



Housing Committee

Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

Members of the Committee

Councillors: M Nuti (Chair), J Hulley (Vice-Chair), 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.

List of matters for consideration

Page

Part I

Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 1. | Notifications of Changes to Committee Membership | |
| 2. | Minutes | 4 - 6 |
| | To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 January 2024 (Appendix 'A'). | |
| 3. | Apologies for Absence | |
| 4. | Declarations of Interest | |
| | Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable and non-registrable interests in items on the agenda. | |
| 5. | CCTV Policy | 7 - 17 |
| 6. | Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy | 18 - 34 |
| 7. | KPI Report | 35 - 38 |
| 8. | Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan | 39 - 55 |
| 9. | SO42 - Additional Resources in Housing Technical Services | 56 - 60 |
| 10. | Exclusion of press and public | |

Part II

Matters involving exempt or confidential information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

Runnymede Borough Council

Housing Committee

Wednesday, 10 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

Members of the Council present: Councillors M Nuti (Chair), J Hulley (Vice-Chair), MK Cressey, S Dennett, R King, I Mullens, M Smith and S Williams.

Members of the Council absent: Councillors M Darby and N Prescott.

In attendance: Councillors .

58 **Notifications of Changes to Committee Membership**

None

59 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 November 2023 were signed as correct.

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 December 2023 were signed as correct.

60 **Apologies for Absence**

None.

61 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

62 **Tenant Satisfaction Survey - Presentation by Acuity**

The Committee received a presentation from Acuity on the results from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey. The Committee thanked officers for their presentation. The Interim Corporate Head of Housing explained that whilst the results were far from where they were desired to be, the issues raised were ones that the department was already endeavouring to address. They outlined the primary causes of dissatisfaction revolved around the condition of internal and external communal areas; day to day repairs services; delays in planned works; the way in which contacts are dealt with; a lack of knowledge or understanding of the Council's role and procedures and poor management of expectations. She pointed members to the action plan laid out in Appendix A which was designed to improve this.

Members asked if it would be possible for the overall satisfaction data to be broken down into wards so that a more targeted approach could be taken to address resident dissatisfaction, and if a simplified version of the results could be shared with tenants. Both of which were agreed to be investigated.

63 **Policies for Estate Improvement**

The Interim Corporate Head of Housing reported that, following the draft Estate Improvement policy being brought to June's Committee requesting permission to consult tenants on improvements, no responses had been received. Therefore, members were asked to approve the Estate Improvement Policy to allow improvements outside of the usual reactive and planned maintenance programme. Members praised officers for the policy and agreed to its implementation.

Resolved that:

The Estate Improvement Policy be approved.

64 **Housing Revenue Account Estimates**

The Corporate Head of Finance outlined the Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2024/25. He explained the variances in the current financial year could be attributed to the Parkside scheme, central heating, the Decent Homes programmes and changes in the contributions into the Major Repairs reserve. This had led to an additional cost of £117,000 in the current year. This meant that the estimated HRA balance at the end of the year was expected to be £35.6 million compared to the £23.6 million originally forecast. This would reduce the following year as the programmes caught up.

The major works programme for the following year would total £9.3 million and would include major upgrades to central heating, kitchens and bathrooms, roofing and various other works that were required to comply with the Decent Homes Standard. There would therefore be insufficient funds in the Major Repairs Reserve the following year, which would require a further transfer from the HRA balances.

The next section on debt charges and depreciation was noted, with the next repayment of HRA loans in 2027 forecast to be met from a combination of set aside receipts and HRA reserve. It was also proposed to transfer £30,000 of HRA funds to top up the Discretionary Housing Payment pot for which Secretary of State permission would be sought.

Proposed fees, charges and rent levels for the following year were discussed. The Regulator for Social Housing has confirmed that the maximum rent increase limit allowable would revert to CPI + 1%. CPI in September was 6.7% meaning the Council can increase rent by up to 7.7%. This would be applied from April 2024, and would also apply to rents for mobile home pitches and the services charges paid by the Council's Independent Retirement tenants. Rents paid for properties bought under the shared ownership scheme would be subject to a 5.8% increase based on the November RPI + 0.5%.

Recommended to Full Council that:

The draft revenue estimates for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A be approved as submitted, and the Full Council was requested to make provisions accordingly.

Resolved that:

The proposed changes in rents and charges (including those for Housing General Fund services) for 2024/25, as set out in pages 47-49 of the Estimates, be approved to be effective either from the first rent week of April 2024, or 1 April 2024 as appropriate

65 **Service Area Plan 2024-2025**

The Interim Corporate Head of Housing outlined the Service Area Plan, which proposed the work streams and priorities for the Housing Business unit over the following calendar year. There are six areas to the Housing Business unit which meets monthly to ensure all

members are aware of the department's priorities. The Interim Corporate Head of Housing outlined the priorities for the following financial year, which would focus on investing in additional IT functionality to improve customer satisfaction; continuing five housing development projects; the continuation of completing works that met the Decent Homes Standard and tenancy management.

Other areas that were mentioned but not at the level of a corporate project were: the review of the IRL manager role; production of a tenant incentive scheme; council heating plan; tree surveys; and starting the review of the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

Members were asked to approve the Service Area Plan for 2024/25.

Resolved that:

The Service Area Plan for Housing be approved.

66 Exclusion of press and public

(The meeting ended at 8.02 pm.)

Chair

Report title	CCTV
Report author	Maggie Ward, Interim Corporate Head of Housing
Department	Housing
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

To resolve

Synopsis of report:

A Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy Council Housing Estates was approved by this Committee in June 2023, this has now been revised in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner Office.

Members are asked to approve consultation with stakeholders.

Recommendation(s):

That Members approve consultation with stakeholders on the revised CCTV Policy for Council Housing Estates

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 This policy attached at Appendix A sets out the Council's approach to the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) on its housing estates. This policy applies to all Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) tenants and leaseholders.
- 1.2 The current CCTV policy was approved by this Committee in June 2023. The proliferation of CCTV and Ring doorbells and consequently complaints from other residents has led to a review of the policy in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office.
- 1.3 Self-installed CCTV including video doorbells is significantly growing in popularity, and this policy outlines the Council's approach to the use of CCTV, including requiring permission to install.
- 1.4 This policy does not extend to Safer Runnymede CCTV that covers any of our properties or communal areas.

2. Report

- 2.1 The use of CCTV is covered by legislation to ensure that whether in a private or public setting it is not infringing the rights of individuals. In practice this is extremely difficult to manage in a residential setting where the opportunity for monitoring is at the point of installation rather than when in use.

Domestic CCTV

- 2.2 The Council has a responsibility to ensure that its tenants are not inadvertently in breach of legislation when they install equipment. It is however impossible without access to the film to know or substantiate whether a tenant is breaching regulations.
- 2.3 Members approved a CCTV policy in June 2023 however, as this equipment is the subject of neighbour disputes, the policy has been clarified and updated in line with the advice available from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) [Domestic CCTV systems | ICO](#). This advice states that the installation of CCTV which overlooks a public area is itself not a breach of data protection law and that it is unlikely that the police would consider using CCTV to record someone as harassment, without other misconduct. The advice states that it is highly unlikely the ICO will consider it fair or balanced to take enforcement action against a domestic CCTV user.
- 2.4 Devices that record events such as CCTV systems on individual properties or ring doorbells have the potential to record people and therefore no such items will be allowed on Council owned properties until it has been confirmed that they will not be in breach of any legislation or will impact on the privacy or the quiet enjoyment of their tenancy of other residents.
- 2.5 If a resident already has a private CCTV and/or other recording device, prior to the start date of this policy, permission to keep them will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.6 Permission will be granted for a maximum of 3 CCTV cameras to one property including a camera doorbell. Tenants are required to set the camera only to film within the boundary of their own property and if the camera becomes the subject of a neighbour dispute permission may be withdrawn.
- 2.7 A ring doorbell or camera may only be fixed to the property and cannot be sited on an external fixture such as wall, fence or gate which is at the boundary onto a public area.
- 2.8 A camera may not be sited at a height where it will overlook areas outside the boundary of the property.
- 2.9 Permission will only be given where the applicant agrees to abide by these rules.

Use of CCTV by the Council

- 2.10 Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Council must have regard to the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice ("the Code"), which sets out principles for the use of CCTV by public authorities. All use of CCTV by Runnymede Council will comply with the Code.

These principles include:

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

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 A policy is required in order to assess applications from tenants for the installation of CCTV and to deal with complaints about their usage from other residents or members of the public.

4. Resource implications

4.1 No resource implications have been identified with this proportionate approach.

5. Legal implications

5.1 The legalisation that applies to this policy includes:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

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

6. Equality implications

6.1 An Equality Impact Screening of the current policy determined that a full impact assessment was not required, there is no evidence that people with any of the nine protected characteristics will be negatively impacted by this policy. It is therefore considered that the Council will comply with its Public Sector Equality duty when endorsing this policy.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 None identified

8. Risk Implications

8.1 Not applicable.

9. Other implications

9.1 Not applicable.

10. Consultation

10.1 Members are requested to approve an 8 week consultation with residents on the revised policy. Posters will be sited within blocks with communal areas and there will be a dedicated page on the Council's website.

11. Background papers

11.1 Housing Committee Wednesday 7 June 2023 Housing CCTV Policy Update ([Public Pack](#))Agenda Document for Housing Committee, 07/06/2023 19:30 (runnymede.gov.uk)

12. Appendices

Appendix A Draft Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy Council Housing Estates
Appendix B Equality Impact Screening

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy Council Housing Estates

Review due: June 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out how Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) deals with CCTV on its housing estates. This policy applies to all Council tenants.

1.2 Self-installed CCTV including video doorbells is a growing phenomenon, this policy outlines our approach to the use of CCTV including requiring permission to install.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to;

- Provide confidence that data captured on CCTV is handled in accordance with data protection principles.
- Ensure a consistent approach to the use of CCTV and other recording equipment
- Explain our approach to private use of CCTV by residents
- Outline the advice relating to the use of residential CCTV provided by the by the Information Commissioners Office and their guidance relating to a proportionate approach to complaints.
- Ensure that a disproportionate level of resources is not required to monitor the installation and use of CCTV and deal with complaints from other residents.

3. Scope, definitions and legislation

3.1 This policy applies to RBC housing tenants and covers;

- CCTV systems (general cameras and recording equipment)
- Self-contained image recording devices (doorbells with integrated cameras)

3.2 This policy does not extend to RBC Safer Runnymede CCTV that covers Housing estates.

3.3 The legalisation that applies to this policy includes:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

4. General Principles

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

These principles include;

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

- Clear rules, policies and procedures must be in place before a surveillance camera system is used and be communicated to all who need to comply with them.

4.2 This policy is written in accordance with the guidance on domestic CCTV provided by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) [Domestic CCTV systems | ICO](#)

5. Private CCTV and Recording Devices

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

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

5.3 If permission has been granted for installation of CCTV this is limited to three CCTV cameras including a video doorbell. Video doorbells are only permitted attached to a front/back door and cannot be mounted on a gate, door, fence(s) or other structure at or near to the boundary to the property pointing to the highway or communal entrance.

5.4 Permission may not be given if the CCTV or video doorbell would cover/record a communal area or public highway instead the Council may require the use of an audio doorbell only.

5.5 CCTV should not be placed at a height where it will cover an area not within the tenancy boundary, such as overlooking a neighbouring garden or communal area.

5.6 If permission is given for CCTV which films communal areas and other residents/visitors entering/exiting a property e.g. on the front door of a flat within a block and a complaint is received then RBC reserves the right to withdraw permission.

5.7 If private CCTV or other recording devices are installed without permission, the Council reserves the right to take appropriate action to seek its removal. If a device is placed on or affixed to Council property, we reserve the right to request its immediate removal, and we may charge the resident for the cost of doing so and for repairing any damage caused to Council property.

6. Rules and Conditions

6.1 Permission will be granted on the following conditions:

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

6.2 In order not to impact on other residents, people should point their CCTV cameras away from their neighbours' homes and gardens, shared spaces, or public streets.

6.3 The CCTV should have the setting applied to record only within the private space of the tenancy.

7. Neighbour Disputes

7.1 If CCTV causes a neighbourhood dispute, we will review the permission that has been granted.

7.2 If there is already an existing neighbourhood dispute which is then escalated by the introduction of CCTV then RBC reserve the right to withdraw permission.

7.3 Where there are concerns for residents' safety CCTV may be allowed for a period at the discretion of RBC.

8. Enforcement

8.1 RBC reserve the right to enforce this policy in line with tenancy agreement section 5.3 which states, *"you must get written permission from us before you carry out any alterations or improvement to your home or shared areas."* Any such requests should be sent in writing to the Council.

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

9. Data Protection

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

9.2 Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service would not give a tenant permission to mount a camera which does not comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Protection Regulations 2018 this includes recording public highways, shared communal spaces or public footpaths.

9.3 Data protection law says that people who capture images or audio recordings from **outside their property boundary** using a fixed camera, such as a CCTV camera or smart doorbell, should:

- tell people that they are using recording equipment;
- in most circumstances, provide some of the recording if asked by a person whose images have been captured;
- regularly or automatically delete footage;
- in most circumstances, delete recordings of people if they ask; and
- stop recording a person if they object to being recorded, but only if it is possible to do so. For example, if they can point the camera in a different direction but still use it for the same purposes, e.g. keeping their property safe

9.4 The Council requires tenants to set all CCTV and camera doorbells to only capture the area up to the boundary of their property so that there is no opportunity to breach the Data Protection Act 2018.

10. Complaints About CCTV

10.1 If a resident has tried talking to someone who is using CCTV but has on-going concerns about any breach of this policy, they should contact the Council with any supporting evidence for the Council to review.

11. Consultation

11.1 Housing Management Team, Law and Governance, Data Protection team and Safer Runnymede have been consulted on this policy.

12. Monitoring and performance management

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

12.2 Housing staff will monitor where tenants have received permission and where the Council has refused permission.

13. Equalities Implications

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

13.2 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.

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

14. Related strategies/Documents

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

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

15. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	April 22	First draft completed	June 2023	Luisa Cantore-Norris	Housing Committee
V2	January 24	Updates made to first draft			

EQUALITY SCREENING

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

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
CCTV Policy	Luisa Cantore-Norris

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?

This policy sets out how the Councils deal with request of the use of CCTV including video doorbells on our housing estates. This policy applies to all Runnymede Borough tenants.

CCTVs systems are used on some estates to monitor public or communal spaces and help in the prevention and detection of crime and anti-social behaviour. The presence of CCTV can reassure residents on our estates.

Self-installed CCTV including video doorbells is a growing phenomenon, this policy outlines our approach to the use of CCTV.

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 does not relate to an area where there are currently know inequalities however, there is currently little data available to analyse regarding this.

The aim of this policy is to provide confidence that data captured on CCTV is handled in accordance with data protection principles, to ensure consistent approach to the use of CCTV and other recording equipment, to maintain safety of our housing estate, residents, staff and members of the public.

The aim of this policy is to ensure there is clear guidance on our approach to private use of CCTV including video doorbells by residents.

This policy is relevant to equality as it applies to all Council tenants however, there is no current evidence that this policy will have an impact on protected characteristics. This policy could have a positive impact on vulnerable adults as they would benefit from the additional security/reassurance having CCTV or video doorbells.

Anyone with a disability or who comes within the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity may feel more reassured by the presence of CCTV camera and therefore the Policy may indirectly have a positive impact on those protected characteristics as well.

This policy will be made available on the Council's website and in other formats as required if to ensure it is accessible to all.

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.

A full impact assessment is not required, there is no evidence that tenants with any of the nine protected characteristics will be negatively impacted by this policy.

It is therefore considered that the Council will comply with its Public Sector Equality duty when endorsing this Policy and a full impact assessment is not required at this stage.

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

Date completed: March 2022

Sign-off by senior manager: Angela Horsey

Report title	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy update
Report author	Iqvinder Sokhal (Head of Housing Solutions)
Department	Housing
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

For information

Synopsis of report:

Members approved a 5-year Homelessness Strategy in 2019 which is now in its final year. This report provides an update on the strategy and informs Members of the work being undertaken for the implementation of the Council's new three year Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every local authority to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy. Rough Sleeping was added to the original remit by government in light of the rise in homelessness. The current Runnymede Borough Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by Members in 2019. This report provides an update on the strategy's action plan for years 4-5 and informs members of the intention to commence work on a new strategy.

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

- 2.1 This will be the final year of the existing strategy and most of the items within the 5- year action plan were completed in earlier years. An update on the current activity is attached at Appendix A
- 2.2 The Council's duties towards people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness are complex. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 extended these duties beyond those people who met the priority need threshold and the Council must provide advice and assistance to anyone who approaches us, irrespective of local connection or circumstances. The duties thereafter will depend on what form of assistance is provided and this will be tailored to the individual in line with legislation.
- 2.3 Over the last two years, the socio-economic landscape, cost of living crisis, post COVID-19 pandemic response and global humanitarian crises have led to an increase in the number of people approaching the Council's homelessness service. In the past three years alone, the average number of homeless approaches has increased by 15%. Nevertheless, the team has continued in its efforts to take reasonable steps as required by legislation to prevent or end

homelessness where possible. This has been achieved by making the best use of our stock, liaising with Landlords and supported housing providers. Since the start of the Strategy, there has been a 22% increase in the number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless and a 31% increase in the number of successful outcomes for those who are actually homeless. In line with the Localism Act 2011, the Council is able to make an offer of private rented sector accommodation to end a prevention or relief duty. Whilst the Council has continued with its efforts to be creative in developing links with Landlords, there are ongoing challenges with sourcing affordable, suitable accommodation for particularly single applicants who are under the age of 35.

- 2.4 The Council has both a Homelessness Adviser and a dedicated Rough Sleeping Adviser from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who meet regularly with officers to review progress on the strategy action plan. Feedback has been that the Council has been successful in limiting the level of rough sleeping in the borough and the strategy has been effective. In a recent visit from DLUHC in 2024, the Council was praised for the plans it has in place to continue to support those facing homelessness. There was acknowledgment from the DLUHC representative that the overriding issue within the borough is the lack of affordable housing options for those seeking accommodation.
- 2.5 In March 2022 this committee approved a No Second Night Out Policy to support the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. When a person makes a homeless application to the Council, we are required by law to carry out an assessment of their needs (s.189A) and we will consider whether they are classed as a priority need (s.189). For individuals that are not classed as a priority, there is no duty on the Council to provide interim accommodation and if they have nowhere else to go, this can result in a person becoming a rough sleeper. Rough sleepers are people who sleep or bed down in the open air, such as on the street, in tents, doorways or bus shelters etc.
- 2.6 The Council takes part in an annual rough sleeper count, coordinated by HomelessLink for Central Government. This estimate/count is based on the number of rough sleepers identified on one night of the year in autumn. This is to give a snapshot figure only. The recent returns for Runnymede are:

Figure 1 Rough Sleeper Count

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
3	5	4	4	2	2	2	1	3

- 2.7 As a result of the No Second Night Out Policy there has been an increase in emergency bed and breakfast placements which have been funded by Central Government grants, which are ring fenced for the purpose of rough sleeping. This enables the Council to accommodate people whilst assessing their housing options and providing them with a Personal Housing Plan (PHP). The Council can then assess the provision of financial support for deposits and rent in advance for any move on properties identified. The lack of such properties within the Borough means that applicants need to be willing to consider a wider area if they are to find a tenancy. Most rough sleepers have limited accommodation offers within this borough and it is usually necessary to look wider for landlords willing to accept benefit dependent tenants without guarantors or references. People under 35 can only access shared accommodation options unless they have significant additional benefits. The No Second Night Policy is

applicable until the point an offer is made but if this is not accepted the emergency accommodation will be discontinued. In the last year alone, 80% of those identified as rough sleeping were successfully supported off the streets through our support pathways into medium and long term accommodation through either private rented sector accommodation, re-connection with their Borough of origin or through our Housing Led scheme (see paragraph 2.11 below).

- 2.8 The homelessness service has experienced significant staffing changes over the past year with none of last year's establishment still in place and three officers joining in the last 6 months. The service has a new Head of Service who joined in the last 4 months. The Housing Navigator role is currently vacant. This is a post to work with rough sleepers, and those whose are in insecure accommodation (such as sofa surfing), to identify pathways into housing and establish channels with the agencies that need to support individuals with complex needs and histories. This has meant that existing staff are having to absorb the role's functions in their current work. The staff ensure that any reports of rough sleeping through StreetLink are responded to for verification and work with the identified rough sleeper to support them off the streets.
- 2.9 There has therefore been a period of recruitment, consolidation and training. Work to ensure that the Personal Housing Plans, which are issued to all applicants, are a working document, tailored to individual circumstances and needs and not just an automated stage in the process has been successful. The current focus is also on reviewing all our internal processes and procedures to ensure we respond effectively to those facing homelessness as well as developing a more robust way of giving homeless decisions that are legally compliant. Ongoing work will continue to develop our move on pathways by strengthening links with partner agencies as well as developing our customer-focused approach.
- 2.10 Although there are very low levels of rough sleeping in the borough there is an increasing cohort of single adults with complex needs that do not meet the priority need threshold under which the Council would be responsible for accommodating them but need multi-agency support to relieve or prevent homelessness. We are increasingly seeing single applicants with complex substance misuse and entrenched historic issues of non-engagement with support services. Many of these people have a history of trauma from childhood, potentially engagement with the care and justice systems and an inability to sustain familial relationships. The incidence of presentations with a diagnosis of anti-social personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, Autism spectrum disorders, ADHD and ODD is reflective of the fact that increasing numbers of people are struggling to cope with the basics of life.
- 2.11 A successful bid resulted in capital funding to purchase 3 properties for complex needs cases to be accommodated in a "Housing Led" scheme with support from Transform Housing & Support. The Housing Led model identifies that there are individuals that are unable to access housing for themselves. In the outer London Boroughs, there are companies refurbishing and letting bedsit accommodation to benefit dependent people over 35 as a business model but for any rough sleeper or person in this borough with no employment or renting history there are very limited opportunities due to a significant shortfall in rent and the Local Housing Allowance.

- 2.12 To be eligible for the Housing Led scheme the client does not need to meet the qualification criteria for the Housing Register where often a history of bad debt, criminality, anti-social behaviour, or a broken local connection restricts their access to social housing and with no means or credibility to access the private rented sector their housing options are nonexistent.
- 2.13 The Council has recently reviewed the relationship with Transform Housing & Support to identify further opportunities for supported housing in the borough and to ensure that the referral processes are effective in identifying the right client for each vacancy, limiting void periods, and ensuring the level of support in the unit is appropriate to the needs of the individual. There is also close partnership work through regular meetings and a referral mechanism so that any potential move on opportunities or evictions are identified at the earliest opportunity, so that such voids are considered for new referrals.
- 2.14 The Council operates an inhouse agency to work with private sector landlords and estate agencies to secure tenancies within the private sector through a package of financial incentives and management offers, known as Magna Carta Lettings. This has been an integral part of our response to homelessness in the borough. At the current time rents have increased so very few landlords will consider a tenant who is benefit dependent and landlords are selling due to changes in legislation and the cost of living resulting in mortgage increases. We have seen a slight slowing down of Landlords wishing to seek their property back and we will monitor the impact the upcoming increase of the Local Housing Allowance will have on the market.
- 2.15 Domestic Abuse is a significant cause of homelessness, and the Council is working to increase the availability of refuge accommodation and suitable rehousing pathways. People fleeing domestic abuse and approaching as homeless from social housing anywhere in the country are entitled under legislation to an offer of social housing. No local connection is required for an approach due to DA and it can be complex to make enquiries to confirm the passport to priority need eligibility due to DA without appearing to make invasive enquiries of a victim.
- 2.16 In recognition that homelessness services need to be agile and responsive, that current economic and specifically housing conditions are making it increasingly difficult to find affordable housing options in the borough it is believed that a future Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy should be for 3 years, keeping the focus on responding to current conditions, government programs and seeking innovative solutions.
- 2.17 Work has commenced on the next strategy with a significant focus on supporting people who do not fall into the priority need groups but present the most challenges in finding accommodation. This will be through enhanced partnership working to focus on intervention at the earliest opportunity as well as strengthening the Council's response to domestic abuse in line with recent legislation. There will be a period of data capture and analysis to enable us to set our priorities and formulate an action plan. Officers will work with DLUHC advisers and ensure that all opportunities for additional funding or support are maximised.
- 2.18 Over the course of the current Strategy we have noted that there is an increase in approaches to the authority for assistance and a reduction in the options available to people. Whilst there have been positive moves such as the imminent increase in the Local Housing Allowance and reduction in the level of inflation, the extent of any positive impact this may result is yet to be

determined. We therefore envisage that the current challenges in securing affordable accommodation are set to continue for the foreseeable future. This is likely to result in an increase in households in priority need for whom we cannot prevent their homelessness and therefore need to provide interim accommodation whilst we work with them. The Council has a portfolio of temporary accommodation properties but this is provided at a high cost to the Council and a temporary move is disruptive to households. Therefore, the immediate aim will always be to maximise the opportunity to prevent any loss of accommodation and where this is not possible, then to identify and support the client into a private sector tenancy in an area where they have connections if possible.

2.19 An update on the Action Plan is attached at Appendix A

3. Policy framework implications

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

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

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

5. Legal implications

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

6. Equality implications

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

6.2 This is to:

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

6.3 The 9 Protected Characteristics are age, disability, race/ethnicity, pregnancy and maternity, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender reassignment and marriage/civil partnership.

6.4 An Equality Impact Screening was carried out when the Strategy was compiled, and it was decided that a full EIA was not required. There was no evidence to suggest that the Strategy would have a negative impact on any of the protected groups. Rather the Strategy has the potential to have a positive impact on all members of the Runnymede community who will need support under the Strategy, a significant number of which will be people with protected characteristics. The review of the Strategy will include analysis of the outcomes for people with different protected characteristics and where the next strategy might address any inequalities and shall be accompanied by an updated or new Equalities Impact Assessment.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

None

8. Other implications (where applicable)

None

9. Timetable for Implementation

Not applicable.

10. Conclusions

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

11. Background papers

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

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

12. Appendices

- Appendix Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan Update

Appendix A – Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
Objective One: Early intervention for homeless prevention						
1.1	<p>Grow the sustainment package, support with budgeting advice.</p> <p>Ensuring households are in receipt of the correct benefits, signposted to debt services, encouraged into work, training, volunteering or education</p>	<p>RBC Support Services and Temporary Accommodation Team, Magna Carta Lettings, Job centre</p>	<p>Credit Unions CAB Communications Team</p>	<p>Year 1-5</p>	<p>Customers are provided with a holistic service when approaching for housing advice, this will include detailed advice in the PHP</p> <p>Expand support provided to clients placed through MCL, regular viewings and support for tenant and landlord.</p> <p>Produce leaflets and handouts about how to sustain a tenancy</p> <p>A pathway to assist homeless households into work, training and volunteering is established</p>	<p>All service users who are placed by RBC utilising financial assistance (deposit and rent in advance) have been provided with a settling in package since January 2023, including those placed out of borough.</p> <p>Established a robust induction service to ensure anybody placed in TA and B&B has made the right benefit claim</p> <p>The level of support for clients in Temporary Accommodation has increased with a focus on financial sustainment and has shown a decrease in people in arrears in TA.</p> <p>Use of leaflets advising on managing money, seeking employment or voluntary work and life skills</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
						Sustainment packages are being managed using the new Support Services module to ensure consistent delivery and measurement of outcomes.
1.2	Improve the availability of good quality, easy to understand information	RBC housing	Communications team	Ongoing	<p>Leaflets and handouts produced</p> <p>Improved and detailed advice included in PHPs</p> <p>No complaints received in relation to the quality or access to information</p>	<p>Package of communication material has been developed and is being produced by Communications Team. E.g. User friendly leaflets for tenants facing possession action, electronic flyers on budgeting, volunteering or getting onto work and looking after your home / life skills</p> <p>Improved Personal Housing Plans (PHP) with clarity on actions to be completed by the service user and their Housing Solutions Officer with timescales</p>
1.3	Redesign website to include self-serve tools	RBC housing, ICT	Communication Team	Ongoing	<p>Updated website to reflect legislative changes, easy to use referral mechanisms for duty to refer and early notification of housing issues</p> <p>Website that</p>	<p>The Duty to Refer form has been improved to enable more comprehensive information to be captured.</p> <p>Work has progressed on the NEC Housing On Line account in preparation for Housing Advice, Homelessness and</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
					provides advice so that customers can self-serve	Allocations to be managed through personal accounts. Tenancy training videos are available on the website and new and TA tenants are directed to them.
1.4	Monitor, review and evaluate data to predict future trends of homelessness	RBC housing	Homelessness Task Group	Years 1-5	Regular data collection through HCLIC and internal reporting mechanisms	Working group established to analyse data and use it to develop prevention and move on strategies
Objective Two: Ensuring sufficient supply of accommodation						
2.1	Continue to make best use of existing housing stock	RBC housing, policy team, Housing Neighbourhood Services team			Mutual exchanges Downsizers Reciprocals Improve the perception of IRL to attract active downsizers. (Independent Retirement Living)	Increased support for people downsizing through the Hardship Fund and new Downsizing policy approved providing incentive payments to free up family size dwellings. Programme of changing 3 bedroom properties with two living rooms to 4 bed ongoing with appraisal when void. IRL upgrade planned in 3 schemes, consultancy in 2023/24 with works to be completed in financial year 24-5. IRLs It is hoped to make them more attractive to downsizers. The properties



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
						are not difficult to let but ideally a proportion would be to people giving up family homes.
2.2	Review nomination agreements and maximise opportunities for future development	RBC housing, policyteam, planning	Registered providers, Surrey County Council	Year 1-5	<p>Regular monitoring of nominations agreements</p> <p>Maximum Affordable Housingachieved in all Section 106 agreements</p> <p>New social housing</p>	<p>Housing work closely with planning to optimise the level of Affordable housing, however in the current climate RPs have little interest in Section 106 properties and Developers are keen to transfer these to low cost home ownership products which do not prevent homelessness. with units reflecting local need and with a focus on requesting social rent.</p> <p>Close liaison with Surrey County Council regarding existing Scheme at Aldwyn Place. Working closely with partners to ensure effective and transparent referral process.</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
2.3	Explore estate regeneration	RBC housing, policy, planning	Registered providers and private developers	Year 1-5	Regeneration started of estates within the borough	Tendered exercise completed and contracted with for a multi-disciplinary Building Consultancy to progress the regeneration of the Parkside area of New Haw
2.4	Monitor and develop Magna Carta Lettings	RBC housing, Magna Carta Lettings	Private landlords, local landlords	Year 1-5	<p>Evolving service to ensure it is still competitive and attracts landlords. Develop our incentive packages to assist tenants such as those without access to a guarantor or 6 months rent in advance.</p> <p>Explore options for those found to be intentionally homeless.</p> <p>Focus on retaining existing Landlords and developing incentive packages</p>	<p>Rent rises and cost of living issues for tenants dependent on benefit or subject to the cap have resulted in increased difficulty in accessing private sector tenancy offers that are affordable.</p> <p>Reviewing MCL operations, finances and incentives</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
2.5	Focus on tenancy sustainment package and improve relationships with landlords	RBC housing, Magna Carta Lettings	Private landlords, Letting Agents	Year 1-5	<p>Continue to host landlord forums and events</p> <p>Provide information to landlords of the services we can provide encouraging early notification of issues to sustain tenancies.</p> <p>Introduce tenancy training for tenants and ensure tenants are ready for move on before securing accommodation</p>	<p>Landlord event to be held in 2024</p> <p>Tenancy Sustainment is available for all tenants on the managed service or let through MCL</p> <p>Successful preventions of MCL tenancies under threat through early intervention. This has minimised the impact on tenants whilst maintaining a positive relationship with the Landlord</p>
2.6	Explore shared ownership housing and access to within the borough	RBC housing, policy team, planning	Registered providers, Help to buy agents	Year 2-5	<p>Explore the opportunity of matching a tenants deposit to buy a home up to a certain limit by way of an interest free loan,</p> <p>Encourage customers to prevent their homelessness by exploring home ownership offers</p>	The cost of purchasing in the borough and Affordable rent payable on the remaining share requires a high annual income.



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
2.7	Develop support for rough sleepers	RBC housing, policy,	Voluntary and community sector partners	Year 1-5	<p>Introduce shared house scheme for single homeless</p> <p>Access to food, clothing, health checks.</p> <p>Developing links with charities and local businesses</p> <p>Close monitoring of vocational and health needs of those rough sleepers including enabling the provision of COVID testing and access to COVID and other vaccines</p>	<p>Shared houses in operation</p> <p>Currently recruiting for a Housing Navigator. In the interim, all members of the team respond to reports of rough sleeping within our target deadlines</p> <p>Complex need applicants placed in the Housing Led properties continue to obtain support from Transform and RBC Sustainment Team.</p> <p>Vouchers are in use to provide food, travel, instant cash for rough sleepers if needed.</p> <p>Training delivered to staff to ensure best of use dedicated funding streams</p>
2.8	Continue to apply for relevant government funding for new initiatives	RBC housing, policy	DLUHC, other local authorities	Years 1-5	<p>Funding bid submitted for all relevant government funding or other funding streams to improve the homeless service</p> <p>Ongoing dialogue with DLUHC and other local authorities to ensure that all</p>	<p>All funding streams have been applied to and the funding is delivering tangible outcomes.</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
					<p>relevant funding opportunities are accessed</p> <p>Successful bid achieved and implemented including monitoring of outcomes.</p>	
Objective Three: Partnership working and holistic support						
3.1	Enhanced Personal Housing Plans, incorporating more than just housing advice	RBC housing	Homelessness Task Group	Year 3-5	<p>Enhanced PHPs produced and given to households facing homelessness. These to include information about health, gambling advice, drink, drug and smoking cessation.</p> <p>To include signposting to debt and credit unions and to generally give more information than just housing advice</p>	Consistent use of comprehensive plans. Officers have been trained on how to ensure compliance with the plans and ways to encourage compliance if this is lacking.
3.2	Continue and improve strong partnership relationships	RBC housing, local charities and businesses, hospitals, DA Refuge, Your Sanctuary and supported accommodation	Registered Providers, social service, supported housing providers	Year 1-5	<p>Continue to work together and develop services for the benefit of our mutual client groups</p> <p>Develop new incentives and</p>	New Mental Health Hospital Discharge procedure rolled out with training to improve the communication between professionals where mental health and housing are a barrier to a successful discharge



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
					projects to best meet the needs of households	<p>Strong partnership working with supported accommodation providers such as Riverside and Transform.</p> <p>Development of an improved and robust referral and move on mechanism with clear pathways. Improvement of referral process, monitoring, timely move on to align properties with suitable clients and improve the turnover of units.</p> <p>Development of new lines of support for the Council's DA package through training for staff, improved links with Refuges and representation on DA Task and Finish Group</p>
Objective Four: Meet the needs of those in temporary accommodation						
4.1	Ensure B&B use is minimal	RBC housing, social services	Emergency accommodation providers	Years 1-5	<p>Set up of shared houses for single people</p> <p>Maintain low levels of B&B usage where possible by earlier intervention</p>	<p>Higher than usual use of B&B due to current economic climate and presentation of those with more complex needs requiring multi-agency support</p> <p>Established a B&B and TA</p>



Ref	Objectives	Lead Role	Partners	Timeline	Measure of Success	2023/24
					<p>to prevent homelessness</p> <p>Ensure efficient move on from B&B to more sustainable housing</p> <p>Assess levels and trends of homeless approaches to ensure appropriate levels of housing are available, both private, social and temporary</p>	<p>monitoring group to ensure timely move on</p> <p>Using more in borough B&B where possible</p> <p>Ongoing training package being delivered to staff to ensure B&B use is kept minimal through improved prevention techniques</p> <p>Where we are providing interim accommodation this is done as soon as possible, very low levels of children in B&B. No breaches of statutory requirements in relation to the duration of B&B stays for families</p>
4.2	Introduce tenancy training and lifeskills to those in need in TA	RBC housing Sustainment, Benefits	RentStart, Citizens Advice, FUSE	Year 1-5	<p>Explore the opportunity to provide pre tenancy training.</p> <p>Explore the opportunities for online training for tenants to prepare them for a tenancy.</p>	Ongoing, Housing Solutions developing an online tool with certification for applicants





Report title	Performance Report
Report author	Angela Horsey, Business Development Manager
Department	Housing
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

For information

Synopsis of report:

This report provides the results of the Corporate Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (management information) for quarter three. The performance targets for 2024/25 are also presented for information.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the results of the Key Performance Indicators (H1 – H9) for the third quarter of 2023/24. This report also includes the results of the Management Information measures which, together with the tenants' satisfaction survey results presented at the last meeting of this Committee, meet the Council's regulatory requirement to collect Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- 1.2 The performance targets for 2024/25 are also presented for information.

2. Performance Results

2.1 Table 1 Key Performance Indicators: Results for Quarter three

	CKPI	Target 2023/24	Result Q1	Result Q2	Result Q3	Target 2024/25
H1 RP02(1)	Proportion of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	95%	79%	67.8%	66.3%	95%
RP02(2)	Proportion of emergency repairs completed within target timescale	100%	89%	95%	81%	100%
H2	Average number of calendar days to re-let a void property (excludes major works voids).	25	56	56	43	25
H3	Satisfaction with the overall reactive repairs service received (% of total number of responses returned).	95%	89%	80%	83%	95%

H4	Number of households in B&B for more than 2 weeks per quarter (annual target)	16	2	6	9	16
H5	Rent arrears of current tenants as a percentage of rent due - cumulative result.	2%	1.76%	1.67%	1.65%	2%
H6 RP01	Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	23%	22.5%	33.4%	31.2%	23%
H7 BS01	Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	100%	99.96%	99.96%	100%	100%
H8	Percentage of stock with a valid safety certification Electrical Installation Condition Report.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
H9	Number of outstanding high risk Fire Risk Assessment actions	0	0	0	5	0
BS02	Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	100%	84%	82%	78%	
BS04	Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	100%	100%	100%	100%	
H10 NM01	Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened (including hate incidents) per 1,000 homes	N/A	4.5	3.1	5.1	N/A
CH01	Number of stage one and stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes	N/A	2.10	8.31	6.58	N/A
CH02	Proportion of stage one and two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	100%	100%	68.4%	100%	100%

2.2 The current Repairs and Voids contractor, MCP were served an Improvement Notice on 26th October 2023 outlining concern about their ability to comply with the contract in the following areas -

- meeting the required Performance Indicators.
- quality of tradespeople undertaking repairs.
- empty properties (Voids) being completed on time.

2.3 There has been an ongoing improvement in their void performance, however reactive repairs performance is still below the standard we require.

2.4 We are aware that the contractor has invested significant resources in management and supervision of the contract and that they have employed more direct labour, to reduce their dependency on subcontractors. The monthly contract meetings continue to address the

issues and during March the improvement will be assessed to decide whether to extend the notice or withdraw as they have met the minimum contract standards.

- 2.5 The improved result reflects more efficient procedures in partnership with the repairs contractor. The indicator for re-letting void properties, however, measures the end of the previous tenancy to the start of the new tenancy and this process can be susceptible to delay due to the individual circumstances of the households involved.
- 2.6 Satisfaction with the repairs service is reflected in the improvement notice as mentioned above. We collect satisfaction data via our Contractor MCP who once complete a repair an automatic text message is sent allowing the tenant to provide feedback based upon their experience. Whilst the response is 83%, it is worth noting that the uptake is very low which is not an accurate reflection on satisfaction overall. This is however becoming a more accepted method with our tenants, so we expect a greater sample of feedback as we progress with this contract.
- 2.7 The Bed and Breakfast result partly reflects the objectives of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (see agenda item 6) There were delays in moving on people accommodated in bed and breakfast placements, all of whom had complex support needs. There are no families with children in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 2.8 The rent collection result and most of the health and safety compliance results are very pleasing and put Runnymede in the top quartile when these results are benchmarked against comparable local authority landlords.
- 2.9 Five high risk actions were identified in the latest round of Fire Risk Assessments. Each of these actions are expected to be completed by 23rd February.
- 2.10 There has been a 2.2% reduction in non-decent homes from the last quarter due to the installation of new kitchen, bathrooms, boilers and electrics. The start of the new, 5-year window and door renewal contract was delayed until January 2024 but, along with commencement of works to roofing and associated items planned for quarter one of 2024/25, significant reduction in non-decency is anticipated. It is also worth noting that decency is reported yearly, and it is normal for stock to fall outside of decency throughout the year as programme progress.

3. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- 3.1 Members will recall that Acuity Research undertook a regulatory compliant satisfaction survey and presented the results to the last meeting of this Committee. These results on perception with landlord services will be submitted to the Regulator of Social Housing along with the annual Management Information data which together make up the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

4. Update on Consultancy Work on Parkside

- 4.1 The Parkside Regeneration project continues to move forward in line with expectations. Ridge, the Council's appointed multi-discipline consultants, are working on the reviews of the design constraints flowing out of Stage 1 and measures to mitigate against them. These include (but are not limited to), Flooding and Capacity checks for all utilities. They are also starting on site surveys including Ecology, Arboricultural, Topographical and Heritage. Ridge are also continuing to update plans for highways and the public realm, massing studies as well as stakeholder engagement (in particular, engagement with planning colleagues). Around mid-February Housing Officers will send a questionnaire to residents within the

proposed regeneration areas seeking insights into the current demographic as well as views to inform plans for the future.”

5 Resource implications/Value for Money

- 5.1 No resource implications have been identified.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 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.

7. Equality implications

- 7.1 No equalities implications have been identified.

8. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

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

9. Risk Implications

- 9.1 No new risks have been identified.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 This report presents the results of the Key Performance Indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (management information) for quarter three.

11. Background papers

None.

Report title	Housing Revenue Account 30-year Business Plan
Report author	Maggie Ward, Interim Corporate Head of Housing
Department	Housing
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

- To resolve

Synopsis of report:

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

This report updates the Business Plan approved in March 2023 with forecast expenditure for this financial year and the detail of the Decent Homes planned programmes.

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

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

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

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

The financial information supporting the plan details the resources available to deliver these commitments. The plan includes £52.3 million to improve the quality of Council owned homes over the next 5 years.

Recommendation(s):

Members approve the Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan which is at Appendix A outlines the financial strategy and planning for the delivery of Runnymede Borough Council's landlord services over the next 30 years.
- 1.2 The Localism Act 2011 enabled Runnymede to refinance its Housing stock and The Settlement Payments Determination of 2012 required stock holding local authorities to produce a 30-year business plan.
- 1.3 There are both contractual and statutory obligations placed on landlords. These include obligations include health and safety requirements, tenant engagement, the provision of day to day repairs, investment in tenant's homes, collection of rent, action to tackle anti-social behaviour, support for older people etc.
- 1.4 The Regulator of Social Housing has published new Tenant Satisfaction Measures with data collection requirements from April 2023 for a first annual submission in Summer 2024. The Council has carried out a Regulatory compliant survey and is ready to submit the data.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan outlines five themes for Runnymede Borough Council's housing landlord service over the next 30 years (the plan will be reviewed annually – it is therefore unlikely that these themes will be retained for the next thirty years).
 - Optimising Income and Efficiencies
 - Good Quality Housing
 - New Council owned homes
 - Review and modernise provision for older tenants.
 - Well managed neighbourhoods

3. Policy framework implications

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

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan provides income and expenditure projections over a 30-year period. It therefore references considerable levels of spending
- 4.2 The supporting capital investment plans of Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Landlord Service are articulated within the Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.
- 4.3 Detailed delivery plans over the next fiscal year are articulated within the Housing Business Centre Plan 2024-2025.

5. Legal implications

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

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 Obligations are placed on public sector bodies to ensure there is no discrimination in the way services are delivered. Equality Impact Assessments are carried as required for proposed service and policy changes.
- 6.2 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan encapsulates the economic aspects of delivery and an EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) is not relevant.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The Housing Revenue Account sets out two commitments on environmental sustainability: -
- Energy Performance (minimum energy performance of our stock at a C energy efficiency rating by 2030)
 - Commencement of 125 additional units by 2026, these homes will be built to an A rating and include alternative heating sources to gas where appropriate.
- 7.2 The Council has submitted a bid to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, a total project cost of £2,507,250.00, RBC are applying for £1,223,456.55 of SHDF match funding, contributing £1,283,793.45 from our own funds. If the bid is successful 169 properties will benefit from a package which could include external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation and solar panels.

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 All Risks associated with the Housing revenue Account are recorded and managed through the Housing Business Unit and Corporate Risk Registers as appropriate.

9. Other implications

- 9.1 Not Applicable

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 It is recommended that Housing Committee members approve the aims identified within the Business Plan. It is also recommended that members note that the delivery of the themes contained within the plan are described within the Housing Business Centre Plan 2024/25

11. Background papers

None

12. Appendices

Appendix A Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023-2053

Runnymede Borough Council

Housing Revenue Business Plan 2023-2053

Date: March 24

Contents

Purpose	3
Summary	3
Strategic Context: Legislation, Regulatory Standards and Related Strategies	3
Legislation	3
Regulatory Standards	4
Related Strategies	5
Owned Residential Stock	5
Type of property and bed sizes	5
Spread of property type	5
Age profile of Stock	6
Average rents	6
Proportion of Benefit Dependent Tenants	6
Links to Runnymede Corporate Business Plan 2022-2026	6
Maximising Income	7
Void rate targets	7
Good Quality Housing	7
New Council owned homes	8
Review and modernise provision for older tenants	8
Well Managed Neighbourhoods	8
Improved Estate Services	8
Garages	9
Governance Monitoring and Implementation / Performance Monitoring and Delivery	9
Threats and Risks	9
Opportunities	9
Delivery	10
Looking to the future	10
Current position as reported to January 2024 Housing Committee:	12
HRA balances	12
Major Works Commitment Approved 2024/25	12
Summary of 30 year forecast as of February 2024	13

When you have finished your document, to update the table of contents, click with the left hand mouse button once within the table of contents. Above it, you should then see a button that says **Update Table**. Click it with left mouse button, then click **Update entire table**, then click **OK**. Then delete this paragraph.

Purpose

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

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

Summary

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

The HRA owns and manages the largest social housing stock in the Borough, 2850 properties with an annual rent debit for 2023/24 of £20 million. In addition, the Council owns 1214 lock up garages across 102 sites originally built to accompany the residential properties.

For the initial years of the financial plan costs and income can be reasonably forecast using the 2023/2024 budget and assumptions for inflation, government guidance on rent setting and predicted planned maintenance costs. Inflation is built into the plan at current low levels however beyond year 5 extrapolation of the income and expenditure is tenuous as a percentage variation in rental income or inflation will have significant impact on the long-term forecast. These aspects that are out of the Council's control mean that the financial modelling beyond year 5 is indicative and will probably need to be adjusted during an annual review.

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

Strategic Context: Legislation, Regulatory Standards and Related Strategies

Legislation

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

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

Year	2021/2	2026/7	2031/2	2036/7	2041/2	Total m
Capital Repayment (m)	1.956	10	30	30	30	102.9
New Borrowing (m)		8	29	20		

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

significantly reduced the anticipated income over the period.

From April 2020 the Government's rent policy permitted annual rent increases on both social rent and affordable rent properties of up to CPI plus 1 percentage point for a period of at least 5 years. In 2023 due to the high level of inflation (11%) this was capped at 7%. This assumption is built into the 30-year plan but after year 5, a conservative increase in line with inflation is assumed. The approved increase for April 2024 is 7.7%.

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

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

The Council published its current [Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy](#) in 2022 and is committed to reviewing these 2 yearly, to ensure that the tenancies being offered in social housing throughout the borough reflect current legislation and housing need in the area. Since 2012 the Council has been able to offer Flexible or Fixed Term tenancies rather than traditional Secure tenancies (which are still offered for Independent Retirement Living) and this should facilitate best use of stock. The Council recognises the need for a balance between optimising use of its stock, providing households with security whilst creating stable neighbourhoods and communities.

Regulatory Standards

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

The Economic Standards can be viewed here:

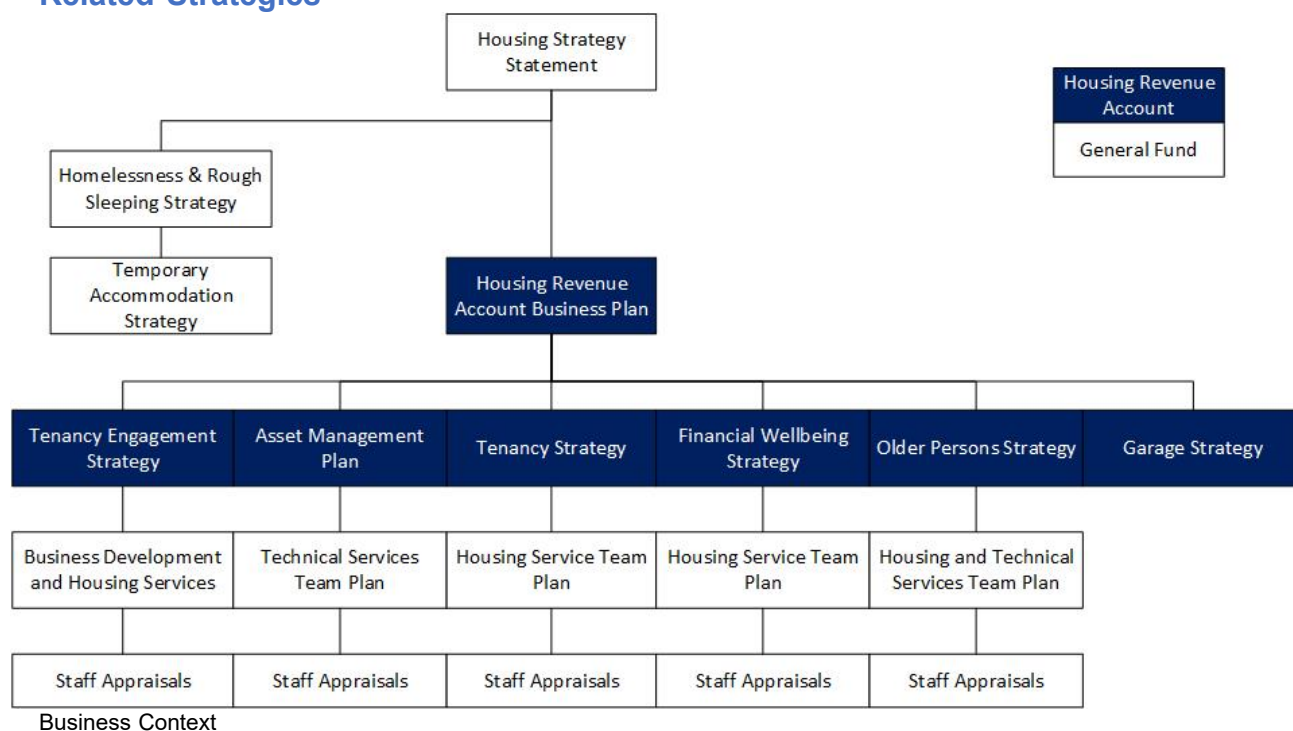
- [Governance and Financial Viability Standard](#)
- [Value for Money Standard](#)
- [Rent Standard](#)

The Consumer Standards can be viewed here:

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

In Summer 2022 the Regulator published a new Consumer Standard. It is a regulatory requirement that social landlords report on the new Tenants Satisfaction Measures from April 2024.

Related Strategies



Owned Residential Stock

Type of property and bed sizes

Property Type	bedsit	1	2	3	4	5	6+	Total
Bungalow		273	44	1				318
Flat High Rise		34	28	30				92
Flat Low Rise	9	297	88	10				404
Flat Medium Rise		71	33					104
House Detached			1	4	2	1		8
House Semi Detached		2	345	671	77	10	1	1106
House Terraced		1	105	210	18	2		336
House Town House			33	40	11			84
Maisonette			15	90	13			118
Independent Retirement	25	177	9					211
Temporary Accommodation	7	15	19	21				62
Mobile Homes		1	9	7				17
Total	41	871	729	1084	121	13	1	2860

Spread of property type

Type	No of homes	% of stock
Flats	641	22
Houses	1873	65
Maisonettes	118	4
Mobile Homes	17	1
IRL	211	7

Age profile of Stock

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

Although general needs flats and maisonettes represent only 28% of the stock, the age of these units, mainly constructed in the 1960s, higher cost of servicing these units and maintaining safety standards in communal areas will result in a focus on these homes within the Business Centre Plan and HRA financial provision for the next 5 years.

Average rents

Housing Weekly "Social" Rent Levels				
No. of Beds	Average weekly rent 2021/22	Average weekly rent 2022/23	Average weekly rent 2023/24	Average weekly rent 2024/25 (7.7% inc.)
	£	£	£	£
Bedsit	68.51	71.32	76.31	82.19
1 Bed	94.20	98.06	104.92	113.00
2 Bed	112.90	117.54	125.77	135.45
3 Bed	123.39	128.40	137.39	147.97
4 Bed	134.65	140.34	150.16	161.72
5+ Bed	158.06	158.48	169.57	182.63

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

Proportion of Benefit Dependent Tenants

The number of tenants in receipt of benefit has increased over 4 years by 9%, with 63% of tenants now receiving Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. This increase and the payment of the housing element of Universal Credit directly to tenants may impact on rental income as the roll out of the new system continues. Runnymede still has a significant proportion of older residents in receipt of Housing Benefit who will not move to UC under the current rules.

	HB	UC	Benefit Dependent
Apr-19	1414	103	1517
	51%	4%	54%
Jan-21	1143	523	1666
	41%	19%	60%
Jan-22	983	685	1668
	36%	24%	60%
Feb-23	863	892	1755
	31%	32%	63%
Feb-24	848	1071	1919
	30%	38%	68%

Links to Runnymede Corporate Business Plan 2022-2026

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

- Climate Change – Good Quality Homes – improving energy performance
- Economic Development – New Council Owned Homes, Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Empowered Communities – Increased resident engagement
- Health and Wellbeing – Good Quality Homes in Well Managed Neighbourhoods

Aims and Objectives of the HRA Business Plan

Our key themes and ambitions are:

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

Maximising Income

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

The planned expenditure within the Business Plan is predicated on achieving a forecasted income and the operational target for 2024 is to maintain arrears below 2% of the debit.

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

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

The level of void properties and relet timescales will impact on income and the Business Plan incorporates an assumption for a void rate of 1.75% from 2025 onwards after a higher rate initially as a result of performance issues with the void contract. Operational void targets for 2024/25 will be set lower than those within the HRA Business Plan.

Void rate targets

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

Good Quality Housing

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

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

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

New Council owned homes

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

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

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

Review and modernise provision for older tenants

Runnymede aspires to be the social landlord of choice for older residents, providing homes that people are proud to live in. A review of older persons housing options and services and of the current individual IRL schemes was carried out in 2022 and this has informed an Older Persons Strategy for our tenants. A specialist consultancy was procured to bring forward plans for modernisation of 3 IRL schemes which should commence in 2024/25

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

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

The schemes will be dementia friendly, modern accessible environments encouraging use of communal facilities for a range of activities representing the interests of a diverse population. Plans to upgrade communal areas have been delayed due to the Covid pandemic but financial provision has been made for upgrading the facilities and appearance of schemes.

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

Well Managed Neighbourhoods

Improved Estate Services

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

The current limited Resident Inspector regime will be extended through our digital engagement

facilitating high levels of customer engagement and feedback on all elements of the service. Tenants and leaseholders will have access to the detail on the forward investment plan for their home and block.

Procurement of an estate cleaning contract in 2024/25 will ensure high standards of cleanliness and safe environments in communal areas.

We will continue to invest in dedicated staff for Anti-Social Behaviour, responding to tenant's concerns and dealing proactively with ASB, keeping the safety and security of residents as a priority.

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

Garages

A Garage Strategy was approved by the Housing Committee in 2022.

The HRA owns 1214 lockup garages within its residential estates across the borough. The rent from the garages is paid to the General Fund (net of repair costs) as non-residential income. Due to the date of construction the garages are too small for most modern vehicles and some of the garage forecourts require improvement. A full stock condition survey of this asset will be carried out over the years 2022-2024, in conjunction with the review of development potential of each site. A strategy for future use of the land including an investment plan to ensure retained garages are well maintained will be developed. Three blocks have already been demolished to provide 12 new homes and a further 10 are planned utilising part of a garage site in Egham. Most sites are not suitable for significant residential development due to their location in the flood plain or close proximity to existing properties, but all development opportunities will be considered as well as potential for alternative usage.

Governance Monitoring and Implementation / Performance Monitoring and Delivery

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

The Housing Committee will meet 5 times annually with special meetings to be convened by the Chair as required.

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

The Council carried out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey in Autumn 2023 to collect the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures required by the Regulator of Social Housing from April 2024. The implementation of a survey module and digital communication suite to our Housing IT system will facilitate opportunities for regular tenant consultation and feedback through personal online accounts as well as traditional methods of communication where appropriate.

Threats and Risks

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

- Inflation
- Limits placed on future borrowing by the proposed levelling up and regeneration Bill
- Increased rates of interest on replacement loans for maturing borrowing
- Increased turnover of properties
- Challenges of Welfare Reform, capped households, universal credit
- Further rent reduction imposed by Government
- Changes in legislation / Industry knowledge leading to additional unforeseen expenditure e.g. Fire Safety works

Opportunities

With a service providing first class landlord services the HRA will seek opportunities to provide

these services to other organisations and individual property owners, creating an additional income stream to the HRA.

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

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

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

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

Delivery

The Housing Department aspires to provide high-quality services which incorporate standard landlord functions with additional packages of appropriate support to residents throughout the life of their tenancy. With an increasing number of residents experiencing multiple deprivations and complex needs increased investment has been needed in staffing resources, including specialist roles for tenancy sustainment. There will be an increase in resident engagement with services driven by resident aspirations and needs. In order to fulfil these objectives this HRA Business Plan makes financial provision for investment in the stock and services and identifies resources required to ensure that the housing professionals involved in provision of services are adequately trained, have access to appropriate equipment, knowledge and resources and essentially are supported by the organisation throughout their career in provision of essential front line services.

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

Looking to the future

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

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

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

The Housing Service achieved ISO accreditation for its repairs, improvements and compliance service in 2022. The ISO 9001 suite of quality management systems (QMS) is a set of standards that assists an organisation to ensure they meet customer and other stakeholder needs within statutory and regulatory requirements. The Quality Policy approved in January 2022 demonstrates

our commitment to the QMS and to continuous improvement of our services.

Demonstrating meaningful and inclusive engagement will be highlighted in the following themes in this Business Plan

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

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

An Annual Report is produced each year providing financial and performance information. Tenant newsletters are published twice a year to disseminate important information and update residents on projects, policies and opportunities available through our Financial Wellbeing Strategy.

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

Whilst traditional communication methods will be maintained for those who choose to opt out of our digital services, we will aim for 90% of our tenants to manage their general tenancy issues through an online account within 5 years. This will enable tailored and regular consultation on all aspects of our service. A range of digital and traditional methods of engagement including focus groups and panels will be used to share information with residents and solicit feedback.

Financial Position to Support the HRA Business Plan Current position as reported to January 2024 Housing Committee: Assumptions within the Financial Forecast

Data	Position
Opening housing stock	2,860
Opening Debt Allocation	£100,000,000
Rental Income year 1 (2023/24)	£19,163,391
Indicative additional borrowing	£57,000,000
Indicative additional units	125
Reserves 31 March 2024	£35,651,000

Assumption	Position
Rent Increase Years 1 to 4 (2023/4) CPI +1%	CPI +1 Years 1-4
Rent Increase Years 5 to 30 (2025/26) CPI	2%
Void rate from year 4	1.75%
Annual void rent Loss at year 5 (at 1.75%)	£397,000
Bad debt provision	£90,000
Assumed inflation rate for supervision & management costs	2%
Assumed inflation rate for repairs costs	2.75%
Planned Investment Spend in years 1 to 7 (Decent Homes compliance)	£52,314,000
Right to Buy Sales	5 per year

Current Loan Schedule and Interest Rates

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

Current position as reported to January 2024 Housing Committee:

HRA balances

HRA estimated balances and reserves £m					
Description	March	March	March	March	March
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
HRA working Balances	£29.20	£31.40	£22.60	£35.60	£23.60
Major Repairs Reserve	£5.80	£3.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Proceeds from Right to Buy Sales - Sums set aside for debt repayment	£2.80	£1.20	£1.40	£2.0m	£2.3m
- Retained 1-4-1 receipts (for new build)	£0.5	£0.70	£0.30	£2.9m	£2.9m
HRA PWLB loan borrowings	£102.00	£100.00	£100.00	£100.0m	£100.0m

Major Works Commitment Approved 2024/25

Major Works budget for 2024/25	
Electrical Rewires	240
Kitchens & bathrooms	2,000
Boiler and central heating	1,695
External Works Programme	
Replacement windows and doors	850
Replacement Fire Doors	450
Replacement roofing, chimneys and rainwater goods, (gutters and downpipes)	3,015
External wall finishes	1,083
Total Special Works budget in 2023/24	9,333

Summary of 30 year forecast as of February 2024

	1	2	3	4	5
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'	£'000'
<u>Income</u>					
Rent Income (net of voids)	(18,780)	(20,187)	(21,180)	(21,888)	(22,282)
Other Income	(528)	(560)	(572)	(583)	(595)
Investment Income	(1,734)	(1,220)	(429)	(191)	(131)
	(21,042)	(21,967)	(22,181)	(22,662)	(23,008)
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Supervision & Management	5,927	6,262	6,388	6,515	6,646
New developments	768	1,273	1,125	1,235	0
Repayment of PWLB Debt/new borrowings	0	0	0	2,000	0
Less aside from RTB receipts	0	0	0	-2,500	0
<u>Housing repairs</u>					
Cyclical Repairs	652	653	671	689	708
Responsive Repairs	797	812	835	857	881
Void Repairs	752	752	772	793	815
Disabled Adaptations	200	200	206	211	217
Major works	8,754	12,729	11,348	9,148	10,535
Capital charges	3,379	3,379	3,379	3,358	3,358
	21,227	26,060	24,723	22,308	23,161
<u>Net (Surplus)/deficit</u>	185	4,092	2,542	(354)	153
Capital Expenditure	1,829	7,940	10,128	4,052	1,067
Opening Balance 1 April	(37,665)	(35,651)	(23,619)	(10,949)	(7,251)
Turn in year	2,014	12,032	12,670	3,698	1,220
Closing Balance 31 March	(35,651)	(23,619)	(10,949)	(7,251)	(6,032)

HRA 30 year forecast February 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure - Revenue	21,227	26,060	24,723	22,308	23,161	23,655	24,163	24,683	25,136	26,033	26,594	27,965	28,578	29,657	20,625
Expenditure - Capital	1,829	7,940	10,128	4,052	1,067	1,136	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
	23,056	34,000	34,851	26,360	24,228	24,791	24,213	24,733	25,186	26,083	26,644	28,015	28,628	29,707	20,675
Income	(21,042)	(21,967)	(22,181)	(22,662)	(23,008)	(24,275)	(25,038)	(25,512)	(25,994)	(26,480)	(26,967)	(27,451)	(27,932)	(28,413)	(29,014)
(Surplus) / Deficit	2,014	12,032	12,670	3,698	1,220	517	(825)	(779)	(808)	(397)	(323)	564	695	1,294	(8,339)
Opening Balance	(37,665)	(35,651)	(23,619)	(10,949)	(7,251)	(6,032)	(5,515)	(6,340)	(7,119)	(7,927)	(8,324)	(8,647)	(8,083)	(7,388)	(6,094)
Closing balance	(35,651)	(23,619)	(10,949)	(7,251)	(6,032)	(5,515)	(6,340)	(7,119)	(7,927)	(8,324)	(8,647)	(8,083)	(7,388)	(6,094)	(14,433)

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	2038/39	2039/40	2040/41	2041/42	2042/43	2043/44	2044/45	2045/46	2046/47	2047/48	2048/49	2049/50	2050/51	2051/52	2052/53
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure - Revenue	25,791	26,217	26,653	39,937	31,632	32,243	32,869	33,510	29,887	31,582	32,192	32,817	33,457	31,999	32,451
Expenditure - Capital	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
	25,841	26,267	26,703	39,987	31,682	32,293	32,919	33,560	29,937	31,632	32,242	32,867	33,507	32,049	32,501
Income	(29,690)	(30,320)	(30,967)	(31,468)	(31,927)	(32,505)	(33,094)	(33,586)	(34,253)	(34,974)	(35,693)	(36,429)	(37,181)	(37,973)	(38,812)
(Surplus) / Deficit	(3,849)	(4,054)	(4,264)	8,519	(245)	(213)	(175)	(25)	(4,316)	(3,342)	(3,452)	(3,562)	(3,674)	(5,924)	(6,311)
Opening Balance	(14,433)	(18,283)	(22,337)	(26,600)	(18,081)	(18,326)	(18,538)	(18,713)	(18,739)	(23,055)	(26,397)	(29,849)	(33,410)	(37,084)	(43,008)
Closing balance	(18,283)	(22,337)	(26,600)	(18,081)	(18,326)	(18,538)	(18,713)	(18,739)	(23,055)	(26,397)	(29,849)	(33,410)	(37,084)	(43,008)	(49,319)

Standing Order 42

Consultation with Appropriate Chair and Vice-Chair for Urgent Action to be Taken Under Standing Order 42

To (Chair & Vice Chair):	Housing
Relevant Committee:	Housing
Date:	31 January 2024
Report Author:	Maggie Ward
Report Title:	<u>Request for additional temporary resources in Housing Technical Services</u>
SO42 Proforma Number:	1030

1. Synopsis of report	Request to employ a one-year additional Housing Maintenance Inspector to deal with Damp and Mould cases and a one-year upgrade for one Housing Maintenance Inspector from grade 9 to 10 to assist with contract monitoring on the MCP Repairs and Void Contract. This is onerous due to contractor failing to meet the terms of the contract and being served with an Improvement Notice.
2. Reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision.	Both these resources need to be deployed as soon as possible to meet our legal responsibilities and provide effective financial and quality management of the contracted repairs service.
3. Recommendation(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Approval for the creation of a one-year Damp and Mould Inspector position utilising savings from vacant posts to meet statutory responsibilities II. Approval of a one-year secondment of a Housing Maintenance Inspector to a Senior Housing Maintenance Inspector utilising saving from vacant posts
4. Context of report	The increased demands currently being placed upon the Technical Services section are beyond the capacity of existing resources. The combination of additional focus on social housing and poor performance of our contractor means that in order to provide the correct level of service to residents and effective contract management additional resources need to be deployed for a year to stabilise the Council's position
5. Report	<p>Request to employ additional temporary resources within Housing Technical Services utilising the savings from vacant posts.</p> <p>The Interim Corporate Head of Housing reviewed performance on Damp and Mould, and we are not able to provide the response level required without adversely affecting other service delivery. This is an area of specific scrutiny by the Regulator but without this it would be an urgent priority in all cases to respond quickly and effectively.</p> <p>The Housing Department does have disrepair cases which are costly, not the levels of compensation we are paying but their legal fees.</p> <p>We do not have a major issue with damp and mould in our stock in terms of properties with system and/or structure failings however like all social landlords we are receiving increased reports for a number of reasons:</p>

- Solicitors widely advertising and canvassing social housing tenants
- Surrey Towers Ring Beam
- Age of windows and doors, not always a negative as actually provide ventilation but cause heat loss. (contract in place)
- Age of boilers – inefficient (a program is in place)
- Cost of heating
- Change in expectation of heating by residents and no ventilation
- Overcrowding of homes (not just people but furniture and general possessions) lack of air circulation

The initial diagnosis and specification need to be completed by someone who will then oversee the works and monitor the property to ensure it is remedied, working with the tenant to understand the causes and seek solutions to the person-centred causes in tandem with works. We can have two identical properties side by side and one has a problem, so it is not simply a structural issue.

The reactive repairs team has one vacancy which has now been filled but the recruit will require induction and with the contract issues with MCP causing significant additional work the Repairs Manager does not have adequate resources to deploy and therefore we are at risk of a damp and mould case not being properly addressed and potentially other issues.

Technical Services management are responsible for performance on this but unless they have additional and specific resources it is going to be difficult to hold them accountable and to set and meet appropriate response targets.

In addition to this post a one-year temporary increase to a Housing Inspector to a senior role from grade 9 to 10 (to be ringfenced to the two grade 9 officers in post) so that they can undertake some of the contract checking which the Repairs Manager is spending the majority of his time on. This work will partly involve checking the works ordered by the contractor for correct coding which invariable leads to reduction in invoices. There is a backlog of this work as the interface between the new contractor and RBC was not in place at the start of the contract.

Financing the post

Savings on Corporate Head salary for minimum of 6 months = £55,960
 Additional D&M Inspector on grade 9, £1,997 to £35,508 = £44,740 (+ 26% on costs)
 Temporary uplift for one Inspector on grade 9 to 10 difference of £4,934

£44,740
4,934

Cost of £49, 674 for additional post / grade so no actual growth in this.

This is a significant area of compliance; new legislation is likely to impose short response times and we have a responsibility to ensure tenants are not living with damp and mould. These additional resources are essential in order to embed a satisfactory approach at a time when the small team is already overstretched.

6. Policy framework implications

The Council has an approved Damp and Mould policy which commits to timescales we will be unable to achieve without additional resources

7. **Financial and Resource implications (where practicable)**

Resource implications of suggested course of action: - Figures from Accountancy

Proposed

Post No.	Post	Hours	Salary £	Comments
	Inspector Temp uplift	10	37	37,466 mid grade
	Additional D&M Temp - 12 months	9	37	33,753 mid grade
			71,219	
		On-costs	20,297	
			<u>91,516</u>	

Summary	£
Current costs	91,498
Proposed costs	<u>91,516</u>
Additional Cost	- 17

8. **Legal implications**

No implications for recruiting additional resources but potential implications of failing to meet our landlord duties

9. **Equality implications**

None identified

10. **Other implications (Environmental/Biodiversity/Sustainability must be addressed)**

Addressing Damp and Mould in properties will bring a number of benefits including improved heat management and reduced carbon emissions.

11. **Background papers**

None

12. **Chief Officer(s) Decision**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

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 their authorised representatives

.....Assistant Chief Executive (Place) P Turner emailed 05/02/24.....

13. **Assistant Chief Executive – Section 151 Officer (if not applicable, please state)**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

Signature(s) and position(s) of
Assistant Chief Executive – Section 151 Officer or their authorised representative



NB: this must include the Assistant Chief Executive Section 151 Officer or their authorised representative where the decision involves expenditure, loss of income, or future implications for budget or financial forecast

In this case authorisation has been provided via email and then physically signed 14.02.2024

14. **Chief Executive's Decision**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

Signature of Chief Executive

I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

In this case authorisation has been provided via email dated 01/02/24

15. **Chair and Vice-Chair Comments**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

In this case authorisation has been provided via email – Chair (Councillor M Nuti) 16/02/2024

In this case authorisation has been provided via email - Vice-Chair (Councillor J Hulley) 14/02/2024

I concur in the Chief Officer's decision

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

I have the following further comments:

The completed copy is to be returned by the Councillors to the Corporate Head of Law and Governance (Democratic Services) who will send a copy to the Chief Officer and report to the relevant Committee for information.