

Report title	Housing 2024/25 Service Area Plan
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Department	Housing
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

Please select one of the following and delete the remaining options.

- To resolve

Synopsis of report:

This report provides an update on the delivery of the 2023/24 Housing Service Area Plan and a summary of the Service Area Plan to be delivered during 2024/25 for approval.

The full proposed Service Area Plan can be found in Appendix A

Items identified as requiring budget growth have been included in the Council’s budget for 2024/25 to be presented to full Council in February 2024. Capital provision will require a further report to Committee to release the funds during the year as per the Financial Regulations.

Recommendation(s):

- i) Members approve the 2024/25 Service Area Plan for Housing

1 Context and background of report

- 1.1 Service Area Plans (SAP) are an essential element in achieving delivery of the Council’s Corporate Business Plan 2023-26 (CBP) and five related Corporate Strategies – Organisational Development, Empowering Communities, Climate Change, Economic Development and Health and Wellbeing.
- 1.2 The CBP describes the key priorities for the Council to deliver over the period of the plan. Annual SAP identify how the CBP will be achieved and is action-orientated, identifying resources required to deliver priorities and sets out where increasingly limited resources will be focused for the following financial year.

- 1.3 The annual business planning cycle for 2024/25 commenced with each Corporate Head of Service submitting any planned activity for the next Financial Year which requires revenue or capital growth for review.
- 1.4 Growth bids and associated business cases were taken to Corporate Management Committee as part of the MTFS report in December 2023. Subsequently these have been incorporated into the budgets for 24/25 being presented to the Housing Committee (HRA) and/or Corporate Management Committee (General Fund) in January 2024 and Full Council in February 2024. Therefore revenue growth presented in the report will have all the relevant approvals in place to allow any works to begin. Capital growth requests approved as part of budget setting will be provisional in the budget for 24/25. Committee approval will be required to drawdown on provisional capital funds prior to a capital scheme proceeding.
- 1.5 When the CBP was set, a total of 194 actions and activities were identified from the associated 5 corporate strategies. Of these, SAPs for 2023/24 included 128 for delivery during the year. The remaining 33 CBP activities are therefore a source of planned activities to be selected for delivery in 25/26.
- 1.6 Service Area Plans also include service-specific planned activity that does not require growth and may not be an activity identified as part of the CBP. For example, where legislation or the regulatory framework has been revised, in which the service operates and needs to be compliant with.
- 1.7 Activities that are required to be delivered as part of the Council's Savings Programme are also included in relevant Service Area Plans.
- 1.8 Service Area Plans also include a Mission Statement to document a narrative of the service area's current position and its direction of travel over the period of the Corporate Business Plan, and a summary of each of the teams that form the service area and the core tasks they deliver.
- 1.9 To ensure a 'golden thread' between Service Area Plans and team and individual plans, Corporate Heads of Service will use the planned activity to set team and individual objectives for 24/25.
- 1.10 Progress against delivery of activities detailed in Service Area Plans forms part of Corporate Performance reporting facilitated by the Project Management Office. Progress of delivery of activities is monitored through Quarterly review meetings with Corporate Heads of Service and subject to regular reporting.
- 1.11 Service Area Plans go to their relevant service committee for approval prior to final approval sought from Corporate Management Committee in March 2024 approving the Corporate Action Plan (which is an amalgamation of all the plans for the year).

2 Key Achievements in 2023/24.

- 2.1 The Service Area Plan 2023/24 contained 22 priorities many of which are multiyear and include Corporate objectives. A number of major projects to address these priorities were started or progressed:
 - Installation of new Fire Doors in Surrey Towers (completed other than one property)
 - Undertake a tenant survey to enable the service to report on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Survey completed
 - Phase 3 of the Upgrade to the NEC Housing System – ongoing

- Review the 2016 Runnymede Tenancy Agreement (review completed Preliminary Notice of Variation to be issued in January to commence consultation)
- Procured a Multi-discipline consultancy for RIBA stages 1 to 3 for the Parkside regeneration project
- Respond to the cost of living squeeze through discretionary assistance - ongoing
- Minimise the time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation – ongoing but challenging in the current housing market
- Improvement of the condition of the Independent Retirement Living Schemes
- Consultants procured and designed and costed report to be provided early in 2024
- Introduce a Tenant Incentive Scheme – Downsizing Incentives implemented further work ongoing
- Minimise the number of Council owned Homes within Runnymede that are non-decent – Planned programme underway
- Accreditation of the Income service (work has been completed on this and an assessment by the accreditation organisation will take place in before the end of the financial year
- Establish a centralised Systems and Revenues team to drive the IT strategy and increase income to the HRA – 5 posts filled and 2 vacancies to recruit to.

2.2 Of the 22, 3 are completed and 1 will be completed prior to the end of the financial year (March 2024)

2.3 The following projects will span a number of annual Service Area Plans; most are ongoing or will be commenced next financial year.

- Development of a Council Heating Plan to transition away from gas
- Reduction of waste to landfill
- Building Safety Act Fund
- All new homes to meet EPC A rating
- Conduct a Tree Survey on HRA land
- NEC Housing Phase 3
- Refresh to 2016 Tenancy Agreement
- Cost of Living Response
- Local Paths Investment
- Replacement of IRL Boilers where required
- Introduce a Tenant Incentive Scheme if approved
- Tenants Handbook Refresh
- Tenant Engagement Accreditation
- Project to provide Improvements to the Independent Retirement Living stock
- Continue to Identify and address non-decent Homes
- Ensure Rough Sleeping is addressed and kept to a minimum
- Seek to minimise the time homeless households spend in Temp Accommodation
- Financial Inclusion

2.4 The full Housing Service Area Plan can be found in Appendix 1. A summary is provided below.

2.5 Service Area Mission Statement:

- *We are committed to continuous improvement of the housing services we provide – be that support for homeless households, the allocation of social housing, management of our own properties, our repairs service, the provision of adaptations, improvements to Council owned properties etc.*

- *We aim to provide quality, empathetic and compassionate housing services. We want to get services right first time and put things right as quickly as possible if they go wrong.*
- *We want to build trust by listening more to the views of service users and by being clear about what we can and cannot deliver.*
- *We are delivering on many of the objectives in our corporate strategies – specifically in relation to climate change, health and wellbeing and community empowerment.*

2.6 Other key areas of work in 2024/25:

- RIBA Stage 3 for Parkside Regeneration
- Holly Close Housing Scheme (RIBA stages 1 to 3)
- Dunkirk housing Scheme (RIBA stages 1 to 3)
- Guildford Road Housing Scheme (acquisition)
- Ruxbury Road Housing Scheme (acquisition)
- Review Allocations Scheme
- Implement the contract management framework.
- Roll out of the Quality Management Framework
- Tender a contract for Estate Services
- Embed recharge collection within NEC

3 Policy framework implications

3.1 This Plan supports the delivery of the Corporate Business Plan.

3.2 Specifically, those actions arising from Corporate Strategies that will be addressed in delivering the Service Plan can be seen in the Planned Activity dashboard in Appendix 1 in the table list titled Corporate Business Plan activities.

4 Resource implications

4.1 No growth has been put forward for 24/25

4.2 These activities have been incorporated into the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the Council's budget for 2024/25. Capital schemes will require relevant committee approval for the release of funds for the schemes to progress.

5 Legal implications

5.1 No direct legal implications identified as a result of this report.

5.2 Where there are contractual or other legal implications linked to any of the proposed areas of work, full consideration of these, working with colleagues in Law and governance, will be undertaken.

6 Equality implications

6.1 No direct equality implications identified as a result of this report.

6.2 Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for relevant activities and projects being delivered as part of this plan. This will ensure that any equality implications are identified and addressed before new initiatives are introduced.

7 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 No direct environmental/ sustainability/ biodiversity implications arising as a result of this report.
- 7.2 For all planned activity, consideration will be given to environmental, sustainability and biodiversity implications, in support of the Council's commitment to climate change and its Climate Change Strategy. Planned activity from across the organisation that supports climate change will be reported to Members regularly during the year.
- 7.3 A number of actions within the Housing Service Area Plan 2023/24 seek to address environmental/sustainability issues. They are included within the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

They include: -

- New homes will be built to an EPC rating of A
- Develop a heating plan to help the service transition away from gas
- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill

8 Risk implications

- 8.1 The Service Risk Register has been reviewed for factors that may impact service delivery in 24/25. Risks have been identified, categorised and scored and any risks that score above the Risk Threshold as set out in the Risk Management Framework are reviewed by CLT to be included in the Corporate Risk Register. Planned activity in service area plans may include actions required to mitigate these risks.
- 8.2 Without approved annual Service Area Plans, there is a risk that is a lack of clarity and prioritisation of activity and resources to enable delivery of the CBP.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 The Service Area Plan presented supports the delivery of the Council's CBP and associated corporate strategies.
- 9.2 The SAP sets out the Council's ambition in delivering more, different and better as an organisation, an aspiration supported by Members and Officers alike.
- 9.3 However, it is important to note that these ambitions will have to be considered against the financial position of the authority.

(To resolve)

Background papers

Housing Business Centre Plan (Service Area Plan) 2023/24