



# Housing Committee

**Wednesday, 15 November 2023 at 7.00 pm**

**Council Chamber - Civic Centre**

## Members of the Committee

Councillors: M Nuti (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), MK 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 **Democratic Services, Democratic Services Section, Law and Governance Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425600). (Email: Democratic.Services@runnymede.gov.uk).**
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The Chairman will make the final decision on all matters of dispute in regard to the use of social media audio-recording, photography and filming in the Committee meeting.

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<b>Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection</b>	
1. <b>Notifications of Changes to Committee Membership</b>	
2. <b>Minutes</b>	4 - 10
	To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 September 2023 (Appendix 'A').
3. <b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
4. <b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable and non-registrable interests in items on the agenda.
5. <b>Draft Fraud Policy</b>	11 - 41
	Includes a presentation on fraud risk and prevention by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council officers.
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## Runnymede Borough Council

### Housing Committee

**Wednesday 20 September 2023 at 7.00pm**

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M Nuti (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), M K Cressey, M Darby, S Dennette, S Williams, R King, I Mullens, M Smith and P Snow (in place of N Prescott).

Members of the Committee absent: None.

**1. Notification to changes to Committee Membership**

Cllr P. Snow substituted for N. Prescott

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 June 2023 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

**3. Apologies for Absence**

None.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**5. 2023 Review of the Asset Management Plan, 2021-26**

The Corporate Head of Housing reiterated the aims of the Asset Management Plan. This included achieving and maintaining the Government's 'Decent Homes Standard' through improving the energy efficiency of Council owned homes. Whilst he acknowledged that it was not possible to achieve 100% energy efficiency on all Council owned homes because of the complexities of the Parkside estate, the ongoing Parkside Regeneration which was attempting to combat these issues. The Asset Management Plan also included upgrading the lifts and repairing estate paths.

Whilst a member praised the efforts of the Housing team for their achievements over the last three years under the current corporate head, he felt that the plan to deliver 125 decent homes was not ambitious enough and would abstain from the vote on that basis.

**Resolved that:**

**Members voted to continue to support the aspirations set out within the current Asset Management Plan and identified the progress currently being made to deliver the long-term goals.**

## 6. Balcony Safety Policy

The Head of Housing and Business Services advised that the objectives of the Balcony Safety Policy was to ensure the safety of residents through minimising the risk of fire, which meant that smoking would be banned on the balconies of council stock. Whilst the current tenancy agreement referred indirectly to the use of balconies, a separate policy document was needed which outlined prohibited items and activities on balconies and provided clarity to residents. It would also enable enforcement if required. The policy stated that balconies should remain clear, window and door restrictors should remain engaged when there were small children on the property.

Tenants had been engaged in the consultation process through posters being placed in communal areas and 174 emails were sent to tenants for whom the Council held an email address. There was a 23% response rate, which was higher than usual for consultations. 83% of responses were from nonsmokers, of whom, 40% were in favour of a total ban on smoking in balconies and 50% if it caused a nuisance to other residents. The Head of Housing and Business Services clarified to a member that the legal basis for the policy would be that it constitutes a nuisance to others. Whilst members raised concerns about the Council's ability to enforce such a policy, and that it would create animosity between neighbours, the Head of Housing stated that a written policy would remove ambiguity and avoid making any reports personal.

Whilst members were asked to approve the proposed Housing Balcony Safety Policy, one member abstained on the libertarian view that they believed that people should be able to do what they wished in their own homes, and that if tenants could not smoke on the balconies, they might smoke inside where there may be children or those with health conditions.

### **Resolved that:**

**Members approved the proposed Housing Balcony Safety Policy.**

## 7. Review of Housing Allocation Scheme

The Head of Housing and Business Services reminded councillors that every local authority is legally required to have a housing allocations scheme. As there had been no change to the relevant legislation since the scheme's implementation in June 2021, there had been no need to significantly change the criteria. The intention was to look at the discretionary elements and consider whether they needed updating to reflect current circumstances. Therefore, the review focused on the strict need for a prospective tenant to have either lived or worked within the borough for three consecutive years as circumstances may mean that a prospective tenant had been forced out of the borough for work or housing and would therefore become ineligible for Council housing. Amendments such as living in the borough for three of the past five years may be more beneficial. A draft policy would be brought to the November 2023 Committee, which would be followed by a formal consultation exercise, and a revised scheme would be brought back to Committee in March 2024.

Members thanked officers for their work and agreed this change would be beneficial to prospective tenants, and asked if external organisations such as housing charities and external organisations would be consulted. Officers confirmed that this would occur.

A Member felt that changes to the scheme would make the Council's approach more flexible and pragmatic, and help to avoid any prospective challenge in the courts.

**Resolved that:**

**Members noted the commencement of the review of the Housing Allocation Scheme.**

## **8. Building Safety Act Preparation**

The Corporate Head of Housing updated members on the Building Safety Case for Surrey Towers which identified one high risk, five medium risk and 17 low risk items. In response to a member's question, the Corporate Head of Housing confirmed that the high-risk item had been an object in a communal area which had since been removed. The medium and low risk items were confirmed to be compartmentalisation issues which were on track to be fixed within the prescribed timescales. The Corporate Head of Housing confirmed the appointment of a compliance officer and compliance safety officer, and that he would update councillors on the fitting of fire doors within Surrey Towers.

**Resolved that:**

**Members voted in favour of delegating authority to the Corporate Head of Housing to approve and authorise submission of the Building Safety Case for Surrey Towers to the new Building Safety Regulator.**

## **9. Review of the Older Persons Strategy**

The Corporate Head of Housing provided an update on the Older Persons Strategy which focused on improving the support and accommodation available to residents to enable as great a level of independence as possible. This included modernising current living areas, landscaping and digital upgrades.

Members praised the strategy for its ambition and the quality of the proposed amendments to the independent living areas.

**Resolved that:**

**Members noted the update.**

## **10. Parkside Regeneration Update**

The Housing Development Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Parkside Regeneration project. The potential for flooding within the area continued to constitute a significant risk to the project, although this was based on out-of-date data and would need to be looked into before committing to further work. Legal advisors had also been appointed, and mobile home agreements were currently being reviewed. There was also a hope of increasing the housing density in the initial proposal of 450 homes to more than 500, which would increase the feasibility of the scheme. However, all such issues would be clarified in a future committee.

A member raised concerns about the risk of flooding to the area, as this would impact the project's ability to continue. He also stated concerns about the upper expected cost for the

project which was currently estimated at £300million given the current economic situation. The Housing Development Manager replied that the potential building costs considered all unknowns, and that the Council would not increase its borrowing, adding that the full cost bracket was currently £175m - £300m.

The member also reported that significant concerns around the communications strategy for the project. The Housing Development Manager replied that lessons had been learned on the communications strategy, which would be revised with the consultants. Furthermore, sign ups to the newsletter appeared to peak before publication which suggested interest. Preserving the good aspects of the existing community would be crucial to the overall success of any potential scheme.

Members asked about the feasibility of the funding being utilised to improve the units already on the Parkside Estate. The Corporate Head of Housing replied that a significant amount of the properties needed a lot of work doing to them to bring them up to a C energy rating from E or F ratings. This would include putting a brick skin around them, which can cost up to £200,000 and many needed new roofs which brought costs up to £280,000 per property, which would be broadly similar to building new properties.

A member asked how the Council planned to work with external partners on the project, and if this would not mean that profit would go to them. The Housing Development Manager clarified that profit would go back into the HRA but would clarify in the next report how such arrangements could work.

The Chairman stated that future reports would provide greater detail and clarification for members.

**Resolved that:**

**Members noted the report.**

## **11. Performance Report**

The Head of Housing and Business Services advised members of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) required by the regulator of Social Housing. The first four items on the report were compliancy measures so would either be red or green. The next twelve were to do with tenant satisfaction. The Head of Housing and Business Services noted that H7 was below 100% at 99.96% as this applied to one property where the tenant had died and the next of kin was refusing to allow entry to carry the relevant gas safety checks out. This had been referred to the legal team and was expected to be resolved soon.

A member asked if future reports could show the previous quarter's data for comparison and asked about the reason for why the first four compliance items had not been met. The Corporate Head of Housing explained that some aspects of the new contractor's performance had been disappointing, which was primarily down to recruitment issues, however steps had been taken to mitigate this and early signs suggested that the performance was now stabilising.

**Resolved that:**

**Members noted the information in the report.**

- 12.** 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.

**13. Procurement of Lifts for Surrey Towers**

The Corporate Head of Housing outlined the need to procure two new fireman's lifts for Surrey Towers.

Members asked if it was possible to lease lifts rather than buy them, and if the type of lifts used throughout the borough could be standardised, potentially through using UK sourced parts. It was stated that the cost of leasing a lift was exceptionally high, and that lifts appear not to be made and serviced within Britain.

A member asked if there was an intention to consult with leaseholders of the property to share the costs. The Corporate Head of Housing confirmed an intention to carry this out, adding that repayment plans would be offered.

**Resolved that:**

**Members approved the procurement of a supplier to replace 2 fireman's lifts in Surrey Towers.**

**14. Tree Audit Proposal**

The Corporate Head of Housing stated that there are an estimated 35,000 trees in the borough. He explained that the need for a tree audit was largely a compliance issue to ensure that the Council was aware of the condition of its trees. Data would then be analysed to identify future work.

Members were supportive of the proactive approach to manage the trees based on risk.

Environment and Sustainability Committee had already approved the release of budgeted funds, and Housing Committee approval was required to release budgeted funds for trees within the HRA.

**Resolved that:**

**Members approved the business case for undertaking an audit of all trees owned by RBC in public spaces.**

**Members approved the release of budget provision to undertake this audit.**

**Members approved a procurement exercise to recruit a 'suitably qualified organisation' to undertake the audit.**

**15. Procurement of an External Decoration Contractor**

The Corporate Head of Housing outlined the need for an external contractor to decorate the woodwork and PVC on Council owned buildings. The amount being requested had been budgeted for within the housing service business plan.



A member asked if it would be possible to do the work in-house. The Corporate Head of Housing explained it was not possible as the current contractor did not have capacity and it would be more expensive due to being charged at schedule of rates cost and therefore the procurement route was the recommended option. The Corporate Head of Law and Governance added that this was part of a general move by local authorities to move away from in-house labour to outsourcing. The replacement of woodwork with plastic would also ensure that future decorations would not be as cost or labour intensive.

**Resolved that:**

**Members approved the procurement process to tender for a new contractor to deliver a range of decoration services to HRA properties over the next five years.**

**16. Housing Revenue Account Development 1**

The Housing Development Manager outlined early-stage potential sites and options identified to help the Council achieve its target of delivering 125 new homes. The officer explained that not all sites listed would be chosen due to budgetary constraints, and the focus would be on achieving highly energy efficient homes that meet the needs of those seeking affordable housing locally.

**Resolved that:**

**Members noted the information.**

**17. Local Paths Business Case**

The Corporate Head of Housing outlined the need for a proactive strategy to ensure all Council owned paths were maintained appropriately. The proposed works would be around 2.5miles in total and require the release of a one-off budgeted sum. A future Committee report would focus on the need for a capital budget to improve paths, which had been neglected for a considerable amount of time, and this draw-down focused primarily on the paths in the worst condition.

A member asked if the work could be done internally. The Corporate Head of Housing explained that the most cost-efficient way was to go to tender. This had been part of a growth bid that had already been budgeted for and agreed, the money just needed to be released, whilst joining up with other functions of the council had been ruled out as it was rare for HRA and other council assets to share commons boundaries.

**Resolved that:**

**Members approved the release of funds within the growth bid to replace and or repair estate paths to maintain or improve standards.**

**18. Housing Revenue Account Development 2**

The Housing Development Manager outlined the background for two potential development sites that had been chosen to contribute to the Council's 125 homes target. A multi-disciplinary team would be appointed separately to the architects as part of the procurement route.

Concerns were raised about any potential developments eventually falling into the hands of buy to let landlords who would rent such properties out to students at the nearby university to be used as HMOs. A member stated that there was a significant shortage of family homes within the area because of this and asked if there were mechanisms to ensure this did not happen to any potential future developments. The Head of Housing and Business Services stated there are mechanisms in place in certain circumstances, although the longevity of these will be minimal.

Addressing concerns around right-to-buy, the Corporate Head of Housing advised that covenants are put in place on right-to-buy properties the Council sells with stipulations on how properties can be used that remains on the property through subsequent ownerships.

**Resolved that:**

**Members approved a supplementary revenue estimate to be spread over the next 4 years for both projects to proceed from RIBA Stage 1 to 3 to be presented to Full Council.**

**19. Grant Funding to Improve the Energy Efficiency of Council Homes – ECO4**

The Corporate Head of Housing outlined the benefits of procuring an external contractor to access ECO4 funding to improve the energy efficiency of 59 of the ‘hardest to treat’ properties. This would enable the Council to work towards its target of ensuring all Council owned homes have an energy rating of at least a C by 2030 and would enable residents to save a significant amount of money on their energy bills.

The outlay required by the Council was modest in the context of the available grant from government.

The Chairman praised the Corporate Head of Housing and his team for getting the grant funding from the Government, and all members agreed this was a positive scheme to pursue.

**Resolved that:**

**Members approved and referred the proposal to Full Council for the procurement of a contractor to implement energy efficiency measures to 59 Council owned homes, via the ECO4 programme.**

Chairman

Meeting ended 21:23

<b>Report title</b>	<b>Housing Fraud Policy</b>
<b>Report author</b>	Abigail Travers, Head of Tenancy Services
<b>Department</b>	Housing
<b>Exempt?</b>	No

**Purpose of report:**

**To resolve**

**Synopsis of report:**

**The Housing Fraud policy sets out the Council's approach to preventing, identifying and addressing housing fraud within the council's own housing stock.**

**Recommendation(s):**

**Approve an 8-week consultation exercise with tenants and leaseholders on the draft Housing Fraud Policy.**

## 1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Runnymede Borough Council is committed to dealing with fraud. There is a significant need for affordable housing in the borough and the impact of housing fraud is that the diminishing social housing stock is not put to best use, increased waiting time for housing, an increased risk of disrepair to the Council housing stock and a drain on resources in tackling the issues.
- 1.2 This Policy sets out the Council's approach to preventing, identifying and addressing housing fraud. It covers housing applications and obtaining housing by deception, allocation of council housing and nomination to other registered social landlords, the right to buy, unlawful subletting, wrongly claimed succession, unauthorised assignment, key selling and not living in the Council's property as a principal home.
- 1.3 The Housing Team work closely with Reigate and Banstead's Fraud Team in the detection and investigation of Housing Fraud, and the Housing Fraud Policy compliments this work. Having this policy also provides reassurance to Members and ensures the reputation of the Council is enhanced to partner organisations and the public in taking a zero-tolerance approach to any fraud or corruption within the Borough.

## 2. Report

- 2.1 This Policy is aligned with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy which encourages prevention, promotes detection and identifies a clear pathway for investigation of all alleged fraud and corruption. It is also one of the External Auditor's statutory duties to

ensure that the Council has in place adequate arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

- 2.2 The Council's staff are an important element in its stance on fraud and corruption and they are positively encouraged and expected to raise any concerns that they may have on these issues where conducting activities in their roles within the Council's Housing function. The Housing Fraud Policy therefore supports the work of the teams in this area and evidences the Council's commitment and transparency to tackling fraud.

### **3. Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 This work is aligned with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.

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

- 4.1 There are no anticipated costs involved. In order to proceed with consultation, we will be using dedicated web-pages to seek feedback from residents.

### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 As highlighted in the body of the report there are a number of different activities which would be classed as Housing Fraud, eg:

- Unlawful subletting – where a tenant rents out their home without our knowledge or permission.
- Wrongly claimed succession – where a resident dies and someone without entitlement tried to take over or succeed the tenancy.
- False Right to Buy – where a tenant gives false information in a Right to Buy application.
- Key selling – where a resident is paid to pass on their keys in return for a one-off payment.
- Unlawful assignment – where a resident stops using their tenancy as their main home and allows another person to live there without our permission.
- Obtaining housing by deception – where a person gets a home by giving false information on their housing application.

- 5.2 There are different pieces of legislation which create criminal offences in respect of the types of behaviour listed above eg: Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013, which creates offences and makes other provision relating to sub-letting and parting with possession of social housing; makes provision about the investigation of social housing fraud; and for connected purposes.

- 5.3 The adoption of a formal policy by the Council in respect of this type of behaviour provides clarity as to what is unacceptable behaviour and the approach the council will adopt when such behaviour is detected.

### **6. Equality implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and will be finalised after the consultation has been undertaken.

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

- 7.1 There are no known environmental, sustainability or biodiversity implications.

## **8. Other implications**

8.1 In tackling Housing Fraud, the Council will have regard to:

- Corporate Business Plan / Business Centre Plans
- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- The Fraud Act 2006
- Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013
- Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1988
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)

## **9. Timetable for Implementation**

9.1 Following an 8 week consultation period, the Final Policy will be brought back to Committee in January after which it can be implemented.

## **10. Conclusions**

10.1 This report supports the requirement for a Housing Fraud Policy within the Council's HRA service.

## **11. Background papers**

11.1 None

## **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft Fraud Policy

Appendix 2 – Draft Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Report title</b>	<b>Presentation on Counter-Fraud</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Simon Rosser (Reigate and Banstead Borough Council)</b>
<b>Department</b>	<b>Revenues, Benefits &amp; Fraud (Reigate and Banstead Borough Council)</b>
<b>Exempt?</b>	No

**Synopsis of report:**

**To receive a presentation on fraud (attached at Appendix A) provided by Simon Rosser from Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.**

**1. Context and background of report**

- 1.1 For the Committee to receive a presentation on counter-fraud from Reigate and Banstead Borough Council officers.

**2. Report**

- 2.1 At its [meeting on 24 May 2023](#), the Council's Standards and Audit Committee received a presentation on counter-fraud and its links to housing from officers from Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. The committee recommended that the report was presented at a future Housing Committee.
- 2.2 Simon Rosser, Head of Revenues, Benefits & Fraud at Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, will present to Housing Committee on counter-fraud. His presentation is attached at Appendix A.

**Background papers**

None.



**Presented by:**

**Simon Rosser – Head of Revenues Benefit and Fraud.**

**Michaela Lambart – Fraud Manager.**

**Tony Rasores – Senior Investigation Officer for Runnymede**

# Fraud Risks/Prevention within Local Authority Housing

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A quick insight into Housing & how the Fraud Team assist Runnymede Borough Council

# The Fraud Act 2006 & The Housing Act 1996



IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO KNOWINGLY OR RECKLESSLY GIVE FALSE INFORMATION OR TO KNOWINGLY OR RECKLESSLY WITHHOLD INFORMATION. THIS IS OUTLINED IN SECTION 171 OF THE HOUSING ACT 1996.



IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO FAIL TO DISCLOSE A CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCE. THIS IS OUTLINED SECTION 214 OF THE HOUSING ACT 1996.



IF THE APPLICANT HAS BEEN DISHONEST ON THEIR APPLICATION FORM, THEY MAY ALSO HAVE COMMITTED FRAUD BY FALSE REPRESENTATION AS OUTLINED IN SECTION 2 FRAUD ACT 2006.



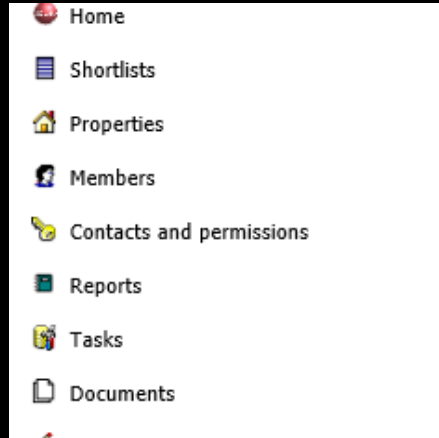
IF THE APPLICANT HAS FAILED TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION ON THEIR APPLICATION FORM THEY MAY ALSO HAVE COMMITTED FRAUD BY FAILING TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION AS OUTLINED IN SECTION 3 FRAUD ACT 2006.





# How Fraud assist Housing?





How is a proactive investigation for Housing started?

# How we 'proactively' review the application

Record all the key details e.g., names, DOB's, address history, family composition, bank account details etc.

Check supporting documents against their application?

Check internal systems

Cross-reference with investigative tools which have been purchased specifically for Fraud & Financial Investigation use.

Check they are within the financial (income & assets) thresholds?

Check if they are a previous or current homeowner?

Do they have the right to reside in the UK?

# Threatened with homelessness and homeless

Local Authorities in England have a **statutory duty** outlined in **S.184, Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996** to take reasonable steps to prevent any eligible person who is threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless.

**The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'.

A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that he will become homeless within 56 days (**S.175**)

# Prevention Duty & Relief Duty (Housing Act 1996)

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**PREVENTION DUTY S.195** IS A 56-DAY PERIOD WHERE HOUSING AUTHORITIES WORK WITH HOUSEHOLD TO PREVENT IMPENDING HOMELESSNESS.

UNDER **S.189A** THE COUNCIL MUST CARRY OUT AN ASSESSMENT IN ALL CASES WHERE AN ELIGIBLE APPLICANT IS HOMELESS OR THREATENED WITH HOMELESSNESS. REGARDLESS OF PRIORITY NEED OR IF THEY ARE INTENTIONALLY HOMELESS.

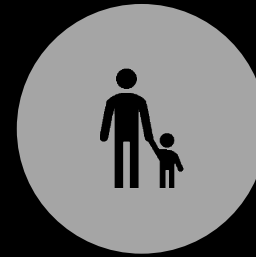
IF HOMELESSNESS CANNOT BE PREVENTED, THERE IS ALSO A **RELIEF DUTY S.189B** TO THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY HOMELESS, THE AUTHORITY MUST SECURE ACCOMMODATION WITHIN A 56-DAY PERIOD.

[HTTPS://NEARLYLEGAL.CO.UK/2017/05/BLUFFERS-GUIDE-HOMELESS-REDUCTION-ACT-2017/](https://nearlylegal.co.uk/2017/05/bluffers-guide-homeless-reduction-act-2017/)

# Causes of homelessness



NOTICE TO QUIT/  
POSSESSION ORDER



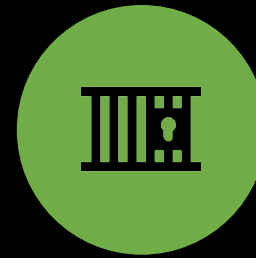
PARENTAL EVICTION



AFFORDABILITY  
ISSUES



FLEEING DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE



HOSPITAL/ PRISON  
DISCHARGE



STREET HOMELESS

# Case study – Miss S

Miss S approached the Council with her dependent son and daughter in August 2018, threatened with homelessness following a warrant for possession.

On 26/11/2018 a letter was sent to Miss S due to rent arrears of £429.40. The Council informed her that if non-payment continued, action for recovery of possession of her home would commence.



On 22/08/2018 the Council accepted the homeless duty for Miss S, and she was placed into temporary accommodation.

# Case Study –Miss S continued...

On 17/01/2019 the rent arrears continued to rise. Therefore, a letter was sent to Miss S to inform her that the Council were “Minded To” make an Intentionally Homeless decision on the homeless application she had put in.



On 31/01/2019 Miss S responded to the information contained in the “Minded To” letter. She provided her account of her housing situation, confirming her financial circumstances, and the dates and sums of payments made by her and her sister towards the rent and arrears.



# Case Study – Miss S continued....

On 24/04/2019 the Council concluded that Miss S is Intentionally Homeless, and she was notified of this decision in writing.

On 16/07/2019 Miss S provided bank statements for a Barclays account showing during a 6 month period in 2017 to 2018 she had made payments totaling £800

8 May 2019

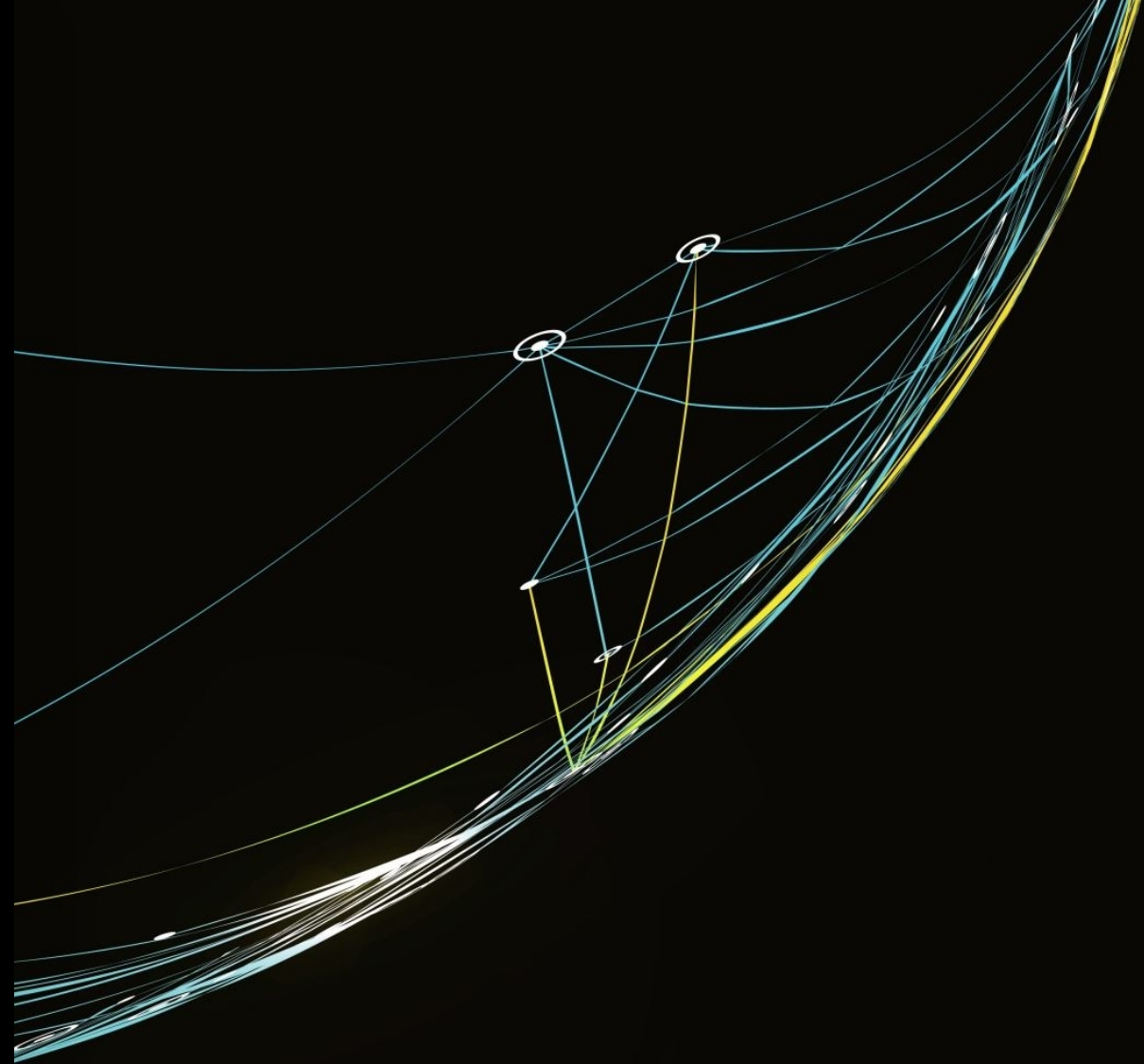
24 Apr. 2019

16 July 2019

On 08/05/2019 Miss S requested a review of the decision that she is Intentionally Homeless.

## Case Study –Miss S continued....

- Miss S was interviewed under Caution on 01/10/2019.
- She denied that the evidence she provided was forged and insisted that she had wrongly been made homeless as she had been paying her rent.
- The case was put forward for legal proceedings and it was deemed it met both the evidential test and the public interest test and therefore criminal proceedings in court commenced.
- Miss S was charged on 3 counts. One fraud offence and two offences of forgery.
- Miss S eventually plead guilty and was sentenced on 27/04/2022 to 12-month community order, 150 hours unpaid work and £2400 in costs.



# Case study Mr A.

Mr A approached the Council with his Mother in July 2023 threatened with homelessness due to eviction from his Cousins property in Addlestone. He stated that they had no capital and had never owned a property in the UK or abroad.

July 2023

Mr A stated that he needed a 2-bedroom property as he was the sole carer for his elderly mother who is terminally ill. This would mean that the council would need to find a suitable 2-bedroom property for Mr A and he would be entitled to keep it for life even if his Mother passes away.

July 2023

On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 the Fraud team raised some concerns with the application and requested further evidence and a 5 year address history.

July 2023

# Case study Mr A.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 Mr A provided his last 5 years of addresses stating that he had lived in the Caribbean from 2012 and stated that he was now staying with his Neice who was evicting him due to her alcohol issues

August 2023

On 3/8/23 a copy of Mr A's Visa application was obtained, and it showed that on his application he stated that he was living in his mother's property in the Caribbean.

Mr A had previously stated that neither he or his mum had ever owned a property in the UK or abroad.

August 2023

On 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023 we obtained a copy of the sale document which showed that the property was owned by Mr A and his mother and sold in December 2022.

August 2023

## Case Study Mr A continued....

- On 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023 Mr A was interviewed under caution and admitted that his application was false when he stated that he had no capital or savings and that neither he or his mother had ever owned a property in the UK or abroad.
- He stated that the property was sold in December 2022 for T\$400,000 (£60,000) which was paid into his mother's Caribbean account
- He was asked why he didn't declare his mother's Caribbean Accounts – to which he said “you didn't ask”
- **As a result, Mr A has been removed from the Social Housing register as he has capital and must find private rented accommodation. This has led to a saving to Runnymede Borough Council**

Fraud statistics  
for Runnymede  
Borough  
Council from  
01/04/2022 to  
31/03/2023

Runnymede total fraud outcomes in 2022 to 2023							
	Total cases Investigated	Total positive outcomes	Total notional savings	Total Cashable savings	Total referrals	Positive outcomes as a percentage	Total savings
Quarter 1	145	8	£16,200.00	£1,307.06	134	5.5%	£17,507.06
Quarter 2	144	13	£22,680.00	£7,303.51	141	9.0%	£29,983.51
Quarter 3	114	11	£102,920.00	£651.72	119	9.6%	£103,571.72
Quarter 4	128	15	£38,880.00	£6,109.40	113	11.7%	£44,989.40
<b>Total for financial year</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>£180,680.00</b>	<b>£15,371.69</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>£196,051.69</b>

Fraud Statistics  
for Runnymede  
Borough Council  
part year  
01/04/2023 to  
30/09/2023

Overall Financial Savings for each quarter and positive percentage outcome for each quarter							
	Total cases looked at in quarter	Total Positive Outcomes in Quarter	Total Notional Savings in Quarter	Total Cashable savings in quarter	Referrals	Total Positive Outcome as a percentage % in Quarter	Total Savings in quarter
<u>Quarter 1</u> 01/04/2023 to 30/06/2023	71	12	£19,440.00	£18,751.95	105	16.9	£38,191.95
<u>Quarter 2</u> 01/07/2023 to 30/09/2023	140	38	£29,160.00	£15,087.20	48	27.1	£44,247.20
<u>Quarter 3</u> 01/10/2023 to 31/12/2023	0	0	£0.00	£0.00	0	#DIV/0!	£0.00
<u>Quarter 4</u> 01/01/2024 to 31/03/2024	0	0	£0.00	£0.00	0	#DIV/0!	£0.00
<b>Total for year</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>£48,600.00</b>	<b>£33,839.15</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>£82,439.15</b>



Any Questions?



**RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Housing Fraud Policy**

DRAFT

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Social housing is a valuable national asset with over four million social housing properties in England providing homes for many low income households and families. At a time when demand for social housing is outstripping supply, it is estimated that up to 50,000 homes may be unlawfully sublet, which equates to more than 1 in 100 housing association and council homes across England. With temporary accommodation for homeless families costing Councils around £18,000 per family, per year, the public purse is being depleted to the tune of nearly £1 billion per annum.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 Runnymede Borough Council is committed to dealing with fraud. There is a significant need for affordable housing in the borough and social housing should be available for those in housing need at the time they need it. The impact of housing fraud is that the diminishing social housing stock is not put to best use, increased waiting time for housing, an increased risk of disrepair to the Council housing stock and a drain on resources in tackling the issues. It can also cause the Council reputational damage.

## 2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to set out the Council's approach to preventing, identifying and addressing housing fraud. It covers housing applications and obtaining housing by deception, allocation of council housing and nomination to other registered social landlords, the right to buy, unlawful subletting, wrongly claimed succession, unauthorised assignment, key selling and not living in the Council's property as a principal home.

## 3. Scope, Definitions and Legislation

- 3.1 This policy will provide the framework for the Council to identify and address social housing tenancy fraud within the council's own housing stock. It does not extend to dealing with housing fraud in the private sector or extend to activities of the Council beyond those relating to its own housing stock.
- 3.2 The Council defines social housing tenancy fraud as "unauthorised occupation that describes any kind of possession by an occupier which is either prohibited or requires consent by the landlord which has not been granted. It will include situations where an existing tenant continues in possession although the property is no longer their only or principal home". Examples of tenancy fraud include:
  - Obtaining housing by deception;
  - Suspected unlawful subletting;
  - Subletting the whole property to a single household or multiple sublets within one property.
  - Non-occupation by the tenant as their principal home
  - Wrongly claimed succession;

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<sup>1</sup> This is according to the Guide to Tackling Housing tenancy Fraud document published by the NFA/CIH [Housing Tenancy fraud guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414444/Housing_Tenancy_fraud_guide.pdf)

- Retention of a tenancy following the death or vacation of the tenant following a previous succession, or of a non-qualifying person
- Unauthorised assignment of the tenancy;
- "Key selling" - where the tenant leaves the property and passes on the keys in return for a one-off lump sum payment or favour;
- Fraudulently obtaining a social housing tenancy by misrepresentation of identity or personal circumstances;
- Unauthorised mutual exchanges;
- Fraudulent Right to Buy applications.

3.3 In tackling Housing Fraud, the Council will have regard to:

- The Fraud Act 2006
- Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013
- Housing Act 1985 Housing Act 1988
- Theft Act 1968
- Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
- Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)

## 4. Housing Allocation

4.1 The Council operate a choice based letting scheme. Properties within Runnymede are let in line with the Council's Allocations Policy. Areas of good practice to prevent fraudulent housing applications include:

- All housing applications are thoroughly verified before being considered for an offer. Identity checks are undertaken using Trust ID for housing applicants, or nominees to Housing Associations and tenants signing up for a new Council tenancy.
- Clear designation of roles and responsibilities in respect of actions and decision-making;
- If an applicant is an employee/member or relation of an employee/member, additional checks are in place involving Head of Housing Services and Business Planning and Head of Housing Solutions;
- Clear procedures in place for processing applications and making allocations;
- All applicants details are sent for Fraud investigations prior to any offer being made
- Documents, from an approved list, are requested to confirm the identity and residency of all household members at point of application, application is not fully processed without these required documents;
- Officers have access to both Councils' Housing Benefit and Council Tax system to verify circumstances;
- Supporting documents are gathered from a range of sources, usually professionals, to verify housing needs e.g. General Practitioner / Occupational Therapist / Social Worker;
- Landlord references for the last 5yrs are obtained to verify statements made on applications;

- Any discrepancies in details provided by applicants are investigated;
- Any identified risks are shared with Tenancy Services at point of allocation to assist in housing management approach;
- A field on the application to record when Housing Benefit systems are checked to verify circumstances; Clear declaration endorsed by applicants setting out consequences of failure to disclose relevant information or intention to mislead, including statements on collusion.
- In addition to checks at verification, the Council checks again the identity of a tenant when they sign for a new tenancy including verifying passports, visas, Identity cards and driving licences electronically.
- We explain subletting and the consequences of breaching the terms of the Tenancy Agreement when a new tenant signs their Tenancy Agreement

Where there is reason to believe an applicant is attempting to commit fraud, that application will be suspended pending further enquiries.

## **5. Tenancy Management**

- 5.1 The Area Housing Managers undertake a home visit to all new tenants within the first month of their tenancy to check that the tenant has moved into the property and to ensure that the applicants listed on the housing application are all in occupation.
- 5.2 The Council uses introductory tenancies, meaning that all tenants will also receive another visit 9 months into their tenancy before the introductory period comes to an end. This also ensures that the tenants have remained in occupation and that should any concern arise regarding tenancy fraud, this is addressed within the first year of their tenancy before it automatically converts to a secure tenancy.
- 5.3 The Tenancy Services Team proactively undertake a series of Tenancy Audits, targeting audits on tenants where there is any suspicion of housing fraud. This may include for example where no contact has been made with the known tenant during the past 12 months, no repairs or home visits have taken place, and the rent account is consistently in a high level of credit.
- 5.4 Evidence of identity is routinely sought during any tenancy management activity, including mutual exchanges, assignment, succession and Flexible tenancy reviews.
- 5.5 The Council undertakes enhanced checks of Right to Buy applications, including but not limited to cross-referencing and verifying identification, referring to the Reigate and Banstead Fraud team, obtaining proof of tenancy history and qualifying period and proof of residency and checking for source of finance if a cash buyer.
- 5.6 In all instances of suspected Housing Fraud, the Council will make a referral to Reigate and Banstead Council's fraud team, who will investigate the alleged fraud and whether to prosecute in cases of unlawful subletting. Reigate and Banstead Council's fraud team have the staff with the knowledge and expertise to provide support to the Council.
- 5.7 The Council uses a range of publicity methods to raise awareness of tenancy fraud, undertakes initiatives such as Key Amnesties and publicises cases where we have successfully regained possession of a property or prosecuted for tenancy fraud. We

advertise how tenancy fraud can be reported confidentially including online via the Council's website.

## **6. Detection**

- 6.1 The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 made subletting the whole of a social rented dwelling a criminal offence. The Act introduced two new criminal offences. Firstly, where the tenant sublets or parts with possession of a property or ceases to occupy knowing that it is a breach of tenancy. The second is where a tenant dishonestly, in breach of tenancy, sublets without consent and ceases to occupy the property as their only or principal home.
- 6.2 Housing staff and property services teams will receive training on Housing Fraud to raise awareness on how to spot the signs of fraud and what to do when suspicions arise.
- 6.3 Runnymede will support prosecution in all cases, except in exceptional circumstances where the Head of Housing and Business Planning or Corporate Head of Housing decides it is in the best interests of the Council not to pursue criminal prosecution.
- 6.4 Officers will work closely with the Fraud team to undertake joint visits and jointly agree on the course of action to be taken where suspected fraud is detected. Further investigations may include reviewing records, further visits and making enquiries with neighbours.
- 6.5 Where necessary and appropriate, and following the completion of fraud investigation a manager will authorise the commencement of legal action for a breach of tenancy.
- 6.6 Any tenant who defrauds the Council is at risk of losing their tenancy and permanent exclusion from the Housing Register.
- 6.7 When fraud is detected, the Council's primary objective is to prevent a social housing tenancy from being allocated inappropriately or to regain possession of a property fraudulently occupied. The Council will also generally seek to prosecute cases of fraud, although in some circumstances we may decide not to pursue legal action if re-possession of the property is achieved. Further sanctions include disqualification from the Housing Register.
- 6.8 Appropriate housing advice will be offered to those affected by fraudulent behaviour, for example, a person living in a property unaware that it has been illegally sublet and legal action taken in line with assessment of the individual circumstances.

## **7. Information Sharing**

- 7.1 We are party to several information sharing agreements with organisations such as the Police, the DWP and Surrey County Council. This is to allow us to lawfully share information for purpose of preventing, detecting and tackling fraud, which is a crime. We will comply with the relevant legislation when doing so.

- 7.2 When we share information we will ensure that the transfer of information is done safely, stored appropriately and is not shared with a third party without permission unless there is a legal basis for doing so.

## **8. Working in Partnership**

- 8.1 Partnership working is essential to successful prevention and detection of tenancy fraud and we will work with a variety of agencies including statutory, non-statutory and voluntary sector organisations.
- 8.2 We will work with other social housing providers operating within Runnymede, especially where Runnymede has nomination rights to their properties, to take the same zero tolerance approach to tenancy fraud that we have adopted.
- 8.3 Recognising that some investigations cannot be managed by one agency alone, we will attend regular partnership meetings to enable the exchange of information between key community partners.

## **9. Confidentiality**

- 9.1 Tenancy fraud can be reported anonymously on our website. The details of the person reporting the fraud will remain confidential unless the reporting person(s) advises the investigating officer that they are happy for their details to be shared.
- 9.2 Anonymous reports are often difficult to deal with, especially when information provided is limited. We will assess how serious the report is before we decide whether we can investigate the case. This may include speaking to partners such as Council Tax, to establish whether they have further information that we can act upon.

## **10. Consultation, communication and training**

- 10.1 RBC will provide clear and comprehensive advice and information to residents, with an aim for a single point of contact.
- 10.2 XXX have also been consulted.

## **11. Monitoring and performance management**

- 11.1 We aim to review this policy in three years to ensure it reflects current legislation and latest examples of best practice.
- 11.2 We will monitor tenancy fraud cases to ensure the correct application of the tenancy fraud policy. We will monitor how many properties are recovered due to tenancy fraud at Operational Management Team Performance Meetings.

## 12. Equalities Implications

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

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

12.3 The screening found XXX

## 13. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	October 2023	First draft completed		Abi Travers	

# EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Housing Fraud Policy	Abigail Travers

**A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity?** Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

The aim of this policy is to set out the Council's approach to preventing, identifying and addressing housing fraud.

This policy covers the following;

- Housing applications
- Obtaining housing by deception
- Allocation of the council housing and nomination to the registered social landlord
- The right to buy
- Unlawful subletting
- Wrongly claimed succession
- Unauthorised assignment
- Key selling
- Not living in the Council's property as its principle home

This policy provides the framework for the Council to identify and address social housing tenancy fraud within the council's own housing stock. It does not extend to dealing with housing fraud in the private sector or extend to activities of the Council beyond those relating to its own housing stock.

**B. . Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality?** Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential on the basis of adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination. The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

This policy may have an impact on protected characteristics such as age and disability if for example a vulnerable person has been living in a property unaware that it has been illegally sublet. In these cases support will be provided to those affected by fraudulent behaviour.

Overall I feel this policy will have a positive impact on social tenants as it will make sure that those who require social housing will be able to access it whilst preventing others from fraudulently obtaining it.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not



engage any protected characteristics then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

**C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion?** Alternatively, if there it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected Characteristics but that measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

This policy does not require a full EIA as the it should have a positive impact as this policy will ensure there is a clear approach to how the council deal with and investigate fraud cases. It will ensure that any tenant who defrauds the Council are dealt with appropriately to ensure the correct actions are taken.

This screening assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge before sign-off.

Date completed:

Sign-off by senior manager:

<b>Report title</b>	<b>Estate Cleaning Services</b>
<b>Report author</b>	Maggie Ward, Head of Housing and Business Planning; Abigail Travers, Head of Tenancy Services
<b>Department</b>	Housing
<b>Exempt?</b>	No

**Purpose of report:**  
  
**For information**

**Synopsis of report:**

**The estate services of cleaning and management of waste and recycling for communal areas within the Council’s Housing stock is currently provided through a small in-house team. There is an aspiration to increase the level of service provided in order to improve the presentation of communal areas across the HRA estate which is not currently possible within a small team due to lack of capacity and resilience.**

**This report informs members of the plan to outsource the cleaning of internal communal areas through a procurement route.**

**1. Context and background of report**

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has historically employed staff to provide cleaning services for the communal areas of the Garfield Road estate with reactive cleaning being provided to other blocks on an ad-hoc basis. A service charge is levied at Garfield Road where communal cleaning is completed by a small team of dedicated staff. There is no other formal arrangement for communal cleaning within the HRA stock, or service charge in place to residents.
- 1.2 There has been a rise in issues within communal areas, dumping of bulk rubbish, storage of inappropriate items and a general increase in dirt and mess being left by tenants and visitors. The interior of all communal areas should be regularly cleaned, and this is not possible within the current operational arrangements.
- 1.3 The Council has a responsibility to ensure that shared areas are clear of hazards and kept clean. It is essential that we put a regime in place that enables people to enjoy their home and be confident that the communal areas will be well presented. In last year’s customer survey, the upkeep of communal areas was an area highlighted, and we know that the appearance of these areas plays a key part in the desirability of an area to live and increase the reputation of Council Housing provision in the Borough.
- 1.4 In the 2019/20 Service Area Plan a new mobile caretaking post was created with the intention to provide cleaning services for our shared houses and introduce cleaning in all the

internal communal areas across the HRA stock. The officer recruited suffered ill-health and resigned from their post earlier this year. Since then, it has not been possible to recruit to this position even with agency staff, and with the increase in workload at Garfield Road there is insufficient resilience within a small team to provide a consistent cleaning service beyond that area.

## **2. Report**

- 2.1 The cost of communal cleaning can be recovered through service charges to tenants and leaseholders. When the mobile caretaking service was planned, it was intended that a charge would be introduced once the service was established, and monitoring was in place so that when the Council consulted on the new charges residents would be aware of what they were being asked to pay for.
- 2.2 Through part of our best practice work with other social housing providers, we have met with teams who have recently moved away from an in-house service provision to outsourcing their communal cleaning services across multiple sites, to learn from their experience and utilise their expertise in this area.
- 2.3 Based on this advice, work is underway to produce a detailed specification for each communal site which can then be incorporated into an open market procurement exercise.
- 2.4 Initial contact with Human Resources indicates that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) will apply to those staff currently employed by the Council in this work within this HRA.
- 2.5 Once the full specification is established with cost estimates and proposed timescales a further report will be brought to this Committee to seek approval for procurement of a contract. Arrangements for monitoring this contract and the potential cost to residents will be included in this report.

## **3. Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 This work is aligned with the Council's Corporate Business Plan vision to provide high quality services and to enhance our environment, and the aims within the HRA Business Plan around having well-managed neighbourhoods, ensuring high standards of cleanliness and safe environments.

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

- 4.1 As this report is for information only there are no resource implications at this stage. .

## **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 As highlighted in the body of the report the condition of communal areas is important from a health and safety perspective. Risks can arise from trip hazards, vermin infestation and fire hazards. The provision of a service designed to address such issues will reduce the risks and possible claims against the Council.
- 5.2 The body of the report mentions that if an outsourcing of the service were to take place, then what is termed as TUPE might apply to staff currently involved in delivering the service. A transfer of undertakings (TUPE) occurs when either a business transfer or a service provision change takes place. In such instances staff may transfer from one employer to another. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006

(TUPE) currently protects the entitlement of UK employees to the same terms and conditions, with continuity of employment, as they had before the transfer.

- 5.3 The report indicates that the Council is considering whether to undertake a procurement exercise to secure an external provider of such services. Any such exercise will have to comply with national legislation and the Council's Contract Standing Orders. There are a variety of methods for undertaking such a procurement exercise and the most appropriate will be selected.

## **6. Equality implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of this project.

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

- 7.1 This will be a feature of the tender process.

## **8. Timetable for Implementation**

- 8.1 TBC

## **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 Members are asked to note that a cleaning service for all HRA communal areas is being specified in preparation for procurement of a contract. Once the service is in place the cost of this will be recovered through service charges.

## **10. Background papers**

[Agenda-8-January-2020-Housing-Committee \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](https://runnymede.gov.uk/agenda-8-january-2020-housing-committee)

## **11. Appendices**

- Appendix – Caretaking Service Task Specification (Draft)

TASK	2 WEEKLY	Monthly	Quarterly
Cleaning of entrance door	X		
Cleaning of door furniture	X		
Wiping down glass doors	X		
Wiping letter boxes (communal entrance door only)	X		
Disinfecting door entry system	X		
Cleaning of superficial marks from walls aka spot wall cleaning	X		
Dust /wipe skirting boards and door frames	X		
Spot clean doors surfaces	X		
Antiviral sanitisation wiping of handrails	X		
Polishing of banisters	X		
Dusting and polishing of internal glass and windows	X		
Dusting of radiators/ gas meters cupboard	X		
Dusting of light fittings & Smoke detectors	X		
Vacuuming/Sweeping of all floors (as appropriate)	X		
Mopping all wooden, vinyl or tiled floors	X		
Antiviral disinfection of light switches	X		
Removing cobwebs within corridors	X		
Litter pick communal grounds	X		
Disposing of litter and junk mail	X		
Deweed Entrance steps	x		
Leaf Clearance from communal pathways & entrances	X		
Report H&S Emergencies such as Blocked Fire Exits	X		
Cleaning of external windows and doors			X

\* Open Spaces addition to contract Leaf Clearance

\* Issues with Bin Store should be reported to Housing via Bartec

\* Regular 1/4 Estate Inspection to address repairs

TASK	2 WEEKLY	Monthly	Quarterly
Litterpick communal Grounds, balconies and gutters	X		
Sweep/ blow communal stairwells	X		
Antiviral disinfection of communal handrails in stairwells and balconies	X		
Sweep leaves from communal pathways	X		
Remove cobwebs from emergency lighting in stairwells	X		
Report and obstructions on stairwells	X		
Report Bulky Waste/ Fly tips on Communal Ground	X		
Mop balcony walkways		X	
Wash guttering			X
Pull out bins, sweep and disinfect bin store		X	
Decontaminate recycling Paladins	X		
Jet Spray Stairwells			X

CLEANING TASKS	DAILY				
	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
	Floor				
FOYER	1-3	4-6	6-10	11-13	14-16
Cleaning of entrance door	x	X	X	X	X
Cleaning of door furniture	x	X	X	X	X
Wiping down glass doors	x	X	X	X	X
Wiping letter boxes (communal entrance door only)	x	X	X	X	X
Disinfecting door entry system	x				
Cleaning of superficial marks from walls aka spot wall cleaning	x	X	X	X	X
Dust /wipe skirting boards and door frames	x	X	X	X	X
Spot clean doors surfaces	x	X	X	X	X
Antiviral sanitisation wiping of handrails	x	X	X	X	X
Polishing of banisters	x	X	X	X	X
Dusting and polishing of internal glass and windows	x	X	X	X	X
Dusting of radiators	x	X	X	X	X
Dusting of light fittings & Smoke detectors	x	X	X	X	X
Vacuuming/sweeping of all floors (as appropriate)	x	X	X	X	X
Mopping all wooden, vinyl or tiled floors	x	X	X	X	X
Antiviral disinfection of wiping light switches	x	X	X	X	X
Removing cobwebs within corridors	x	X	X	X	X
Antiviral disinfectant wiping of bench seat	x				
Polishing the metal lift panels and doors	x	X	X	X	X
Cleaning of lifts and lift doors	x	X	X	X	X
Clean communal toilet	x				
Provide access to Contractors	x				

ESTATE DUTIES	DAILY	WEEKLY	2 WEEKLY	MONTHLY	QUARTERLY
Litter pick car park & communal grounds	x				
Decontamination of recycling facilities	X				
Rotation of refuse and recycling Paladins	X				
Bin Collection preparation		X (Thurs)			
Leaf Clearance from communal pathways		X			
Bin Store Clean		X			
Empty communal litter bins	X				
Clarence of fly zappers		X			
Leaf Clearance Darley Dene				X	
HEALTH & SAFETY DUTIES	DAILY	WEEKLY	2 WEEKLY	MONTHLY	QUARTERLY
Stairwell Health & Safety Check AM & PM	X				
Health & Safety Check		X			
Report Fly Tipping	X				
Report Personal belongings in communal areas	X				

\* Monthly Building Inspections with Surveyor

\* Open Spaces to pick up Park

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>
Sweep/blow walkways	X			
Litter pick Blocks and stairwells	X			
Mop Balconies		X		
Skim/ Rotate Refuse Bins	X			
Decontaminate Recycling paladins	X			
Remove Bulky Waste	X			
Building and Hazard Check/ walkabout	X			
Report Bulky Waste / Fly Tips on communal ground	X			
Report Personal belongings in communal areas	X			
Disinfectant Bin Stores			X	
Litter pick Middx Park	X			
Visual H&S check of park equipment	X			
Monitor Bin Chutes for blockages/ inappropriate use	X			
Remove cobwebs from emergency lighting in stairwells	X			
Antiviral disinfection of communal handrails in stairwells and balconies	X			
Wash guttering				X
Jet Spray stairwells				X



<b>TASKS</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Sweep/blow walkways	X		
Litter pick Blocks and stairwells	X		
Mop Balconies		X	
Skim/ Rotate Refuse Bins	X		
Decontaminate Recycling paladins	X		
Remove Bulky Waste	X		
Building and Hazard Check/ walkabout	X		
Report Personal belongings in communal areas	X		
Disinfectant Bin Stores			X
Litter pick Middx Park	X		
Visual H&S check of park equipment	X		
Monitor Bin Chutes for blockages/ inappropriate use	X		
Remove cobwebs from emergency lighting in stairwells	X		
Antiviral disinfection of communal handrails in stairwells and balconies	X		

<b>Report title</b>	<b>Garage Allocation Policy</b>
<b>Report author</b>	Maggie Ward Head of Housing Services & Business Planning
<b>Department</b>	Housing
<b>Exempt?</b>	No

**Purpose of report:**

**To resolve**

**Synopsis of report:**

**The Council has a stock of lock up garages 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):**

**To approve the Garage Allocation Policy**

**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 A report was brought to this committee in June 2023 outlining the need for a Garage Allocation Policy and requesting approval for a consultation with residents on the proposed policy.

2.2 Council owned garages can be rented by non-Council tenants. In 2012 the Council successfully applied for a direction under section 74(3)(d) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to disapply the garages from the HRA in favour of the General Fund as 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). This has the benefit of allowing the net income from the garages to be kept by the General Fund whilst the ownership of the land and properties remains with the HRA.

2.3 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 £1400 per week they are not affordable for most tenants who are in receipt of HB or Universal credit.

- 2.4 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 1 has been in operation for at least 20 years but a formal policy has not been approved by Committee within this time.
- 2.5 The policy has never been challenged but were this to occur it could only be evidenced as historical practice.
- 2.6 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
- 2.7 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 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 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
- 2.8 A consultation on the policy was opened for 4 weeks on the Council's website with one response being received. The consultee suggested that there should be an application fee which could be discounted off the initial rent if the applicant took a garage to avoid timewasters. It is felt that whilst this could generate income it would not be reasonable at this time as the wait for some garage blocks is lengthy and others have several voids so the fee could act as a deterrent. There was also a suggestion that garages should never be let to people from out of the borough as it should be a service for residents, as category 4 will only ever be used if there is no Runnymede resident, and it is believed that income should be generated rather than leaving garages empty. An annual reregistration was also recommended, which is being introduced when the garage allocations are transferred to our NEC system following the implementation of the new residential allocations module. Information on availability was requested and we intend to advertise garages on our website where there is no applicant once the migration is made to the NEC system.

### **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 It is good practice for local authorities to adopt policies to set out how they will deal with certain situations. A policy provides a framework against which a decision will be made. A local authority clearly can depart from a policy if there are valid reasons for doing so.

### **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 The Policy will be implemented immediately on approval.

### **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 Members are asked to approve the Garage Allocation Policy

### **10. Background papers**

Garage Allocation Policy Consultation [Report](#) to Housing Committee June 2023

### **11. Appendices**

- Garage Allocation Policy

# **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 the Policy has a positive impact on the protected characteristics of age and disability but the impact on people in other protected characteristics is unknown. The Policy will be monitored and any further impacts relating to protected characteristics not referred to above will be referred to the Equalities Group for consideration.

## 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	



<b>Report title</b>	Plans to submit a further bid to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
<b>Report author</b>	Simon Allen
<b>Department</b>	Housing
<b>Exempt?</b>	No

**Purpose of report:**

**To resolve**

To provide committee members with the relevant information around the Housing Department activities to make a bid for wave 2.2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and to seek their agreement to proceed to the bidding process.

**Synopsis of report:**

In September 2023 Runnymede Borough Council was notified that wave 3 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) would open its 'bidding window' from April 2025 – the organisation has also been made aware that a wave 2.2 of the fund is also likely to be opened to organisations who failed with their wave 2.1 bid (which includes Runnymede Borough Council).

Earlier this month, the Department for Energy Security and New Zero (DESNZ) announced that SHDF wave 2.2 will open for applications week commencing 20 November 2023. In this latest round of funding, up to £80 Million will be allocated to successful bids, helping social housing landlords to improve energy efficiencies of their stock.

Applications must be submitted by the week commencing 15 January 2024 and successful projects will be notified by late February to early March. The delivery window is two years, until March 2026, with projects required to spend all their grant funding within the first year.

The purpose of the bid is to seek additional funding to deliver on the Housing Service's key carbon reduction target of: - ***'Ensure all RBC owned social housing units have an energy efficiency rating of C or above by 2030'***.

At the beginning of 2022 it was estimated that between £8.79m and £9.3m of investment will be required in the Council's housing stock to deliver the above target. Funding to enable this investment is coming from the following sources: -

- Green Homes Grant – Local Authority Delivery 1.
- Improvement work to achieve the Runnymede Investment Standard £3.7m by 2026.
- A request for wave 2.2 Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- I. Housing Committee Members approve a bid to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund when it re-opens.
- II. Housing Committee give delegated authority to the Assistant Chief Executive (Place) in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to approve a bid to the fund – including clarified finance figures.
- III. Housing Committee Members note that should a bid be successful to the fund the service is on track to deliver a C energy efficiency rating two years after a successful bid.

## **1. Context and background of report**

- 1.1 In March 2021 the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy etc introduced the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The fund is designed to: -

*“Upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C up to that standard. It will support the installation of energy performance measures in social homes in England; and help:*

- *deliver warm, energy-efficient homes*
- *reduce carbon emissions*
- *tackle fuel poverty*
- *support green jobs*
- *develop the retrofit sector*
- *improve the comfort, health, and well-being of social housing tenants”*

- 1.2 Funding via the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will be released in a number of waves. Wave 1 of the fund funded 69 projects up to the value of £179m.
- 1.3 Funding via wave 2.1 of the fund funded 107 projects up to the value of £778m.
- 1.4 It is anticipated that the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund wave 2.2 will open in November 2023 for bids with a further wave anticipated for April 2025.
- 1.5 Runnymede Borough Council currently have 757 properties with an energy efficiency rating below a C.
- 1.6 All of these properties are general needs accommodation.
- 1.7 426 of these properties will achieve a C rating by the installation of new doors, windows, boilers etc. via RBC’s ‘Decent Homes’ programme.
- 1.8 The remainder 331 will require additional work on top of what is planned under our capital programme to achieve a C rating. Work is planned for 59 properties via ECO 4 funding – although one of these properties will not achieve a C rating due to the scale of work required to bring it to a C rating.

## **2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended**

- 2.1 A project team will be put together to develop Runnymede Borough Council's next bid to the SHDF. The team is likely to be comprised of members from Housing Technical Services, Housing Services, the Council's Bid Writer/Grants Officer, and the Climate Change Team. Bidding guidelines and materials have been released and members of this team will be attending introductory webinars in early November in order to be fully prepared for a bid from 20 November.
- 2.2 OVO Energy are also available and willing to support the data modelling and bidding process at no cost and without prejudice to any procurement process should the application secure funding.
- 2.3 As a submission was submitted to the wave 2.1 of the SHDF in the winter of 2022, Runnymede Borough Council holds good data on the energy performance of its stock.
- 2.4 Runnymede Borough Council also purchased energy efficiency modelling software to support its bid to the fund (Elmhurst Housing Energy Modelling Software).
- 2.5 In the bid to the wave 2.1 SHDF Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service sought £1,229,997 .

This was intended towards the following work: -

- External Wall Insulation £2.65m
  - Planning Application Fees £1,180 (traditional dwellings non-painted)
  - Ground Source Heat Pumps X2 £638,969, RBC have budgeted £200,000 for this work - £638,969 is the non-budgeted amount.
- 2.6 59 properties have received additional energy efficiency measures since the wave 2.1 bid was submitted.
  - 2.7 This is likely to reduce a further submission to the SHDF by around £900,000.

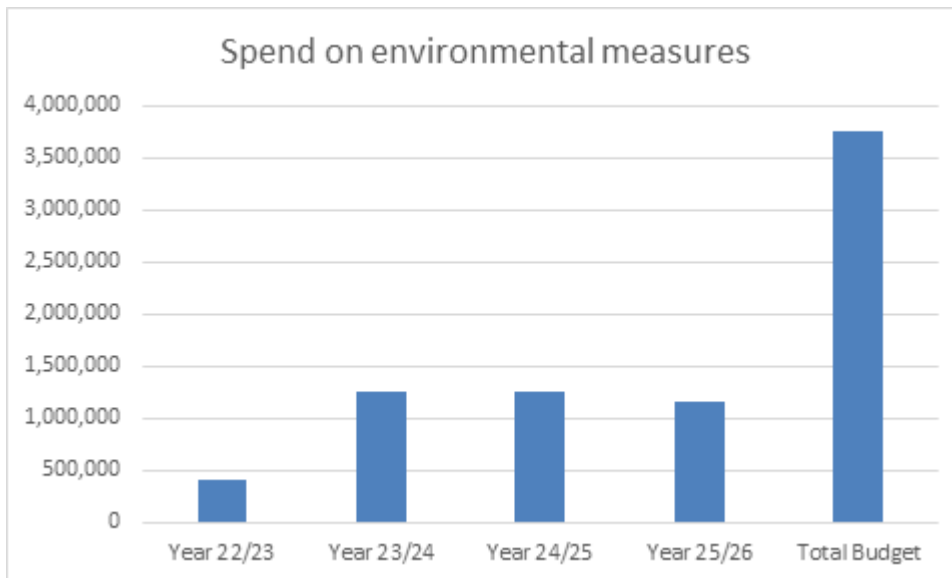
## **3. Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The Housing Asset Management Plan identifies a number of climate change objectives for the Housing Service
- 3.2 The key one that this report impact on is: -
  - Achieve a C energy efficiency rating as a minimum for all Runnymede Borough Council's social homes by 2030

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

- 4.1 Resources have been identified within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan to deliver the £3.7m of work identified to improve the energy performance of the Council's housing stock.

This work is phased over 4 years from 2022 – 2026 at the following rate: -



## 5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Runnymede Borough Council is obligated as a Registered Provider of Social Housing to comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's Home Standard.
- 5.2 This standard predominantly focuses on ensuring social landlords meet their repairing obligations and comply with the Decent Homes Standard.
- 5.3 Currently the standard does not refer to energy performance. This is anticipated to change when the standard is next reviewed.

## 6. Equality implications

- 6.1 An Equalities Screening of the impact of work to upgrade the energy performance of the Council's housing stock has been undertaken.
- 6.2 This demonstrates the positive impact of this work – but emphasises the importance of gaining access to properties to undertake improvement work and monitoring closely any refusals we have from tenants.

## 7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The work to improve the energy performance of Runnymede Borough Council's housing stock forms a central strand of the work of the Housing Service to cut its environmental impact.
- 7.2 By delivering a C energy efficiency rating for all Council owned homes – this will reduce the carbon emissions from Council homes by 1078 tonnes per year from the position at the beginning of 2022.

## 8. Other implications

- 8.1 It is essential to procure a contractor to undertake any work funded via the SHDF. A number of frameworks exist which will enable this exercise to be expedited. This is likely to be required as bidding and implementation times are often tight.

## 9. Timetable for Implementation

- 9.1 Earlier this month, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) announced that SHDF Wave 2.2 will open for applications the week commencing 20 November. In this latest round of funding, up to £80 million will be allocated to successful bids, helping social housing landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their stock.
- 9.2 Applications must be submitted by the week commencing 15 January 2024 and successful projects will be notified by late February to early March. The delivery window is two years, until March 2026, with projects required to spend all their grant funding within the first year.

## 10. Conclusions

- 10.1 A successful bid to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will enable Runnymede Borough Council to achieve a C energy efficiency rating for all its social homes prior to 2030.
- 10.2 Without a successful funding bid a significant unfunded budget gap exists.
- 10.3 Once energy efficiency rating C is achieved additional plans for enhancing energy performance can then be compiled to enable further energy performance improvements prior to 2030.

## 11. Background papers

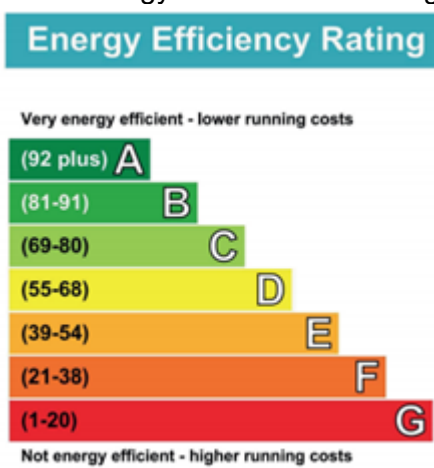
Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026 (within the September 2023 Housing Committee papers)

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 outcomes - [Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1: successful bids - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 outcomes - [Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1: successful bids - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

PAS 2035 - [TrustMark & The Delivery of PAS 2035](#)

Energy Performance Rating System (below)



<b>Report title</b>	<b>Performance Report</b>
<b>Report author</b>	Angela Horsey, Business Development Manager
<b>Department</b>	Housing
<b>Exempt?</b>	No

**Purpose of report:**  
**To provide information.**

**Synopsis of report:**  
 This report provides the results of the Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (management information) for quarter two. It also provides an update on the tenants' satisfaction survey.

## 1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the results of the Key Performance Indicators (H1 – H9) for the Second quarter of 2023/24.
- 1.2 This report also includes the results of the Management Information measures and provides an update on the tenants' satisfaction survey which together meet the Council's regulatory requirement to collect Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

## 2. Performance Results

### 2.1 Table 1 Key Performance Indicators: Results for Quarter 2

	<b>CKPI</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Result Q1</b>	<b>Result Q2</b>
H1 RP02(1)	Proportion of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	90%	79%	<b>67.8%</b>
RP02(2)	Proportion of emergency repairs completed within target timescale	100%	89%	<b>95.33%</b>
H2	Average number of calendar days to re-let a void property (excludes major works voids).	30	56	<b>56</b>
H3	Satisfaction with the overall reactive repairs service received (% of total number of responses returned).	90%	89%	<b>80%</b>

H4	Number of households in B&B for more than 2 weeks per quarter	Max 4 in any quarter	2	6
H5	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due - cumulative result.	2%	1.76%	1.67%
H6 RP01	Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	23%	34.5%	33.4%
H7 BS01	Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	100%	99.96%	99.96%
H8	Percentage of stock with a valid safety certification Electrical Installation Condition Report.	100%	100%	100%
H9	Number of outstanding high risk Fire Risk Assessment actions	0	0	0
BS02	Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	100%	84%	82%
BS04	Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
H10 NM01	Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes	N/A	4.5	7.6
CH01	Number of stage one and stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes	N/A	2.10	8.31
CH02	Proportion of stage one and two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	100%	100%	68.4%

- 2.2 The results for delivery by the contractor of day-to-day repairs, both emergency and non-emergency works, were below target and not acceptable in quarter two. This is being addressed in contract monitoring and performance is expected to fall back into line over the coming months as the contractor is fully resourced.
- 2.3 The average number of days to re-let a property is measured from the end of the previous tenancy to the start of the new tenancy. The Council's repairs contractor carries out 'void works', with a target of 25 days to prepare the empty homes as part of this process. Members will be aware from this committee's meeting in September that Officers are reviewing the substandard performance by the contractor and are seeking external support to address this in a timely manner.
- 2.4 Asbestos surveys are slightly behind the target, but this will increase with the Decent Homes works being undertaken. It is not a regulatory requirement to have 100% surveys across the stock but plans are in place to aim for this challenging target.

- 2.5 Planned works are typically programmed over five years, resulting in gradual but sustained improvements to the condition of the stock. At the start of the year additional properties become classified as 'non decent', as elements such as kitchens, bathrooms and roofs come to the end of their notional life (so the non-decent percentage goes up). These are included in the planned programmes and due to works carried out during the year, the non-decent percentage goes down. Normalised reporting occurs at the end of the financial year.
- 2.6 Tenants with a completed repair now receive a satisfaction survey via text from the contractor. This approach has replaced the outdated system of posting survey forms with reply envelopes. There have been some technical difficulties in establishing this method during the summer and recent results are not comparable with previous quarters due to the change of survey method.
- 2.7 One of 2633 properties did not have a gas certificate at the end of the quarter. This has since been rectified.
- 2.8 There has been a continuing trend this year of mainly single people with complex needs requiring Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The current challenges in the housing market with high rents and limited options in and around the Borough have resulted in more people remaining longer in emergency accommodation.
- 2.9 Of 19 complaints responded to in the quarter, 6 responses were overdue.
- 2.10 The results for rent collection remain pleasing given the current financial climate.

### **3. Tenants Satisfaction Survey**

- 3.1 Acuity Research are currently carrying out the tenants' satisfaction survey. The survey is compliant with the specific technical requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing in collecting the necessary 12 Tenant Satisfaction Measures on perception with landlord services. The initial results will be presented to Members at the January meeting of this Committee. The results must be submitted to the Regulator from April 2024.

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

- 4.1 No resource implications have been identified. A budget has been identified for the tenant satisfaction survey.

### **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 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. Submission of Tenant Satisfaction Measures is a regulatory requirement of the Regulator of Social Housing.

### **6. Equality implications**

- 6.1 No equalities implications have been identified.



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

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

## **8. Conclusions**

8.1 This report presents the results of the Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures for quarter two year.

### **Background papers**

None

[https://democracy.runnymede.gov.uk/documents/g782/Public reports pack 08th-Mar-2023 19.30 Housing Committee.pdf?T=10](https://democracy.runnymede.gov.uk/documents/g782/Public%20reports%20pack%2008th-Mar-2023%2019.30%20Housing%20Committee.pdf?T=10)

**RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL****CONSULTATION WITH APPROPRIATE CHAIRMAN AND VICE- CHAIRMAN FOR URGENT ACTION  
TO BE TAKEN UNDER STANDING ORDER 42**

**To: Cllr M Nuti & Cllr J Hulley**  
Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Housing Committee

**Date: June 2023**

**Report Author: Andy Vincent**

**Report Title: Use of temporary accommodation -  
Parkside**

SO42 Proforma number: 1024

**1. Synopsis of Report.**

A number of properties have been used on the Parkside and Braeside areas of New Haw as temporary accommodation since 2010.

Using the units as temporary accommodation was designed to assist with the regeneration of the Parkside area, by enabling the properties to be emptied quickly.

Occupants of temporary accommodation units also do not have the Right to Buy entitlement or access to a statutory home loss payment if required to vacate the property.

There has been a steady reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by Runnymede Borough Council. Currently 57 (May 2023) households are in temporary accommodation compared to 73 in December 2020.

It is proposed that excess units are let on a longer-term basis. In March 2021 Housing Committee members agreed to 12 properties being used by Accent Housing Association.

The purpose of this report is to seek permission for additional empty units, no longer in use as temporary accommodation, in the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw to be let to the local NHS to be used for key worker accommodation.

Many of the properties are family size units and would be underoccupied as temporary accommodation.

**2. Reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision.**

A number of preliminary conversations have been had with the NHS accommodation service to establish whether they are interested in the accommodation.

Rental income is being lost through the accommodation not being occupied (at over £1,500 per week). Also, Runnymede Borough Council are incurring costs maintaining and securing the properties and gardens while they are empty.

A swift decision will enable the properties to be let and rental income being generated.

### **3. Recommendations.**

- i. Approval is sought for some of the empty HRA properties in the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw to be let to the NHS accommodation service locally to be used as key worker accommodation – while the future of the Parkside regeneration scheme is considered.**

### **4. Context of report.**

Historically Runnymede Borough Council has used a significant number of units for temporary accommodation. As the authority has become more successful in preventing homelessness fewer units are required.

12 units of former temporary accommodation in the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw have been passed to Accent Housing Association (see March 2021 Committee report [Minutes-10-March-2021-Housing-Committee \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#)).

It is proposed in this report that a further 12 units are passed to NHS accommodation services to be used for key worker accommodation.

This will work to ensure Runnymede Borough Council maximises its rental income and gives the Council some flexibility depending on decisions regarding the future of the Parkside regeneration project.

It is important that the Council is not perceived to allow the area to deteriorate or become an estate with a transient population of homeless households whilst the development plans are progressed impacting on quality of life and the value of properties.

### **5. Report and, where applicable, options considered**

The purpose of this report is to propose that temporary accommodation located on the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw that is now empty and not required to accommodate homeless households is used to accommodate key workers while the long-term future of the area is considered.

If the decision is taken that no regeneration activity is to take place in that area, a further report will be drafted proposing that the accommodation is relet in the normal way through the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

Letting the accommodation ensures that rental income is generated by the authority and ensures that key workers within the borough are accommodated.

Using the accommodation for key workers via NHS accommodation services also enables shorter term tenancies to be used with fixed end dates; enabling access to the site for regeneration more easily than lets made via traditional council tenancies.

Also, occupants of the site would not have the Right to Buy or rights to statutory home loss payments should the decision be made to proceed with the redevelopment.

## 6. Policy framework implications

The proposals outlined above support the objective outlined within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan of 'Maximising income and efficiencies'.

The business plan refers to: -

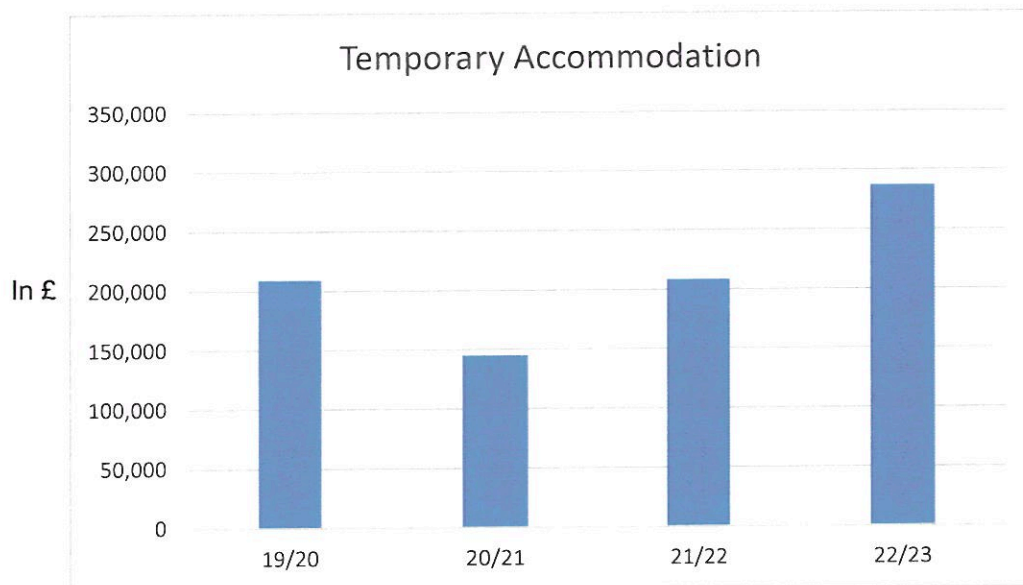
"Some HRA stock is utilised as temporary accommodation for the Homelessness Service enabling households to be placed temporarily in good quality accommodation within the borough if we are unable to prevent them from becoming homeless. Properties which are designated for redevelopment may be utilised as Temporary Accommodation during the planning stage to maintain an income and ensure vacant possession at the appropriate time."

Parkside currently is not designated for development – so it is appropriate that the accommodation previously utilised as temporary accommodation is returned to longer term use.

## 7. Financial and Resource implications

Several years ago some HRA properties were being used as temporary accommodation. With the increase in the purchase of dedicated temporary accommodation properties being purchased in recent years (through Grant income) these HRA properties are now being left void and the HRA is left with the void costs to pay.

The amount of rent being lost to the HRA from empty temporary accommodation has increased in recent years – partly as a result of the organisation getting better in preventing homelessness, meaning that these properties are left vacant. The following chart shows the rent that could have been received by the HRA if these properties were used:



Rental Charge – Runnymede Borough Council intends to charge the NHS accommodation service an affordable rent at 60% of market. The service will be responsible for the rent for the term of the lease which is estimated to be £148,512 per annum which is a reduction to the void rent loss.

Runnymede Borough Council (HRA) will retain repairing and improvement liabilities – due to the legal requirements placed on the landlord (Right to Repair, Decent Homes, Gas and Electrical Safety obligations etc.).

Despite the need to retain the repairing and improvement liabilities renting these properties to the NHS will reduce the ongoing net deficit to the HRA.

## 8. Legal implications

The starting point in any consideration of the disposal of Housing land is the Housing Act 1985. That piece of legislation grants local authorities discharging the function of Housing Authorities the power to acquire and hold land for Housing purposes. The legislation accepts there will be occasions on which land held for Housing purposes has to be disposed of and the power to dispose of such land is contained in section 32 Housing Act 1985.

In summary the section states a local authority have power by virtue of that section, and not otherwise, to dispose of land held by them for the purposes of providing housing. The section goes on to state a disposal under that section may be affected in any manner but shall not be made without the consent of the Secretary of State.

To make life easy for Housing Authorities in 2013 the Secretary of State issued a series of what are called General Consents relating to the disposal of land held for housing purposes to avoid the need for Housing Authorities to keep seeking specific consents. One of those consents relates to the general disposal of housing land and is titled General Consent A The General Consent for the Disposal of Land held for the purposes of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 - 2013.

General Consent A states at paragraph A4.2.1 'Subject to paragraphs 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, a local authority may dispose of a short tenancy of land which is not let on a secure or introductory tenancy, where a short tenancy is-

- (a) the grant of a lease for a term not exceeding seven years; or
- (b) the assignment of a lease with a term which at the date of the assignment has not more than seven years to run.

Paragraphs 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 do not prevent the proposed disposal as the Council will be granting a lease of the land for a period of less than seven years.

Thus, the Council will dispose of the land in question by granting what is termed a short tenancy in the form of a lease for a period of less than seven years.

It should be noted that the Council will only be able to grant a further 'short tenancy' at the expiry of the one currently proposed if it waits for a period of one year from the end of the first tenancy i.e., Tenancy one is for the period 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2025 Tenancy two can only start on 01/01/2027.

## 9. Equality implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed and reviewed by the Council's internal Equalities Group prior to lettings commencing with the NHS accommodation service.


## 10. Other implications

None

## 11. Background papers

[Minutes-10-March-2021-Housing-Committee \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#) see item 491.

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

.....  ..... CORPORATE HEAD OF FINANCE .....

**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 28 JUNE 2023

Signed 

Date 20/7/2023

I have the following further comments:

Further information may be obtained from Andy Vincent – Corporate Head of Housing

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.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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