repairs and/or adaptations to their homes. The HIA supports residents throughout the entire grant application process and provides advice on any other assistance available. HIA is a non-profit making service and is funded by the Better Care Fund and resourced by the Council. The cost incurred by the Council is in principle reimbursed by the fees it charges for its services to residents.
- 1.2. In January 2023 a report was presented to Community Services Committee outlining the progress of the service over the previous 12 months, and the development plan for the next year.
- 1.3. This report outlines the progress made throughout the first part of 2023 so far, focusing on stage one of the development plan. This was to revise and update the Housing Assistance Policy.
- 1.4. The changes that have been made are outlined in this report.

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered

- 2.1 Home Improvement Agency Assistance Policy – information outline and updates
 - 2.1.1 In January 2023 the Committee report outlined that the current policy will be updated to provide more information on the wider range of grant options, following the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO).
 - 2.1.2 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) provides general powers for housing authorities to provide assistance for housing renewal, including home adaptations. By publishing the Housing Assistance Policy under the RRO, housing authorities can use government funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant more flexibly. It is

primarily for the provision of home adaptations to help people live independently; however, it enables funding to be spent on other forms of assistance such as repairs and grant top up.

- 2.1.3 Under the RRO there is also the opportunity to consider potential wider use of funding, to deliver improved health outcomes for residents, provided that use is agreed with and in accordance with local Better Care Fund priorities. The Better Care Fund is managed locally by North West Surrey Alliance and Adult Social Care jointly, with officers of the Council contributing to the plans and priorities through attendance at the Local Joint Commissioning Group.
- 2.1.4 The Home Assistance Policy sets out the requirement to provide both mandatory and non-mandatory grants via the DFG, and how both are delivered against the legislation that sets out the requirements relating to DFG expenditure.
- 2.1.5 This flexibility enables the Council to support more residents, and make sure that the grants on offer are relevant to the Boroughs needs and demographic. Runnymede are given approximately £874,000 annually to spend on disabled adaptations.
- 2.1.6 Mandatory grant available is the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Residents can receive up to £30,000 towards adaptations to their home with the aim is to support them to continue to live independently. This includes works such as wet rooms, stairlifts and access solutions, including ramps. For adults, this is a means-tested grant and is for residents who are disabled, elderly or vulnerable. Children are also eligible to apply for a mandatory grant and these are not means tested.
- 2.1.7 In addition to offering residents the mandatory DFG, Runnymede Borough Council provides a selection of discretionary grants to support vulnerable, disabled, and elderly residents. These are divided into two categories, "Minor Works and "Home from Hospital" grants. The policy explains the types of grants available in these strands, which include clearance grants, energy efficiency grants, relocation grants and a dementia living package.
- 2.1.8 Included within the policy is also a discretionary grant of £15,000 that can be used as a 'top-up' to the mandatory £30,000 available through the DFG. With material and labour costing considerably more now, plus the cost-of-living crisis impacting residents affordability in part funding works themselves, this top-up allows residents to receive all adaptations they need to live safely and independently at home.
- 2.1.9 Via the Home Improvement Agency team, residents are signposted to potential loan solutions where they are ineligible for a grant or where works exceed the limit of the funding available, including from Parity Trust, to support them with works to their property. Loans via Parity Trust are only available for homeowners.
- 2.1.10 One of the major changes to the Home Assistance Policy presented with this report is the move to a tenure neutral offering following Ombudsman advice received by the Housing Business Unit in 2023. Taking the step to a tenure neutral process will provide consistency to residents, no matter their housing status and ensure all residents receive a fair, holistic assessment of their needs and appropriate adaptations.

- 2.1.11 As part of the move to a tenure neutral service, the next stage of this transition will include working in partnership with Woking Borough Council to determine the viability of extending the HomeLink Handyperson Service, in Runnymede, to incorporate support to Council tenants, with appropriate works funded either via existing Housing budgets, or where appropriate, paid for privately. The forthcoming work in relation to the Handyperson service, is included within the Community Services Service Area Plan for 2023/2024.
- 2.1.12 For information, the Handyperson service is delivered by Woking Borough Council, in partnership with 3 other local authority partners.
- 2.1.13 In creating a tenure neutral policy, consideration has been given to appropriate levels of sign off for grant applications. The revised policy proposes the following sign off processes:
- All non-means tested grants will be approved by officers, in the case of Housing from an appointed Manager for all Council tenant applications for all other applications, the Independent Living Manager and Deputy Head of Community Services.
 - All means tested grants, including the DFG, will be reviewed and signed off by the Corporate Head of Community Services and the Corporate Head of Housing, who will provide oversight and an independent view of applications within each other's area of responsibility. Where necessary, Adult Social Care or health system partners may be invited to join discussions relating to an application.
- 2.1.14 Following recent guidance on development of the management and use of Disabled Facilities Grant, the policy review now includes information on the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) and how former service personnel can be supported. The HIA Team have attended training on this subject, and alongside the updated policy and knowledge from the team, they will be able to appropriately support applications for grant funding when required.
- 2.1.15 Finally, within the January 2023 report, officers highlighted the intention to adopt a Trusted Assessor model. Foundations, the Governing Body for DFGs, recommend using a Trusted Assessor model to streamline the referral process, and ensure that OT (Occupational Therapy) resources are used most effectively, in more complex cases. To move towards a more holistic approach, aiming to reduce waiting time for residents, better utilise OT resources, and offer a modern service.
- 2.1.16 It is intended to work towards the adoption of a Trusted Assessor model, that will be able to be used across all tenures, given that this approach provides an effectively and timely way to progress more routine, yet urgent applications, for example a stairlift for a resident who is at risk of falls and lives alone.
- 2.1.17 As a result, the policy has been written with the inclusion of the use of Trusted Assessors in Runnymede, to enable this approach to be implemented later in 2023/2024.

2.2 Housing update provided by the Housing Team

- 2.2.1 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service proposed a Housing Adaptations Policy at the June 2021 Housing Committee meeting. However,

following feedback from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman involving an individual housing case that had been escalated to them, a tenure neutral policy has been developed across the authority.

- 2.2.2 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman highlighted recent legislation, guidance and case law to the authority which had not been reflected within the policy. - R (McKeown) v Islington LBC [2020] EWHC 779 (Admin); [2020] PTSR 1319
 - R v Birmingham City Council ex p Mohammed [1999] 1 WLR 33, QBD
 - Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England [2022] (DLUH&C, DH&SC).
- 2.2.3 External legal advice has been received from a Barrister at 4-5 Gray's Inn Square to support the development of the new and proposed policy.
- 2.2.4 Given the tenure neutral status of the new policy, whilst approval of the Home Assistance Policy is a responsibility of Community Services Committee, approval of the policy in relation to the Councils housing stock and tenants, will also be sought from Housing Committee.

2.3 Housing Assistance Policy next steps

- 2.3.1 As a requirement of adopting the RRO, public consultation will take place in Summer 2023 prior to the formal adoption of the new policy.
- 2.3.2 Consultation will be undertaken through the following channels:
 - Through use of Council social media platforms
 - Consultation discussions to be held at RBC Day Centres with hard copy material available.
 - Consultation with Runnymede Access Liaison Group (RALG).
 - Promotion of the consultation via community notice boards
- 2.3.3 Member support with the consultation is welcomed, particularly encouraging residents in the communities they serve to engage in the process. Again, we are aware that some residents will not have access to technology, where required paper copies of the policy will be made available.
- 2.3.4 On the basis that the consultation is supportive of the policy, it will then be implemented by officers. However, should there be any considerable changes required because of the consultation, a further report will be brought back to Committee.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The strategic focus of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy is placed under three main objectives with aim one 'Healthy Homes,' linking directly and positively to the work the HIA Team carry out. The service supports residents to live safely at home, helping them to continue to live independently.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1. Moving towards a tenure neutral service is likely to have resource implications. These will firstly be on staffing. The HIA Team will be taking on a greater amount of work, with 3000 additional social housing properties. The Team will work closely with Housing to share the workload and prevent any backlogs or delays due to resource.
- 4.2. There may also be resource implications on revenue costs for the Housing Team. This is because they expect to accept more applications for disabled adaptations due to the change in policy following the legislation. This will be monitored, and a further report will be presented if a supplementary estimate is required.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1. Relevant legal issues are dealt within the body of the report.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1. The HIA team supports disabled and vulnerable residents in Runnymede. It is implemented in accordance with the principles of the Council's Equality Objectives 2016-2020.
- 6.2. As part of the policy review, an Equalities Impact Assessment has been conducted to ensure we do not discriminate or disadvantage any residents. It also helps to promote equity within the service.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 To run a sustainable service we need to ensure that our people, our materials, and our contractors are sustainable.
- 7.2 To have sustainable people, the workforce needs to ensure they are working together effectively to deliver the best possible outcome for residents. The HIA Team and Housing Team will work collaboratively throughout the application process to utilise all skills and resources in the best way possible.
- 7.3 To make sure our materials and contractors are sustainable; we are carrying out a procurement process to support with sustainable procurement practises. Once this has been agreed, it will be brought to Committee for approval.
- 7.4 It is recognised that a mandatory part of the HIA service is the requirement for Caseworkers to travel around the borough to visit clients in their home, and there will be an environmental impact associated with the use of their car. To mitigate this impact, they are classed as mobile workers, and able to work from anywhere in the borough. For example, if the clients house is closer to their home, they will work from home before and after the visit.

8. Other implications (where applicable)

- 8.1 None identified.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. This report outlines progress and changes made to the Housing Assistance Policy, including the use of the DFG and the impact of the RRO. There are varying ways we the Council can spend the DFG funding and these are outlined in the policy.
- 9.2. The policy update includes a breakdown of all grants, how to access them, and the suitability criteria. Following an update from the Housing Team, the policy describes the change to becoming a tenure neutral service.
- 9.3. This report also outlines the next steps for the HIA Team, including changing the Handyperson service to tenure neutral and beginning to adopt a Trusted Assessor model over the next 12 months.
- 9.4. Following Committee, the Policy will be sent out for consultation to relevant groups, including RALG. All considerable changes will be brought back to Committee for approval.

(To resolve)

Background papers

Background papers - Housing Adaptations Policy from page 166 of this agenda pack [Agenda-9-June-2021-Housing-Committee \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#)

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Home Improvement Assistance Policy

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 The Home Improvement Agency Assistance Policy sets out the financial assistance that will be provided to private homeowners and private tenants in Runnymede Borough Council who are seeking assistance from the Home Improvement Agency Team. It also sets out the assistance available to Runnymede Residents living in Social Housing properties.

1.2 It outlines the procedures introduced in response to the adoption of the Runnymede Private Sector Reviewal Strategy 2019 – 2024.

1.3 The Council's obligations, powers and duties in relation to the provision of financial assistance for repair and adaptations are contained within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Central Government provision for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and the Handyperson Service (HPS) is allocated to the Council through the Better Care Fund (BCF) via Surrey County Council (SCC) and North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group (NWSCCG). This policy provides flexibility to deliver an adaptations programme, according to local priorities and available resources.

1.4 The overall aims and objectives of the Home Improvement Assistance Policy are:

- To assist low income, elderly or disabled persons whose homes are in need of urgent repair, to make their homes safe to live in
- To support the adaptation of disabled people's homes to enable them to live independently and ensure their homes are suitable for their needs or support disabled people to move to an alternative home that will better meet their needs
- To assist low income elderly, disabled, families with children who are homeowners and private tenants to tackle energy efficiency and fuel poverty
- To assist residents who have been discharged from hospital back to their homes to minimise bed blocking and support recovery from illness
- To provide a subsidised home repair service through a Handyperson Service (HPS) to enable residents to maintain a safe and secure home environment
- To make best use of the Council's property assets so that the long-term benefit derived from the housing stock is preserved for future use.
- Ensure residents have a full understanding of the parameters within which decisions are made

1.5 The underlying principles of the Policy are:

- Homeowners should, in the first instance, be responsible for improving and maintaining their homes. Financial assistance from the Council is only appropriate where homeowners do not have the means to do so. Private tenants should first consult with their landlord, who is responsible for maintaining and repairing properties.
- All Social Housing tenants should follow this policy when applying for adaptations to their property
- The Council's financial assistance scheme must provide best value. The Council must use its public funds prudently and effectively. Loans will be provided in preference to grant aid where this is considered appropriate and affordable for the homeowner. As the loans are ultimately repayable, the Council will be able to assist more people and improve more homes by this method. Grant aid will only be provided where loans are not appropriate
- Any financial assistance scheme cannot assist all homeowners in need, or even address all cases of unsatisfactory housing. The financial resources available to the Council are limited and grant assistance is only available in certain circumstances that have been designed to address the priorities set out below

- Repair or adaptation of a property for the existing occupier may not always be the most reasonable and practical solution. In handling applications for assistance the Council will have to assess the appropriateness of the case and give consideration to alternatives such as re-housing or re-location.

2. Financial Assistance

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

2.1 The Council has a statutory obligation under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to administer mandatory DFGs to provide aids and adaptations to enable disabled residents to live independently in their own homes.

2.2 The eligibility criteria, scope of the works and general requirements governing DFGs are prescribed by the Government and the Council is unable to deviate from these requirements.

2.3 To be eligible for a grant:

- The applicant must either be a home-owner or tenant, including private tenants, local authority and social housing tenants
- The applicant or beneficiary of the adaptation must be registered disabled or eligible to be registered
- A written recommendation from an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor, that adaptation works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the client for one or more of the following purposes:
 - i) Facilitating access to and from the dwelling or building by the disabled occupant;
 - ii) Making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant;
 - iii) Access to the principal family room by the disabled occupant;
 - iv) Access to or providing a bedroom for the disabled occupant;
 - v) Access to or providing a room containing a WC for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
 - vi) Access to or providing a room containing a bath or shower for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
 - vii) Access to or providing a room containing a wash hand basin for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
 - viii) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled person;
 - ix) Improving or providing a heating system for the disabled person;
 - x) Facilitating the use of or power, light or heat by the disabled person by altering same or by providing additional means of control;
 - xi) Facilitating access and movement around the dwelling to enable the disabled person to provide care for someone;
 - xii) Making the dwelling or building suitable for the accommodation, welfare or employment of the disabled person
 - xiii) Facilitating access to and from the garden by a disabled occupant, or making access to the garden safe for a disabled occupant

2.4 If an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor assessment is undertaken and recommendations made, the Council may review the recommendation before a formal application is received. Consideration will be given to whether the proposals are "reasonable and practical". If a private Occupational Therapist has provided the recommendation, the Council will consult with the Social Services Authority as required under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

2.5 As referenced above, Trusted Assessors will be utilised for assessments where appropriate. For further information on the instances that a Trusted Assessor will be used instead of an Occupational Therapist please discuss this with a member of the Home Improvement Team at the point of referral.

2.6 Means Testing (Appendix A)

The applicant and their spouse/civil partner/common law partner shall be means tested to determine what contribution (if any) they will be obliged to make towards the costs of works. Means testing shall not be applied where the beneficiary of the adaptation is under 19 years of age.

2.7 Grant financial limits

The maximum amount of grant is set by central government and is £30,000. Where a financial contribution is required, the level of grant will be reduced by the amount of any assessed contribution towards the cost of the works.

2.8 Grant conditions

It is a condition of the grant that the applicant or a member of the applicant's family will occupy the dwelling as an only or main residence throughout the grant condition period. The grant condition period lasts for five years from the date certified by the Council that works are satisfactorily completed.

A condition regarding repayment will be attached where the grant exceeds £5,000. The repayment condition will be applied where the property is disposed of (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) within 10 years or if there is a change of ownership within 10 years of the completion of the works. Repayment will be limited to £10,000. If subsequent loans grants are made, the total of both will be taken into account. The charge does not apply for Social Housing residents.

Where a grant is subject to repayment conditions then the Council will take the following into account when asking for repayment:

The extent to which you would suffer financial hardship;

Whether the sale is to enable you to take up employment, or to change location of your employment;

Whether the sale is being made for reasons connected with your physical or mental health or well-being;

Whether the sale is being made to enable you to live with or near a person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care which you will provide;

Whether the sale is made to enable someone to provide care for you.

Having considered all these factors the Council must be satisfied that repayment is reasonable in the circumstances.

These conditions only apply to privately owned properties.

2.9 Additional information relating to Social Housing properties

The Council will not usually replace adaptations in a property where they have been removed by the current resident. If they are required, it will be at the Council's discretion where to reinstall, and the cost may be recharged to the resident.

For social housing tenants, where a home has been adapted for a specific resident who no longer lives there, the Council will try to identify a suitable tenant for the property. In the event that this is not possible, the property may be let with adaptations in place, and these will not usually be removed at the request of the new resident. The property will be advertised and let as such unless there is a prior agreement in writing from the Council to carry out works. Where a resident living in an adapted property is being moved because of redevelopment or refurbishment of their home, essential adaptations will be carried out in the

new home being offered. This is most likely to apply to residents of previously converted housing, older properties and Independent Retirement Living schemes which require refurbishment.

During planned works, the Council will maintain any existing adaptation or fixed equipment if it is still needed for the household. The Council may remove semi-portable equipment or minor adaptations such as a handrail, stair lift or specialist shower if no longer needed due to a permanent change in the household requirements. Fixed adaptations such as structural alterations or concrete ramps will be retained and maintained.

Pavement crossovers and hard standings will be considered if recommended by an OT. If the Council does commit to completing the work, these requests are subject to approval by the Planning Department and Surrey County Council Highways.

There is no statutory duty to grant works to communal areas. Where works are both necessary and reasonably practical, the Council will consider essential access requirements. Such proposals may require the consent of other residents and must not compromise other residents' safety and will therefore be risk assessed on a case-by-case basis. In Social Housing, the Council will consider the cost and practicality of making provision for residents' mobility scooters and whether it is appropriate to offer alternative accommodation. Requests for the provision of a mobility scooter store without any other adaptations will be considered by a Trusted Assessor at the Council regarding a Surrey County Council Occupational Therapist.

Where a tenant requests a mutual exchange or transfer from their adapted property to one that is not adapted the Council are likely to decline the request unless there is evidence that the adaptations are no longer required. The Council may not carry out further adaptations to the subsequent property unless there are extenuating circumstances. When tenants request a mutual exchange, the incoming tenant will be expected to have an OT recommendation for any installed adaptations.

Tenants wishing to carry out their own adaptations, including making provision for a mobility scooter, need permission from the Council before any work is carried out. The resident must;

- Ensure proposed work is carried out by a fully competent qualified contractor
- Conform to the appropriate regulations and legislation
- Be responsible for putting right any damage relating to the works being carried out
- Contact the Council Home Improvement Agency Team upon completion of any work so an inspection is carried out
- Provide the Council with any relevant certificates of the work upon completion
- Maintain and repair any equipment or fittings they have installed

3. Discretionary assistance

3.1 In addition to providing mandatory DFG's, the Council has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002. Using these powers, the Authority has agreed to offer discretionary grants for private sector residential adaptations in certain specific circumstances and where funding permits.

3.2 The policy has been revised in response to increased funding, through the Better Care Fund, and in line with recommendations made to Surrey councils through Foundations (national Home Improvement Agency charity) Adaptation and Equipment Report 2017.

3.3 Any discretionary assistance will only be considered having regard to the financial resources available at the time.

4. Minor Works Assistance

4.1 Small grants are available on a discretionary basis, within an annual budget limit, to assist low income, vulnerable homeowners and tenants to carry out small scale works of repair or improvement which address their health, safety and security needs or otherwise essential minor repairs to improve the condition of the home.

4.2 These grants are only available for works administered by our HIA and only in circumstances where there is no other funding available to carry out the works.

- Maximum grant is £5,000 plus any VAT chargeable and fees payable to the Home Improvement Agency.
- No more than £6,000 (plus VAT and/or Fees) can be payable in regard to the property within a 3 year period.
- Applicants must be over 60, disabled or otherwise vulnerable.
- Applicants must have lived in the property for a minimum of 2 years prior to the application.
- Applicants with savings of more than £23,250 will not be eligible.

4.3 Applicants must be in receipt of, or eligible for, a means tested benefit; or be proven not to be able to afford the works. If the applicant has sufficient capital, they will be expected to use their own resources and not apply for a grant. However, assistance can be provided with organising the works for a fee.

4.4 Adaptation work that the Council could carry out to an individual flat or house which otherwise meets the current household needs includes:

- Installation of grab rails in various locations throughout a property
- Installation of access steps/ramps to front and rear entrances
- Additional internal banister rails
- Additional external handrails
- Installation of lever taps
- Installation of over-bath shower facilities.

All adaptations for Social Housing properties will be subject to suitability.

5. Minor Works – Clearance

5.1 Small grants are available on a discretionary basis, within an annual budget limit, for complex social support for “extreme” cleans where there may be hoarding issues, but not filthy and verminous. The grant is aimed to support vulnerable clients in private dwellings with significant hoarding that impact on the client’s well-being and neighbouring properties.

- £1500 towards clearing a home
- Residents will be assessed to check they do not have more than £23,500 in savings
- The grant is a one-off payment, and cannot be applied for multiple times
- Payment can be made to the caseworker or cleaning company direct
- Referral must come from Environmental Health and/or Adult Social Care
- Referral must include the reason why the funding cannot come from Adult Social Care
- Resident must have a dedicated caseworker from Environmental Health (EH) and/or Adult Social Care (ASC) who will coordinate the approach
- Approach will be coordinated by the referrer (EH or ASC)

- Specialised hoarding company must be used for the de-cluttering
- On-going support should be put in place to support any relapses e.g. CBT, group therapy, peer support
- Fire service involved if needed

6. Energy efficiency grant

6.1 Small grants are available to support residents in replacing or repairing central heating boilers and heating systems.

6.2 These grants are for urgent minor repairs and energy efficiency top up grants and are only available for works administered by HIA and in circumstances where the resident has no alternative means of self-funding. Residents must check works cannot be completed by their insurance company before applying. The eligibility criteria is:

- Maximum grant is £2,000 plus any VAT chargeable and fees payable to the Home Improvement Agency.
- No more than £6,000 (plus VAT and/or Fees) can be payable in regard to the property within a 3 year period
- Applicants must be over 60, disabled or otherwise vulnerable
- Applicants must have lived in the property for a minimum of 2 years prior to the application
- Applicants with savings of more than £23,250 will not be eligible
- Applicants must be in receipt of, or eligible for, a means tested benefit; or be proven not to be able to afford the works. If the applicant has sufficient capital, they will be expected to use their own resources and not apply for a grant. However, assistance can be provided with organising the works for a fee.

For Social Housing tenants, boilers and heating repairs and installations are covered under the obligation of the Council in relation to tenancy.

7. Feasibility grant

7.1 A feasibility grant can be used:

If an Occupational Therapist assessment is undertaken and recommendations made for a DFG, and

- You qualify financially for a mandatory DFG, and
- If you need to get a structural survey done for more complex disabled adaptations , or
- To investigate other options in line with the OT's recommendation so you get the most suitable adaptation

7.2 There is a limit of £5,000 for this grant and where proposed works are feasible it will be applied to the DFG. For example if a person has a £5,000 feasibility grant then the maximum mandatory DFG would be £25,000.

7.3 A DFG means test will be undertaken for the disabled person and any partner to determine eligibility for this grant. If the disabled person is a child, the parents or legal guardian are not means tested.

8. Relocation Grant

8.1 Where it is assessed that adaptation works required to a property relating to a disabled person are uneconomical or considered unreasonable and/or impracticable having regard to

the age and condition of the dwelling or building, the Council has discretion to provide grant aid to assist in the reasonable costs associated in moving to a pre-adapted or more easily adaptable property.

8.2 These costs may include:

- Removal expenses
- Legal costs
- Valuation costs

8.3 These costs will not include those related to the purchase of a home, such as stamp duty or a deposit.

8.4 To qualify:

- The applicant must be either an owner-occupier or tenant. This includes tenants in both private and council owned properties.
- The relevant person must be a disabled person within the household, registered or eligible to be registered with Adult Social Care.

8.5 There is a limit of £10,000 for this grant per application. It will also be possible to apply for DFG for the new property, however to a maximum combined value of £30,000 if within Runnymede borough. For example if a person has a £10,000 relocation grant then the maximum DFG at that new property would be £20,000.

8.6 The Council reserves the right to place a legal charge on the property, for repayment of this grant, if the property is sold or ownership transferred within ten years of the award in line with the Regulatory Reform Order.

8.7 A DFG means test will be undertaken of the disabled person and any partner to determine eligibility for this grant. If the disabled person is a child, the parents or legal guardian are not means tested.

9. Discretionary Adaptation Assistance (DAA)

9.1 In some cases the extent of the aids and adaptation required for a disabled applicant is extensive and the total cost of the work may exceed the amount available under the DFG regime. Where the additional funding cannot be met by SCC, the housing association (where applicable) or the disabled occupant and all other sources have been exhausted, consideration will be given to providing the necessary top-up funds.

9.2 The Discretionary Adaptation Assistance (DAA) grant can be used for the following:

- Where the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) isn't enough to pay for the works needed
- Where the works aren't covered under a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), such as adapting or making a home safe to allow a hospital discharge
- For getting adaptation works done quickly for a terminally ill patient
- For repairing adaptations that are already in the property

The maximum grant available is £15,000.

9.3 To qualify for DAA the client must have, but not limited to:

- An Occupational Therapy assessment or a referral from a health professional
- Savings of less than £23,500
- Means test completed
- Surveyor specification, detailing the work required

- Contractor estimates for the works
- Owner permission received from a landlord (if applicable)
- Risk assessment from OT, determining the risks if the works do not take place

Where DAA is required, approval is subject to a panel of Head of Community Services, Head of Housing and Adult Social Care. Should there be other health partners involved with a case, they will also be invited to discuss specific applications.

9.4 Conditions of the grant

A repayment condition will be applied where the property is disposed of (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) within 10 years or if there is a change of ownership within 10 years of the completion of the works. Repayment may be waived if there are exceptional circumstances requiring the sale or disposal and repayment would cause exceptional hardship.

This charge only applies to residents that privately own their homes.

10. Dementia Living Package

10.1 Small grant available under the Discretionary Adaption Assistance Scheme, for residents with a diagnosis of Dementia. To provide assistance for items such as improvement of lighting and colour contrasts, signage, equipment, improve internal and external access.

10.2 The qualifying conditions are the same as the Discretionary Adaption Assistance grant, but the maximum contribution is up to £3000.

10.3 This budget will be ringfenced each year and is subject to sufficient funds being available.

11. Home from Hospital Package

11.1 Small grant available under the Discretionary Adaption Assistance Scheme. This grant is for fast tracked repairs for people awaiting discharge from hospital or immediately after hospital discharge. Referrals should be by hospital staff or other health and social care professional. Referrals for assessment of need also able to be made by Social Prescribing Officer and Handyman service.

11.2 The maximum grant available is £7500. Funding only available to residents awaiting discharge from Hospital or Hospice or who have been discharged no more than 14 days previous. Funding is available for adaptations to properties including the express installation of stair lifts and ramps(whenever possible)

12. Disabled Facilities Loan

12.1 You may be able get a Disabled Facilities Loan if you:

- Own your home
- Already have a Disabled Facilities grant (DFG) or a Discretionary Adaptation Assistance (DAA) grant but need extra money to do the works

12.2 Grant financial limits

The maximum loan available is £20,000. The interest rates are 0%.

12.3 Conditions of the loan

If you sell your property, you will have to pay back any outstanding balance on the loan. The term of the loan can be between 1 and 15 years, depending on how much you can afford to pay back each month.

13. Home Trust Loan Scheme/Major Works Loan (applicable to homeowners only)

13.1 The Council offers a subsidised loan to homeowners to improve and renovate their homes. The loan sits alongside the existing discretionary grant policy and can help finance works where the applicant would be excluded by the stricter eligibility criteria for a grant.

13.2 Runnymede Borough Council is working in partnership with Parity Trust. Parity Trust is a socially responsible, not-for-profit lending organisation. By working with Parity Trust, a low-cost lending scheme, subsidised by the Council is available for home repair or maintenance.

13.3 These loans for up to £25,000 are available for elderly and disabled homeowners who would otherwise be unable to carry out the works.

- The homeowner must be in receipt of a means tested benefit or otherwise have insufficient capital or income to be able to finance the total cost of the essential works privately (this will be established by application of the means testing calculation currently used for Disabled Facilities Grants)
- The homeowner must either be disabled or be a person of 60 years or over, (if a couple, the older person being 60 years or older).
- The work needs to remedy repair or serious defects and will be inspected before approval is given.

13.4 The interest on the loan is fixed for the life of the loan at a low rate (typical APR of 5.63% as of June 2023). Parity Trust will do a full financial assessment and repayments will be set at an amount you can afford. If you do not qualify for a Home Trust Loan, Parity Trust may be able to offer advice on other options available to you including other low cost, non-subsidised, loans.

13.5 The loan will be secured against your property and applicants must be understanding that their home may be repossessed if they do not keep up repayments on a mortgage or other debts secured against it.

14. Runnymede Renewal Loan Scheme (applicable to homeowners only)

14.1 Runnymede Borough Council will provide secured loans on a discretionary basis in accordance with legislative processes to elderly and disabled owner occupiers who do not qualify for a Home Trust Loan. The property must be classified as having a Category 1 or 2 hazard (as defined by the Housing Act 2004) and be subject to an improvement notice. The Council may undertake “works by agreement” after service of a statutory notice requiring those works to be carried out.

- The homeowner must either be disabled or be a person of 60 years or over, (if a couple, the older person being 60 years or older).
- The loan can only be for the cost of works together with ancillary costs that are needed to remedy the identified hazard(s), plus any VAT chargeable and fees.
- No interest will be applied to the first £6,000 of the loan. For amounts in excess of £6,000, interest on the amount over £6,000 at 5% per annum will be added to the repayable amount each 1st April following the first anniversary of the loan being made.

- Repayment of the loan may be deferred until such time as the person named on the loan and partner (if applicable cease living at the property).
- Any partial voluntary repayments that the client may wish to make will be deducted from the loan, reducing in the interest-bearing element first. No charge or penalty will be applied to voluntary repayments.
- Clients will be sent an annual statement detailing the amount of the loan or loans, together with any interest accrued.
- The Notice will be recorded as a charge in the local land charges register. Repayment will be recovered when the property is disposed of.

15. Application Process and Grant Conditions

15.1 As part of a grant of loan, there will be general conditions attached. They are as follows:

- A minimum of two estimates are required, or where appropriate the Council's schedule of rates with specialist contractors e.g. stair lifts.
- A formal decision will be provided within 3 months for applications to Minor Works Assistance and Discretionary Adaptation Assistance funding schemes
- A formal decision on Mandatory DFG applications will be provided within no more than 6 months.
- Any grant approval will include fees and client contribution.
- The client contribution must be paid before work commences.
- The aggregate of interim or staged payments must not exceed nine-tenths of the amount of the grant.
- The assisted works must be completed within twelve months from the date of approval, or such further period as the Council may allow.
- The assisted works must be carried out in accordance with such specifications as the Council determine.
- The assisted works must be carried out by the contractors that submitted the estimates upon which the assistance was approved.
- The assisted works must be executed to the satisfaction of the Council.
- The Council must be provided with an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt for the works and any professional fees or charges.
- Advance payments will only be made with the prior approval of the Council before works commence e.g. if contractors request stage payments.
- Unforeseen works will be regarded as additional works which could not have been reasonably foreseen at the time of approval but are necessary and can only be approved with the agreement of the Council.
- Works eligible for funding through an insurance claim will not receive assistance.
- The dwelling or home must be occupied as the applicant's main residence. The applicant must also certify that they intend to remain in the property for 5 years.
- Repayment of the grant is required should the home be sold or transferred within 10 years of the date that the works are certified as being complete.
- To assist with recovery in the event of a breach a grant condition, a charge will be registered on the local land charges on houses where the grant exceeds £5000.

16. Home Improvement Agency

16.1 The Council provides a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) –to provide a dedicated service for elderly and disabled residents who need extra help to undertake repairs and/or adaptations to their homes.

16.2 The HIA will assist residents through the whole grant application process and provide advice on other assistance available. The HIA officers and surveyors visit the client in their own home to:

- Assist with completing application forms
- Undertake the financial check to establish the client's eligibility for a grant
- Meet with the Occupational Therapist (OT) to agree how the adaptation will be done in accordance with the OT assessment
- Undertake the function of Trusted Assessors in relation to minor adaptation and works
- Prepare schedules of work, detailed drawings and contract documents
- Help in finding suitable and reliable builders/ contractors and in obtaining competitive quotes
- Supervise the works
- Obtain the required Local Authority Planning and Building Regulations approvals where necessary for major schemes

16.3 The HIA service is non-profit-making. It is jointly funded by SCC, NWSCCG and the Council. It is also partly funded through the fees it charges for its services.

17. Handy Person Service

17.1 Runnymede Borough Council work in partnership with Spelthorne, Surrey Heath and Woking Borough Councils to provide a Handyperson service to residents of the borough. The service operates under the service title Homelink, with Woking Borough Council the lead partner borough, responsible for the coordination and delivery of the service.

17.2 The core objective of the service is to provide a low-cost Handyperson service. The service is for elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents to undertake minor works of home repair and home safety such as:

- Minor aids and adaptations
- Fitting of half steps and galvanised rails to access doors
- Home security work, including key safes, door chains and spy holes
- Installing smoke or carbon monoxide alarms
- Electrical jobs such as changing light pendants, installing or replacing an extractor fan
- Plumbing work such as replacing taps or washers
- Small DIY jobs including changing light bulbs, hanging curtains or blinds, putting up shelves, changing toilet seats, assembling small items of furniture and draught proofing.

17.3 This service is open to homeowners or private tenants in Runnymede who meet any of the following criteria:

- Are aged 60+
- Have a disability
- Are vulnerable in some other way, or
- For tenants, we can only help if the work would normally be your responsibility, rather than your landlord's.

18. Appeals and Approval Process

18.1 Any applicant wishing to appeal against a decision on the provision or recovery of financial assistance may appeal in writing to the Corporate Head of Community Services or Corporate Head of Housing.

18.2 Any person wishing to complain about the level or standard of service provided should follow the Runnymede Borough Council complaints scheme.

18.3 Non-means tested grants for privately owned properties, private rented and housing association properties will be approved by the management of the Home Improvement Agency. Residents residing in Social Housing will be approved by members of the Housing Management Team.

18.4 All means tested grants will be ratified by a panel made up of the Head of Community Services and Corporate Head of Housing.

19. Communication and Consultation

19.1 Throughout the process, residents from all tenures will be provided with clear and comprehensive advice and information, with the aim for a single point of contact. Prior to the adoption of this policy and any future amends, this policy will be brought to Committee for approval.

19.2 When works to all properties are approved, the council will consult with residents, explaining the scope of the work and how long it is likely to take to complete.

19.3 Where adaptations are refused or declined by the resident in favour of a move to alternative accommodation, the Council will provide support during this process.

19.4 The Council will actively promote this policy and the adaptations service through a range of media including (but not limited to) leaflets, posters, newsletters and the Council website.

20. Armed Forces Covenant

20.1 The Armed Forces Act 2021 places legal duty on specific public bodies to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory function. This includes the Disabled Facilities Grant.

20.2 Runnymede Borough Council will follow the guidance set out in the Armed Forces Covenant when working with and dealing with applications for DFGs with families and individuals in the Armed Forces.

20.3 The Armed Forces Covenant details further information on the legislation and guidance that Runnymede Borough Council will follow.

21. Equality and Diversity

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

21.2 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.

21.3 The screening found **XXX TO BE ADDED ONCE FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM EIA GROUP XXX**

22. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	April 2023	First draft of joint policy created with Housing and HIA		Alice Foster & Andy Vincent	

Appendix A

Resources guidance for means testing for Disabled Facilities Grants

For Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applications made on behalf of a child, or for adult applicants who are in receipt of a 'passporting benefit' *, the mandatory DFG grant will pay for the reasonable cost of works and fees up to a maximum of £30,000.

In all other cases, DFG applications are subject to a statutory financial means test. The assessment looks at the resources of the disabled person (the relevant person) and their spouse/ partner and their dependents. The test is used to determine how much, if anything, the relevant person is required to contribute towards the cost of the works. The applicant must pay their contribution (calculated by the means test) towards the cost of grant-eligible expenses.

Where the applicant (the owner or tenant of the property) is not the disabled person, it is the disabled person (together with their spouse/ dependents etc.) who will be means tested and who will be required to declare, and provide documentary evidence of, all income, savings and capital.

Passporting Benefits

Adult DFG applicants who are in receipt of one of the following benefits will be 'Passported' to receive the reasonable cost of the eligible works and fees, without undergoing a financial means test.

- Income Support
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Guarantee pension credit
- Working/Child tax credit – income (for tax credits) below £15,050
- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit

Appendix B

Definitions

Definition of vulnerable households

Vulnerable household groups targeted for assistance are those who may be particularly at risk of suffering health and safety problems as a result of poor housing conditions in situations where they do not have the resources or support to undertake remedial action themselves. Married couples and partners are treated as a single person when living at the same property and both sets of finances are taken into account.

Applicants must be:

- In receipt of a means tested benefit (as set out below) which will mean no contribution to make towards the cost of works, subject to the grant maximums. In addition to the income related benefits that are ‘passporting benefits’ for a DFG or;
- Have the state retirement pension as their main source of income with savings of less than £15,000, or be subject to a means test which closely follows the statutory test for DFG’s
- The test looks at an applicant’s income and capital and their ability to meet the cost of the works from their own resources.

Eligible benefits

- Income support
- Income-based employment & support allowance (not contribution based ESA)
- Income based jobseeker’s allowance (not contribution based JSA)
- Working tax credit and/or child tax credit (where your annual income is below the income threshold to attract the maximum tax credit amount)
- Housing benefit
- Guaranteed pension credit (not savings pension credit alone)
- Universal credit

Definition of “reasonable and practical”

The definition below is taken from “Disabled Facilities Grant delivery: Guidance for local authorities in England”.

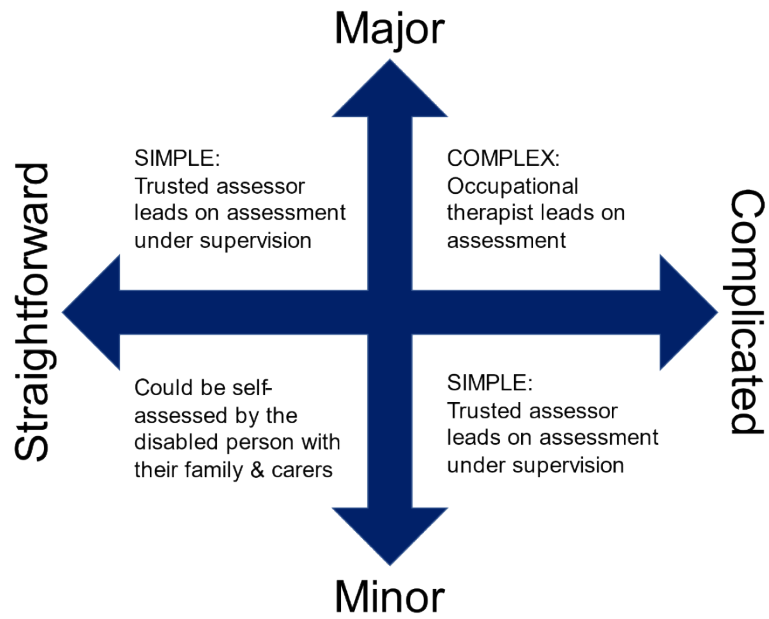
Where the relevant works have been judged to be necessary and appropriate, the housing authority then has to consider whether it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having “regard to the age and condition” of the property. The reason for this test is that it may not be a good use of resources to award a DFG to adapt an old, run-down building. Each application should be considered on its own merits but where a home is in serious disrepair or beyond economic repair then a housing authority may consider that the relevant works are not reasonable and practicable. In these cases, it would be good practice for local authorities to provide information and advice to the applicant on their housing options. Other issues, such as whether the property is otherwise suitable for the disabled person are not relevant considerations.

Triaging

Foundations, the National Body for DFGs and HIAs in England, and the Government DFG guidance recommends that authorities use a triage system to make an initial assessment of the complexity and urgency of the case.

All referrals will be triaged as the following:

- Urgent & simple
- Non-urgent & simple
- Urgent & complex
- Non-urgent & complex



Authorities are recommended to treat cases as urgent in the following circumstances:

- Coming out of hospital and at risk
- Living alone and at risk
- Severe cognitive dysfunction and at risk
- Living with a carer who is elderly or disabled
- Living without heating or hot water and at risk
- Limited life expectancy

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Update, (Maggie Ward, Head of Housing Services and Business Planning)

Synopsis of report:

Members approved a 5-year Homelessness Strategy in 2019 which is now in its final year. This report provides an update on the strategy and informs Members of the intention to commence work on a new 3-year strategy to be brought to this committee in March 2024

Recommendation(s):

Members note the update on the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 and the commencement of the review of the current strategy and evidential data with a new draft 3-year strategy to be brought to this Committee in March 2024

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every local authority to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy (Rough Sleeping was added to the original remit by government in light of the rise in homelessness). The current Runnymede Borough Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by Members in 2019. This report provides an update on the strategy's action plan for years 4 and 5 and informs members of the intention to commence work on a new strategy.

2. Report

- 2.1 This will be the final year of the existing strategy and most of the items within the 5-year action plan were completed in earlier years. An update on the current activity is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.2 The Council's duties towards people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness are complex. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 extended these duties beyond those people who met the priority need threshold and the Council must provide advice and assistance to anyone who approaches us, irrespective of local connection or circumstances. The duties thereafter will depend on what form of assistance is provided and this will be tailored to the individual in line with legislation.
- 2.3 The Council has both a Homelessness Adviser and a dedicated Rough Sleeping Adviser from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who meet regularly with officers to review progress on the strategy action plan. Feedback has been that the Council has been successful in limiting the level of rough sleeping in the borough and the strategy has been effective. The overriding issue within the borough is the lack of affordable housing options for those seeking accommodation.

2.4 In March 2022 this committee approved a No Second Night Out Policy to support the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. When a person makes a homeless application to the Council, we are required by law to carry out an assessment of their needs (s.189A) and we will consider whether they are classed as a priority need (s.189). For individuals that are not classed as a priority, there is no duty on the Council to provide interim accommodation and if they have nowhere else to go, this can result in a person becoming a rough sleeper. Rough sleepers are people who sleep or bed down in the open air, such as on the street, in tents, doorways or bus shelters etc. There are many more people who are in insecure situations which make them vulnerable and unable to access services.

2.5 The Council takes part in an annual rough sleeper count, coordinated by HomelessLink for Central Government. This estimate/count is based on the number of rough sleepers identified on one night of the year in autumn. This is to give a snapshot figure only. The recent returns for Runnymede are:

Figure 1 Rough Sleeper Count

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
3	5	4	4	2	2	2	1

2.6 As a result of the No Second Night Out Policy there has been an increase in emergency bed and breakfast placements which have been funded by government grants. This enables the Council to accommodate people whilst assessing their housing options and providing them with a Personal Housing Plan (PHP). There is then financial support available for deposits and rent in advance if a property can be found that meet our required standard. The lack of such properties within the Borough means that applicants need to be willing to consider a wider area if they are to find a tenancy.

2.7 In recognition that homelessness services need to be agile and responsive, that current economic and specifically housing conditions are making it increasingly difficult to find affordable housing options in the borough it is believed that a future Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy should be for 3 years, keeping the focus on responding to current conditions, government programs and seeking innovative solutions.

2.8 The homelessness service have experienced significant staffing changes over the past year with only 1.5 FTE of last year's establishment still in place and 6 officers relatively new in place including the Housing Solutions Manager and an Interim Head of Service. There has therefore been a period of recruitment, consolidation and training and focus is currently on improving our client contact, both increasing the level of in person conversations, reviewing our internal documentation and developing user friendly guides. Work is in progress to ensure that the Personal Housing Plans which are issued to all applicants are a working document, tailored to individual circumstances and needs and not just an automated stage in the process.

- 2.9 Although there are very low levels of rough sleeping in the borough there is an increasing cohort of single adults with complex needs that do not meet the priority need threshold under which the Council would be responsible for accommodating them but need high levels of support to relieve or prevent homelessness. We are currently recruiting for a Housing Navigator, a post to work with rough sleepers, and those whose are in insecure accommodation (such as sofa surfing) , to identify pathways into housing and establish channels with the agencies that need to support individuals with complex needs and histories.
- 2.10 A successful bid resulted in capital funding to purchase 3 properties for complex needs cases to be accommodated in a “Housing Led” scheme with support from Transform Housing & Support. The Housing Led model identifies that there are individuals that are unable to access housing for themselves. In the outer London Boroughs, there are companies refurbishing and letting bedsit accommodation to benefit dependent people over 35 as a business model but for any rough sleeper or person in this borough with no employment or renting history there are very limited opportunities due to the buoyant local housing market and high levels of employment.
- 2.11 To be eligible for the Housing Led scheme the client does not need to meet the qualification criteria for the Housing Register where often a history of bad debt, criminality, anti-social behaviour, or a broken local connection restricts their access to social housing and with no means or credibility to access the private rented sector their housing options are nonexistent.
- 2.12 The Council is reviewing the relationship with Transform Housing & Support to identify further opportunities for supported housing in the borough and to ensure that the referral processes are effective in identifying the right client for each vacancy, limiting void periods, and ensuring the level of support in the unit is appropriate to the needs of the individual.
- 2.13 The Council operates an inhouse agency to work with private sector landlords and estate agencies to secure tenancies within the private sector through a package of financial incentives and management offers, known as Magna Carta Lettings this has been an integral part of our response to homelessness in the borough. At the current time rents have increased so very few landlords will consider a tenant who is benefit dependent and anecdotally we are hearing that in line with the national trend landlords are selling due to imminent changes in legislation and recent mortgage increases.
- 2.14 A review will be carried out of the operations of Magna Carta Lettings to establish which products deliver the best outcomes for the Council and tenants and where future funding and resources should be focused. A report on Magna Carta Lettings will be brought to this committee and will inform the emerging strategy.
- 2.15 Work will commence on the next strategy this year with a significant focus on supporting people who do not fall into the priority need groups but present the most challenges in finding accommodation. There will be a period of data capture and

analysis to enable us to set our priorities and formulate an action plan. Officers will work with DLUHC advisers and ensure that all opportunities for additional funding or support are maximised.

2.16 Whilst the levels of homeless people in Runnymede are still comparatively low compared to other areas there is an increase in approaches to the authority for assistance and a reduction in the options available to people. This is likely to result in an increase in households in priority need for whom we cannot prevent their homelessness and therefore need to provide interim accommodation whilst we work with them. The Council has a portfolio of temporary accommodation properties but this is provided at a high cost to the Council and a temporary move is disruptive to households. Therefore, the immediate aim will always be to identify and support the client into a private sector tenancy in an area where they have connections if possible.

2.17 An update on the Action Plan is attached at Appendix A.

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 sets out the requirement for local authorities to develop and publish a Homeless Strategy at least every 5 years and for this to be kept under regular review.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 All activities within the Strategy are covered by existing budgets.

5. Legal implications

5.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002, sections 1-4, a local housing authority must regularly undertake a review of homelessness in the Borough and in consultation with social services and other relevant organisations, formulate and publish a local homelessness strategy. The authority has a duty to publish a new strategy every 5 years.

6. Equality implications

6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty before adopting the Strategy.

This is to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a Protected Characteristic and those who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not.

- 6.2 The 9 Protected Characteristics are age, disability, race/ethnicity, pregnancy and maternity, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender reassignment and marriage/civil partnership.
- 6.3 An Equality Impact Screening was carried out when the Strategy was compiled and it was decided that a full EIA was not required. There was no evidence to suggest that the Strategy would have a negative impact on any of the protected groups. Rather the Strategy has the potential to have a positive impact on all members of the Runnymede community who will need support under the Strategy, a significant number of which will be people with protected characteristics. The review of the strategy will include analysis of the outcomes for people with different protected characteristics and where the next strategy might address any inequalities.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 None

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the progress on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and that work will commence on a new 3 year strategy to be brought to this committee in March 2024.

(To resolve)

Background papers

[New Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024 Housing Committee 14 March 2019](#)

[Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Update Housing Committee 9 March 2022](#)

Appendix A – Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
Objective One: Early intervention for homeless prevention						
1.7	<p>Grow the sustainment package, support with budgeting advice.</p> <p>Ensuring households are in receipt of the correct benefits, signposted to debt services, encouraged into work, training, volunteering or education</p>	RBC Sustainment Team, Magna Carta Lettings, Job centre	Credit Unions CAB Communications Team FUSE	Year 1-5	<p>Customers are provided with a holistic service when approaching for housing advice, this will include detailed advice in the PHP</p> <p>Expand support provided to clients placed through MCL, regular viewings and support for tenant and landlord.</p> <p>Produce leaflets and handouts about how to sustain a tenancy</p> <p>A pathway to assist homeless households into work, training and volunteering is established</p>	<p>All service users who are placed by RBC utilising financial assistance (deposit and rent in advance) have been provided with a settling in package since January 2023, including those placed out of borough.</p> <p>The level of support for clients in Temporary Accommodation has increased with a focus on financial sustainment and has shown a decrease in people in arrears in TA.</p> <p>Sustainment packages will be managed using the new Support Services module to ensure consistent delivery and measurement of outcomes.</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
1.8	Improve the availability of good quality, easy to understand information	RBC housing	Homelessness Task Group, communications team	Ongoing	Leaflets and handouts produced Improved and details advice included in PHPs	Package of communication material has been developed and is being produced by Communications Team for roll out from June 2023. E.g. User friendly leaflets for tenants facing possession action, electronic flyers on budgeting, volunteering or getting onto work and looking after your home / life skills Focus on improved Personal Housing Plans (PHP) with clarity on actions to be completed by the service user and their Housing Solutions Officer with timescales as a review determined these were too generic and not being utilised by clients or the case worker as a tool to support clients to improve their housing situation.
1.9	Redesign website to include self-serve tools	RBC housing, ICT	Communication Team	1-3	Updated website to reflect legislative changes, easy to use referral mechanisms for duty to refer and early notification of housing issues Website that provides adviceso that customers can self-serve	Duty to Refer is on the website and is being effectively utilised by appropriate agencies. Work has progressed on the NEC Housing On Line account in preparation for Housing Advice, Homelessness and Allocations to be managed through personal accounts.



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
						Tenancy training videos are available on the website and new and TA tenants are directed to them.
1.11	Monitor, review and evaluate data to predict future trends of homelessness	RBC housing	Homelessness Task Group	Years 1-5	Regular data collection through HCLIC and internal reporting mechanisms	Project group to look at levels of Temporary Accommodation to align demand with supply by data driven forecasting.
Objective Two: Ensuring sufficient supply of accommodation						
2.2	Continue to make best use of existing housing stock	RBC housing, policy team, tenancy management			Mutual exchanges Downsizers Reciprocal Improve the perception of IRL to attract active downsizers. (Independent Retirement Living)	Increased support for people downsizing through the Hardship Fund and new Downsizing policy approved with providing incentive payments to free up family size dwellings. Programme of changing 3 bedroom properties with two living rooms to 4 bed ongoing with appraisal when void. Upgrade planned in 2023/24 of all IRL schemes to make them more attractive to downsizers



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
2.4	Review nomination agreements and maximise opportunities for future development	RBC housing, policy team, planning	Registered providers	Year 1-5	Regular monitoring of nominations agreements Maximum Affordable Housing achieved in all Section 106 agreements New social housing	Housing work closely with planning to optimise the level of Affordable housing, with units reflecting local need and with a focus on requesting social rent.
2.6	Explore estate regeneration	RBC housing, policy, planning	Registered providers and private developers	Year 1-5	Regeneration started of estates within the borough	Tendered exercise completed and contracted with for a multi-disciplinary Building Consultancy to progress the regeneration of the Parkside area of New Haw
2.8	Expand and develop Magna Carta Lettings	RBC housing, Magna Carta Lettings	Private landlords	Year 1-3	Explore new incentives for landlords to assist tenants such as those without access to a guarantor or 6 months rent in advance. Explore options for those found to be intentionally homeless. Expand the service to get new landlords on board	Rent rises and cost of living issues for tenants dependent on benefit or subject to the cap have resulted in increased difficulty in accessing private sector tenancy offers that are affordable. Reviewing MCL operations, finances and incentives to draw up a new Business Plan during 2023



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
2.9	Focus on tenancy sustainment package and improve relationships with landlords	RBC housing, Magna Carta Lettings	Private landlords, Homelessness Task Group, FUSE	Year 1-3	<p>Continue to host landlord forums and events</p> <p>Provide information to landlords of the services we can provide encouraging early notification of issues to sustain tenancies.</p> <p>Introduce tenancy training for tenants and ensure tenants are ready for move on before securing accommodation</p>	<p>Landlord event held in January 2023</p> <p>Tenancy Sustainment is available for all tenants on the managed service or let through MCL</p> <p>MCL tenancies under threat will be dealt with as a prevention duty when issues are identified so that an appropriate action plan can be put in place using our Housing Solutions Officers and MCL sustainment.</p>
2.10	Explore shared ownership housing and access to within the borough	RBC housing, policy team, planning	Registered providers, Help to buy agents	Year 2-5	<p>Explore the opportunity of matching a tenants deposit to buy a home up to a certain limit by way of an interest free loan, Encourage customers to prevent their homelessness by exploring home ownership offers</p>	<p>Awaiting information on the Government new arrangements for shared ownership sale.</p> <p>The cost of purchasing in the borough and Affordable rent payable on the remaining share requires a high annual income.</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
2.11	Develop support for rough sleepers	RBC housing, policy, Homelessness TaskGroup, FUSE	Voluntary and community sector partners	Year 1-5	<p>Introduce shared house scheme for single homeless</p> <p>Explore a model of donation point to fund towards FUSE activities.</p> <p>Introduction of access to a shower for rough sleepers</p> <p>Access to food, clothing, health checks.</p> <p>Developing links with charities such as Haircuts4Homeless on a local scale.</p>	<p>Shared houses in operation</p> <p>Advertising or a Navigator to support rough sleepers</p> <p>3 complex needs clients are now placed in the Housing Led properties with support from Transform and RBC Sustainment Team.</p> <p>Vouchers are in use to provide food, travel, instant cash for rough sleepers if needed.</p> <p>Fund for providing other items as needed</p>
2.12	Continue to apply for relevant government funding for new initiatives	RBC housing, policy	DLUHC	Years 1-5	<p>Funding bid submitted for all relevant government funding or other funding streams to improve the homeless service</p> <p>Successful bid achieved and implemented including monitoring of outcomes.</p>	All funding streams have been applied to.



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
Objective Three: Partnership working and holistic support						
3.1	Enhanced Personal Housing Plans, incorporating more than just housing advice	RBC housing	Homelessness Task Group, FUSE, health and wellbeing group	April 2019	Enhanced PHPs produced and given to households facing homelessness. These to include information about health, gambling advice, drink, drug and smoking cessation. To include signposting to debt and credit unions and to generally give more information than just housing advice	Done, all plans have these elements as standard, officers are required to identify which issues are present and actively work with the client on these through tailored support and signposting.
3.5	Continue and improve strong partnership relationships	RBC housing, Homelessness Task Group, FUSE	Registered Providers, social service, supported housing providers	Year 1-5	Continue to work together and develop services for the benefit of our mutual client groups Develop new incentives and projects to best meet the needs of households	New Mental Health Hospital Discharge procedure rolled out with training to improve the communication between professionals where mental health and housing are a barrier to a successful discharge Joint project team with RBC and Transform Housing set up to improve referral process, monitoring, timely move on to align properties with suitable clients and improve the turnover of units.



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2022/23
Objective Four: Meet the needs of those in temporary accommodation						
4.1	Ensure B&B use is minimal	RBC housing, social services	Homelessness Task Group, FUSE	Years 1-5	<p>Set up of shared houses for single people</p> <p>Maintain low levels of B&B usage by earlier intervention to prevent homelessness</p> <p>Ensure efficient move on from B&B to more sustainable housing</p> <p>Assess levels and trends of homeless approaches to ensure appropriate levels of housing are available, both private, social and temporary</p>	<p>High level of B&B use last year, reduced now and shared houses in operation in our stock and with Transform</p> <p>Using more in borough B&B where possible</p> <p>Where we are providing interim accommodation this is done as soon as possible, very low levels of children in B&B,</p>
4.3	Introduce tenancy training and life skills to those in need in TA	RBC housing Sustainment, Benefits	RentStart, Citizens Advice, FUSE	Year 1-3	<p>Explore the opportunity to provide pre tenancy training.</p> <p>Explore the opportunities for online training for tenants to prepare them for a tenancy.</p>	Ongoing, Housing Solutions developing an online tool with certification for applicants





CCTV Policy (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

In order to comply with legislation covering the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) a policy covering use of this equipment by Council tenants is required.

Recommendation:

Members acknowledge the results of the consultation with stakeholders and approve the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy for Council Housing Estates

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 This policy attached at Appendix A sets out the Council's approach to the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) on its housing estates. This policy applies to all Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) tenants and leaseholders.
- 1.2 CCTV is a television system in which video signals are transmitted from one or more cameras to a set of monitors, used especially for security purposes.
- 1.3 Self-installed CCTV including video doorbells is significantly growing in popularity, and this policy outlines the Council's approach to the use of CCTV, including requiring permission to install.
- 1.4 This policy does not extend to Safer Runnymede CCTV that covers any of our properties or communal areas.

2. Report

- 2.1 The use of CCTV is covered by legislation to ensure that whether in a private or public setting it is not infringing the rights of individuals. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that its tenants are not inadvertently in breach of this legislation where they install equipment. This draft policy was considered at the Housing Member Working Party on 5th April 2022 and approved for an 8 week consultation by this committee in September 2022.
- 2.2 Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Council must have regard to the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice ("the Code"), which sets out principles for the use of CCTV by public authorities.

These principles include:

- Use of surveillance camera being for a specified purpose
- User of a surveillance camera must take into account its effect on individuals and their privacy.

- Clear rules, policies and procedures must be in place before a surveillance camera system is used and be communicated to all who need to comply with them.
- 2.3 Any device that is recording such as CCTV systems on individual properties or ring doorbells have the potential to record people and therefore no such items will be allowed on Council owned properties until it has been confirmed that they will not be in breach of any legislation.
- 2.4 In accordance with this policy all tenants will be required to obtain permission from RBC before obtaining and installing private CCTV and/or other recording devices including video doorbells.
- 2.5 If a resident already has a private CCTV and/or other recording device, prior to the start date of this policy, permission to keep them will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If a tenant's installation is in breach of legislation the Council will require its removal.
- 2.6 If permission has been granted for installation of CCTV this is limited to no more than three CCTV cameras, two in the front (one CCTV and one video doorbell) and one at the back of a property.
- 2.7 Permission would not be given if the CCTV or video doorbell covers a communal area or public highway, instead the Council would insist on the use of audio doorbell only.
- 2.8 Permission will be granted on the following conditions:
- All work is carried out at the tenant's own cost. The Council is not liable for loss, damage, injury, or any third-party claim connected with the works.
 - Maintenance of the CCTV or video doorbell will be the tenant's responsibility for the duration of your tenancy. When a tenancy ends the tenant will be required to remove the CCTV or video doorbell and make good any damage, at their own cost
 - The tenant must sign a consent form agreeing not to use the video function to cover the public highway.
- 2.9 If private CCTV or other recording devices are installed without permission, we reserve the right to take action to seek its removal if this is not done following a request. The costs of legal enforcement and subsequent charges for removal and repairs will be rechargeable. In all situations the Council will work with residents to understand the requirements of the legislation rather than taking enforcement action.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 This policy will be enforced using the provisions of the Tenancy Agreement as determined within the Tenancy Policy

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 Management of this policy will be within existing staffing resources. If removal or making good is required, this will be recharged to the tenant.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Failure to comply with this policy will be dealt with as a breach of the Tenancy Agreement, providing RBC with a legal remedy to ensure tenants are not in contravention of legislation.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 None identified

8. Consultation

- 8.1 A poster directing tenants to information on the policy was placed in all Housing Revenue Account owned blocks with a communal area for 8 weeks. A copy is attached at Appendix B.
- 8.2 Only one response was received which raised concerns about victims of crime such as stalking that needed the protection of cctv or a video doorbell. The policy makes provision for looking at cctv on an individual basis, we would work with the police to ensure that if additional protection was required we would facilitate this if possible without breaching legislation.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Members are asked to approve Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy for Council Housing Estates.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

None

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy Council Housing Estates

Review due:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach to the use of CCTV on our housing estates. This policy applies to all Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) tenants and leaseholders.
- 1.2 Self-installed CCTV including video doorbells is a growing phenomenon, this policy outlines our approach to the use of CCTV including requiring permission to install.

2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to;
- Provide confidence that data captured on CCTV is handled in accordance with data protection principles.
 - Ensure consistent approach to the use of CCTV and other recording equipment
 - Explain our approach to private use of CCTV by residents

3. Scope, definitions and legislation

- 3.1 This policy applies to Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) housing tenants and leaseholders and covers;
- CCTV systems (general cameras and recording equipment)
 - Self-contained image recording devices (doorbells with integrated cameras)

This policy does not extend to Safer Runnymede CCTV that covers any of our Housing estates.

- 3.2 The legalisations that apply to this policy are;
- Human Rights Act 1998
 - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
 - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - General Data Protection Regulation 2018

4. General Principles

4.1 Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, we must have regard to the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (“the Code”), which sets out principles for the use of CCTV by public authorities.

These principles include;

- Use of surveillance camera being for a specified purpose
- User of a surveillance camera must take into account its effect on individuals and their privacy.
- Clear rules, policies and procedures must be in place before a surveillance camera system is used and be communicated to all who need to comply with them.

5. Private CCTV and Recording Devices

5.1 All tenants are required to obtain permission from RBC before obtaining and installing private CCTV and/or other recording devices including video doorbells.

5.2 If a resident already has a private CCTV and/or other recording device, prior to the start date of this policy, permission to keep them will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.3 If permission has been granted for installation of CCTV this is limited to no more than three CCTV cameras two in the front (one CCTV and one video doorbell) and back of property.

5.4 Permission would not be given if the CCTV or video doorbell covers a communal area or public highway instead the Council would insist on the use of audio doorbell only.

5.5 Permission will be granted on the following conditions:

- All work is carried out at the tenant's own cost. The Council is not liable for loss, damage, injury, or any third-party claim connected with the works.
- Maintenance of the CCTV or video doorbell will be the tenant's responsibility for the duration of your tenancy. When a tenancy ends the tenant will be required to remove the CCTV or video doorbell and make good any damage, at your own cost
- The tenant must sign a consent form agreeing not to use the video function to cover the public highway.

5.6 If private CCTV or other recording devices are installed without permission, we reserve the right to take action to seek its removal. If device is placed on or affixed to our property, we reserve the right to remove it without notice, and we may charge the resident for the cost of doing so and for repairing any damage caused to our property.

5.7 In exceptional circumstances and following a recommendation from the police Runnymede Borough Council will consider requests to allow specified areas of a communal area or public highway to be videoed. Permission to install video equipment would normally only be granted to prevent/record actual threats or acts of violence.

6. Enforcement

6.1 RBC reserve the right to enforce this policy in line with tenancy agreement section 5.3 states, *"you must get written permission from us before you carry out any alterations or improvement to your home or shared areas."*

Any such requests should be sent in writing to the Housing and Neighbourhood Services Team.

6.2 The Council reserves the right to withdraw permission to have a CCTV at any time if any tenant does not adhere to this policy. The tenant will be asked to remove the CCTV (including video doorbell) immediately, and potentially, permanently.

7. Data Protection

7.1 The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation do not apply to domestic CCTV or video doorbell installations if they are only trained on a domestic property.

7.2 If a camera captures images of people outside the boundary of your private domestic property – for example, a neighbours' home or garden, shared spaces, or public footpath then the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation applies.

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service would not give a tenant permission to mount a camera which requires the tenant to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Protection Regulations 2018.

8. Complaints About CCTV

8.1 If, having checked the guidance, you believe a tenant is in breach of the above conditions of mounting a CCTV camera, or a CCTV camera and/or video doorbell covers shared spaces or public footpath you should submit your concerns and supporting evidence to Housing and Neighbourhood Services who will review your complaint and update you accordingly.

8.2 You can do this by writing to us at Runnymede Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2AH or by emailing us at tenancy.management@runnymede.gov.uk

9. Consultation, communication and training

9.1 RBC will provide clear and comprehensive advice and information to residents, with an aim for a single point of contact.

9.2 Housing Management Team, Data Protection team and Safer Runnymede have also been consulted

10. Monitoring and performance management

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

10.2 The Area Housing Managers will record on Northgate and monitor where tenants have received permission or where the Council has refused permission

11. Equalities Implications

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

11.2 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

11.3 The screening found that there is no evidence that tenants with any of the nine protected characteristics will be negatively impacted by this policy.

12. Related strategies/Documents

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property>

<https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/domestic-cctv-systems-guidance-for-people-using-cctv/>

[CCTV Guidance for Residents.docx](#)

13. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	April 22	First draft completed			



*Thinking of
installing CCTV?*

Our draft CCTV policy may affect you.

We're introducing a new policy to comply with the law on use of video doorbells and other CCTV on tenants' homes.

The policy will say cameras must not film communal areas like hallways in flats or affect other people's privacy.

Tenants will also need permission from Area Housing Managers before installing equipment.

Have your say

www.runnymede.gov.uk/housing/cctv-policy-consultation

Email listening@runnymede.gov.uk

Call 01932 425853



 CCTV Policy

Housing Estate Improvement Policy (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

This reports request approval to carry out a consultation with tenants on a new Estate Improvement Policy.

The policy aims to bring forward improvements that are outside the usual reactive or planned maintenance programmes enabling resident to request improvements and ensuring the budget for these is allocated in a fair, transparent, and beneficial way.

Recommendation(s):

Members approve an 8 week consultation exercise with tenants and leaseholders on the draft Estate Improvement Policy (appendix A).

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Historically there has been a limited budget for estate improvements with additional works being carried out through the reactive and planned maintenance programmes. This policy and an increased budget will enable a more focussed and planned approach to estate improvements enabling residents to be involved in the process and giving more priority to communal areas and estate environments.

2. Report

- 2.1 A draft Estate Improvement Policy is attached at Appendix A. This will enable an improvement pipeline to be drawn up, encouraging proposals from stakeholders, and ensuring that the budget is apportioned geographically across the stock. Estate works may need to be tendered and a longer-term plan will ensure procurement of some approved projects early in each fiscal year ensuring the full budget can be spent.
- 2.2 When assessing proposals consideration will be given to:
- Urgency of work
 - Anticipated cost of the proposal
 - The scope for the proposal to be funded from another source.
 - Benefits of the proposal, including the number of residents who would benefit.
 - Feedback from tenants impacted by the proposal.
 - Severity of issue that proposal aims to address.
 - Projects that have been undertaken or are currently in progress in the location.
 - Ongoing cost of maintenance and upkeep of the improved area and whether this has an impact on service charges.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 Runnymede Council's Corporate Business Plan 2022-2026 has 5 key objectives, one of which is Empowering Communities: To support groups and societies with initiatives to strengthen their communities and to represent and advocate for our residents' interests
- 3.2 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan sets out an objective to have Well managed neighbourhoods where the exterior and communal areas of our homes will be well maintained through investment.
- 3.3 The Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy 2021-2026 targets an increase in the number of tenants and groups actively involved in improving their estates and neighbourhoods as a key performance measure.

4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1 There is an existing annual budget of £200,000 which will be utilised for these works.

5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 Under the provisions of the Housing Act 1985 housing authorities are empowered to provide housing and expend funds on the land which surrounds such housing provision. The proposal which is being consulted on would fall within the powers granted to the Council as a Housing Authority.

6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 Monitoring of the Estate Improvement budget with a clear and transparent process will ensure that residents, ward members and officers are able to propose improvements which are then assessed using consistent criteria and are scheduled over a multi-year programme increasing the time available for consultation and resident participation.

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

This policy will ensure that these implications are given due consideration and promoted within estate Improvement programme.

8. **Consultation**

- 8.1 An eight week consultation is proposed with the results to be brought back to this committee with a final draft to a future meeting of this committee.
- 8.2 Consultation to focus on tenants and leaseholders of properties with internal and external communal areas.
- 8.3 A dedicated webpage where residents can share their thoughts on this policy.

9. **Conclusions**

Members approve a consultation with stakeholders on the draft Estate Improvement Policy.

(To resolve)

Background Papers – none

Appendix A

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Estate Improvement Policy

DRAFT

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 Housing Services has an annual Estate Improvement budget to enable specific additional improvements to Council owned housing estates and blocks of flats.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is;

- To identify upgrade to communal parts beyond our day-to-day management of areas using a transparent process that involves residents and benefits them.
- To invest in enhancing the bio-diversity of our housing estates
- To involve residents in the management and improvement of their estates and neighbourhood
- To publicise estate inspections and encourage resident involvement

3. Scope, definitions and legislation

3.1 Estate Improvements are an opportunity to improve the appearance of blocks, roads or an estate and can help improve residents' quality of life.

3.2 As the budget is funded by the Housing Revenue Account all proposals must benefit Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) tenants and the improvement should be on Housing land.

4. Suitable Proposals

4.1 Some suitable projects would be (not an exhaustive list);

- Community gardens and landscaping
- Railings and other new security features
- Bike or buggy stores and racks
- Bin shed/enclosures
- Tables and benches
- Pathways
- Installation of solar panels
- Recycling facilities
- Cycle storage
- Parking improvements

4.2 Approval of projects is subject to land ownership, building regulations and planning permission being considered.

All proposals are considered on a case-by-case basis.

5. Submitting a Proposal

5.1 Proposals can be made by RBC tenants and leaseholders, Councillors and Council Officers.

5.2 All suggestions should be made to the relevant Area Housing Manager in the Housing and Neighbourhood Services team, who will review the application and put forward a proposal.

5.3 The following will be taken into account when considering each proposal:

- Urgency of work
- Anticipated cost of the proposal
- The scope for the proposal to be funded from another source
- Benefits of the proposal, including the number of residents who would benefit from it
- Feedback from tenants impacted by the proposal
- Severity of issue that proposal aims to address
- Other projects that have been undertaken or are currently in progress in the location
- Ongoing cost of maintenance and upkeep of the improved area and whether this has an impact on service charges.

5.4 RBC will complete an inspection when considering a proposal request.

A panel comprising Head of Housing Technical Services, Head of Housing Services & Business Planning, Head of Tenancy Services and a tenant (if applicable) will consider any proposal.

All proposers will be informed as to the outcome of their proposal following the Panel meeting to consider requests received.

5.5 Although a preliminary decision will be made at this meeting, further investigation could mean a scheme is not feasible, due for example, to Planning restrictions, actual cost of delivering the scheme, extent of benefit, lack of resident support for proposal following consultation.

All proposers will be kept informed of any developments with their proposal, as it progresses.

5.6 Due to the limited budget available and the scale of preparations required, not all proposals may be taken forward immediately. They may need to be deferred to the following year and a programme of improvements will be established.

6. Resident Engagement

6.1. Resident engagement ensures we understand our residents' expectations, so we can deliver services according to their needs and priorities.

6.2 We will work with residents to help shape how services are provided and to ensure they are able to hold us to account.

7. Consultation, communication and training

7.1 RBC will provide clear and comprehensive advice and information to residents, with an aim for a single point of contact.

7.2 All tenants have also been consulted.

8. Monitoring and performance management

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

8.2 The Estate Improvement Budget will be monitored to ensure that expenditure is not disproportionate in one area and that schemes can be brought forward to ensure parity.

A 3 year plan will be drawn up to ensure that all areas are considered for improvements and officers and tenants are encouraged to bring schemes forward in unrepresented areas

The Head of Tenancy Services will have responsibility for the management of the Improvement Budget

The Housing Panel will consist of a minimum of 2 officers and will be convened within 7 working days of a proposal being made

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 a full impact assessment is not required and as time goes on and projects are approved, it would be useful to build up data on who was positively and negatively affected by decisions made.

10. Related strategies/Documents

RBC's Climate Change Strategy
Information on the Planned Capital Programme

11. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	March 2023	First draft completed		Luisa Cantore-Norris	

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DRAFT

Garage Allocations Policy Consultation (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

The Council has a stock of lock up garage which are let on weekly paid licences. Originally let with Council tenancies they are now in lower demand and are let to applicants on a waiting list. An Allocation Policy is required to ensure that appropriate preference is given to local residents.

Recommendation(s):

Members approve a consultation exercise on the adoption of a Council Garage Allocation Policy (Appendix A).

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Council owns and manages 1214 lock up garages which were built as part of the social housing stock. Initially garages were let as part of the residential tenancy but as most of them are not adjacent to the property but in blocks and had a separate charge many tenants declined to take the garages leading to them being available to the wider community.

2. Report

- 2.1 Council owned garages can be rented by non-Council tenants, the income for garages was transferred to the General Fund in 2012 when less than 50% of garages were let to Council tenants (many properties having been sold under the Right to Buy with the owner retaining the garage but not on a residential tenancy). Most Council garages are not large enough to accommodate modern vehicles and the cost cannot be covered by benefits unless the garage is physically integral to the property, so with a current rent of £16.50 per week they are not affordable for most tenants who are in receipt of HB or Universal credit.
- 2.2 In order to ensure that preference is still given to Council tenants or people occupying the homes for which they were originally built a Garage Allocation Policy is required. The priority scheme within the draft policy at Appendix A has been in operation for at least 20 years but a formal policy has not been approved by Committee within this time.
- 2.3 As the number of vehicles within each home has increased and parking is a challenge on many of our estates it is important to ensure that any local resident requiring a garage for their car is prioritised
- 2.4 Council garages will be allocated with the following priorities:
- **Priority 1-** Council tenants in the properties for which the garages were initially built with a disability or age requiring a garage in close proximity
 - **Priority 2-** Council tenants in the properties for which the garages were initially built
 - **Priority 3-** Non-Council Tenants within the local area

- **Priority 4-** Other applicants

2.5 The terms and condition of the Garage License include:

1. A garage must only be used for the garaging of a taxed, insured and roadworthy domestic vehicle.
2. Garages are not suitable for storage of any other items and must not be used for any criminal or illegal purpose.
3. Garages should not be let for the purpose of a business that will interfere with local residents.
4. No vehicle repairs or antisocial activities may be carried out within the garage area.
5. Garages cannot be sub-let
6. The Council will not be held liable in respect of loss of or damage to any property brought onto any garage premises.
7. Garage rent is payable in advance.
8. If an applicant has an outstanding debt to the Council their application will be deferred and no offers will be made until they have cleared the whole outstanding debt. This includes debts which have been passed to a collection agency due to non-payment.
9. If rent is not paid the garage will be repossessed and a charge will be made for the lock change and clearance of any items.
10. The Council's preferred method of payment is Direct Debit

3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 The garage Strategy 2022 – 2024 identifies two key objectives for the garage portfolio, this policy will ensure that if the garage estate decreases HRA tenants and local residents will retain priority for allocation of available units.

1. Optimising Income and Efficiencies – by ensuring the existing stock is delivering the greatest revenue return to the authority
2. New Council owned homes – as some sites will be identified for residential development

4. **Resource implications**

4.1 This policy enables the garages to be let to all applicants, maintaining the income stream but with preference for local residents.

5. **Legal implications**

5.1 Under the provisions of section 12 Housing Act 1985 a Housing Authority has the power to provide and maintain in connection with housing accommodation provided by them other buildings or land which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, will serve a beneficial purpose in connection with the requirements of the persons for whom the housing accommodation is provided. The provision of garages would fall within these powers.

5.2 The adoption of a policy to govern the letting of garages provides clarity and certainty over the manner in which an asset is dealt with. Any such policy will have

to comply with the general principles of public law, regarding its reasonableness, and its operation.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 Preference will be given to local residents ensuring that elderly, disabled or vulnerable people will be prioritised for a garage near to their property. As the garages are on a weekly agreement, if a garage is required for a local resident an occupant with a lower priority under the policy will be requested to relocate within a reasonable timescale.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 This policy ensures that preference will be given to local residents reducing the level of street parking.

8. Timetable for Implementation

- 8.1 If approved an 8 week consultation will be carried out with a final draft policy to be brought back to this committee.

(To resolve)

Background Papers

None

Appendix A

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Garage Allocation Policy

DRAFT

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to garages owned and managed by Runnymede Borough Council.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to;

- Ensure garages are allocated fairly and efficiently to maximise rental income
- Ensure applications are dealt with fairly
- Operate a garage lettings system that is easy to understand and transparent

3. Allocation

3.1 Council garages will be allocated in the following property order;

- **Priority 1-** Council tenants in the properties for which the garages were initially built with a disability or age requiring a garage in close proximity
- **Priority 2-** Council tenants in the properties for which the garages were initially built
- **Priority 3-** Non-Council Tenants within the local area
- **Priority 4-** Other applicants

4. Garage Use - Conditions of Tenancy

4.1 Garages are let in accordance with the Council's garage condition of tenancy.

4.2 A garage must only be used for the garaging of a taxed, insured and roadworthy domestic vehicle.

Garages are not suitable for storage of any other items and must not be used for any criminal or illegal purpose.

4.3 Garages should not be Let for the purpose of a business that will interfere with local residents.

No vehicle repairs or antisocial activities may be carried out within the garage area.

4.4 Garages cannot be sub-let

4.5 The Council will not be held liable in respect of loss of or damage to any property brought onto any garage premises.

5. Rent Payable

5.1 Garage will be let on a weekly license, rent is payable in advance.

If an applicant has an outstanding debt to the Council their application will be deferred and no offers will be made until they have cleared the whole outstanding debt. This includes debts which have been passed to a collection agency due to non-payment.

5.2 If rent is not paid the garage will be repossessed and a charge will be made for the lock change and clearance of any items.

The Council's preferred method of payment is Direct Debit

6. Termination

6.1 Garage agreements are weekly agreements, to terminate an agreement one week's notice is required.

6.2 The garage must be returned clean and tidy, failure to clear the property of personal belongings or rubbish may result in a charge to the Licensee.

6.3 In the event of the Licensee's death, their next of kin (if known) will be given a reasonable period of time to return the keys. The weekly Licence Fee will still be payable until the keys are returned.

6. Consultation, communication and training

6.1 RBC will provide clear and comprehensive advice and information to residents, with an aim for a single point of contact.

7. Monitoring and performance management

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

7.2 In order to analyse success in maximising rental income, there will be regular performance monitoring of the proportion of garages that are empty and how long it takes to re-let empty garages.

8. Equalities Implications

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

8.2 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.

8.3 The screening found XXX

9. Related strategies/Documents

[Garage Allocation- Lock-Up Garages Conditions of Tenancy](#)

10. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	October 2022	First draft created		Maggie Ward	

DRAFT

Private Rented Sector Offer (Housing, David Dakin)

Synopsis of report:

The Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) Policy which uses offers of accommodation within the private rented sector to prevent or relieve homelessness was introduced in 2015 and has been reviewed. Members approved a consultation on the new draft policy in November 2022 and this report provides the results of the consultation and requests approval for the policy.

Recommendation(s):

Members approve the Private rented Sector Offer Policy 2023-2026 (Appendix A)

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced offers within the Private Rented Sector as a lawful means of discharging a homelessness duty. Prior to this unless it was only with the agreement of the applicant that an offer of a private rented tenancy would be made to a household to whom a main homeless/housing duty was owed. Recognising the increased pressure on social housing and the expanded role of the private sector this legislation enabled Local Authorities to change the way they operated.

2. Report

- 2.1 A reviewed policy is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.2 Where possible homelessness will be prevented or relieved through an offer of a private sector tenancy. Where immediate and suitable offers of accommodation can be found in the private sector these will be made to households threatened with homelessness, thereby avoiding the need for them to go into temporary accommodation which is costly for applicants and the Council and is disruptive for households.
- 2.3 If a household is placed in temporary accommodation the Council will continue to look for an offer within the private sector to offer them. Applicants are encouraged to look for their own accommodation and where appropriate the Council will assist with a deposit and rent in advance if the property meets the required standards and is considered suitable. If a household wishes to live in a particular area of the Borough, they will be encouraged to source their own offer as the Council is unable to consider area preference other than in exceptional circumstances. The small geographical area of Runnymede means that an offer anywhere in the borough could be deemed suitable due to the short distance from existing employment, education, support network etc. Offers will be considered on a case by case basis with specific consideration being given to children within an academic year with external examinations such as GCSE or A level.
- 2.4 In order to support the PRSO policy the Council has invested in the Magna Carta Lettings service which works with private landlords and incentivises them through

payments and management schemes to take tenants nominated by the Local Authority.

- 2.5 The use of the PRSO policy ensures that properties are available through the Housing Register for households seeking to access social housing; many of whom are in the private sector or unsuitable accommodation. Subject to meeting the eligibility and qualification criteria households made an offer within the private sector can join the Housing Register.
- 2.6 When determining whether a PSRO unit is suitable consideration will be given to the individual needs of the household, any disabilities requiring adaptations and the affordability of the offer.
- 2.7 It is appreciated that the PRSO policy is not always popular with households it is applied to, due to most applicants seeking assistance with their housing needs aspiring to a social housing tenancy but the demand for social housing in Runnymede considerably exceeds supply. It is essential to balance the needs of those facing homelessness with the need for a Housing Register that enables people to access social housing within a reasonable timescale and that homelessness is not incentivised by a perceived fast track into social housing.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 This policy operates alongside the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme June 2021, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24, and Tenancy Strategy 2022-26

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 Use of the private sector for preventing and relieving homelessness has reduced the Temporary Accommodation costs to the Council and maintains the level of social housing available for Choice Based Lettings

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 (sections 148 and 149) introduced provisions which enable local housing authorities to bring their statutory housing duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 to an end, by making an offer of a private rented sector tenancy rather than a social housing tenancy. The creation of a policy enables the local housing authority to set out the basis on which it will use that power.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 This is a review of an existing policy with no significant changes. An EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) screening with updated data has been shared with the Equalities Group

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 None identified.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 An 8-week consultation took place with stakeholders including targeted contact with applicants who have approached as homeless and current applicants on the

Housing Register. A dedicated webpage was set up which had 191 views and a short questionnaire which 6 people completed.

- 8.2 Emails were sent to applicants on the Housing Register and those currently in Temporary Accommodation directing them to the consultation page. A reminder was sent a week before the consultation closed.
- 8.3 Only 6 responses to the questionnaire were received but due to the number of visits to the web page it is believed that that if there were significant objections to the policy people would have utilised the short questionnaire to voice this.
- 8.4 The results of one question have led to improved communication, the one offer policy is repeatedly made known to applicants throughout the process but it appears it is often ignored with a belief that social housing will be the outcome so applicants will be asked to sign to confirm that they understand the policy.

Q7 The Council makes one offer of suitable accommodation only. How clearly do you feel this rule is communicated?

Figure 1

Response	%	No
Extremely clear	33	2
Very clear	17	1
No so clear	33	0
Not at all clear	0	1
Total	17	6

9. **Timetable for Implementation**

- 9.1 Implementation on approval by Members, there are no changes to the existing policy so there will be no discernible impact for service users other than an updated document.

(To resolve)

Background Papers

None

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Private Rented Sector Offer Policy

Review due:

Definitions

Term	
Private Rented Sector Offer	Defined by the Localism Act 2011 as an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy made by a private landlord to an applicant. To end the Main Duty, the tenancy must be for a period of at least 12 months. The council must have arranged the availability of the property to discharge its homelessness duty.
Homelessness applicant	This is a person who completes an application to be assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. This policy refers to a homelessness applicant as 'the applicant'.
Prevention duty	Housing authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person (regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection) who is threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This means either helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live before they become actually homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is brought to an end by an event such as accommodation being secured for the person, or by their becoming homeless.
Relief duty	If the applicant is already homeless, or becomes homeless despite activity during the prevention stage, then a relief duty is owed. . This relief duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way.
Main housing duty	If homelessness is not successfully prevented or relieved, a housing authority will owe the main housing duty to applicants who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally.
Priority Need	People recognised as having a greater need for assistance with acquiring housing such as pregnant women, families with children, and those who are homeless as a result of being a survivor of domestic abuse or due to an emergency such as a fire or flood. Other groups may be assessed as having priority need because they are vulnerable as a result of old age, mental ill health, physical disability, having been in prison or care or as a result of becoming homeless due to violence.
Suitable Final Offer of Accommodation	Referred to in this policy where an offer of accommodation is made to an applicant under a prevention, relief duty or main duty.
Local Housing Allowance	The Valuation Office Agency Rent Officers determines Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates used to calculate housing benefit and Universal Credit Housing element for tenants renting from private landlords. This is issued by Government and is subject to local rents. Runnymede is within two LHA areas.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) sets out Local Housing Authority's statutory responsibilities to those that are eligible for assistance and are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

1.2 Following assessment of an applicant's homeless application the Council may owe an applicant a prevention, relief or the main housing duty and the Council are required to secure suitable accommodation for applicants.

1.3 Local Housing Authorities must take reasonable steps to help all eligible homeless applicants to secure accommodation for at least 6 months and are able to discharge their homeless duties through securing suitable, available accommodation for the household. This offer of accommodation can be in the private rented sector.

1.4 There is a higher demand for social housing in Runnymede than there are available social homes. This means that not all homeless applicants can readily access affordable housing within the social housing sector. Therefore, the private rented sector has an important role to play in providing good quality accommodation and flexibility to meet household needs.

1.5 This approach gives local housing authorities greater opportunity to use the private rented sector to satisfy households housing needs and reduce the local authorities need to use temporary accommodation. It has long been recognised that placing families in short term temporary accommodation, especially Bed and Breakfast style accommodation, can be detrimental to all members of the household concerned.

1.6 This policy sets out Runnymede Borough Council's approach to discharging homeless duties owed to applicants into the private rented sector.

2. Aims

2.1 The aim of this policy is to:

- Make the best use of good quality private sector accommodation
- Use the private rented sector to discharge statutory duties owed
- Widen the choice of housing solutions available to homeless applicants
- Enable applicants to find appropriate housing quickly and give a greater degree of choice
- Build positive relationships with private-sector landlords
- Reduce reliance and pressure on temporary accommodation, including reducing B&B use
- Ensure movement and relieve pressure on the Housing Register
- Improve standards of private rented sector housing

3. Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO)

3.1 An offer of accommodation in the private rented sector is known as a PRSO (private rented sector offer). Runnymede Borough Council will consider a PRSOs to prevent or relieve homelessness in all cases.

3.2 If the Council considers an available private rented sector property to be suitable for the needs of an applicant, a PRSO of that property is likely to be made. This supports the

objectives of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which is to prevent and relieve homelessness.

3.3 The individual needs and circumstances of the homeless household will be considered when deciding whether to make a private rented sector offer. In considering the individual circumstances of each household, we may not consider a PRSO to be appropriate if the applicant is vulnerable, requires supported accommodation or is unlikely to be able to sustain a private rented tenancy, or if a member of the household requires significant adaptations to make the property suitable.

3.4 PRSO made under the prevention or relief duties, will be for an assured shorthold tenancy with a minimum initial term of 6 months and offers made under the main duty will be for a minimum initial term of 12 months.

3.5 Applicants are encouraged to locate their own private rented sector accommodation and the Council may be able to provide financial support to secure a property. Where the Council make a PRSO, the Council must ensure that it is suitable in accordance with the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. Applicants have the right to request a review of the suitability of any PRSO made at the prevention, relief, or main duty stage.

Location

3.6 Runnymede will, where reasonably practical, seek to offer private rented sector accommodation within the Borough, except in the following circumstances:

- Where it considers it beneficial to move the applicant out of the area, for example, to reduce risk of domestic abuse, other violence, or harassment, or to assist a person to break away from a detrimental situation, such as drug or alcohol abuse, or where support and specialist services are available outside of the borough;
- When applicant wishes to move away from Runnymede, including where the applicant has found the accommodation themselves;
- Where there is no suitable accommodation within the Borough;
- Where it is not reasonably practicable to secure accommodation within the Borough within a reasonable time, having regard for the general housing conditions prevailing in the local area

3.7 It is relevant to note that the Borough is geographically small, and the private rented sector market produces limited suitable properties at the Local Housing Allowance rate. Therefore, there may be occasions where it is appropriate to make out of borough PRSO, taking into account other areas that have reasonable facilities and transport links.

3.8 In considering whether a property is suitable the Council will consider:

- a) The significance of any disruption caused by the location to employment, caring responsibilities, or education of the household**

If the applicant (or their partner) is in employment (usually taken to be at least 16 hours per week). If they are in employment, then the location must be within reasonable travel to the work area of employment and have transport links frequent enough to enable this.

If an applicant is verified as the carer for another person, who cannot readily withdraw this care without serious detriment to the well-being of the other party, then the location will need to be of sufficient proximity to enable this, even if this may require public transport. Although sometimes inconvenient it is not always unreasonable to rely on public transport.

If any members of the household are undertaking GCSEs at school (Years 10 & 11 – children aged 14 to 16), or other proven vital examination, then they should not be required to change schools. Due to the small size of the borough, if it is practicable for children within this age group to travel to their existing school for the period of study, an offer not in the immediate vicinity of the existing school may be made if public transport is available.

b) The proximity & accessibility to medical facilities & other support which are used by, or essential to the well-being, of the household

If the applicant or any member of the household requires specialist medical treatment or support, which can only be provided in Runnymede, then the location will need to be of sufficient proximity to enable this, although this may require public transport. RBC will also have regard to other medical treatment or support required by the applicant or any member of the household, and where health professionals consider that it will be significantly detrimental to change provider or location. Significantly means exceptional and not desirable by either applicant or health professional

c) The proximity & accessibility to local services, amenities & transport

Regardless of location, RBC will seek to offer accommodation that is reasonably accessible to local services and amenities, especially for persons on low incomes and those with a need to rely on public transport.

Affordability

3.9 Housing authorities will need to consider whether the applicant can afford the housing costs without being deprived of basic essentials such as food, clothing, heating, transport and other essentials specific to their circumstances. Housing costs should not be regarded as affordable if the applicant would be left with a residual income that is insufficient to meet these essential needs.

3.10 The Council will ensure that any PRSO made is affordable for the tenant and their household based on the facts of their application. The Housing Solutions Team will carry out a thorough income and expenditure check, including an assessment of reasonableness of non-essential expenditures and entitlement to welfare benefits.

Property Size and standards

3.11 In considering whether a property is suitable, the Council will have regard to the household composition and the space in the accommodation, including the impact of any particular medical needs. The Council will ensure that the property is not overcrowded at the time of PRSO.

3.12 The Council will ensure that any property being considered for use meets the suitability requirements, including:

- Ensuring the property is in a reasonable physical condition, and free from any Category 1 hazards as defined by the Housing, Health and Safety Rating system
- That the property meets the required gas safety regulations i.e. having an up to date Gas Safety Certificate
- The property meets electrical equipment regulations i.e. having an up to date electrical safety certificate
- If the property is a HMO (house in multiple occupation) that it is appropriately licenced.
- Having appropriate fire safety precautions, including working smoke alarm
- All properties having a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) to be provided by the landlord

3.12 In considering whether a property is suitable the Council must be satisfied that there is no evidence to suggest that the landlord of the property cannot be considered as a 'fit and proper person as defined by Section 66(2) of the Housing Act 2004.

The Council will be satisfied that the landlord has provided a written tenancy agreement which is adequate for the purposes of a PRSO.

3.13 The Council is required to assess whether accommodation is suitable for each household individually, and case records should demonstrate that they have taken the statutory requirements into account in securing the accommodation, including general duties such as the Public-Sector Equality Duty.

Re-application after two years

3.14 Where an applicant was made a PRSO to discharge the Council's main housing duty, should they become homeless again within two years of accepting the offer and so long as they are eligible and have not become homeless intentionally, the Council will owe them the main s.193 duty in accordance with the Housing Act.

3.15 The date from which the two years begin is the date of acceptance of the PRSO, not the date when the tenancy was granted or when the applicant moved in.

4. Refusal of PRSO and Reviews

4.1 Households will only be made one suitable offer of accommodation and the Council will discharge its duty upon refusal.

4.2 Applicants will be advised of their right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation offered and the review will be carried out in accordance with the review regulations. Applicants are able to accept a PRSO offer, move in and request a review of the suitability of the accommodation.

4.3 Where the Council concludes that the PRSO is suitable, the Council will consider its duty to be discharged and no further offer of accommodation will be made. Where the applicant accepted and moved into the property, this will remain available to them, but where a property

has been refused and the review finds that the offer was suitable, no further offer of housing will be made, and the applicant will be responsible for securing their own housing.

4.4 Where an offer of accommodation is made under a prevention duty and the offer is refused, this will not affect any further duties that may be owed to the applicant. However, it may be the case that the same accommodation may then be offered to an applicant as a relief duty where this is appropriate and suitable. Where a final offer is made at relief stage, and this is refused it will preclude the applicant from being owed the main duty.

4.5 Applicants can appeal to the County Court on a point of law should they remain dissatisfied with the review outcome.

5. Monitoring and performance management

5.1 We aim to review this policy in 2 years to ensure it reflects current legislation and the latest examples of best practices.

6. Equalities Implications

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

6.2 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.

6.3 The screening found that a full impact assessment is not required, and the Policy is inclusive of all at risk of homelessness or who are unfortunate enough to become homeless through the provision of privately rented accommodation.

7. Related strategies/Documents

Allocation Scheme
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy,
Private Rented Schemes Policy
Tenancy Strategy

8. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	2015	First draft	2015	Andy Kefford	Committee
V2	October 2022	Review and refresh of 2015 version		Andrew Kefford	

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DRAFT

Surrey Towers Local Lettings Policy (Andy Vincent, Corporate Head of Housing)

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service is experiencing lower demand from housing applicants for properties at Surrey Towers.

In order to ensure all properties are let and the amount of rent lost through the properties being empty is kept to a minimum, a Local Lettings Policy for the block is being proposed.

The policy will be reviewed annually by Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Committee.

The detail of the Local Lettings Policy is included in Appendix A.

Recommendation(s):

That Housing Committee members

1. Approve the Local Lettings Policy set out in Appendix A.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 All social housing properties owned and managed by Runnymede Borough Council are let according to the authority's published Housing Allocations Policy.
- 1.2 All social housing within the borough where the Council has a nominations agreement are also let according to this policy.
- 1.3 The Housing Allocations Policy provides for the ability for Local Lettings Policies to be developed to alter the terms of the policy for a small group of properties provided that the overall intention of the policy and access to social housing for all residents is not altered.
- 1.4 Local Lettings Plans
 - 1.4.1 From time to time, the Council will adopt Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) for new or existing schemes, developments and/or areas of the borough where it wishes to deliver the broad objective of mixed, balanced sustainable communities.
 - 1.4.2 [Section 166A\(6\) of the Housing Act, 1996](#) enables local housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description whether or not they fall within the Reasonable Preference categories. This section enables the Council to set aside homes or certain types of properties across the stock, for applicants who meet certain criteria.
 - 1.4.3 LLPs for developments and existing stock of over 50 units will be considered and approved by a Council Committee and an Equality Impact Assessment Screening will be compiled as part of the plan. LLPs for developments and

existing stock of up to 50 units will be agreed by the Service Manager and/or the Strategic Housing Manager, in conjunction with the Head of Housing.

- 1.5 Currently Runnymede Borough Council only has one Local Lettings Policy in place for its properties and this relates to the bungalows on Field View.

2. Surrey Towers Local Lettings Policy

- 2.1 Demand for accommodation in Surrey Towers is lower than the rest of the social housing stock owned by Runnymede Borough Council. The impact of this can be seen in the relet times of properties at Surrey Towers compared to relet times across the total of the housing stock.

- 2.2 Relet times in 2022/23

Surrey Towers	65 days	114 including major works.
RBC Stock- average routine relet times	32 days	84 including major works.

12 empty properties at Surrey Towers in 2022/23 or 12.37% of the block

169 units owned by RBC were let in 2022/23 of 2849 properties in total representing 5.93% of the total stock.

- 2.3 It is proposed to introduce a Local Lettings Policy to promote demand for the accommodation and improve its sustainability.
- 2.4 All properties within Surrey Towers will initially be offered through the Choice Based Lettings system within the Housing Allocation Policy or if there is no interest by a direct let to a homeless household.
- 2.5. If this is unsuccessful, it is proposed to enable applicants to benefit from an additional bedroom to their assessed housing need. This relates only to 3-bedroom properties within the block for which the wait is reasonably short in this borough, and therefore most applicants are willing to wait for a house.
- 2.6 There is a shortage of level access family size accommodation within the social housing stock of the borough, and this will widen the cohort of families that can be allocated such a property where mobility needs require additional space, or a family member would benefit from their own rooms.
- 2.7 Finally it is proposed to enable key workers employed within the borough to benefit from the accommodation if no further interest is forthcoming.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The Housing Allocations Policy enables Local Lettings Policies to be introduced – where over 50 properties are affected, this needs to be agreed by Housing Committee prior to its introduction.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 The proposed Local Lettings Policy will be implemented by the Housing Allocations Team within Housing Solutions.

4.2 Implementation will have no additional resource implications.

5. Legal implications

5.1 Housing authorities are required by [section 166A\(1\)](#) of the Housing Act 1996 to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities, and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation; and they must allocate in accordance with that scheme ([section 166A\(14\) Housing Act 1996](#)). All aspects of the allocation process must be covered in the scheme, including the people by whom decisions are taken. In the Secretary of State's view, qualification criteria form part of an allocation scheme.

5.2 [Section 166A\(6\)\(b\) of the Housing Act, 1996](#) enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of [Section 166A\(3\) Housing Act, 1996](#). This is the statutory basis for so-called 'local lettings policies' which may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives.

6. Equality implications

6.1 An Equalities Screening has been completed and no equality implications have been identified from the introduction of the Local Lettings Policy at Surrey Towers.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 None

8. Consultation

8.1 A number of residents have been spoken to individually regarding this proposed policy.

8.2 Additional consultation will be undertaken with residents on the proposals at the 'consultation event' for Garfield Road residents on 30 May 2023.

9. Timetable for Implementation

9.1 If the Local Lettings Policy for Surrey Towers is approved, it will be implemented following the Housing Committee meeting on 7th June 2023.

9.2 A review of the policy will be conducted annually at the June meeting of the Committee.

10. Conclusions

10.1 The purpose of proposing the Local Lettings Policy for Surrey Towers is to ensure demand for accommodation within the block remains strong and therefore that available accommodation can be quickly relet.

- 10.2 Without intervention via a Local Lettings Policy relet times for the accommodation within the block will continue to exceed the total average relet times and potentially deteriorate further.
- 10.3 This proposed policy will be reviewed annually to assess whether it continues to be required or whether it needs amending.
- 10.4 This increases the opportunities to provide suitable accommodation for disabled residents, both mobility and children in need and additional room due to Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

(To resolve)

Background papers

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Allocations Policy [Housing Allocations Scheme \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](http://runnymede.gov.uk)

Appendix A – Surrey Towers Proposed Local Lettings Policy

Appendix A

SURREY TOWERS LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY

June 2023

Runnymede Borough Council (RBC)



1.0 Purpose of the Local Lettings Policy

- 1.1 This Local Lettings Policy (LLP) has been prepared to clarify the letting arrangements for 30 flats of social housing at Surrey Towers, Garfield Road, Addlestone, Surrey – KT15 2NH owned and managed by Runnymede Borough Council.
- 1.2 This LLP should be considered alongside the RBC Housing Allocations Scheme.
- 1.3 Runnymede Borough Council is the landlord of the properties at Surrey Towers and therefore controls the lettings process. The LLP will be used for all future lets at Surrey Towers, until the policy is reviewed.
- 1.4 The Housing Allocations Scheme enables Local Lettings Policies to be established for specific communities. It is essential that establishing Local Lettings Policies to give preference to one particular group does not disadvantage other groups.
- 1.5 An LLP involving 50 units or fewer can be agreed by Runnymede Borough Council without the need for approval from Housing Committee, as set out in RBC's Housing Allocations Scheme Version 1.1. 2017.
- 1.6 This LLP has been created in consultation with residents at Surrey Towers.
- 1.7 In formulating this LLP regard has been given to evidence of local housing need, based on the number of applicants registered for social housing, and their priority on the register.

2.0 Objectives of the LLP

- a. To ensure best use of the flats at Surrey Towers
- b. To promote Surrey Towers as a desirable place to live in the centre of Addlestone.
- c. To be mindful of RBC's Public Sector Equality Duty.

3.0 Property details

- 3.1 The 3-bedroom flats are high rise accommodation. They are accessed via a communal lobby and two lifts. Each flat has a personal balcony.

3.2 **Parking**

There are no individual parking spaces available at the property – there is parking on site but this is not considered sufficient for all residents of the flat block and surrounding accommodation.

3.3 **Tenure type**

All new tenants will be offered an initial Introductory Tenancy followed by a Flexible Tenancy, in line with RBC's Tenancy Policy.

Existing secure tenants will retain their existing tenancy.

3.4 **Rent levels**

Rent levels are set for the properties at a Social Rent and will follow Runnymede Borough Council's Rent Setting Policy.

4.0 **Allocations**

4.1 **Applicant groups to be offered priority within this LLP**

In order to create a sustainable community, as well as meet the other objectives of this LLP, priority of allocation will be given to the following applicant groups:

4.1.1 **Allocations in line with RBC's Housing Allocations Policy**

Initially offers of accommodation made to housing applicants seeking accommodation in Surrey Towers will be in accordance with the provisions set out within Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

Due to the nature of the accommodation at Surrey Towers i.e. flats on a single level, priority will also be given to individuals with a medical need for this type of accommodation.

The other preference categories in this policy will only be considered if accommodation cannot be let via 'normal' allocations and letting routes.

4.1.2 **Enable applicants to benefit from an additional bedroom**

In order to promote demand for accommodation in Surrey Towers if accommodation is advertised for a second time following no initial interest – applicants will be able to benefit from an additional bedroom i.e. applicants with a two bedroom need will be able to bid for three bedroom accommodation

4.1.3 **Key workers**

If no interest for the accommodation comes from two rounds of advertisements – then accommodation will be offered to the NHS as key worker accommodation.

4.2 **General Allocation Criteria**

4.2.1 **Previous / current tenancy conduct**

Save for a small number of exceptions, Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Allocations Scheme does not allow tenants with outstanding housing related debt, nor tenants who have breached the terms of a tenancy within the past five years, to be allowed onto the Housing Register. Because of this, it is not anticipated that Runnymede will let the properties at Surrey Towers to any applicant where such breaches have been declared or discovered through verification checks.

4.2.1 Applicants with support needs

Applicants who are offered accommodation at Surrey Towers may have support needs.

RBC will ensure that applicants with support needs are offered appropriate support – via our Tenancy Support Service.

4.2.2 Economic activity

Economic activity is not a criteria considered under this Local Lettings Policy.

4.2.3 Affordability checks

Financial checks will be undertaken as part of the normal process of applying to join Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Register.

4.2.4 Pets

None of the flats at Surrey Tower have direct access to a private garden.

Keeping a dog in high rise accommodation is not encouraged. If permission is sought to keep a dog careful consideration will be given as to the potential for nuisance to be caused to other residents within the block.

Small pets may be allowed within the properties, although permission must be obtained from Runnymede Borough Council in writing before any pet is kept at the property.

4.2.5 Decision making

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Allocations Team will offer the properties at Surrey Towers in line with the Housing Allocations Scheme and the additional criteria set out in this Local Lettings Policy.

5.0 Equality

Mindful of its equality duty, RBC has carried out an Equalities Screening of this LLP to ensure that it complies with legislation and that people with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged. That Equalities Screening shows that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of this screening is attached to this LLP.

6.0 Monitoring

The effectiveness of this LLP will be reported to the Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Committee annually.

Where changes to the LLP are proposed they will be requested as part of the annual report to committee

Housing Damp & Mould Policy (Housing, Maggie Ward)

Synopsis of report:

This policy outlines the way Runnymede Borough Council will deal with reports of damp and mould in its stock.

Recommendation(s):

Members approve the Housing Damp & Mould Policy (Appendix A)

1. Context

- 1.1 There is increase in the level of damp, mould and condensation issues being reported within the Council's owned homes. This is partly due to the installation of energy efficiency measures and reduced air circulation, which in turn increases the amount of moist air within a property and therefore creating excess condensation which if left un-treated, can cause mould to form.
- 1.2 A policy is required to ensure that the Council actively tackles incidents of damp and mould.

2. Report

- 2.1 This policy sets out specific guidance to ensure that the Damp & Mould present in Runnymede Borough Council's properties is managed effectively. It also aims to proactively manage the prevention of Damp & Mould in properties which are on estates where Damp & Mould has previously been reported.
- 2.2 The primary aims of this policy are to:
 - Ensure that our tenants have a safe home to live in.
 - Ensure the sustainability of our properties by managing damp & mould problems as they emerge, so that they do not contribute to potential structural problems.
- 2.3 The Housing Service has set out a clear approach for the management of damp & mould in our properties, which will include:
 - Monitoring properties where there is potential for Damp & Mould to develop. This will be achieved by tracking the frequency of Damp & Mould repairs in each of our estates and certain construction types
 - Monitoring the condition and age of the components of our properties (for example doors & windows) through our capital investment works.
 - Using the processes available in our Damp & Mould procedure to inspect and monitor the progress of reported Damp & Mould in our properties.
 - Performance Monitoring on complaints, number of repairs, MP and Councillor enquiries, and the number of disrepair cases which mention Damp & Mould.

2.4 A technical officer will complete an appropriate property inspection when a report of damp & mould is received by the Council. If appropriate it will be a joint inspection with the Area Housing Manager

2.5 Where inspections are carried out, factors to be considered include:

- Insulation (Loft and wall)
- Window fittings
- Fuel poverty
- If there are factors that might be within the tenant's control to affect the presence of damp & mould, for example:
 - Heating (with due consideration to the financial position of the tenant);
 - Ventilation
 - Arrangements for drying clothes;
 - Overcrowding
 - Construction design
- Inspectors will routinely provide information leaflets and letters regarding damp & mould.

2.6 RBC will provide a package of works as appropriate and work with the tenant to understand the causes of damp and mould and positive actions which can / need to be taken to avoid the build-up.

2.7 Potential works

- Increased passive ventilation
- Mechanical ventilation to areas of high humidity
- Increase in loft insulation and or top up to existing
- Mould treatments to affected areas
- Referrals to our capital works programmes for new windows and doors
- Thermal insulation (internally)
- Replacement of rainwater goods and or repairs if applicable
- Humidity sensors

2.8 Once the Council is satisfied that any construction, ventilation and heating issues have been addressed the tenant will be advised of this and be provided with information on any issues within the property that they need to manage.

3. Consultation

3.1 As this policy relates to a significant health and safety issue and ensures that the Council is not in breach of its duties it is not recommended that there is a period of consultation on the policy.

4 Policy framework implications

4.1 The Tenancy Agreement outlines both the landlord and tenant responsibilities in relation to repairs and maintenance and ensuring the property is kept clean.

4.2 The agreement is currently being reviewed – as highlighted in the Housing Services Area plan 2023/24. A refreshed version will be presented to Housing Committee in June 2024.

5. Resource implications

- 5.1 There will be costs associated within the implementation of this policy but they will be contained within existing budgets and staffing resources.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The policy takes into account the following legislation;

Landlord & Tenant Act 1985
Defective Premises Act 1972
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Equality Act 2010
Right to Repair Regulations 1994
Building Regulations
Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
The Housing Acts 1985 & 1996
Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System
Homes (Fitness for Human habitation) Act 2018
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Section 11 - Repairs and Maintenance
Decent Homes standards
Housing Ombudsman

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 As the policy applies to all tenancies, it is believed that there will be no negative impact on the experience of residents with Protected Characteristics. Limited data is currently available on the link between reports of Damp & Mould in RBC properties and the Protected Characteristics of our tenants.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that our data quality will improve due to the changes proposed to RBC's approach to Damp & Mould. In the medium to long term, reports may be generated regarding these potential links.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 Addressing damp and mould effectively helps to ensure that our tenants living in suitable, good quality housing.
- 7.2 Failure to address damp and mould issues has potentially serious health implications for tenants and their household.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Members are asked to approve the Damp & Mould Policy for implementation.

(To Resolve)

Background Papers

None

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Damp & Mould Policy

DRAFT

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out specific guidance to ensure that the Damp & Mould present in RBC properties is managed effectively. It also aims to prevent the development of Damp & Mould in properties which are on estates where Damp & Mould has previously been reported.

1.2 The Council will ensure that our procedures to manage Damp & Mould are followed, in accordance with best practice, which will assist the service in achieving the aims of this policy.

1.3 In publishing this policy, RBC aims to ensure its services are in line with the following section from a recent letter from the Housing Ombudsman Service to all Chief Executives of members of their service:

I would also highlight two areas of the report. Firstly, my report recommended landlords take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. I further recommended landlords consider a dedicated policy to support decision-making and an urgent, proactive approach. I am asking all landlords to actively consider whether such a policy is required, if not done so already. If a dedicated policy is genuinely not considered necessary, I ask you to be really clear why.

2. Aim

2.1 This policy aims to ensure that the Council meets its obligations as a landlord and seeks to provide assurance that damp & mould is adequately managed, ensuring the safety of our tenants and leaseholders.

2.2 The primary aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that our tenants have a safe homes to live in.
- Ensure the sustainability of our properties by managing damp & mould problems as they emerge, so that they do not contribute to potential structural problems.

2.3 These aims will be achieved through the following means:

- The Housing Service has set out a clear approach for the management of damp & mould in our properties, which will include:
 - Monitoring properties where there is potential for Damp & Mould to develop. This will be achieved by tracking the frequency of Damp & Mould repairs in each of our estates.
 - Monitoring the condition and age of the components of our properties (for example doors & windows).
 - Using the processes available in our Damp & Mould procedure to inspect and monitor the progress of reported Damp & Mould in our properties.
 - Performance Monitoring on complaints, number of repairs, MP and Councillor enquiries, and the number of disrepair cases which mention Damp & Mould.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy covers the life cycle of any report of Damp and/or Mould, whether found as part of the preventative monitoring detailed above, or through a repairs request sent to the Housing Repairs team.

3.2 Access for preventative work regarding Damp & Mould is covered by the current Tenancy Agreement (under section 6 – Access).

3.3 In line with government guidance, for example: [Housing disrepair legal obligations: good practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), RBC expects that adequate audit trails have been maintained internally for Damp & Mould repairs & inspections.

4. Responsive Repairs which involve Damp & Mould

4.1 RBC aim to complete a relevant inspection as soon as possible of the affected property upon receipt of a report of Damp & Mould being received.

4.2 Where inspections are carried out, factors to be considered include:

- Fuel poverty – if a resident is struggling to pay for heating, financial support can be offered through the RBC website: [Reduce fuel bills – Runnymede Borough Council](#) or [Difficulty paying your rent – Runnymede Borough Council](#) or through Customer Services.
- If there are factors that might be within the tenant's control to affect the presence of damp & mould, for example:
 - Ventilation;
 - Heating (with due consideration to the financial position of the tenant);
 - Arrangements for drying clothes;
- Inspectors will routinely provide information leaflets and letters regarding damp & mould.

4.3 Damp & mould repairs which are deemed to be the result of wilful neglect or damage to the property by any resident of a property will be subject to the terms of the RBC Recharge Policy.

4.4 Tenants have a Right to Repair for qualifying works (up to a value of £250) – for a full list, see: [Using the right to repair scheme - Citizens Advice](#)

5. Policy statement

5.1 The Council will take every opportunity to involve interested tenants in managing and developing this service. Including utilising their skillschallenging our performance at core groups, and advising on revised policy changes.

5.2 The Council recognises that in certain cases there may be underlying issues that contribute to access problems. These can relate to a support need, language or format issue, or a specific tenancy management problem. In these circumstances, where it is reasonably practicable to identify the need, the Council will try to overcome or resolve the cause of the problem and be sensitive to the issue before pursuing legal action.

5.3 Appropriate and regular training will be provided to all property and first point of contact staff.

5.4 Properties which have recently been void should already meet the specific damp related requirements set out in the Runnymede void standard before re-let.

6. Council Roles & Responsibilities

6.1 The following roles have responsibilities:

The Chief Executive - overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Head of Housing Technical Services - will take the lead on the consistency of the council's approach regarding these reports.

6.2 Employees

All employees, irrespective of their position shall:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be adversely affected by damp & mould, including members of the public, tenants, visitors and contractors.
- Co-operate as appropriate with other staff and agencies to ensure compliance with this policy and all other legal requirements.
- Halt works that, constitute a serious risk to health and safety.
- Report any concerns that they may have in relation to the management of damp & mould.

7. Consultation, communication and training

7.1 The Council will provide clear and comprehensive advice and information to residents, with an aim for a single point of contact.

7.2 Internal stakeholders have also been consulted.

8. Legislation and Regulation

The following regulation relates to this policy document:

The Home Standard – sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide tenants with quality accommodation and a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service.

[Home Standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Decent Homes Standard – sets expectations for the maintenance standards of homes which should be let by Local Authorities.

[COVER \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Equality Act, 2010 - protects people against discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in employment, and as users of private and public services based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Fitness for Human Habitation Act, 2018 – enhances protections for tenants against hazards in rented properties.

[Guide for local authorities: Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

9. Related Policies & Documents

Recharge Policy
Repairs Policy
Void Standard
Damp & Mould Procedure

10. Monitoring and performance management

10.1 The Council aims to review this policy in three years or sooner if needed to ensure it reflects current legislation and latest examples of best practice.

10.2 Technical Services will monitor contractor performance (KPIs) and any complaints from residents.

10.3 Business Development plan to put in place a system to monitor the potential for future repairs requests from our estates (by mapping where previous requests/complaints have emerged).

11. Equalities Implications

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out for this policy.

11.2 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.

11.3 The screening found that there will be no negative impacts on residents with Protected Characteristics.

12. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	January 23	First draft completed		Tom Branagan	

Safer Streets – Update, (Andy Vincent, Corporate Head of Housing)

Synopsis of report:

The purpose of this report is to update Runnymede Borough Council’s Community Services and Housing Committees on the work to implement the commitments made in the Safer Streets Funding bid which was submitted to the Home Office in conjunction with Surrey Police in autumn 2022.

Target hardening work intended to design out crime has been completed on the Garfield Road estate.

A youth service designed to engage with young people on the estate and divert them away from anti-social activity commenced in May 2023. This is being delivered by Eikon a local charity based in New Haw.

Runnymede Borough Council has secured £67,000 in match funding via the Safer Streets programme in 2022/23 – this funding is being utilised to deliver the diversionary activities led by Eikon.

Recommendation(s):

That Community Services and Housing Committee members note the progress being made to implement the commitments made by Runnymede Borough Council in the Safer Streets bid.

1. Context and background of report

1.1 In September 2022 Runnymede Borough Council was asked to join a Surrey Police led funding bid, representatives from Community Services (including Community Safety and Safer Runnymede) and Housing, supported by the Corporate Grant Bid Writer to compile an application for Safer Streets Funding round 4.

1.2 Safer Streets Funding is available to: -

“Police forces, local authorities, British Transport Police and eligible community groups across England and Wales to prevent violence against women and girls in public, neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour.

These projects will be able to roll out extra CCTV and streetlighting in their communities and expand work to change attitudes and behaviours and prevent these crimes happening in the first place.”

1.3 The purpose of the bid was to address issues of anti-social behaviour on the Garfield Road Estate Addlestone (described as the Safer Streets bid in the remainder of the report).

1.4 Working with Police Officers and their Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO), the initial consideration for the bid focused on the physical Garfield Road housing estate area. Following a walk around by Officers, where options to reduce anti-social behaviour and criminality were considered, several components were included as part of the application. These were:

- The installation of gates into stairwells
- Installation of CCTV cameras, linked to Safer Runnymede
- Installation of additional lighting
- Reconfiguration of gardens to remove secluded pathways

- 1.5 The Safer Streets bid also proposed to provide support alongside physical diversionary activities, designed to prevent people from and to move people away from anti-social activity. This was initially intended to be delivered in the form of a Youth Café, however due to reasons reported to committee in March 2023, such an opportunity was not able to be realised.
- 1.6 Therefore, officers have worked with the Police and Crime Commissioners Office and with Home Office representatives, to identify potential alternative projects that can be delivered at the Garfield Road estate, focussed on young people, in order to preserve as much of the grant funding originally awarded as possible for the benefit of the prescribed area, its residents and the wider Addlestone community.
- 1.7 This report sets out the work already completed in relation to the Safer Streets funding bid and the Youth intervention work that is to be delivered at the Garfield Road Estate, working in partnership with Eikon, a local youth charity.

2. Delivering the proposals within the Safer Streets bid

- 2.1 The physical work proposed within the bid for the estate has been completed.

- Additional CCTV cameras have been installed.
- Two stairgates installed (other gates may be installed following detailed consultation with the residents affected).
- Additional lighting is in place at Hampshire and Middlesex Court.
- The pathway behind the bungalows has been removed and blocked off.

- 2.2 A security firm is also undertaking regular sweeps of the estate to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour.

- 2.3 Support and work to divert young people and young residents engaged in anti-social behaviour away from further nuisance is being delivered by The Eikon Charity.

- 2.4 This arrangement commenced in May 2023 and has been specified to provide the following interventions: -

- 2.4.1 Children and young people 8-18 years in Runnymede (including those out of school) are identified, assessed, and supported with relevant, and direct early interventions to improve their wellbeing and mental health either in a community or school setting:

- Intensive 121 support with the child (and with a parent or sibling in some cases) help overcome anxieties and early level concerns.
- Targeted group work to address key topics such as healthy relationships (including boys' groups with a focus on healthy boundaries with girls/ women and challenging domestic violence social norms), anger management, friendship circles.
- Preventative work with larger cohorts of children to address key topics such as anti-bullying, online safety, and school transition support.

2.4.2 Parents and carers in the community are supported by building their knowledge, confidence, and skills to support their young person’s wellbeing and mental health longer term:

- 121 support with their young person in community settings.
- Parent webinars on topics such as ‘Supporting your Child’s Mental Health and Wellbeing,’ ‘Supporting your Child’s Self-esteem and Confidence,’ ‘Supporting your Child through Year 10 & 11’ (and bespoke events can be arranged). These are funded elsewhere, but parents in the programme will be signposted.

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 The Safer Streets work supports objectives 1& 2 within the Council’s Corporate Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

- Healthy Homes: Ensure residents of all ages can live in safe, secure, good quality homes and are supported when necessary to be able to continue to live independently.
- Healthy Communities: For all residents to be able to engage and participate in their community, access services, facilities, amenities, leisure, and recreational opportunities locally.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 In 2022/23 the following has been spent – in line with the original funding application on activities on the Garfield Road Estate.

Item	Year 1 Spend (£)
Gates	3,700
Cameras	12,692
Lights	300
Metal Fences	
Wooden Fences	6,507
Turf	-
CCTV Monitoring/Maintenance	22,560
Project Management	4,999
Ongoing Maintenance	4,000
Patrols on Surrey Towers Estate	12,000
Total:	66,758

4.2 Expenditure by Runnymede Borough Council is match funded through Safer Streets – and therefore this money is available to support the diversionary activities delivered by Eikon.

4.3 It is intended for other agreed works, delivered via existing budgets within Housing, to be completed to provide the opportunity to realise £95,000 of further match funding from the Safer Streets project in 2023/2024 that will enable Eikon to deliver the project outlined for a period of two years.

5. Legal implications

5.1 Social landlords have a key role to play in creating safe and sustainable communities. They can achieve this in partnership with the police and other key local agencies to deliver a comprehensive approach to local problems and priorities. The measures outlined in the body of the report are evidence of the efforts being made by the Council in its capacity as a Housing Authority to discharge its role in addressing community safety issues.

6. Equality implications

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the target hardening, diversionary activities, and floating support service.

6.2 No equalities issues have been identified – although it is essential that the floating support service reaches all parts of the community.

This will be monitored through regular contract meetings.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 None

8. Other implications

8.1 Consultation – Engagement with residents is essential in this project. A meeting was held with residents in July and October 2021.

8.2 Regular updates have been provided on improvement measures to the Garfield Road estate via newsletters.

8.3 Engagement on diversionary activities and the floating support service is planned for 30th May 2023.

9. Timetable for Implementation

9.1 The target hardening interventions highlighted within the Safer Streets bid have been completed.

9.2 The support service – delivered by The Eikon Charity commenced in May 2023. A progress update on delivery will be received in June with a contract management meeting taking place in July 2023.

10. Conclusions

10.1 Significant progress is being made in implementing the commitments made within the Safer Streets Bid.

10.2 It is anticipated that further diversionary work will be undertaken on the estate in 2023/24. This will enable match funding to be drawn down from the Safer Streets fund to support the provision of the Eikon service.

(To resolve

Background papers

Previous reports to Committee on the Safer Streets Project

[Safer Streets Funding Application Report](#)

Housing Quarter 4 2022/23 Performance Report (Angela Horsey, Business Development Manager)

Synopsis of report:

This report provides the results of the Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures for the year ending March 2023.

Recommendation:

None. This report is for information only.

1. Context of report

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the results of the Key Performance Indicators for the year 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 4

	Performance Indicator	Target for Q4	Result Q1	Result Q2	Result Q3	Result Q4
H1 (TSM RP02 (a))	Percentage of non-emergency repairs completed within target	95%	94.8%	95.8%	95.2%	95.8%
(TSM RP02 (b))	Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target timescale		97.47%	97.21%	97.18%	100%
H2	Average number of calendar days to re-let a void property (excludes major works voids).	25	68	37	43	45
H3	Satisfaction with the overall reactive repairs service received (% of total number of responses returned)	95.0%	95.5%	92.7%	97.5%	97.3%
H4	Number of households in B&B for more than 2 weeks in the year					40
H5	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due	1.75%	2.36%	2.42%	2.34%	1.93%

H6	Percentage of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	30%	29%	25%	24%	22.5%
H7	Percentage of stock with valid annual landlord gas safety certification	100%	99.9%	99.9%	100%	100%
H8	Percentage of stock with valid Electrical Installation Condition Report certification	100%	99.8%	99.9%	100%	100%
H9	Number of outstanding high risk Fire Risk Assessment actions	30	34	34	34	10
H10	Number of reported anti-social behaviour cases opened in the year per 1,000 properties					17
TSM BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out.		84%	84%	84%	84%
TSM BS04	Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out		100%	100%	100%	100%
TSM BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out		100%	100%	100%	100%
TSM CH02 (Stage 1)	Stage One complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales in the year					86%
TSM CH02 (Stage 2)	Stage Two complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales in the year					88%

- 2.2 Performance on reletting empty properties was disappointing throughout the year. The Council's new Repairs contract started on 1st April 2023 and the contractor MCP is also carrying out void works, with a challenging target of 25 days to prepare the homes for letting.
- 2.3 Over the year 40 households were on nightly paid accommodation for more than 2 weeks, of these 8 households had children. Most of the households without children had complex support needs, with very limited accommodation options. The Council has a No Second Night Out policy and therefore provides emergency accommodation for people who do not meet the priority need threshold whilst working to secure move on for them.
- 2.4 The rent arrears result for quarter 4, and therefore for the year end was very positive especially given the current financial climate. It also compares

favourably with the result of 2.28% for benchmarked local authority landlords of a similar size.

2.5 Results for compliance with the Decent Homes standard and all the health and safety compliance results not already at 100% have improved during the year.

2.6 An analysis of complaints during the year is in item 18 in this agenda.

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 Members 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 the year ending 2022/23.

(For information)

Background papers

None

Complaints Analysis, (Angela Horsey, Business Development and Policy Manager)

Synopsis of report:

This report provides an analysis of complaints made about Housing services in 2022/23 and provides information on arrangements for complaints handling.

Recommendation(s):

That Members note:

- (1) the analysis of complaints made about Housing services
- (2) the refreshed Housing Complaints Policy

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 This committee receives updates on complaints made about housing services as part of regular performance reports. Additional analysis is presented to Members twice a year.

2. Complaints

- 2.1 All complaints about housing services are logged and monitored in line with the Housing Complaints policy approved by this committee in January 2021.
- 2.2 There was an increase in the number of complaints received between April 2022 and March 2023 (48) and the same period in the previous year (31). In addition, a slightly higher proportion of complaints were upheld last year, compared with the previous year.
- 2.3 As required by the Housing Ombudsman, information on how tenants can make a complaint has been added to the Council's website and has featured in tenant newsletters and correspondence in recent years. This is thought to have led to the increase in complaints, along with a better understanding from staff of the importance of treating expressions of dissatisfaction as formal complaints. The Housing Complaints Policy notes that learning from complaints informs our risk management, audit functions and contracting arrangements, aids governance and helps us make improvements to policies and processes. Complaints are therefore to be welcomed as feedback, rather than considered an indication of failure.

2.4 Table 1 Housing Complaints Received since April 2021

April 21 - March 22					April 22 - March 23				
Subject	Upheld	Not upheld	Partly upheld	Total	Subject	Upheld	Not upheld	Partly upheld	Total
Repairs/Maintenance	3	8	2	13	Repairs/Maintenance	7	8	4	19
Housing Register		6	1	7	Housing Register		4	1	5
Staff	1	4		5	Staff	1	11	2	14
Data Management	2			2	Adaptation/Improvement		1	2	3
Untidy neighbouring property		2		2	Right to Buy			1	1

Arrears		1		1	Arrears		1		1
ASB		1		1	ASB		1		1
					Tenancy management	1	1		2
					Development/ refurbishment	2			2
TOTAL	6	22	3	31	TOTAL	11	27	10	48

- 2.5 Last year there was a 67% increase in complaints from tenants and a 30% increase from other customers compared with the previous year. There was a sharp increase in the number of complaints about or mentioning staff, compared to the previous year. 79% of these were not upheld. Nine of the fourteen complaints about staff were from council tenants. Of these, two tenants complained twice. When investigating complaints, managers are required to consider making recommendations for service improvements such as revised procedures or staff guidance. Complaints are also analysed at management team meetings.
- 2.6 Registered Social Landlords are required to carry out an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code to ensure complaint handling (in relation to landlord and tenant issues) remains in line with its requirements, and to publish the results. A self-assessment was completed by staff in July 2022 and resulted in some minor amendments to the current complaints policy and procedure. The self-assessment is on the Council's website [here](#).
- 2.7 The refreshed Housing Complaints policy is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.8 This year's self-assessment against the Code will take place in the summer and tenants will be invited to take part.
- 2.9 Three complaints were subsequently referred to one of the Ombudsman Services in 2022/23 - two to the Local Government Ombudsman and one to the Housing Ombudsman.

Ombudsman	Complaint	Outcome
LGO	Housing Register priority	Not upheld
Housing	Antisocial Behaviour	No investigation required
LGO	Disabled Adaptations	Upheld

- 2.10 In response to the findings of the Local Government Ombudsman, a new Home Improvement Agency Assistance Policy is presented to Members for approval at item 5 of this agenda.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 In addition to the Council's corporate complaints policy, a Housing Complaints policy was approved by this committee in 2021. The policy was reviewed in April 2023, with minor amendments made to reflect recommendations arising from the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

5. Legal implications

5.1 All bodies registered with the Regulator for Social Housing come under the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman by effect of the Housing Act 1996 and Localism Act 2011. The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code was updated in 2022 to further strengthen provisions to support a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must carry out an annual assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements and must publish the results.

6. Equality implications

6.1 There are no known equality implications arising from this report; however analysis of the profile of complainants is planned in order to address any issues that may emerge. Action on this will be reported to future meetings of this committee.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 There are no known environmental, sustainability or biodiversity implications.

8. Other implications

8.1 There are no known additional implications.

9. Conclusions

9.1 This report provides an analysis of complaints made about Housing services in 2021/2022 and 2022/23. It also provides information on arrangements for handling complaints about housing services.

(For information)

Background papers

Housing Complaints Policy V1.1

[Effective Involvement of Governing Bodies: Housing Ombudsman guidance for landlords](#)

Appendix A

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Housing Services Complaints Policy

Review due: April 2025

1. Introduction

The Council strives to provide high-quality services to all our residents and customers in line with our Customer Charter. It has adopted the following definition of a complaint which has been suggested by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman:

An expression of dissatisfaction about a Council service, whether the service is provided directly by us or by one of our partners or contractors, which requires a response.

2. Policy Details

2.1 RBC's two stage complaints procedure is at <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/comments-complaints-and-compliments>. It is also publicised in the tenants' newsletter and as part of regular correspondence with residents as appropriate, along with contact information for the relevant ombudsman.

2.2 A complaint can be about quality of service, behaviour of staff or perceived failure to adhere to policy. It is not a request for service (e.g., request for a repair), request for information, explanation of Council policy, or feedback (e.g. in a survey). The resident does not have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such.

2.3 This policy seeks to build on the Council's corporate policy and add specific details relevant to Housing Services. Housing Services welcomes feedback from residents including compliments and complaints. Complaints are dealt with fairly and in a timely manner. Where mistakes have been made, we will take steps to put things right. Complaints about someone causing antisocial behaviour are dealt with separately.

2.4 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman can investigate complaints about the Council's services including housing allocations and homeless applications. Our landlord function comes under the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman, and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code sets out requirements for registered social landlords to respond to complaints effectively.

2.5 There is much commonality between the Local Government Ombudsman's guide to complaint handling and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code (the Code). Their respective definitions of a complaint are marginally different, but both are clear that what matters is that complaints are properly identified and investigated. We have satisfactorily completed a self-assessment of compliance with the Code and shared the outcome of this assessment with residents by putting it on the Council's website. We will promote the Code and undertake regular reviews to ensure it is being applied.

2.6 Learning from complaints informs our risk management, audit functions and contracting arrangements, aids governance and helps us make improvements to policies, processes, and training.

2.7 Some issues can be resolved through discussion with the customer and appropriate member of staff. If this does not resolve the matter, a customer can complain formally using the Council's two stage complaints procedure by completing the e-form on the website,

emailing or writing, phoning or complaining in person. Staff will assist a customer who needs help to make a formal complaint.

2.8 Staff will also clarify if it is appropriate to take a complaint from a representative, including councillors and MPs, by checking if they have the complainant's consent to act on their behalf and are satisfied, they are acting in the complainant's best interests. A complainant can approach their Ward Councillor for advice at any time. A designated person, such as a Councillor, may help resolve the complaint or refer the complaint straight to the Housing Ombudsman (complainants can refer a complaint to the LGO without a designated person). Councillors have an important dual role scrutinising the delivery of council services and also signposting and pursuing complaints on behalf of the public.

2.9 In some circumstances we may be able to resolve an issue raised via social media, but we will usually suggest this is formalised by the complainant so it can be logged and dealt with in line with this policy. We cannot investigate a complaint where data protection could be compromised as a result of responding, without the explicit consent of the person the complaint concerns.

2.10 The matter will probably not be treated as a complaint if:

- It has already been considered at Stage 2 of the complaints policy.
- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago (except for safeguarding or health and safety issues). However, if it is a recurring issue, we will consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.
- Legal proceedings have been started.
- The issue has already been decided by a court or independent tribunal.
- There is a designated appeals process, specific statutory review or right of appeal (for example for homelessness, disrepair etc.) unless the complaint is specifically about officer conduct and not the statutory process.

2.11 Customers have the right to challenge our decision not to accept their complaint by going to the Ombudsman, who can instruct us to take on the complaint.

2.12 Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 days and be responded to within 10 working days if all possible. If this is not possible the complainant will be kept informed and be given a timescale for a full response.

2.13 Complaint investigations will be conducted in an impartial manner and complaints will be responded to by a senior manager.

2.14 If a complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction it will be progressed to stage two to ensure the customer can challenge the decision by correcting any errors or raising any additional concerns. At the end of a stage two, we will advise the complainant of their right to refer the complaint to the relevant Ombudsman Service.

2.15 If a customer makes a complaint in an unreasonable way, for example repeatedly or aggressively, we will write to them explaining what action we are taking to resolve the matter. This could include restricting how the complainant should contact us and who they can contact. If a complaint is considered vexatious or unreasonably persistent, we may follow the Council's [unreasonable complainant behaviour protocol](#) and explain this to the complainant in writing. In the case of council tenants behaving unreasonably we may take enforcement action in line with their tenancy agreement. Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and will demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

2.16 The Council is committed to ensuring that disabled people are not disadvantaged in accessing its housing services. To this end, we will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and those with support needs in applying this policy and our complaints procedure.

3. Communication and training

3.1 The Council will provide residents with advice about how to make a complaint and also contact information for the relevant Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with tenants and residents.

3.2 Staff will receive guidance on the value of learning from complaints in order to improve services and training on the complaints procedure.

4. Monitoring and performance management

4.1 We aim to review this policy in two years to ensure it reflects current legislation and best practice.

4.2 We log and monitor all formal complaints received and report on these to the Standards and Audit Committee. In addition, we report regularly to Housing Committee and the Housing Management Team reviews the volume and outcome of complaints and complaint handling performance to drive service improvements. Phone calls about complaints may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

5. Equalities Implications

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

5.2 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.

5.3 In accordance with the Equality Act we will make changes in our approach as necessary to ensure our services are accessible to disabled people as well as everybody else. The reasonable adjustments required may be physical, but we will also adjust this policy and procedure, as well as staff training, to ensure that the objectives are delivered equally well for all our customers including people with, for example, learning disabilities and those who cannot read or write or speak English.

6. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	January 21	First draft completed	January 21	Angela Horsey	Housing Committee
V1.1	April 23	Review of first draft. Recommendations from Self Assessment against the Complaints Handling Code incorporated		Angela Horsey	

Parkside Regeneration, (Mark Bawden, Housing Development Manager)

Synopsis of report:

- 1. Update regarding the appointment of consultants for the Parkside Regeneration project.**

Recommendation(s):

None. This report is for information only.

1 Context of report

- 1.1 On 18th 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 Members on the progress of the project since the last update at Housing Committee held on 8th March 2023.

2 Procurement

- 2.1 The Housing Service, along with colleagues from Corporate Procurement, have worked with STAR, a procurement consultancy. 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 A price was sought for the completion of all tasks required to submit a valid planning application for a viable scheme. Tender submissions from four consultancies were assessed. The prices submitted varied from £1.8m up to £4m.
- 2.3 The tenders were assessed with a weighting prioritising quality over price on a 70/30 basis. The clear winner was Ridge, rated best for both quality and price.

- 2.4 Ridge 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).

2.5 Contracts have been executed and a schedule of meetings will be arranged to progress the project.

2.6 As a result of delays through the procurement process and setting up the contract a revised timetable is provided below.

Stage	Completion	Report
RIBA Stage 1	24 November 2023	January 2024
RIBA Stage 1	18 October 2024	TBC
RIBA Stage 1	11 April 2025	TBC

These reports will form the basis for the decision gateways for the Housing Committee to determine whether to proceed with the project.

3 Resource implications

3.1 None. This report is for information purposes only.

4 Legal implications

4.1 The procurement utilised 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.

4.2 Legal Services have assisted in the procurement process and the drafting of the consultant appointment contract.

4.3 Legal Services are assisting Housing in the procurement of external legal advice on the areas listed below (the cost of which will be taken from the already approved budget),

- Due Diligence
- Land Assembly
- Planning
- Compulsory Purchase Orders (if required)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Energy Generation and Management
- Construction and Procurement

5 Equality implications

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

6 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

6.1 Policy EE9 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan sets out when biodiversity net gains are required.

6.2 A balance would need to be sought between the cost of construction and the energy performance of any new development.

6.3 It is intended that the development would replace poor housing stock with modern, fit for purpose homes.

6.4 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.

7 Other implications

7.1 None

8 Conclusions

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

(For information)

Background papers

None

Urgent Action – Standing Order 42

A copy of proformas 1,015 and 1,020 detailing action taken after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee are both enclosed.

1,015 – Local Authority Housing Fund
1,020 – Safer Streets Funding Release

(For information)

Background Papers

None

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CONSULTATION WITH APPROPRIATE CHAIRMAN AND VICE- CHAIRMAN FOR URGENT ACTION
TO BE TAKEN UNDER STANDING ORDER 42**

**To: Cllrs J Gracey & J Hulley
Chairman and Vice- Chairman of the Housing Committee**

Date: 3 February 2023

Report Author: Andy Vincent/ Mark Bawden

Report Title: Local Authority Housing Fund

SO42 Proforma number: 1015

1. Synopsis of Report.

Runnymede Borough Council have been provisionally allocated grant funding of £1,435,376 through the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing's (DLUCH) new Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF).

The LAHF provides capital funding to Local Authorities (LAs) to enable the provision of housing for displaced households from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

This report sets out,

- The reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision,
- The context of this report and a breakdown of the provisional allocation,
- A high-level financial appraisal of the scheme,
- The suggested route to delivering of the new homes.

2. Reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision.

On 21st December 2022 DLUCH announced the new £500m LAHF which will run over financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

On 9th January 2023 RBC's Chief Executive was informed of the provisional LAHF allocation of £1,435,376. Councils were required to complete a validation form by 25th January 2023, which provided DLUCH with an expression of interest. This form was completed under the Authority of RBC's Section 151 Officer, indicating that RBC could provide the 8 homes that the provisional allocation allows for, subject to internal approval.

The next steps require a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed in March 2023, committing to delivery of the requested number of units.

Properties should be acquired before the "target date" of 30th November 2023, however payments will be honoured by DLUCH if delivery is within the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

To meet the required timescales, it will be necessary to access the market at the earliest possibility.

Below is a proposed timetable for seeking internal approval and formally agreeing to the LAHF scheme with DLUCH.

- Report to Corporate Management Committee – 23/02/2023
- Report to Full Council – 02/03/2023
- Signing of MOU by Section 151 Officer – 03/03/2023

The exact mix of units, their location and the rent that is charged will be authorised by the Corporate Head of Housing, ensuring the best affordability for future tenants without exceeding a repayment period of 35 years (see financial appraisal for current projection).

3. Recommendations.

- i. That the Council sign-up to the LAHF.
- ii. That the suggested delivery route is adopted.
- iii. That it is recommended to Corporate Management Committee and Full Council a total budget of £3,186,752 to purchase 8 properties to fulfil the requirements of the LAHF terms be approved, repurposing existing budgets within the current capital programme. The total budget is made of the £1,435,376 provisional allocation from DLUCH and £1,751,376 from the HRA.
- iv. That the additional use of the HRA working balance of £390,000 due to the unavailability of 1-4-1 receipts for this scheme be approved.
- v. The Corporate Head of Housing will, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee, determine rent levels related to properties included in this scheme.

4. Context of report.

150,000 people from Ukraine have come to live in the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Prior to that 23,000 people from Afghanistan, who worked alongside the British Government, have come to the UK. Of those around 9,200 are living in bridging hotel accommodation.

The LAHF provides Councils with capital funding to secure move on and settled accommodation for Ukrainian and Afghan households. In their notification to RBC DLUCH state "As well as helping to fulfil the UK's humanitarian duties to assist those fleeing war, the fund will create a lasting legacy for UK nationals by providing a new and permanent supply of accommodation for LAs to help address local housing and homelessness pressures."

The funding presents an opportunity for RBC to increase the housing stock within its ownership. After the initial letting to the LAHF designated cohort, the units will become part of RBC's general needs Housing Revenue Account stock.

It should be noted that the LAHF provides LAs with capital funding for property purchases and does not include revenue funding for support services.

5. Report and, where applicable, options considered

The LAHF is broken down into two elements, the Main element, and the Bridging element.

The **Main element** seeks to provide family sized accommodation (with two – four+ bedrooms) to the entire cohort, i.e., people that are resident in the UK under the following schemes,

- Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (including eligible British Nationals under this scheme) (ACRS),
- Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP),
- Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS),
- Homes for Ukraine (HFU), and
- Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES)

RBC have been provisionally allocated £1,092,000 for the Main element. This funding provides 40% of the purchase of properties with the remaining being funded by the RBC HRA Revenue budget. This is assessed via DLUCH's formula to be sufficient to purchase 7 properties.

The **Bridging element** provides funding for some of the 9,200 people currently living in Home Office bridging accommodation who are being resettled via the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. This fund aims to support local authorities to help move more households out of bridging accommodation and focusses on the delivery of large family homes with four or more bedrooms.

RBC have been provisionally allocated £343,376 for the Bridging element. This funding can provide 50% of the purchase with the remaining being funded by RBC. This is assessed via DLUCH's formula to be sufficient to purchase a minimum of 1 property.

Included within both elements is an Improvement Budget. This is an average allocation of £20,000 per property for other costs such as refurbishment, energy efficiency measures, legal costs, valuations, decoration, furnishings or other costs to prepare the property for letting. How the Improvement Budget is spent is left to the discretion of each LA, i.e., it does not need to be spent equally across the properties.

The match funding that RBC would need to contribute, based on DLUCH's requirements for the number of new homes and estimated purchase prices, is a maximum of £1,751,376 although this figure may be lower if properties with lower values are identified.

"The basic model assumes stock acquisition. In practice this could include, but is not limited to:

- Refurbishing and/or converting local authority-owned residential or non-residential buildings, including defunct sheltered accommodation;
- Acquiring, refurbishing and/or converting non-local authority owned residential or non-residential buildings, including bringing empty or dilapidated properties back into use;
- Acquiring new build properties 'off-the-shelf', including acquiring and converting shared ownership properties;
- Developing new properties, including developing modular housing on council-owned sites, and;
- Working with and supporting other organisations who want to offer accommodation for this cohort."

LAHF, Prospectus and Guidance, DLUCH (December 2022)

Properties should be available before the "target date" of 30th November 2023, however payments will be honoured by DLUCH if delivery is within the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Financial Appraisal

RBC's current pipeline for the delivery of new build homes does not anticipate delivery before the target date of 30th November 2023 or before the absolute deadline of 31st March 2024. Further to this, providing all of the 8 LAHF homes in one place may not be seen to support achieving balanced and

inclusive communities. It is therefore proposed that stock acquisition is the route that would be most appropriate. This option presents the lowest impact on those that are already seeking affordable housing in Runnymede and means that the LAHF properties will be distributed across the Borough.

The following mix of homes is proposed, this represents the use of the maximum grant allowance and it may be possible to purchase cheaper properties.

Element	Size of Properties	Number of Units	Average Price
Main	Two bedrooms	4	£310,000
Main	Three bedrooms	3	£380,000
Bridging	Four(+) bedrooms	1	£646,752
		Total acquisition costs (ex. costs)	£3,026,752

The LAHF seeks family sized accommodation. The exact mix that can be achieved for the Main element will be dependent on the availability and cost of properties. DLUCH has expressed a preference for larger homes. The Bridging element allocation could mean that it is possible to buy a property with more than four bedrooms, however, the resulting affordability of that home for future residents will need to be considered. It is not possible to mix grant from the Bridging element to increase the Main element or vice versa.

Early financial appraisals have been carried out to show the benefit of utilising the LAHF grant, a summary is included below.

Element	Properties	Estimated costs ^(a)	Payback period
Main	4 x Two + 3 x Three bedrooms properties	£2,520,000 ^(b)	23 years
Bridging	1 x Four bedroom property	£666,752 ^(c)	35 years

^(a) costs include acquisition, works, legal fees, valuations, decoration, furnishing, etc.

^(b) based on 4 x two bedroom and 3 x three bedroom homes (average price plus £20,000 improvements per property).

^(c) this represents a purchase price of £646,752 for the purchase of 1 x four(+) bedroom property (average price plus £20,000 improvements per property).

It is intended that these properties will be let at Affordable Rent levels. The above projected payback periods are based upon rents that are up to 80% of the market rent. The exact mix of units, their location and the rent that is charged will be authorised by the Corporate Head of Housing in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee, ensuring the best affordability for future tenants without exceeding a repayment period of 35 years. It will be particularly important to ensure the four-bedroom property is let at the lowest possible rent as the benefit cap may otherwise render this property unaffordable to tenants. Furthermore, DLUCH are keen to ensure that the cohort are given the best possible opportunities to secure employment. Lower rents are known to enable an easier transition from benefit to employment income.

The capital that is required for the match funding is being rediverted from the 2023/24 street purchase programme and new build activities set out in the Capital Programme approved at full Council on 9 February 2023.

Route to delivery

Securing the additional homes for the scheme would be achieved in much the same way as similar street purchase programmes.

A cascade of purchasing options will be considered in the order set out below,

- 1) Properties where RBC is the freeholder or where the title absolute is available in areas where RBC have stock,
- 2) Freehold properties in other suitable locations,
- 3) Properties where RBC can purchase a share of a freehold.

4) Properties where RBC would become a leaseholder.

Leaseholders will be contacted to ask whether they are considering selling their property. Buying back leasehold properties holds other benefits for the Council in terms of the management and maintenance of blocks of flats.

The projected delivery of the units and associated spend is set out below. Property purchases can be delayed for a number of reasons but where possible purchases will be completed earlier than scheduled, if at all possible. Acquisitions will come before the spend on the repairs and on-costs.

Quarter	Units acquired	Acquisition costs	Repairs and on-costs	Total
Q1 2023/24	2	£690,000	£10,000	£700,000
Q2 2023/24	3	£1,190,000	£90,000	£1,426,752
Q3 2023/24	3	£1,000,000	£60,000	£1,060,000
	8	£2,880,000	£160,000	£3,186,752

DLUCH require updates every two months to monitor performance.

6. Policy framework implications

The Housing Development Strategy, adopted September 2021, seeks to deliver 125 new affordable homes within 5 years. These homes will contribute towards this target.

7. Financial and Resource implications

It is proposed that funds that had been earmarked for street purchases (£1.3m) and new build activities (£0.451m) in the 2023/24 Capital Programme are rediverted to provide the match funding for the LAHF homes.

The grant levels available through the LAHF provide an opportunity for RBC to increase the number of housing properties.

It is not possible to mix other government support (e.g., Homes England grant or Right to Buy 1-4-1 receipts) with the LAHF. This means that there will be an additional call on the HRA revenue budget of £390,000 in the short term as the 1-4-1 receipts that would have been used to offset the street purchases will need to be replaced by the HRA working balance. This does however mean that these 1-4-1 funds will be available to offset other scheme costs in the future. To minimise the level of call on the HRA working balance, if other sources of income can be identified, they will take precedence.

Total financing will therefore be as follows:

Quarter	Total
LAHF Funding – Main element	1,092,000
LAHF Funding – Bridging element	343,376
Total LAHF Funding	1,435,376
HRA Working Balance	1,751,376
Total Budget	3,186,752

The units would be delivered without the need for additional staff resource.

8. Legal implications

Legal colleagues have already been consulted. Neither the validation form nor the MoU seek to place any legal duties on RBC.

It is intended that the purchases will be dealt with in house, subject to review of workloads and timescales, and as such the option to instruct external legal help will remain in place.

9. Equality implications

Equality implications need to be considered when households are placed into new homes. For example, mobility needs need to be taken into account when considering the accommodation.

10. Other implications

None

11. Background papers

None

12. Chief Officer(s) Decision

Signature of authorised officer



I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

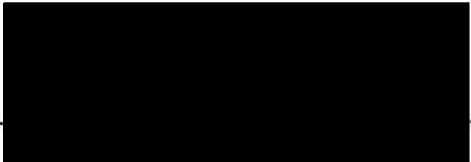
Signature(s) and position(s) of other relevant Chief Officer, Corporate Heads, or authorised representatives



NB: this must include the Assistant Chief Executive or their authorised representative where the decision involves expenditure, loss of income, or future implications for budget or financial forecast.

13. Chief Executive's Decision

Signature of Chief Executive



I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

14. **Chairman and Vice-Chairman Comments**

I concur in the Chief Officer's decision

Signed _____

Date 9/12/23

Signed _____

Date 9/12/23

I have the following further comments:

Further information may be obtained from Andy Vincent – Corporate Head of Housing or Mark Bawden – Housing Development Manager.

The completed copy is to be returned by the Councillors to the Corporate Head of Law and Governance (Mario Leo) who will send a copy to the Chief Officer and report to the relevant Committee for information.

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**CONSULTATION WITH APPROPRIATE CHAIRMAN AND VICE- CHAIRMAN FOR URGENT ACTION
TO BE TAKEN UNDER STANDING ORDER 42**

**To: Cllr C Howorth & Cllr S Walsh
Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Community Services Committee**

**Cllr J Gracey & Cllr J Hulley
Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Housing Committee**

Date: 14 April 2023

Report Author: Andy Vincent/Darren Williams

Report Title: Safer Streets Funding Release

SO42 Proforma number: 1020

1. Synopsis of Report.

In September 2022 Surrey Police supported by Runnymede Borough Council (described as the Safer Streets bid in the remainder of the report) submitted a funding application for Safer Streets Funding round 4 to address issues of anti-social behaviour on the Garfield Road Estate Addlestone.

The aim of the Safer Streets Funding is to make funding available to: -

police forces, local authorities, British Transport Police and eligible community groups across England and Wales to prevent violence against women and girls in public, neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour.

These projects will be able to fund the roll out extra CCTV and streetlighting in their communities and expand work to change attitudes and behaviours and prevent these crimes happening in the first place.

The Safer Streets bid focused on physical improvement to the Garfield Road Estate to design out crime and anti-social behaviour and provide support and physical diversionary activities designed to prevent people from and to move people away from anti-social activity.

Physical improvements to the estate include: -

- Additional CCTV cameras
- Blocking off a secluded walkway
- Gating off 'rat runs' on the estate
- Additional lighting

These have been completed.

The other element of the Safer Streets bid submitted was revenue grant funding for the delivery of a Youth Café in close proximity to Garfield Road, with part of the match funding coming from the already planned capital budget for a Youth Café facility.

As a result of the unavailability of suitable/affordable premises locally to deliver the youth café, officers have worked to preserve as much of the grant funding as possible, and to deliver a service working with young people in the Garfield Road area and possibly neighbouring parts of Addlestone. As a result of this work, it is proposed for the support service will be provided by a Young Person Focused charity Eikon – who are located in Addlestone and well established in the Surrey area.

It is intended that the match funding for this function will be provided via the money spent against the other elements of the bid, and improvement to the Garfield Road estate, by revamping the play area behind Middlesex Court and a refreshed basketball court behind Hampshire Court, at a cost of approximately £90,000.

2. Reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision.

This document is requesting for approval to work with Eikon as an alternative to the original Safer Streets funding intention. A decision is required in order to implement the alternative arrangements to ensure that the grant funding required in 23/24 is secured. Due to the need to make definite commitments relating to this, a decision is not possible to wait until the June committee cycle.

3. Recommendations.

- i. Approval is provided for the Council to enter a grant funding arrangement with Eikon, to deliver youth engagement services at Garfield Road Estate/in Addlestone, for a period of two years, funded by £160,000 of funding from the Safer Streets funding stream.

4. Context of report.

The launch of Safer Street 4 grant funding by the Home Office, prompted Surrey Police to consider opportunities for projects across the County. Locally, the Runnymede Neighbourhood Team, focused on the Surrey Towers and Middlesex Court area of Addlestone (the Garfield Road Estate), given the levels and variety of criminality and anti-social behaviour in the area.

The Council was asked to join the Police led funding bid, with representatives from Community Services (including Community Safety and Safer Runnymede) and Housing participating, supported by the Corporate Grant Bid Writer, joining the Police in a partnership bid which allowed consideration of a broader set of opportunities, some of which have been the Council's long held ambitions.

Working with Police Officers and their Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO), the initial consideration for the bid focused on the physical Garfield Road housing estate area. Following a walk around by Officers, where options to reduce ASB and criminality were considered, several components were included as part of the application. These were:

- The installation of gates into stairwells
- Installation of CCTV cameras, linked to Safer Runnymede
- Installation of additional lighting
- Reconfiguration of gardens to remove secluded pathways

The second element of the bid is focused on work to reduce anti-social behaviour on the Garfield Road Estate through diversionary and educational activities.

Initially, the proposal and focus of the grant funding awarded, was to deliver years 1 and 2 of a Youth Café, at a venue not far from the Garfield Road Estate. This element secured funding of £321,000 over a two-year period. Match funding for this grant would in part be secured using the previously approved capital budget of £160,000 for such a project.

However, due to the unavailability/affordability of a suitable facility within the immediate area surrounding Garfield Road, the Youth Café element has been unable to be delivered. As a result, of the £160k of grant funding in year 1, only £67k is able to be realised due to the Council not having delivered an intervention.

Officers have worked to try and preserve as much of the grant originally awarded as possible, by considering an alternative service function, working with young people in the Garfield Road Estate area and neighbouring area. Having identified an existing project which has the potential to be extended into this area, it is proposed that the Council work in partnership with Eikon, a young people focused charity.

Their proposal is to provide the following interventions: -

1. Children and young people 8-18 years in Runnymede (including those out of school) are identified, assessed, and supported with relevant, and direct early interventions to improve their wellbeing and mental health either in a community or school setting;
 - a) Intensive 121 support with the child (and with a parent or sibling in some cases) to help overcome anxieties and early level concerns;
 - b) Targeted group work addresses key topics such as healthy relationships (including boys' groups with a focus on healthy boundaries with girls/ women and challenging domestic violence social norms), anger management, friendship circles;
 - c) Preventative work with larger cohorts of children addresses key topics such as anti-bullying, online safety, and school transition support;
2. Parents and carers in the community are supported by building their knowledge, confidence, and skills to support their young person's wellbeing and mental health longer term;
 - a) 121 support with the young person in community settings;
 - b) Parent webinars on topics such as 'Supporting your Child's Mental Health and Wellbeing,' 'Supporting your Child's Self-esteem and Confidence,' 'Supporting your

Child through Year 10 & 11' (and bespoke events can be arranged). These are funded elsewhere, but parents in the programme will be signposted.

The partnership with Eikon would be for a two-year period, costing £160,000 in total. This would be funded by the Safer Streets grant received.

In order to realise this grant, the Council would need to ensure it delivers its own commitments, as agreed with the Home Office, in Garfield Road. Given that £67k of funding has been received in 2022/2023, these commitments in 2023/2024 would need to total a minimum of £97,000. Using existing budgets within Housing, set for the purpose of estate enhancements, it is proposed that improvements will be made to playgrounds and basketball courts.

Whilst the above does not deliver the Youth Café initially intended, it does provide a solution to accessing as much of the remaining grant funding, as possible, and to placing youth intervention services in the Addlestone area. The Corporate Heads of Housing and Community Services have spent a significant amount of time, rescuing the original funding submission and it is felt that if this approach is either not approved by Members, or by the Home Office (in principle it has), then the only other option would be to withdraw from any partnership with Eikon and confirm that we will not be drawing down any of the remaining 23/24 grant funding available.

6. Policy framework implications

The Safer Streets funding bid supports the objectives of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, given the impact community safety has on the wider determinants of health. Specifically, this project meets the themes of Healthy Homes and Healthy Communities within the strategy.

7. Financial and Resource implications

In 2022/23 the following has been spent – in line with the original funding application on activities on the Garfield Road Estate.

Item	Year 1 Spend
	£
Gates	3,700
Cameras	12,692
Lights	300
Metal Fences	
Wooden Fences	6,507
Turf	-
CCTV Monitoring/Maint	22,560
Project Management	4,999
Ongoing Maintenance	4,000
Patrols on Surrey Towers Estate	12,000
Total:	66,758

Expenditure by Runnymede Borough Council is match funded through Safer Streets – and therefore this money is available to support diversionary activities.

8. Legal implications

It is possible for the Council to apply, either on its own or in partnership with another organisation, for grant funding from Government schemes. Any such grant funding will normally be subject to certain conditions e.g. to be spent on specific projects or to have match funding provided by applicant organisations. In the present case the Council is required to provide match funding for certain elements of the projects for which funding has been granted.

The securing of an external organisation to deliver elements of the projects for which funding has been secured is permissible subject to appropriate controls being put in place i.e. auditing of expenditure.

9. Equality implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the target hardening, diversionary activities, and floating support service.

No equalities issues have been identified – although it is essential that the floating support service reaches all parts of the community.

This will be monitored through regular contract meetings.

10. Other implications

Engagement with residents is essential in this project. A meeting was held with residents in July and October 2021.

Regular updates have been provided on improvement measures to the Garfield Road estate via newsletters.

Engagement on diversionary activities and the floating support service is planned for the early summer 2023.

11. Background papers

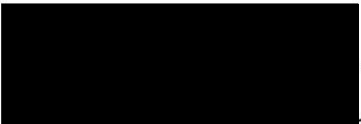
[Safer Streets Funding final.pdf \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#)

12. Chief Officer(s) Decision

Signature of authorised officer 

I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

Signature(s) and position(s) of other relevant Chief Officer, Corporate Heads, or authorised representatives



NB. this must include the Assistant Chief Executive or their authorised representative where the decision involves expenditure, loss of income, or future implications for budget or financial forecast.

13. Chief Executive's Decision

Signature of Chief Executive 

I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

14. Chairman and Vice-Chairman Comments

Community Services

I concur in the Chief Officer's decision.

Howarth
Walsh

Signed

[Redacted Signature]

Date

April 27th 2023

Signed

[Redacted Signature]

Date

April 27 2023

I have the following further comments:

Further information may be obtained from Andy Vincent – Corporate Head of Housing or Darren Williams – Corporate Head of Community Services

The completed copy is to be returned by the Councillors to the Corporate Head of Law and Governance (Mario Leo) who will send a copy to the Chief Officer and report to the relevant Committee for information.

14. Chairman and Vice-Chairman Comments

Housing

J Gracey
Hollis

I concur in the Chief Officer's decision.

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

I have the following further comments:

Further information may be obtained from Andy Vincent – Corporate Head of Housing or Darren Williams – Corporate Head of Community Services

The completed copy is to be returned by the Councillors to the Corporate Head of Law and Governance (Mario Leo) who will send a copy to the Chief Officer and report to the relevant Committee for information.

**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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