



**NEWARK &  
SHERWOOD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Castle House  
Great North Road  
Newark  
NG24 1BY*

*Tel: 01636 650000*

[www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)

**Friday, 5 March 2021**

**Chairman: Councillor T Wendels**

**Vice-Chairman: Councillor Mrs R Holloway**

**Members of the Committee:**

**Councillor Mrs K Arnold  
Councillor M Brock  
Councillor Mrs B Brooks  
Councillor Mrs I Brown  
Councillor M Brown  
Councillor S Carlton  
Councillor R Crowe  
Councillor Mrs L Dales  
Councillor L Goff  
Councillor J Lee**

**Substitute Members:**

**Councillor Mrs G Dawn  
Councillor P Harris  
Councillor Mrs L Hurst  
Councillor N Mitchell  
Councillor P Peacock  
Councillor Mrs S Michael**

**MEETING: Homes & Communities Committee**

**DATE: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 6.00 pm**

**VENUE: Broadcast from Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY**

You are hereby requested to attend the above for the purpose of transacting the business on the Agenda as overleaf.

Attendance at this meeting and public access will be by remote means due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Further details to enable remote access will be forwarded to all parties prior to the commencement of the meeting.

If you have any queries please contact Karen Langford on [Karen.Langford@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.Langford@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk) 01636 655992.



## AGENDA

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### **Remote Meeting Details**

This meeting will be held in a remote manner in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

The meeting will be live streamed on the Council's social media platforms to enable access for the Press and Public.

1. Apologies for Absence
  2. Declarations of Interest by Members and Officers and as to the Party Whip
  3. Declaration of any Intention to Record the Meeting
  4. Minutes of meeting held on 18 January 2021 5 - 15
  5. Sherwood & Newark Citizens' Advice - Annual Performance Report 2019-20  
*The Chief Officer of Sherwood & Newark Citizens' Advice, Jackie Insley, will be in attendance at the meeting to present the report to the Committee.* 16 - 27
  6. Chairman's Report
  7. Forward Plan - April 2021 to March 2022 28 - 29
- Part 1 - Items for Decision**
8. Homelessness Prevention Grant - Strategy and Project Delivery 30 - 41
  9. Review of Customer Access Service Opening Hours 42 - 43
  10. Review of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 44 - 58
  11. Proposal for Public Space Protection Orders - Newark Town Centre and Sites in Balderton 59 - 75
  12. Health and Safety Annual Report 76 - 84
  13. Social Housing White Paper "The Charter for Social Housing Tenants" 85 - 90
  14. Customer Journey - Tenant Engagement Review Update 91 - 97
  15. Gas Servicing Access Arrangements 98 - 104

### **Part 2 - Items for Information**

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17.	Housing Service Compliance Performance - Quarterly Report	111 - 120
18.	Update on Refugee Resettlement in Newark and Sherwood	121 - 126

**Confidential & Exempt Items**

19. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider resolving that, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Homes & Communities Committee** Broadcast from Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 18 January 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor T Wendels (Chairman)  
Councillor R Holloway (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs K Arnold, Councillor M Brock, Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor Mrs I Brown, Councillor M Brown, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor L Dales, Councillor L Goff, Councillor J Lee and Councillor Mrs S Saddington

ALSON IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs L Hurst

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None

The meeting was held remotely, in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

### 89 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

NOTED (a) Councillor Mrs I Brown – Agenda Item No. 14 – Personal Interest.

### 90 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

That there would be an audio recording of the meeting undertaken by the Council.

### 91 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2020

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and to be signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the order of business on the agenda would be changed. Agenda Item 14 – Yorke Drive Regeneration Update would be taken before the Items for Decision.

### 92 DISTRICT WIDE HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2020

The Committee considered the report from the Housing Development Officer providing the findings of the Newark and Sherwood District Wide Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2020 and accompanying Sub Area Analysis Report.

A brief presentation of the findings of the HNA was given to the Committee by Michael Bullock, Managing Director of Arc4. This is to be followed by a detailed presentation at a separate meeting on Monday, 8 February 2021 to which all

Members and stakeholders will be invited. This will give Members and stakeholders the opportunity to scrutinise the findings, broaden their understanding of the housing market and needs across the District and, if appropriate, challenge the Consultant on the findings being presented to test the assessment's robustness.

The report explained that the District Wide Housing Needs Assessment 2020 and Sub-Area Analysis had been commissioned to ensure the Council maintains a robust housing needs evidence base to inform the key strategic housing, planning and economic corporate documents.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members did consider and endorse the findings of the Newark and Sherwood Housing Needs Assessment 2020 (HNA) and accompanying Sub-Area Analysis Report.

### 93 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported on an item relevant to meeting in January and therefore appropriate to update on flood resilience grants. The administration of the property flood resilience grants began in June 2020 and provides up to £5,000 per property to ensure that it is more resilient to flooding in the future. To date, the Council has processed and approved 39 applications. Of these, 11 applicants have now completed the works and the grant has been paid. Lowdham is the main area from where the applications are being received but grants from Girton, Egmanton, Laxton and Weston have also been submitted.

The Chairman then highlighted the continued challenges around coronavirus and lockdown, continuing to support residents in need: HART completed a further 25 CEV welfare checks throughout December ensuring support in place to access essential supplies. Also assisted with the distribution of 60 Christmas gifts to those in need, collected by a resident of Sutton on Trent. Having strengthened the Community Relations Team by recruiting two additional colleagues to progress objectives in the Community Plan and deliver on the HART response across the District.

Despite Covid, teams continue to provide services to tenants and residents across a number of areas – currently operating an “emergency plus” services on repairs and investment delivery to protect our trades teams and our tenants as much as we can by focusing our service on emergency repairs and essential planned works and external jobs that can be completed in a safe way.

The Chairman went on to highlight the progression of research with tenants to understand their satisfaction with our services to form the basis of our Tenant Participation and Engagement Review and using tenant feedback. Updating the lettable standard of our homes with a proposal coming to the next Homes and Communities Committee. This will enable reinvestment to some of the savings that have been created bringing the housing service in house and noting services our tenants want us to improve. Preparations are being made for bringing the grounds maintenance of our rented homes into the Council and working with tenants to agree how we will monitor the quality of this service.

The Chairman went on to inform the Committee, how it is vitally important we

understand our responsibilities – particularly around the regulatory framework of housing. To this end, a paper will go to the next Committee to talk through the themes of the White Paper. The Chairman then invited the Committee members to suggest topics for “bitesize workshops” where officers would talk about different aspects of the Directorate – to widen the Committee’s knowledge and help be a good landlord that puts tenants at the centre of our services.

94 FORWARD PLAN - FEBRUARY 2021 TO JANUARY 2022

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for February 2021 to January 2022 with the Chairman inviting Members to put forward any items they would wish to be considered by Committee at a future meeting.

One Member requested that adequate kitchen facilities were explored for consideration in a future homelessness report.

95 YORKE DRIVE REGENERATION UPDATE

The Committee considered the report from the Growth and Regeneration Lead Officer providing an update to the Committee on progress within the Yorke Drive Regeneration Project.

The Growth and Regeneration Lead Officer confirmed to the Committee that there would be a net gain of 190 homes within a mixed tenure scheme. The Committee were encouraged that this will be an area that people will be proud of and by supporting the residents going forward, leading to less anti social behaviour.

AGREED (unanimously) that progress on the delivery of the Yorke Drive Regeneration Project is noted.

96 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS PRIORITIES

The Committee considered the report from the Assistant Business Manager for Housing Repairs and Asset Management to gain approval to adopt new responsive repairs priorities introduced temporarily in July 2020 to assist the Council with managing our service during the early days of the pandemic.

The report explained that this change will provide a more customer focused, simplified service to our customers and result in shorter waiting times generally whilst maintain high levels of satisfaction with the service.

The breadth of repairs contained within the Priority 1 (P1) category had also been extended and were highlighted in section 3.2 of the report.

The Committee noted the efforts made and thanked the team.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee approved the proposal to move to the three priorities system.

- (b) at the request of the Housing Advisory Group, a further report will be brought to this Committee in six months' time to provide an update on the impact of this service change with regard to performance, tenant satisfaction, complaints/feedback and training completed across both Customer Services and Responsive Repairs.

97 HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING – SELF ASSESSMENT

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Housing Management to update on the results of the self-assessment of the newly revised and approved Customer Feedback Policy against the Housing Ombudsman Effective Complaints Handling Self-Assessment.

The Committee having approved the revised Customer Feedback Policy at the November 2020 meeting.

The report highlighted how the Housing Advisory Group on 21 December 2020 had commented as well as views of involved tenants also included in this report and the Self-Assessment.

The Housing Advisory Group had agreed the current process was too long winded but that it was important to keep a tenant perspective on complaints. The group requested a programme of communications to tenants to ensure all are aware of how to make a complaint, how to provide feedback and the process involved.

Feedback and learning from complaints should be reported to the Tenant Scrutiny Panel at suitable regular intervals.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members approved the proposals outlined in section 3.2.
- (b) Members approved the amendments to the Policy, principally to remove the tenant panel stage of the complaint process and for complainants to be offered the option for an involved tenant to be involved in Stage 2 complaint investigations.
- (c) Members approved the creation of a reasonable adjustment policy to support our equalities commitments.
- (d) the production of a communications plan be provided to promote the new feedback policy as outlined in section 8.2.

98 THE DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL (2020) – IMPACTS FOR NSDC

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection advising the Committee of the new duties required by the Domestic Abuse Bill (2020) and the specific requirements for Tie One and Tier Two authorities.

The report advised that the County Council is required to appoint a domestic abuse



local partnership board for the purposes of providing advice to the authority about the exercise of the authority's functions.

The report highlighted the implications for NSDC with reference to secure tenancies and victims of domestic abuse and homelessness.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members considered the implications of the Domestic Abuse Bill and how it will be implemented locally.

99 UPDATE ON THE DELIVERY OF THE SAFER STREETS INITIATIVE

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection to update Members on the progress made on the delivery of the Safer Streets initiative.

The report informed that progress is being made for which the district council is the lead involved with target hardening at Chatham Court, bicycle theft reduction including Chatham Court and improved secure bicycle storage for Newark, as well as redeployable CCTV for two areas as part of the safer streets initiative.

Chatham Court is to also have a Community Hub which will be provided within a vacant unit, planning permission is currently being sought for change of use. Partners such as police, Nottingham County Council and local support groups have committed to support the hub. It is expected to be available for use towards end of March.

The safer streets project is due for completion at the end of March 2021 and it is therefore proposed that a final report after completion of the project will be presented to the Committee in May 2021.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members noted the progress in the implementation of the Safer Streets project and;
- (b) to support the proposal to have a report at the completion of the project.

100 E-NEWSLETTERS

The Committee considered the report from the Assistant Director Transformation and Communications to propose a move from a twice yearly printed versions of the Voice, the council's newsletter, to an E-Newsletter format.

To incorporate within this move an alternative provision for tenants (previously a quarterly printed publication provided by the council's former housing management provider, Newark and Sherwood Homes).

The proposal was to not return to a primary printed publication (either for residents or for tenants) but replace this with an e-newsletter format that will be equally useable for both purposes, as well as a range of additional functionality.

The proposal was also presented to the Housing Advisory Group on 21 December 2020 and was well received, particularly with regard to modernising this communication channel.

Initial feedback included:

- a) A request for hard copies to be available in Community Centres and how we support people to opt in;
- b) How we might “push out” notifications to tenants that a new e-newsletter is available
- c) Further discussion on how we might be able to use the savings from this to invest in digital skills/equipment/connectivity for tenants.

The Committee discussed alternatives, noting that tenants receive quarterly rent statements in a paper format and additional papers can be included such as the tenants annual report. Feedback using this means to gain opinion for an e-newsletter or a printed version.

The need to engage with tenants, leading to more tenants becoming involved.

AGREED that:

- (a) the proposal to move to electronic E-Newsletters;
- (b) one paper newsletter provided once a year; and
- (c) to review in six months as to take up.

101 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY – ANNUAL DELIVERY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report from the Homeless Strategy and Safeguarding Officer informing them of the progress achieved to deliver objectives within the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024 and to inform of the findings of the Homelessness Review 2020.

After a jointly commissioned Homelessness Review was conducted in 2018 jointly with Mansfield District Council and Ashfield District Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council launched the Newark and Sherwood Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-24.

The report showed the activities within the first year to take the Council closer to eradicating homelessness and showed the ongoing commitment to support those in most need.

The Committee thanked the staff in providing the information in this report, again noting the request that adequate kitchen facilities were explored for consideration in a future homelessness report.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members noted the update on the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy's first year achievements and the findings from the Homelessness Review 2020.
- (b) also noted the partnership work that is being carried out to support the homeless strategy and frontline service delivery.

102 HOMES & COMMUNITIES REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2021 AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2020

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Financial Services comparing the Revised Budgets for the period ending 31 March 2021 with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period, based on meetings with Financial Services staff and the appropriate Business Manager.

They are based on eight months' performance information on the Council's revenue and capital budgets, including:-

- General Fund (GF) Revenue
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Capital Programme

The Committee were reminded that it was requested by Members at the Policy & Finance Committee during February 2020 that reports were presented to individual Committees, for noting, for them to understand the financial position of their Committee.

The Committee were presented with the report for noting and to be taken to the next Policy & Finance Committee on 21 January 2021.

AGREED (unanimously) that the contents of the report be noted.

103 2021/22 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET AND RENT SETTING

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Housing Projects and the Assistant Business Manager for Financial Services.

The annual report presented to the Committee on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would:

- a) provide the actual outturn of the HRA for the 2019/20 financial year (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020) (column 2 of Appendix A1);
- b) examine the proposed income and expenditure on the HRA for the 2021/22 financial year (column 4 of Appendix A1), in accordance with Section 76 (Duty to prevent debit balance on Housing Revenue Account) of the *Local Government and Housing Act 1989*;

- c) provide indicative amounts of income and expenditure for the 2022/23 to 2024/25 financial years (columns 5 to 7 of Appendix A1); and
- d) set rent levels and service charges for 2021/22 (with effect from the first Monday in April 2021).

The setting of the HRA budget and the approval of rent levels will allow the required time to notify tenants of proposed changes to rents in accordance with legislation.

AGREED (unanimously) that the following recommendations be made to the Council at its meeting on 9 February 2021:

- a) the HRA budget for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix A1 to this report;
- b) an increase of 1.5% (CPI + 1%) in the 2021/22 rents of all properties in the HRA as at 31 March 2021;
- c) an increase of 1.5% (CPI + 1%) in all 2021/22 service charges, except for the television (TV) licence costs payable by tenants of Gladstone House; and
- d) that the TV licence costs payable by tenants of Gladstone House in 2021/22 remain at £0.21 per week.

#### 104 HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager and Assistant Business Manager for Financial Services:

To seek feedback from the Committee on the proposed general fund revenue budget for the 2021/22 financial year (01 April 2021 – 31 March 2022) for those services which fall under its remit.

To seek feedback from the Committee on the scale of proposed fees & charges for 2021/22 for those services which fall under its remit.

To seek approval from the Committee for the 2021/22 base budget in Appendix A to be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2021 for inclusion in the overall council budget; and

To seek approval from the Committee for the 2021/22 fees & charges in Appendix D to be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2021 and Council at its meeting on 09 March 2021.

AGREED (unanimously) that the following recommendations be made to the Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2021:

- i. the 2021/22 base budget in Appendix A for inclusion in the overall council budget to this report;
- ii. and to Council on 9 March 2021 the 2021/22 fees and charges in Appendix D.

105 SEVEN HILLS HOMELESSNESS PROVISION VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee considered the update from the Development Manager and the Senior Housing Options Officer regarding the Seven Hills Homelessness Project.

The Committee were informed that potential bidders had been sourced during December as a precursor to the tender process.

The build would involve linking properties together by way of a connecting door (similar to hotel rooms) allowing for flexibility in room sizes to capture varying needs.

The Development Manager advised that tenders would be going out in late January with a return in March, awarding the contract in April and to start construction in August/September, with completion in April 2022.

AGREED (unanimously) that the content of the update be noted.

106 HRA NEW BUILD DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report from the Development Manager providing the Committee with the up to date performance of the HRA new build development programme.

The HRA Development Programme has to date provided 190 additional new council homes with a further 70 homes currently under construction. This is the largest single contribution of affordable new build homes by any single provider within the district during this period.

A Committee Member referred to 3.8 of the report and requested a breakdown to the numbers of types of properties in each area. The Development Manager to provide and circulate to the Committee a full breakdown of the flats, houses and bungalows.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee noted the current position and progress of the HRA new build development programme delivery and the financial performance thus far.
- (b) Members feedback their observations about the content and any further information that may be useful in future reports.

107 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

108 HRA NEW BUILD DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL SITE REPORT

The Committee considered the exempt report regarding the HRA New Build Development Potential Site Report.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Chairman

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

Document is Restricted

## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

15 MARCH 2021

### SHERWOOD & NEWARK CITIZENS' ADVICE – ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019-20

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform Members that Sherwood & Newark Citizens' Advice (SNCA) have achieved the performance targets for the commissioned Debt Management & Homeless Prevention Service to residents in the district for the financial year 2019-20.

1.2 To share Sherwood & Newark Citizens' Advice Annual Report attached at **Appendix A**.

#### **2.0 Debt Advice Service**

2.1 Within the annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council, Housing Options and Housing Management, the SNCA agrees:

- To provide a community based debt and income maximisation service to support customers and potential customers of NSDC's Housing Options Service and tenants of NSH.
- Deliver the service through appropriately qualified employees and/ or volunteers who meet the requirements of the Legal Aid Agency Specialist Quality Mark.
- To deliver the service from the CAB offices on Forest Road, Ollerton, Castle House, Newark and offices of NSDC, NSH and other partners, subject to agreement between NSDC, NSH and SNCA.
- Priority referrals will come directly from NSDC's Housing Options Service, Housing Management or self-referrals from individuals approaching directly for assistance who can be identified as households who may become homeless because of rent or mortgage arrears.
- Referrals may also be taken from other support agencies.
- To promote the service in the local media, community locations and through other
- appropriate outlets include digital media.
- Provide training and awareness raising sessions to staff of NSDC, which advise how to address tenants' debt issues and encourage referrals to the project by staff of NSDC.
- Provide awareness raising events with communities and other agencies to encourage referrals to the project
- Provide guidance and support to NSDC staff in relation to dealing with debt issues.

2.2 The provision of a specialist debt service is additional to the Core Service, which the Council provides a separate Discretionary Grant. SNCA have a trained caseworker team to deliver specialist welfare benefits and debt advice. Specialist debt advisers can talk through the options available to people based on their situation; help people to prioritise debts to make sure that the most urgent issues are dealt with promptly; help people to budget accurately to work out how much they can afford to pay and negotiate with creditors. This service is available Monday through to Friday across the Newark & Sherwood District.



2.3 The nominated SLA Managers for the Council and SNCA meet quarterly to review the agreed performance targets and outturns, which are provided below for 2019/20:

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
Total Number of referrals By: Referring organisation (priority to be given to those from NSDC & NSH) Location	270	503
Number of repeat contacts (within 3 month period)	Data Only	0
DNA Appointments	Data Only	127
Total number of individuals assisted By: Budget Advice Debt Casework	200	223
Tenure By: Social – Council Social – other RP Private Owner Occupier	Data Only	102 38 46 17
Number of homeless preventions (sustainable for 6 months)	125	104
Of the above, number of potential NSH evictions prevented	30	48
Total number of NSH individuals assisted By: Income Maximisation Advice For: Introductory Tenancies Secure Tenancies	Data Only	102
Total number of NSH individuals assisted holding Introductory Tenancies	Data Only	11
% of the above introductory tenancies sustained and successfully rolled over to secure tenancies without arrears due to CAB intervention.	Annual – 100% (Housing Management required to provide data)	
Total value of rent arrears managed: By: NSH Other RP's Private	£75,000	£135,433
Total value of mortgage arrears managed	£100,000	£405,732
Total value of other debts managed, such as Energy and Utility arrears and other debt managed	Data Only	£1,752,069
Training and Awareness raising sessions	4	2

2.4 Although this report relates to performance of the service in 2019/20, we are also mindful of the impact that the pandemic has had on the delivery of the service. Performance figures throughout 2020/21 indicate that the number of referrals has significantly reduced and therefore, the number of households assisted will reduce.

2.5 A 'Lockdown Lifeline' has been created by Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice which further explains the impact of the pandemic at **Appendix B**

### **3.0 Equalities Implications**

3.1 SNCA provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on his or her rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

### **4.0 Financial Implications – FIN20-21/8957**

4.1 The Debt Advice Service is jointly funded from the District Council's Homeless Prevention Fund (contributing 50% £25,000) and the Housing Revenue Account (contributing 50% £25,000) each year.

### **5.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee note the contents of the report, particularly the performance outturns for the commissioned debt management and homeless prevention service to residents in the District for the financial year 2019-20.**

#### Background Papers

Nil

For further information, please contact Cheska Asman, Homeless Strategy Officer on 655643.

**Suzanne Shead**

**Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing**

**Life goes on...**

**We're here  
to help**

**citizens  
advice**

**Sherwood  
& Newark**

Annual Report  
2019/20

# A View from the Chair

## Life goes on

### Positive Thoughts and Actions

Since March this year we have been living in unprecedented times, that are unpredictable as well as extremely stressful emotionally and financially, not only for us all in the service but to all our clients, facing loss of income, loss of jobs but also the loss of their friends and family.

I want to start by sharing not only mine, but on behalf of the rest of the Trustee Board our real heartfelt appreciation, admiration and gratitude for the commitment, in meeting the challenges faced daily. To all our team involved from our employees and our volunteers, who have and are going above and beyond in such trying times, we thank you all. I must also mention and thank our Citizens Advice partners especially Broxtowe and Ashfield for all their cooperation in partnership and trust.

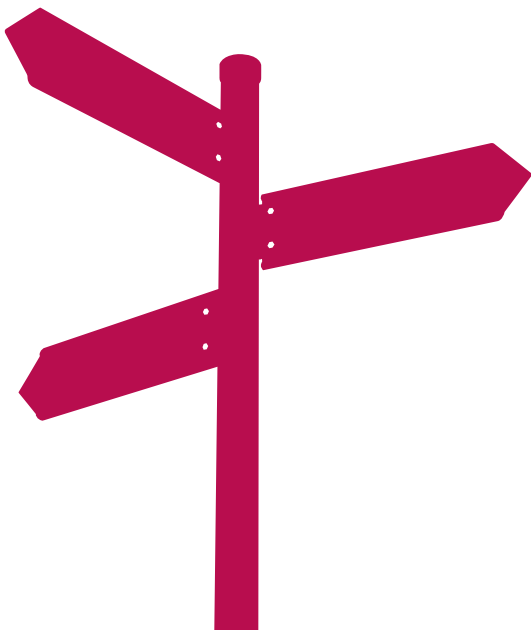
We have all heard the term the 'New Normal', I am pleased to say that due to foresight and vision from our Chief Officer and Trustees, along with willing partners in other local Citizens Advice, we were ahead of the game. The creation of

the shared service model was underway before COVID-19 and since COVID-19 it has picked up real momentum, and I must say without the cooperation and leverage of a shared service model it would have been difficult to achieve the level of services we have done to date. We have adopted new technologies Video, Chat with more to come that have changed the way we engage and support our clients, as they say necessity is the mother of all invention, this for us has been proven true. We will still need our face to face model, but will complement this with Phone, chat and video enabling our reach to support our clients in a much broader manner.

Finally, the ongoing demands on us as a service will continue to increase for the foreseeable future as our clients will require our skills and services to help and support them and their families through some tough times financially and emotionally. To achieve meeting these increasing demands we all need to pull together, support and watch each other through the hard times ahead, after all the quality of service is down to our employees and volunteers, it has now more than ever emphasised the real contribution to society and individuals we all make, through dedication and commitment.

It has been a wonderful year for us as a service in uncharted challenging times, and I expect that the teams will continue to rise to the further challenges ahead in the years to come.

*Neil Buckley, Chair*

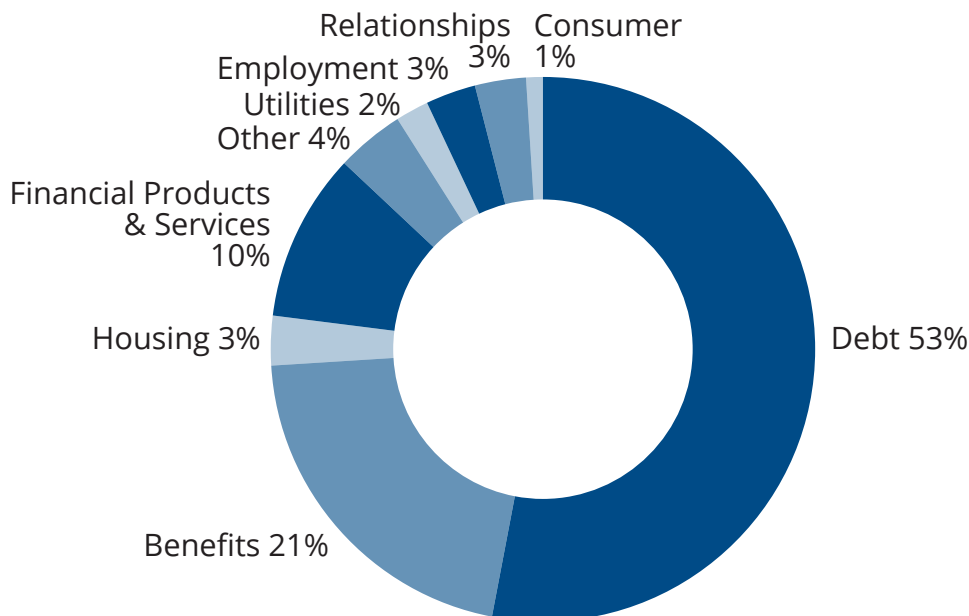


# How Did We Do?



**93%** of clients happy with our service

## And this is why people came to us



# Our Homelessness Prevention Work

As part of this year's report we wanted to inform on our work in partnership with Newark & Sherwood District Council which prevents homelessness across Newark & Sherwood. We employ a specialist debt caseworker who represents tenants of private sector landlords, social housing, and Newark & Sherwood District Council tenants along with people with mortgages.

The level of advice provided by our Debt Caseworker is for cases that require specialist intervention, representation and advocacy. We work in close cooperation with Newark & Sherwood housing officers and Housing Options service to deliver the following objectives:-

- Maximise the homeless prevention resources in the District and increase the number of homeless preventions.
- Create greater cooperation aimed at delivering the Authorities obligations under the Homeless Prevention Act.
- Provide an additional source of reported prevention through Citizens Advice's money advice caseworkers.
- Provide a housing safety net to Universal Credit claimants.

Demand for debt & housing advice has increased over the last 12 months and we achieved the following outputs during the year:

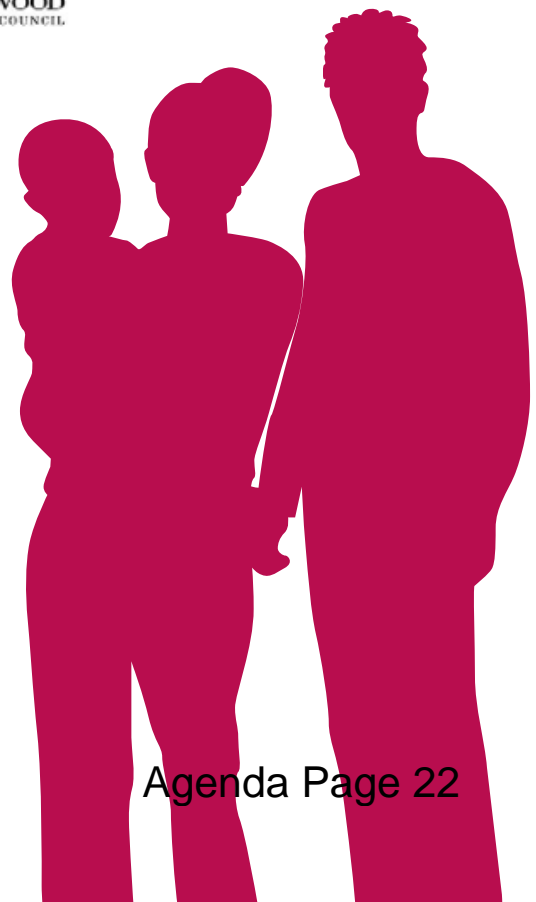
- 223 Individuals Assisted with budgeting advice and debt casework
- 104 households received specialist advice preventing homelessness
  - 48 evictions prevented
  - 56 households threatened homeless that we resolved

**104 households received specialist advice preventing homelessness**

- £59,796 in additional benefits gained for Newark & Sherwood residents lifting people out of poverty and putting money back into the Newark & Sherwood economy.

We helped people to complete housing related forms, navigate home search help and advice and discussed housing options with them. Our initial focus of importance is building relationships with clients, which helps an individual engage with the intervention on offer. This project enabled us to work in partnership and build strong links with organisations that provide services that meet a range of needs, including: mental health, physical health, housing, Local Authorities and other statutory services.

This in turn has helped us create a 'wrap-around' and holistic approach to homeless prevention. Clients were often assessed for more than their housing needs, with support provided to meet non-housing needs through this network of support.



# Campaigning for Change

Our Research and Campaigns Team seek to improve policies and practices that impact on people's lives. We use our client insight to:

- help us research issues further
- influence decision makers to change policies and practices.

Our work is influential both locally and nationally. It has contributed to changes in the way Universal Credit is administered, proposed legislation to improve the security of housing tenure and the introduction of energy price caps.

This year we set the following local campaign priorities:

## Homelessness

Changes to the legal framework around homelessness from April 2018 include a wider duty on local authorities. Along with our colleagues in Nottinghamshire we set out to see how this was working in the county.

The resulting report found:

- Local authorities in Nottinghamshire appear to be striving to work to the new challenges
- Housing stock is clearly an ongoing barrier to dealing with homelessness. Agencies need to work together to achieve the best outcomes for people.

In Newark & Sherwood, we have taken this information and developed a partnership with the Local authority to reduce instances of homelessness in the District.

## Mental Wellbeing in Newark & Sherwood

We made significant progress creating the case for additional support for those who experience mental health conditions. People struggling with their mental health are more likely to achieve poor outcomes as



consumers and service users. By testing new ways of working with this vulnerable group based on early intervention and partnering with Nottinghamshire Mind we were able to significantly improve outcomes and wellbeing for those struggling with their mental health. We have contributed to national campaigns that lobby for changes in the way service providers treat those with poor mental health.

## Universal Support Help to Claim Project

This project gives people the support they need to make a claim for Universal Credit, from starting an application to receiving their first full payment. The service is available face-to-face, over the phone and online through web chat. Clients can self-refer, be signposted into the service or be referred by DWP staff through a national referral route or by other partners through locally agreed routes. Everyone going through the service will be triaged to assess their individual level of support needs.

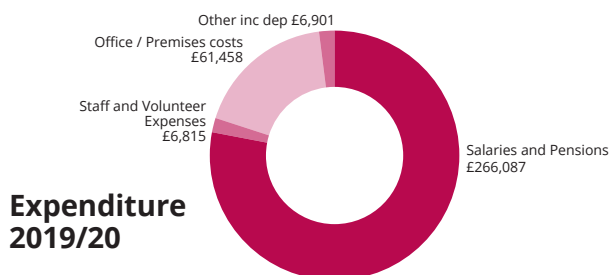
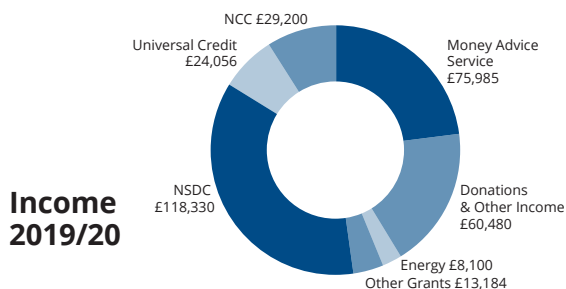
Those who can support themselves with some reassurance are helped to do so. More intense support will go to those who need it most. The service has received one year's funding from April 2019 to March 2020 with a further year's funding agreed from April 2020 to March 2021.



**More intense support will go to those who need it most**



# The cost of running Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark



- Our main funders for our generalist service include Newark & Sherwood District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. These run on 3 year cycles and we provide detailed reports and case studies to our funders to demonstrate the impact and value we add. We work in partnership with both Local Authorities to ensure we react to change such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Other funders for specialist work (debt, outreach and benefits advice) include the Money and Pension Service, and the Department for Work and Pensions.
- Newark & Sherwood District Council and Newark & Sherwood Homes also provide funds for our Community Debt and Homeless Prevention Project.
- We employ 11 staff and have around 36 volunteers.
- We are an independent local charity who rely on funders and donations to continue to provide a high quality advice service. None of our funding is ever guaranteed or taken for granted and we achieve high outputs and outcomes for our clients.
- In order for us to provide this specialist service it costs between £250 and £300k per year. The majority is salaries and pensions. It also consists of premises, office costs and the training of our volunteers to ensure the advice we give is accurate and quality assured.

## Looking forward

In March 2020 we had to make the transition to home working due to the Coronavirus. We worked swiftly to ensure residents in Newark & Sherwood could still access our service during the pandemic by switching to give advice remotely.

We continue to offer telephone, email and web chat advice. At the time of writing this report we are slowly phasing back to our face to face advice to help the most vulnerable and those that cannot access us any other way.

In partnership with Newark & Sherwood District Council, our Newark premises was one of the first Citizens Advice offices across England and Wales to re-open to limited face to face advice.

During the lockdown all of our projects continued including our money advice, homelessness prevention and universal credit advisers working remotely. We also continued our valuable work delivering our Energy Advice Programme and working in partnership with Collingham Rural Advice Centre to remotely support Collingham & District residents.

We dealt with hundreds of enquiries around housing, benefits, employment and debt. We are preparing ourselves for high demand once we return to normal as we anticipate people will be hit with economic hardships and multiple problems due to the economic downturn.

**This makes survival of our service in Newark & Sherwood absolutely crucial and we need to ensure our Charity has enough funds to meet the high demand.**

It is also a worrying time for us as many funders have appropriately prioritised Covid-19 responses so in the next couple of years access to charitable funds may be hard to secure.

Thank you to our dedicated staff and volunteer teams who with the support of our Trustee Board made the return to the office possible.



# How we change lives ...

## Benefits

**Janet\*** lived alone in her own home having retired some years ago. For many years Janet had worked in a physical job, unfortunately developing a number of health conditions which affected her mobility and caused her daily pain, therefore we assisted her to apply for a blue badge.

We assessed that Janet was also eligible for Attendance Allowance and successfully helped her apply. Janet was awarded the highest rate of Attendance Allowance and also got her blue badge.

The extra money Janet receives through Attendance Allowance enables her to employ a gardener and cleaner. This has made a massive difference to Janet's quality of life and at the same time created additional work for 2 other individuals...

## Consumer, Benefits and Energy...

**Adrian\*** came to our service distressed about a consumer issue and needed help with a refund for faulty goods. The company had closed down, only to discover that it had reopened under another name. Fortunately Adrian had paid by credit card and we helped him to successfully claim a refund under Consumer Credit Act.

During the visit Adrian mentioned that his outgoings exceeded his income and he'd been using savings to survive, causing sleepless nights. We identified that Adrian had an entitlement to Guarantee Pension Credit and Council Tax benefit backdated for 3 months.

Our energy adviser spotted that his latest bill was estimated, so we gave actual meter readings to his supplier resulting in refunding him over £400 and a reduced Direct Debit, alongside making a successful Warm Home Discount application for £140 per year.

Adrian's stress has been relieved by taking back control and no longer having to rely on savings to meet monthly outgoings.

## Money Advice

**Emily's\*** was afraid she would lose her family home having received a possession hearing notice for rent arrears, Council Tax arrears and non-priority debts. She became distressed in the interview, sharing that she had no personal income or financial support from her partner who was mentally abusing her and the children.

Emily agreed for Social Services to support her family while we offered practical help to deal with her debts. Due to her depression, Emily felt unable to attend court, so we completed the court forms, successfully achieving a suspended possession order on her behalf.

Following a request from Emily, we referred her to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and provided her with the contact details for Women's Aid. Social Services and the children's school continue to work with Emily and her family, working towards a positive outcome.

## Universal Credit - Help to Claim Service

**Derek's\*** legacy claim was ending due to receiving his state pension. To get help with his rent, the local authority said he would need to claim UC to continue. Derek, who lived with his wife, received disability benefits and had limited digital skills. We explained how UC would work for them and what their entitlement would be, helping them gather the required information and submit a digital claim. Derek advised us that the verification process had failed so we helped them resolve the issues to ensure the claim was correct for payment.

Derek and his wife were reassured to know what income they would have going forward and we were able to provide additional help with an application to Severn Trent's Big Difference scheme resulting in the maximum award.

*\*names changed to maintain confidentiality*

# Free, confidential advice. Whoever you are.



We help people overcome their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.

## With thanks to our main funders



**And thanks to our dedicated staff and wonderful volunteers without whom none of this would be possible.**



[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

Registered Charity Number 1112930, Company Number 5656961  
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN 617732



## **Appendix B – Service delivery due to Covid-19 Pandemic (February 2021)**

### **Lockdown Lifeline: Ensuring adequate support across Newark & Sherwood during the Covid-19 pandemic**

Coronavirus has had a sudden and unprecedented impact on people's jobs and incomes. Nearly 4 out of 10 (38%) households have reported lost income because of this crisis, with nearly 1 in 10 (8%) households reporting losing 80% or more. \* (\*Poll of 2,000 adults conducted on behalf of Citizens Advice by Opinium (carried out between 2-7 April)

At the start of the Pandemic in March 2020, we have had a 92% reduction in our volunteer numbers and reduced capacity due to people's caring responsibilities or health issues. This had a significant impact on the volume of clients accessing the service.

However In response to the pandemic, Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark quickly moved to remote working and successfully delivered substantial levels of advice by facilitating staff and volunteers to work remotely from home. Then with the easing of the lockdown it was evident that some beneficiaries were significantly disadvantaged by the closure of face to face advice services. It was therefore crucial that from July 2020, limited appointments in person were made available with appropriate COVID-19 hygiene measures in place.

Alongside paid staff, on average we have had 15 volunteers delivering our local services compared to 29 volunteers pre-COVID 19. Due to the confidential nature of our service personal laptops could not be used leaving us with a shortage of equipment. However we quickly utilised the laptops at Castle House and secured additional funding to buy new laptops which ensured we could get more volunteers remote working where possible...

In addition to our website traffic, people have been coming to us for advice by telephone, email and through webchat. Many people we help were already in very difficult financial situations before this crisis and new groups of people have faced a sudden income shock.

We have also rolled out a remote training programme for new volunteers in readiness for the anticipated increased demand going forward, once all restrictions are lifted. Access to timely advice and acting quickly will reduce the risk of large numbers of people falling into unsustainable debt, facing eviction, or losing access to essential services.

Despite all the barriers we faced from April 2020 and with a much reduced workforce, our team of determined volunteers has helped 2,887 people with 12,235 issues (1 April 2020 - 31st Dec 2020)

Breakdown of some of the issues:

- 20% of calls related to benefits and Universal Credit
- 54% to Debt (top issue council tax arrears)
- 10% employment (we saw a massive increase mostly relating to Covid 19 related issues ie furlough scheme)

Quality of our services - We continue to be monitored and assessed monthly by Citizens Advice on Quality of Advice. As we have shifted to mainly to telephone and email advice, capturing profile data from clients is more difficult as many clients when seeking advice, wish to remain anonymous.

**Forward Plan of Homes & Communities Committee Decisions from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

This document records some of the items that will be submitted to the Homes & Communities Committee over the course of the next twelve months.

These committee meetings are open to the press and public.

Agenda papers for Homes & Communities Committee meetings are published on the Council’s website 5 days before the meeting <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/agendas/>. Any items marked confidential or exempt will not be available for public inspection.

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Subject for Decision and Brief Description</b>	<b>Contact Officer Details</b>
7 June 2021	Yorke Drive Regeneration Update	<a href="mailto:Cara.clarkson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Cara.clarkson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Housing Services Integration – Projects Update	<a href="mailto:Suzanne.shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Suzanne.shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Review of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy	<a href="mailto:Alan.Batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Alan.Batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Community Engagement Strategy	<a href="mailto:andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Lettable Standard Project update	<a href="mailto:Caroline.wagstaff@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Caroline.wagstaff@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Commissioning External Partners - Service Level Agreements	<a href="mailto:Andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	CCTV Policy review	<a href="mailto:Alan.Batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Alan.Batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Annual Report – Community Centres (General Fund)	<a href="mailto:Andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Tenancy Strategy	<a href="mailto:julie.davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">julie.davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Annual Tenant Visits proposal	<a href="mailto:julie.davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">julie.davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Discretionary and Community Grants Programme 2019/20 & 2020/21 Performance	<a href="mailto:andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">andy.hardy@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Bi Annual Report	<a href="mailto:Helen.Richmond@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Helen.Richmond@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Update against Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment (complaints)	<a href="mailto:julie.davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">julie.davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	6 month ASB update	<a href="mailto:Alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Affordable Housing Delivery 20/21	<a href="mailto:Suzanne.shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Suzanne.shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Community Plan – Quarterly Performance Report Housing Services Q4 / YE	<a href="mailto:Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>

7 June 2021	Safer Streets Final Report	<a href="mailto:Alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Review of E-Newsletter take up	<a href="mailto:Deb.johnson@newark-sherwood.gov.uk">Deb.johnson@newark-sherwood.gov.uk</a>
7 June 2021	Update on Seven Hills progress	
7 June 2021	Tenants Forum – Together with Tenants	
13 September 2021	Community Plan – Quarterly Performance Report Housing Services Q1	<a href="mailto:Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
13 September 2021	Review of Allocations (CORE)	<a href="mailto:Julie.Davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Julie.Davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
13 September 2021	See the Person report	<a href="mailto:Terry.Bailey2@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Terry.Bailey2@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
22 November 2021	Community Plan – Quarterly Performance Report Housing Services Q2	<a href="mailto:Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
22 November 2021	Review of Responsive Repairs Performance on new priorities	<a href="mailto:Sally.SkipworthCooke@newark-sherwood.gov.uk">Sally.SkipworthCooke@newark-sherwood.gov.uk</a>
22 November 2021	Update on Grounds Maintenance service	<a href="mailto:Suzanne.shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Suzanne.shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Matthew.Finch@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Matthew.Finch@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
22 November 2021	Policing in Newark And Sherwood – Presentation from Neighbourhood policing Inspector	<a href="mailto:Alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Alan.batty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>
24 January 2022		
14 March 2022	Community Plan – Quarterly Performance Report Housing Services Q3	<a href="mailto:Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk">Natalie.cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</a>

## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

15 MARCH 2021

### HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT – STRATEGY AND PROJECT DELIVERY

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update and seek approval from committee members to fund targeted intervention projects to deliver the councils Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024, funded from homelessness prevention grants/reserve.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 As detailed in the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy – Annual Delivery Update presented to Homes and Communities on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The current five-year Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024 was informed by a comprehensive review of homelessness carried out in 2018 and subsequently the strategy was launched in April 2019.

2.2 As a reminder, the aims of the Strategy are to:

- Prevent as many residents as possible from becoming homeless
- Ensure that if anyone has to sleep rough, it is brief and does not happen again
- Help as many residents as possible to move seamlessly from one home to another without the need for emergency or temporary accommodation
- Provide a good quality service that customers are highly satisfied with

The objectives of the Strategy are:

- To improve financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homelessness, through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
- To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies
- To deliver additional supported housing and housing related support as required
- To increase the amount of private rental sector (PRS) housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies
- To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met, in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs
- To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness
- To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Housing Options
- To ensure services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated.

The strategy is framed around eight themes:

- Theme 1 Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness
- Theme 2 Responding to the shortage of social housing
- Theme 3 Supported housing and housing related support
- Theme 4 Working with the Private Rented Sector

- Theme 5 Addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness
- Theme 6 Reducing the impact of homelessness on the community
- Theme 7 Improving Customer Services for people who are homelessness
- Theme 8 Improving the data available to relevant agencies

2.3 The strategy includes a vision that the population should be living in, or can access, homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community, that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.

Central to achieving this vision is ensuring that homelessness affects the smallest possible number of residents and where it does; there is help available to quickly resolve their situation so that it does not happen again.

2.4 The table below provides an overview of two projects, which are currently funded through the Councils Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation to help deliver our strategy aims and objectives. The Council's Homes and Communities receive an annual update and scrutinise performance outturns – which are attached at **Appendix A**.

Organisation	Value of Grant 2020/21	Proposed continuation of funding to 2023/24	Link to Community Plan	Link to Homelessness Strategy	SLA Term
Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice – Debt Project	£50,000 (split between Housing Options and Housing Management)	£150,000	Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents	Theme 1 - Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness	2020/21
Furniture Project	£5,000	£15,000	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area.	Theme1- Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness	2020/21
	<b>£55,000</b>	<b>£165,000</b>			

*Note: synergies with the councils discretionary grants programme*

### 3.0 Proposals

#### Homelessness Trends

3.1 The Housing Options Team have remained very busy during 2020/21. There have been many complex cases including mental health, drugs, alcohol and offending behaviour. The numbers of presentations during this time has remained reasonably similar with 199 in quarter one and 212 in quarter two. Both of these quarters are slightly down on the same periods last year, 275 for quarter one and 273 for quarter 2 2019/20.

The Homeless Reduction Act has only been in for two years; therefore, we are no longer able to show comparisons with previous statutory acceptances due to the Act's implementation.

- 3.2 Reasons for approaching the service remain similar to previous periods – loss of private sector tenancies, family and/or friends no longer willing to accommodate and domestic abuse.
- 3.3 In addition to the day-to-day elements, the team have also worked exceptionally hard to deliver the governments 'Everyone In' programme in the first round of lock down. Nine rough sleepers were placed into temporary accommodation. Of those nine, one returned to his previous partner, four lost the accommodation due to behaviour (of which three to custody). Two had no recourse to public funds, one abandoned the accommodation and the last was successfully rehoused.

### **Rough Sleepers**

- 3.4 Through analysis of the Street Outreach Reports, the number of rough sleepers in Newark and Sherwood has increased. The Street Outreach Team carry out weekly visits to assist rough sleepers and submit updates to us, we also receive monthly street count reports, which show that in 2020, numbers have increased from zero rough sleepers found in January and March (note that the shelter was still open) to 2 in May and June and 6 in August and October. The last monthly street count reports, in January 2021 identified 1 rough sleeper.
- 3.5 This is not in keeping with the rest of the county, however, one of those consistently found was previously offered accommodation under 'Everyone In' but refused and another had accommodation available to him at Wellow Green but declined to use it and remained on the streets in Newark.
- 3.6 We now have our Winter Night Shelter Provision in place, this commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> November and we have placed twelve rough sleepers, two of which have been rough sleeping for some time. One has been consistently rough sleeping for at least two years and the other is nearing 70 years of age and has been homeless and rough sleeping periodically for at least the last 8 years.
- 3.7 As governance to oversee and ensure a successful outcome for as many as possible a Multi-agency Rough Sleeper Action Group has been established. The group meet fortnightly and includes partners such as the Police, DWP, CGL, housing, Framework (various services) and Public Protection.
- 3.8 The 2020/21 Winter Night Shelter provision has been adapted, due to Public Health Guidance. Current plans include a teatime drop in service at Newark Baptist Church, which includes a meal and support through a triage assessment, which will result in a referral for emergency accommodation if necessary. More than 30 individuals have made use of the drop in so far.
- 3.9 Emergency Winter Night Shelter provision has been arranged by utilising five void flats on Lincoln Road that will not be relet due to the Yorke Drive Regeneration Project, in addition we have block booked four rooms in a local B&B. On average eight rough sleepers made use of the Winter Night Shelter in 2019/20, therefore, we initiated eight self-contained units of accommodation for rough sleepers and one unit for Covid symptomatic or diagnosed cases.



### Homelessness Prevention Grant

3.10 Please find below an overview of the Homelessness Prevention grant allocation and reserve:

<b>31/03/2019</b>	<b>£455,881.25</b>	Balance b/f
31/05/2019	-£99,173.00	MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2019-20
31/05/2019	-£30,964.00	MHCLG HRA New Burdens Funding 2019-20
05/08/2019	£10,000.00	Trf to A10213 to pay Ashfield DC our contribution to Framework Street Outreach Service
<b>31/03/2020</b>	<b>£576,018.25</b>	Balance b/f
30/04/2020	-£99,173.00	MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2020-21
30/04/2020	-£76,239.00	MHCLG HRA / Prevention Pot 2020-21
07/07/2020	£6,000.00	Contribution to Ashfield DC for Framework Street Outreach Service
10/08/2020	-£10,000.00	MHCLG Rough Sleeper Funding
19/08/2020	£15,500.00	V13 Upgrade + SR Split Civica Quotation V1.0
Pending	£316,800.00	Committed and agreed via an Urgency Item as a contribution towards the NSAP Capital Project – purchase of the six Alms-houses.
Pending	£6,395.00	Additional contribution to NSAP Capital Project for surveys and contractor costs
09/12/2020	£5,320.00	Court Order
	<b>£411,415.25</b>	Expected balance as at 31 Mar 2021

The Homelessness Prevention Grant principles are to:

- Prioritise prevention activity;
- Carry out homelessness activities in line with the principles of the homelessness reduction act;
- Reduce or eliminate the use of emergency B&B, particularly for periods over 6 weeks.

An overview of additional funding through the RSI, NSAP, Cold Weather funding and Protect Plus is provided in Appendix B and C.

### **3.11 Proposals**

A number of funding proposals are proposed below that not only support the themes and objectives within the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy and its action plan but also the objectives within the Community Plan:

Organisation/proposal	Value of Grant 2020/21 – 2023/24	How will we deliver	Link to Community Plan	Link to Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy
<p><b>Starter Packs</b> We would like to enable households to set up home after leaving temporary or supported accommodation by funding grants to pay for starter packs of essential items, which will include flooring. If required, loans for additional items could also be made available.</p> <p><b>Why</b> One of hardest things for people that are leaving supported or temporary accommodation is to furnish their property; there are no currently no services that can assist with items. In addition, charitable monies are harder to come by and we need to minimise residents turning to high interest lenders or loan sharks (links to other proposals within this report)</p>	40,000	Furniture Project are willing to assist/work with a flooring specialist to supply and fit carpets	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area	Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness
<p><b>Welfare Benefits Advice Service</b> We propose to provide a Welfare Advice Service in Newark and Sherwood in partnership with Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice.</p> <p><b>Why</b> Citizens Advice Newark and Sherwood, as part of their post Covid Development Plan have identified a 92% reduction in volunteers who previously assisted with service delivery.</p>	120,000	Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice have an officer already in place with relevant skills but due to a loss of funding this service has been lost and the officer has been relocated	Improve the Health and Wellbeing of local residents	Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness

<p>Since 23rd March, 88% of issues relate to welfare benefits, debt or employment.</p> <p>The aim of the service is now to be the social safety net in navigating the welfare system and long-term plans are to fundraise for in house specialist teams.</p> <p>DWP State of the District report for October 2020: Those claiming UC in Newark Sept 2019 – 2342 Sept 2020 - 5540 An increase of 136%</p> <p>For specific ages 16-24 year olds Sept 2019 - 463 Sept 2020 - 1016 An increase of 119%</p> <p>Projected unemployment in Newark and Sherwood after furlough is expected to rise to 11.5% to 12% from the pre-Covid 4.5% (D2N2 Study).</p>		<p>within the service.</p>		
<p><b>Credit Union Co-ordinator</b> To contribute funding to employ a co-ordinator to promote Nottingham and Lincoln Credit Union (NLCU) in Newark and Sherwood</p> <p><b>Why</b> To ensure residents manage their debt and support any Employment and Welfare Advice Services we need to encourage long-term savings and affordable living, we can do this by providing and encouraging the use of an organisation with credit options that are acceptable and affordable.</p>	<p>30,000 (£5000 from Econ Regen historical funds)</p>	<p>A working group has been established to promote the service initially, NLCU will employ the co-ordinator</p>	<p>Improve the Health and Wellbeing of local residents</p>	<p>Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness</p>

<p><b>School Engagement</b> To deliver homelessness prevention and awareness in secondary schools</p> <p><b>Why</b> By addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness, particularly in schools can reduce the number of young people experiencing homelessness in the next generation, assist those living in poverty or children of families already placed in temporary accommodation due to homelessness.</p>	20,000	Broxtowe Youth Homelessness will deliver to all schools in Newark and Sherwood.	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area	Addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness
<p><b>Homeless prevention or tenancy sustainment</b> To assist young people with a child under 5 to manage a situation such as living in temporary accommodation to ensure future tenancy sustainment once moved on or to assist a family at risk of or threatened with homelessness</p> <p><b>Why</b> Officers have experienced waiting lists for families in need of support from Homestart while in temporary accommodation.</p>	24,000	Topping up existing funds to Homestart and prioritising through a SLA (note that if possible this will be linked to the work that Community Relations are doing to gain a presence in Ollerton)	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area	Addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness
Total Value	<b>£234,000</b>			

- 3.12 These initiatives support themes 1 and 6 and are being presented now to meet successful homelessness prevention needs. We plan to create working groups with partners around each theme and develop key work plans to meet the aims and objectives within the strategy.
- 3.13 SLT support the above proposals, **totalling £234,000**, Service Level Agreements containing performance targets and monitoring of outcomes will be agreed with quarterly performance meetings taking place with relevant partners.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 No further Equality and Diversity implications have been identified in addition to those already considered when the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleepers Strategy was completed and the EIA.

#### **5.0 Digital Implications**

5.1 There are no digital implications arising from this report.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications FIN20-21/9139**

6.1 The Homelessness Reserve was established to utilise, manage and control all government grant funding, specific to this initiative within the district. It is an earmarked reserve, which NSDC has built up over recent years, such that as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the balance on the reserve was £576,018.25. This figure is expected to reduce to £411,415.25 by the end of the current financial year, with the Councils contribution to the purchase of the six Alms Houses, other small items of expenditure, but then offset by the grant income of £185,412 received in the current year.

6.2 The above proposals, if agreed will be funded partly from the existing reserve and also from future annual grant allocation that the Council will receive over the next three to four years.

#### **7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 The table at 3.11 includes the alignment to relevant objectives within the Community Plan.

#### **8.0 Comments of Director(s) or Housing Advisory Group**

8.1 The proposals set out in this report are practical and will help to support services for those facing challenges around securing and maintaining a safe and secure home. The housing advisory group have also had sight of these proposals and support the allocation of funds, with clearly set out rationale. There are synergies with our internal housing service too around making links and better alignment.

#### **9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- a. That member's note that the report has been presented to SLT on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and support the proposals.
- b. Members consider the contents of this report and approve the funding proposals to successfully deliver the councils five year Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024.

#### **Background Papers**

The details of any background papers you have used in writing the report (note these would then become public documents available for inspection) or if none used write "Nil". Background Papers are not published with the report as an appendix.

Suzanne Shead  
 Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing

### Appendix A – Performance figures for Debt Project and Furniture Project

Provider	Performance Indicator	Target 2018/19	Outcome 2018/19	Target 2019/20	Outcome 2019/20	Target 2020/21
<b>Citizens Advice - Debt</b>						
	Total number of referrals	270	582	270	503	270
	Total number of individuals assisted	200	192	200	223	200
	Number of homeless preventions	125	133	125	104	125
	Of the above, numbr of potential NSH evictions prevented	30	33	30	48	30
	Number of Newark and Sherwood Homes individuals assisted	Data only	100	Data only	Data only	Data only
	Total value of rent arrears managed	£75,000	109,556	£75,000	£135,433	£75,000
	Total value of mortgage arrears managed	£100,000	341,114	£100,000	405,732	£100,000
	Training and awareness raising sessions	4	2	2	2	2
<b>Furniture Project</b>						
	Total number of referrals from NSDC Housing Options Team and Newark and Sherwood Homes	42	69	47	55	52
	Total number of referrals delivered for Housing Options Team and Newark and Sherwood Homes	38	66	42	51	47
	Total number of referrals received across Newark and Sherwood	167	155	150	150	167
	Total number of referrals delivered across Newark and Sherwood	158	151	145	143	161
	Tenure not provided	Data only	36	Data only	19	Data only
	Social Housing – NSH	Data only	136	Data only	99	Data only
	Private rent	Data only	21	Data only	8	Data only
	Owner/Occupier	Data only	7	Data only	9	Data only
	Other registered provider	Data only	24	Data only	5	Data only
	Number on waiting list (average)	Data only	27	Data only	29	Data only
	Average waiting times (average)	Data only	1-2 weeks	Data only	1-2 weeks	Data only

## **Appendix B - Overview of additional funding**

### **Rough Sleeper Initiative**

Funding has been successfully secured in Nottinghamshire under the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) for the last three years.

Back in January 2020, Nottinghamshire was awarded £836,916 additional funding by MHCLG and approval given to carry forward £355,397 underspend from 2019/20.

In addition to this £140,000, match funding was pledged by district and borough authorities (£10,000 each with our contribution coming from the Homelessness Prevention Grant) and by Framework (£70,000). Public Health continue to fund assertive Outreach Substance Misuse Workers to work alongside RSI funded roles; the value of this support is £79,000 for 2020/21. Allocated spending is explained at Appendix C.

Meeting have taken place to consider the fourth years funding bid, general ideas are to move more towards Health and Wellbeing this year, such as:

- Meaningful use of time;
- Rebuilding positive relationships;
- Peer mentors;
- Consideration of trauma or psychologically informed environments and the resulting impact on someone's life.

We have since been given assurance from MHCLG that we are guaranteed at the same amount of funding in year 3 (2020/21) and there will be a further announcement of an additional allocation in April 2021. Each authority has been asked to make a £10,000 contribution to the 2021/22 funding bid.

### **Next Steps Accommodation Programme**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government launched the Next Steps Accommodation Programme on the 18 July 2020. The £266M fund was made available to provide accommodation and support for people experiencing homelessness and was split into two streams. A short term/interim accommodation (£105m) revenue only fund and a longer-term move on accommodation fund (£161M), both to be utilised by March 2021.

On the 17 September 2020, the Council was advised it been successful in securing an initial £22,846 from the £105M short-term revenue fund to deliver its winter provision for rough sleepers.

The longer Term Move-on Accommodation fund is part of an overall £433m available to deliver 3,300 units of accommodation and is split into £130M capital funding and £31M revenue funding.

We made an initial bid to purchase the six former Alms-houses on Northgate, Newark to provide interim supported accommodation for those with complex needs who are rough sleeping or vulnerably housed, as detailed below:

<b>Costs for 'First Steps' Accommodation at Northgate, Newark</b>	
<b>Capital Dwelling Costs</b>	
6 Alms-houses	670,000
Additional works to properties (to reach appropriate EPC standards)	34,000
<b>Final Costs</b>	
Total Cost for 6 dwellings	<b>£704,000</b>
<b>Proposed Grant Details</b>	
MHCLG Contribution at 55% of total costs	<b>£387,200</b>
<i>Requires a 45% funding contribution from the Council/match funding</i>	<i>£316,800</i>
<b>Revenue Costs</b>	
Specialist Rough Sleeper Support Worker Post	£8,700 (2020/21) £35,000 pa for 3 years
<b>Proposed Grant Details</b>	
*MHCLG Contribution	£28,080 per year
MHCLG Contribution of the 3 year 8 week period covered by the bid	£4,320 (2020/21 8wks) £28,080 (2021/22) £28,080 (2022/23) £28,080 (2023/24)
<b>Total Revenue Contribution for lifetime of the bid</b>	<b>£88,560</b>

On 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020, we received confirmation from Homes England that, following further due diligence we have been allocated the funding, subject to entering into a contract with Homes England.

### **Cold Weather Fund**

MHCLG have made a £10 million Cold Weather Fund available to support councils get rough sleepers off the streets during the winter by helping with the requirements to provide accommodation that is self-contained. A bid was placed for our maximum allocation of £6,400 and we have since been notified that this has been successful, the money will be used to provide a continued winter night Shelter.

### **Protect Plus**

MHCLG have allocated a further £15 million to assist the ongoing efforts to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic. This scheme – called the 'Protect Programme' – will help areas provide additional support during the restrictions and throughout winter. Newark



Sherwood DC have been allocated £5000, however, following discussions with MHCLG Advisors we have submitted a request for £11,246 to cover the cost of an additional flat, specialist support to assist the higher number of homeless EU nationals to apply for settled status and to cover the shortfall in previous allocations.

### Appendix C – Allocated Rough Sleeper Initiative costs 2020/21

Provision	Provider	Costs
Rough Sleeper Initiative Coordinator	Framework	£37,200
Lead authority (1 day pw to administer the funding)	ADC	£10,000
Street outreach team	Framework	£500,000
CPN	Nott's Healthcare Trust	£61,141.50
Call Before You Serve	Derby City Council	£53,597.60
40 YMCA bed spaces (ADC/MDC)	YMCA	£100,237
Landlord liaison officers (3FTE)	N&SDC NCHA MDC	£80,183 + £37,500 personalised budget
Prison navigator	Framework (previously DLNRCRC)	£35,000 + £12,000 personalised budget
MH navigator	Framework	£35,000 + £12,000 personalised budget
Social lettings agency	N Galloway – ended June 2020	£27,884.60
Admin support	ADC	£15,000
New navigator team (4FTE) – 'Nottinghamshire Prevention and Resettlement Service'	Framework – started Aug 20	£143,3000 + £34,500 personalised budget Note this is the 12 month cost from start date
Outreach wound care nursing	Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust	£31,468
GP enhanced access	CCG	£15,000
CGL outreach	CGL (Oct-Mar)	£57,299.40

## **HOMES & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2021**

### **REVIEW OF CUSTOMER ACCESS SERVICE OPENING HOURS**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To review the opening hours of the Customer Access Service (CAS) contact centre and recommend alignment with the opening times of the main council contact centre.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The move to Castle House provided the Council with a perfect opportunity to review the times it opened to the public. Now, the return of the housing management to the Council together with the proposed merger of the two customer service teams provides a further opportunity for alignment.

2.3 The original Council opening times were the same as the CAS contact centre – Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5.15pm and Friday 8.30am – 4.45pm. These were revised to Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm.

2.4 The CAS contact centre remained with the original opening times of Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5.15pm and Friday 8.30am – 4.45pm.

2.5 The table below details the number of calls received during specific period since the new telephone system was installed on 16 December 2020 up till 31 January 2021. It clearly shows that the busiest times for telephone calls are between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Calls received during this period</b>	<b>Average number of calls per time period per day (30 days)</b>	<b>Average number of calls per 15 minute time period per day</b>
8.30am – 9.00am	110	3.6	1.8
9.00am- 1.00pm	2978	99.3	6.2
1.00pm – 5.00pm	2083	69.4	4.33
5.00pm – 5.15pm	19	0.6	0.6

#### **3.0 Proposals**

3.1 It is proposed that the CAS contact centre operating hours aligns with the Councils contact centre opening hours. This will provide our tenants and customers with a service which has simplified opening hours and does not cause any confusion as to when the service is open.

3.4 Out of hours, there will be no change as tenants who need to report an emergency will transfer through to Careline as they currently do.

3.5 The alignment of the opening hours brings the additional benefit of providing increased stability to the service. There is no requirement for the advisors to have an early start or late finish which means there is an increase in the availability of staff to provide a service during the busier times.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 The proposed alignment of the opening hours do not present any specific equality issues.

#### **5.0 Digital Implications**

5.1 The ICT business unit will need to make a small one off amendment to the telephony system to align the opening times.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications to this proposal.

#### **7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 No direct links to the Community Plan directly but contributes to the alignment of services.

#### **8.0 Comments of Director/Housing Advisory Group**

Tenants Forum on 10/2/21 - Agreed unanimously that the times should be altered in line with recommendations. They felt that tenants needed to have uniformity across all council services.

#### **9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

a) **The Committee approve the alignment of the opening hours.**

#### **Reason for Recommendations**

**To update Members on the small change in service delivery.**

#### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Jill Baker on ext. 5810

Suzanne Shead  
Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2021**

### **REVIEW OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report reviews the Council's existing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, which is scheduled to be reviewed every three years.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Council's existing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy was adopted in 2015 and ran for a period of three years, before being reviewed in 2018. A further review is now due.
- 2.2 The previous policy dealt with the changes brought about at the time by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014, which introduced a process of simplification of the existing legal powers. Previous legal powers available for tackling ASB had been reduced from nineteen to six and this remains the case. These powers are now established and embedded into the day to day work of those with a responsibility for tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- 2.3 Following the integration of the Housing Services back into the Council the policy review this year has focussed on ensuring that the Issues of ASB in the Councils Housing stock are incorporated within the new policy. Colleagues from Housing Services have been involved in the policy review.

#### **3.0 Content of the ASB Policy**

- 3.1 The core message still remains and is aligned with Home Office guidance that accompanies the legislation; namely that we will focus our attention on the impact that ASB has on victims and communities. Consequently the action that we take individually as a Council or collectively with our partner agencies will be designed with victims' needs at the heart of the decision making process. This element has been strengthened with additional content included on the use of the 'Community Trigger' process.
- 3.2 The policy continues to recognise the need to work in partnership with a range of agencies, both statutory and voluntary. It also recognises the role that the Bassetlaw, Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership plays in helping to address ASB across the district. The CSP reviews its priorities each year and it has this year identified ASB as a key priority to reflect the increase in ASB that has been generated during the covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.3 Section 4 lists the three policy objectives, whilst section 5 confirms the responsibilities of those working at the Council, including the responsibility of the Homes & Communities Committee to develop and adopt the policy.
- 3.4 Section 6 lays down the Council's commitment to supporting the victims of ASB and lists some of the actions we will take to achieve this. It establishes the options that victims of ASB or their representatives have for reporting incidents to the Council.
- 3.5 Vulnerability and safeguarding are covered at section 7 and the policy recognises the disproportionate impact that ASB can have on vulnerable people and the need to make

safeguarding referrals in appropriate cases. The Council's safeguarding responsibilities are often intertwined with cases of ASB. All staff involved in ASB casework are regularly trained in Safeguarding and how to make referrals to the appropriate agency.

- 3.6 In order to protect victims from harm the Council sets out its commitment at section 8 to take an "uncompromising approach to the initiation of enforcement action". In practice this means that we will be prepared to take the necessary enforcement action using all of the powers at our disposal aligned with the resources that we possess. We will also use our influence to encourage partner agencies to support and take action where it is jointly agreed to be appropriate. This section also takes account of the need for any action taken to be proportionate to the nature of the ASB and table one sets out some of the measures, both legal and otherwise, that we have at our disposal.
- 3.7 Section 9 sets out the Council's commitment to partnership working, listing some of the agencies and partners who we will work with and the benefit of working in this way.
- 3.8 Additional information on how to access and implement the Community Trigger process is set out in section 11.
- 3.8 Equalities are addressed in section 12 and the Councils' commitment to deal with hate motivated ASB or behaviour that is malicious in nature, offensive, or targeted towards a particular group of society is reinforced.
- 3.9 A range of consultations have taken place with partner organisations on the amendments to the policy. They include
- Nottinghamshire Police
  - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
  - Notts Fire and Rescue
  - Nottinghamshire County council
  - Victim Support
  - Housing Advisory Group
  - Housing tenants
- 3.10 The consultation comments have been reviewed and where appropriate changes have been made to the policy.

#### **4.0 Digital Implications**

- 4.1 None from this report

#### **5.0 Equalities Implications**

- 5.1 An equalities checklist has been completed and has determined that it is not necessary to proceed to a full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). This is because the existing policy is being reviewed and the changes made do not alter the principle aims of the Council around dealing with ASB. The refreshed policy recognises the disproportionate impact that ASB targeted against minority groups or certain sections of society can have and commits the Council to deal with such cases with a heightened priority. This can be viewed as a positive intent towards achieving greater equality within our communities.

**6.0 Financial Implications (FIN20-21/9158)**

6.1 There are no financial implications resulting directly from this report.

**7.0 Comments from Director and or Housing Advisory Group**

7.0 At the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the group felt the overarching policy was good and brought together housing within the wider council. The group recommended that Officers look at linked policies e.g. effective tenancy and estates management and recharges e.g. balancing leaving tenant damage to be at their cost versus essential repairs such as glazing that are a health and safety issue and a blight on the look of an area.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee notes the report and approves the adoption of the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy by the District Council for the period 2021 – 2024.**

**Reason for Recommendation**

**To ensure that the Council has an adopted Policy setting out its approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour.**

**Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Alan Batty ext 5467

Matthew Finch  
Director – Communities and Environment



# **Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**

**2021 - 2024**

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) is committed to reducing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in our communities as it recognises the damage that persistent ASB can cause to the stability, cohesiveness and health of communities that experience it.
- 1.2 Although ASB can be difficult to define because of its impact being perception led, the Council has set out in section three of this policy, the definition and general principles that it will work to when addressing issues and complaints about ASB. The perception led nature of ASB has also required the Council to acknowledge the possibility of unreasonable complaints being made and that in those circumstances an investigation may be halted.
- 1.3 The Council also acknowledges the disproportionate impact that ASB can have upon vulnerable members of our communities, the link it has with safeguarding, the need for effective partnerships to exist, and that our primary responsibility is always to protect victims from further harm or distress. That's why the Council is committed to working with partners to ensure all victims, especially vulnerable victims, are listened to and kept informed and supported during any investigation.
- 1.4 This policy also provides an overview of the action(s) that the Council will take to deal with ASB and what route a person can take if they are not satisfied with the service they have received.
- 1.5 We will not tolerate incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB). The Council will intervene appropriately where we can, and enforce matters relating to ASB when required. This approach will be made clear to all residents within and visitors to the district.
- 1.6 This policy will apply to all Newark and Sherwood District Council residents, their families and any other occupants or visitors. The same principles apply to our tenants, members of staff and any other persons working on behalf of the council.
- 1.7 The Council is committed to supporting tenants and leaseholders living in local communities to enjoy a quality of life which is not negatively impacted on by those who fail to meet the obligations of their Tenancy Agreements.
- 1.8 For those residents in council properties, there are conditions within the tenancy agreement in relation to anti-social behaviour and for those residents in council properties, enforcement may be taken against their tenancy conditions. This approach will be made clear to all tenants and prospective tenants.
- 1.9 Newark & Sherwood District Council has a responsibility to protect staff members whilst they are undertaking Council business. The Council will not tolerate anti-social behaviour directed towards staff and robust action will be taken against those that engage in such behaviour.

## **2 Policy Context**

- 2.1 The Council's current Community Plan (2020-2023) sets out the following vision:

*Newark and Sherwood already has much to be proud of. With its captivating history, beautiful countryside, characterful market towns, world renowned businesses and an enviable location*

*at the crossroads of the country's transport network. We want to do all we can to enable local residents and businesses to flourish and fulfil their potential as well as encouraging more visitors to enjoy all that Newark and Sherwood has to offer.*

*In order to achieve these, we will be locally focused and nationally connected - driven by what matters most to the people we serve and with a perspective and relationships stretching well beyond our boundaries.*

2.2 The Corporate Plan aims to achieve this vision through the delivery of seven objectives:

- Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to the local area.
- Create more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority.
- Enhance and protect the district's natural environment
- Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents
- Deliver inclusive and sustainable economic growth
- Continue to maintain the high standard of cleanliness and appearance of the local environment
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and increase feelings of safety in our communities

2.3 The ASB Policy directly contributes to a number of the above objectives and should be read alongside the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy.

2.4 The Council is an active member of the Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood Community Safety Partnership (BNSCSP) which brings together a number of organisations to work together with local people to build safer and stronger communities. The ASB Policy is a key document to help inform work carried out by the BNSCSP.

### **3 What is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)?**

There's no single definition of what is meant by ASB. For the purpose of this policy, the Council have adopted the definition applied by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014:

- i. conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
- ii. conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises,  
or
- iii. conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

3.1 ASB covers a wide range of unacceptable activity that causes harm to an individual, to their community or to their environment. This could be an action by someone else that leaves you

feeling alarmed, harassed or distressed. Anti-Social Behaviour may include but is not limited to the following:

**Noise:**

- Loud music
- Persistent, unnecessary or excessive noise
- Shouting or yelling
- Persistent Alarms
- Excessively loud or persistent parties
- Dogs persistently barking

**Intimidation and harassment:**

- Verbal or written abuse including via social media
- Threats of violence
- Damage or threats to damage property
- Keeping or failing to control an aggressive dog

**Environmental:**

- Graffiti
- Dumping rubbish and littering
- Dog fouling
- Fly posting
- Abandoned vehicles
- Vandalism
- Street drinking
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicles e.g. off-road motorbikes

3.2 What is not Anti-Social Behaviour and will not be investigated by officers of the District Council under this policy:

- Children playing in the street or communal areas
- Young people gathering socially unless they are being intimidating
- Being able to park outside your own home
- Parking related issues on a highway or shared access drive
- DIY and car repairs unless they are taking place late at night
- Civil disputes between neighbours, i.e. boundary disputes or disputes over shared driveways
- Reasonable day to day noise, i.e. children within a household, appliance noise,
- One off complaints about noise, e.g. parties

3.3 It is also important to acknowledge that some complaints about ASB can be considered malicious, vexatious, trivial, or unreasonable. Children playing in an area designed for play e.g. a skate boarding park or multi use games area, may fall within this category. Other examples may be someone having a one off event such as a milestone birthday party with some associated noise, a baby crying for attention, or a misplaced wheelie bin temporarily blocking access or egress. Although the incident may be annoying at the time, it is the role of the Council's officers when investigating complaints to decide whether the complaint is reasonable or not. An investigating officer will advise a complainant if they believe the

complaint is unreasonable. This is done because persistent unreasonable complaints can often be perceived as harassment by the subject and lead to a counter complaint being made.

3.4 The Council will also work together with partners to utilise the resources and legal powers we have to reduce environmental crimes, problematic street drinking, graffiti, vandalism and all other types of ASB. The Council will respond to an initial complaint within 5 working days

3.5 All of our activity to tackle ASB is intended to help make people in our communities feel safe, welcome and that they have a pleasant place in which to live, work and visit.

#### **4 Policy Objectives**

4.1 The three objectives of this policy are:

- To work with partners to support and protect victims of ASB
- To deliver a range of appropriate interventions when responding to incidents of ASB
- To use enforcement and legal powers with partners to target those who continue to cause ASB

#### **5 Responsibilities**

5.1 The response to ASB is provided across the Council and responsibilities are outlined as follows;

- **Homes and Communities Committee** – This committee has the responsibility for developing and adopting the Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- **Director of Communities and Environment** – Responsibility for ensuring that the Council’s ASB Policy is in place and is being delivered effectively. The Director of Communities and Environment also has responsibility for the authorisation of high level ASB enforcement including service of a Closure Notice.
- **Business Manager Public Protection**- Responsible for the development of the ASB Policy for the Council and authorisation of enforcement requiring court action. The Business Manager is also responsible for the monitoring of any raised risk ASB cases; responding to any complaints regarding the service and any Community Triggers made to the Council.
- **ASB Officers** – Responsible for dealing with all cases of ASB. They are responsible for notifying the Business Manager of any safeguarding concerns or any raised risk victims cases that they are dealing with. They have delegated authority to take forward any enforcement action not requiring court action. They have delegated authority to issue fixed penalty notices.
- **ASB Support Officer** – Responsible for an initial triage of cases reported to the Council and maintaining the Council’s database of ASB incidents. They will provide an initial response to incidents and support the ASB Officers in effectively performing their role.
- **Community Protection Officers** – responsible for supporting and assisting with community and environmental ASB. They have delegated authority to issue fixed penalty notices.
- **Business Manager Housing & Estates** - Responsible for the development of the ASB Policy, in line with the Business Manager Public Protection, and authorisation of enforcement requiring court action for Council tenants. The Business Manager is also

responsible for the monitoring of any raised risk ASB cases and responding to any complaints regarding the service to Council tenants.

- **Tenancy Officers** – Tenancy Officers are responsible for the day to day management of complaints of anti-social behaviour from or about Council tenants. Tenancy Officers have delegated authority to take forward any enforcement action in line with the Council's procedures, which does not require court action. If a case escalates and legal enforcement or a tenancy breach is required, the case is escalated to the **Senior Housing Officer** or Business Manager for Housing & Estates.

**5.2** There are other posts within the Council that have a role to play in reducing ASB **these are:**

- \* **Licensing Officers**
- \* **Street Wardens**
- \* **Environmental Health Officers**
- \* **Park Wardens**
- \* **Environmental Protection Officers**

## **6 Supporting the Victims of ASB**

6.1 In accordance with the principles of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the Council will give priority to supporting victims of ASB. To support the focus on victims, the Council will carry out the following actions:

- Refer cases to the commissioned service in our area for offering support to victims of ASB and crime. This is currently provided by Victim Care and is commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Set up multi-agency meetings as to identify how vulnerable victims could be best supported and take agreed actions;
- Train our staff to identify vulnerability and feel confident to take appropriate action;
- Work closely with other agencies to share information where appropriate so that victims do not get overlooked; and
- Conduct and record a risk assessment of victims to ensure vulnerable victims are identified at an early stage.

6.2 The Council takes the welfare and support of victims of ASB seriously and will continue to work with our communities to ensure that victims feel that they are listened to and supported. Complaints regarding ASB can be made online, by telephone, or in person and referrals are often made through partner agencies and services, e.g. Environmental Health, Police and Schools. These reporting options are important to ensure that victims can access the services they need as easily as possible.

## **7 Vulnerability and Safeguarding**

- 7.1 Whilst accepting that being a victim of ASB is distressing for anyone who is affected, the Council recognises that for some people the impact may be far worse because of an identified vulnerability.

Vulnerable victims are likely to be disproportionately affected by ASB and vulnerabilities can be caused by a wide range of factors, such as; isolation, a mental health condition, physical disability, age, or substance misuse.

- 7.2 Sometimes it will be necessary to make a safeguarding referral and cases that require this course of action will be additionally recorded as part of our corporate safeguarding procedures. Concerns about ASB and safeguarding often overlap which reinforces the necessity for strong partnership working.

## **8 Actions and Enforcement**

- 8.1 To deal effectively with ASB the Council recognises that it is necessary to affect a long-term change in people's behaviour so that individuals are able to make alternative behavioural choices that are more acceptable to the communities within which they live.

- 8.2 The Council will take an uncompromising approach to the initiation of enforcement action for cases of ASB in order to achieve this goal and protect victims. However, the Council also recognises that behavioural change can be achieved in many other ways and will therefore explore all reasonable interventions that could bring about the desired change in behaviour and this will always be our initial focus whilst maintaining the right to take enforcement action, where appropriate.

- 8.3 As a landlord, the Council understands the importance of making our neighbourhoods safer places to live and the need to address anti-social behaviour as soon as we can. The Council's tenancy conditions clearly state tenant responsibility with regards to nuisance behaviour relating to the tenant, household members and any visitor(s) to the property. We will ensure that tenants are made aware of their responsibilities with regards to ASB at tenancy sign up and any subsequent visits.

- 8.4 Housing management's focus with tenants of the council will focus on supporting changes in unacceptable behaviours. This is in line with the Council's duties towards preventing homelessness where possible. An incremental approach will be taken to tenancy enforcement in line with the Tenancy Agreement.

- 8.5 The Council will take an approach to dealing with ASB, which is proportionate and appropriate to the behaviour being produced or complained about and table one below outlines some of the main actions we will take. Whilst the Council will do all that it can to reasonably prevent ASB, at the same time it will take proportionate enforcement action and will do so at the same time as employing preventative measures if necessary.

**Table 1 – Potential Preventative Measures (not exhaustive).**

<b>Mediation</b>	Using qualified experts in mediation to try to resolve issues and come to agreements on a way forward.
<b>Good Neighbour Agreements</b>	These are informal agreements where neighbours agree to certain types of behaviour and can be a lever to improving relationships.
<b>Education within schools</b>	This can be on a range of topics including: alcohol and drug awareness, healthy relationships, inter-generational work, cultural awareness. These are run either by internal staff, external agencies or a mix of partners
<b>Referral to support services</b>	There are a range of support services available, some of which are provided by the voluntary sector.
<b>Warnings</b>	Often it is appropriate to issue a warning, which could be either verbal or in writing. Warnings would be issued by either an individual agency e.g. social landlord, or from the partnership.
<b>CCTV</b>	The Council has a network of monitored cameras that it provides to act as a deterrent for those who would commit acts of ASB. Evidence may also be collected on the cameras to support enforcement activity.
<b>Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)</b>	A more formal agreement which outlines expected behaviour and highlights potential repercussions if they are breached. ABCs are formally signed by the offender, the Council and Police staff.

8.6 If early intervention and preventative measures are not successful in resolving issues, then proportionate enforcement actions will be considered. Enforcement may be taken, for example, under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Action can also be taken under housing legislation e.g. possession proceedings. This would be done in partnership with the relevant landlord or managing agents. There are also sanctions under criminal law, such as Harassment Warnings or Public Order offences.

8.7 Court cases may be taken which can result in fines, the issue of court orders, injunctions, and even imprisonment. In all cases these powers will be used proportionately and only when considered appropriate. Whenever enforcement powers are used they will be in accordance with the principles set out in the Corporate Enforcement Policy. Generally, preventative measures will be pursued either before or alongside formal enforcement action

**Table 2 – Potential Enforcement Measures – People**

<b>Community Protection Warnings</b>	To stop a person, business or organisation causing anti-social behaviour which spoils the community’s quality of life. A Community Protection Warning can be issued by police or authorised officers of the council with delegated powers to do so. The officer must be satisfied that the behaviour has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, be persistent in nature, and be unreasonable.
<b>Criminal Behaviour Orders</b>	Issued within the criminal court whereby an individual has engaged in criminal and anti-social behaviour. Evidence based that has to satisfy the Court beyond reasonable doubt that the individual has engaged in behaviour that has, or is likely to cause, nuisance, harassment and distress to any person(s) and that an Order will stop the individual’s behaviour.
<b>Civil/ASB Injunctions</b>	To stop or prevent individuals engaging in anti-social behaviour. Issued in the County Court for over 18’s and in the Youth Court for under 18’s and to meet legal test, evidence shows that, on the balance of probabilities, the individual has engaged or likely to engage in behaviour that causes nuisance or annoyance and the Court finds it just to impose an Injunction.
<b>Mandatory Possession Proceedings Notice</b>	Where ASB has already been proven in court, and the perpetrator is a Council tenant or a household member of a Council tenancy we can serve notice in order to regain possession of their property.

**Table 3 – Potential Enforcement Measures – Places**

Closure Order	An Order which provides the police or Local Authority to close a premises, which is being used, or likely to be used, to commit nuisance or disorder. An initial Closure Order can close a premises for 48 hours however, if the disorder is of such a level, the police or Local Authority can apply to the Magistrates Court for an Order for up to a period of maximum 6 months, which can see a premises closed and access to the premises restricted.
Public Space Protection Order	An Order designed to stop individuals or groups causing anti-social behaviour in a public space. Local Authorities have the powers to implements a PSPO and must be satisfied that the behaviour has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, be persistent in nature, and be unreasonable.



8.8 Where appropriate the Council will publish enforcement action outcomes in the press or via the Council's social media platforms on a case per case bases, taking into account public interest, and the level of enforcement taken.

8.9 Although the Council will employ a range of measures to tackle ASB its **overriding principle is that victims must be protected from those who perpetrate ASB and the Council is committed to reducing ASB in its communities.** This means that the Council will use all legal powers at its disposal and also encourage partners to do likewise. To do this we may use various techniques including collation of evidence using both covert and overt CCTV, diary records and witness statements.

## 9 Partnership Working

9.1 To ensure that it tackles ASB effectively, the Council will work with a number of external partners and is committed to effective partnership working. Partners include:

- Nottinghamshire Police;
- Registered providers of social housing;
- Nottinghamshire County Council, specifically the Family Service and the Youth Support Service;
- Nottinghamshire Probation;
- Change, Grow, Live (Nottinghamshire's commissioned drug and alcohol service)
- Schools and educational facilities; and
- Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Other local authorities, including town and parish councils
- The Environment Agency
- Voluntary agencies and the third sector

9.2 By working with partners and sharing information, the Council is able to adopt the best method to deal with each individual case and in many cases enforcement action is jointly taken forward. Sometimes the Council may be the lead enforcement agency whereas on other occasions it may play a supporting role. This depends on the nature of the ASB and the matters being enforced.

9.3 The Council is an active partner of the Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood Community Safety Partnership (BNSCSP) and will support this partnership to improve community safety generally and tackle ASB across the district.

## 10 Working with other Housing Providers

Those social housing tenants responsible for behaving in an anti-social manner put themselves at risk of tenancy enforcement action. Those who live in accommodation provided by private landlords may also put themselves at risk of similar action. The Council will share information and support other Housing providers to enable their use of early intervention tools and offer guidance and support to them in developing effective policies in order to deal with anti-social behaviour. The use of legal remedies by other housing providers will be the responsibility of that landlord, however the Council will provide supporting evidence to them subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1990, as amended and other relevant legislation.

## **11 Community Trigger**

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced specific measures designed to give victims and communities a say in the way that complaints of anti-social behaviour are dealt with.

The Community Trigger (also known as the ASB Case Review) gives victims of persistent anti-social behaviour reported to any of the main responsible agencies (such as the council, police, housing provider) the right to request a multi-agency review of their case where a local threshold is met.

The Community Trigger process is different from a single agency complaints process which looks at faults in the way an agency has responded. The Community Trigger aims to bring agencies together to take a joined up, problem solving approach, to find a solution and ultimately stop the anti-social behaviour.

More information about the Community Trigger is on our website and may be accessed [here](#).

## **12 Equalities**

12.1 The Council has made a commitment to ensuring that it complies with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. Part of this commitment requires an understanding of how policies may affect people with 'protected characteristics' under the legislation.

12.2 It also recognises that people with 'protected characteristics', such as those who are older or younger, who have disabilities or who are from a minority ethnicity, may be particularly vulnerable to ASB. The Council will work to ensure that any risk assessments or consultation takes this into account and that our response is tailored accordingly.

Hate motivated ASB or behaviour that is malicious in nature, offensive, or targeted towards a particular group of society will be dealt with as a high priority because of the elevated risk.

## **13 Policy Review and Updates**

13.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years. However interim amendments may also be required to reflect any legislative or procedural changes.

## **14 Complaints and Feedback**

14.1 Should you have a complaint or comments regarding this policy or how a case has been dealt with, please make us aware.

14.2 NSDC operates a complaints procedure that can be accessed through the website, via our Customer Service Team on 01636 650000, or by writing to the Council. More information on how to make an official complaint about the service you have received from the Council can be found [here](#).

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2021**

### **PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS – NEWARK TOWN CENTRE AND SITES IN BALDERTON**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

To inform the Committee of the incidents of anti-social behaviour in Newark Town Centre and Coronation Park, Balderton Lakes and Lakeside shops in Balderton and to seek approval to begin a consultation process on the use of Public Space Protection Orders within these locations.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

##### **2.1 Newark Town Centre**

During 2020, there was a marked increase in the level of anti-social behaviour associated with Newark town centre. This was across a number of locations and perpetrator age groups. There were issues of young people congregating in the Market Square, climbing on the stalls and throwing projectiles. Street drinkers and vagrants were also contributing to the level of ASB. The police analyst has produced an ASB profile setting out the locations and issues in more detail.

2.2 Members may be aware that in November 2019 the pre-existing Designated Public Protection Order (DPPO) relating to drinking alcohol in public places in Newark Town Centre was replaced with a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

2.3 PSPOs can cover the same geographical area and control different behaviours. Therefore, it is permissible for Newark town centre to have a PSPO for alcohol controls and ASB controls that have the same geographical coverage.

##### **2.4 Balderton**

The areas around Coronation Park, Balderton Lakes and the Lakeside Shopping centre have all seen significant increases in ASB since March 2020. The main issue has been young people congregating at these locations and moving between them the ASB has been related to attacks on wildlife, stones being thrown at cars, youths shouting and spitting at people passing by and littering.

2.5 Set out in Appendix One is a profile of ASB produced by the police analyst summarising the police incidents that have occurred within defined areas of Balderton and Newark for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020. It can be seen from the profile that For the 2 year period of 2019 to the end of 2020, Newark Town Centre and Balderton have seen the highest numbers of Police Dispersal Powers utilised district wide.

2.6 The council also records reports of ASB and these records support the police data that both Newark town centre and Balderton have seen on an increase in ASB.

2.7 The Council has received a formal Request from Inspector Heather Sutton to consider the introduction of a Public Space Protections Orders to control in both Newark Town Centre and areas of Balderton.

### **3.0 Public Space Protection Orders**

3.1 Public Space Protection Orders are designed to promote responsible behaviour and restrict behaviour that is Anti-social, in parks and other public open spaces. Any behaviour can be restricted on any land, which is publically accessible with or without payment. There is no prescribed wording for a Public Space Protection Order, allowing a flexible approach to their declaration, which must aim to address specific antisocial behaviours in a geographically defined area.

3.2 Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) are intended to provide means of preventing individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour in a public space where the behaviour is having, or likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; be persistent or continuing in nature; and be unreasonable. The restrictions and requirements included in a PSPO may be comprehensive or targeted on specific behaviours by particular groups and/or at specified times.

3.3 The power to make an Order rests with local authorities, in consultation with the Police and other relevant bodies who may be affected.

3.4 Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 sets out the basis on which local authorities may make a PSPO. It provides as follows:

(1) A local authority may make a public spaces protection order if satisfied on reasonable grounds that two conditions are met.

(2) The first condition is that:

(a) Activities carried out in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or

(b) It is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.

(3) The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities:

(a) is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,

(b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and

(c) Justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

Details of section 59 are attached as Appendix Two to the report.

3.5 When making a PSPO due regard must be taken so as to ensure that every proposed restriction in the PSPO meets the statutory criteria. The restrictions proposed must be proportionate having regard to the legitimate aim of preserving the quality of life for everyone who lives or works in or who visits the proposed areas.

3.6 It is important to note that any all PSPOs need to be supported by evidence that show that the controls are required and that the level of control and the geographical area in which it is proposed is appropriate and proportionate. Initial information from Council and Police in relation to the number of incidents in each area, would support Orders being made.

- 3.7 Other options to control this behaviour have been considered. Ad hoc enforcement using Community Protection legislation could be used but this does not provide an ongoing and immediately available remedy.

#### **4.0 Proposals**

- 4.1 Due to the history of anti-social behaviour in Newark town centre and specific areas of Balderton, it is proposed that Public Space Protection Orders be considered for Newark town centre, Coronation Park, Balderton Lakes, and Lakeside Shopping Centre.
- 4.2.1 The terms of the PSPO would be such as to provide a direction to leave a specified area covered by the PSPO:

***If a police officer, police community support officer, or authorised officer of the council has reasonable grounds to suspect that the behaviour of the person in the location has contributed or is likely to contribute to members of the public in the area being alarmed, harassed or distressed, they can direct the person to,***

***(a) Leave the location, or part of the location, and***

***(b) Not to return to the location, or part of the location, for the period specified in the direction (“the exclusion period”)***

***The exclusion period must not exceed 48 hours and must***

***a) Be given in writing, unless that is not reasonably practicable***

***b) Must specify the area to which it relates***

***c) May impose requirements as to the time by which the person must leave the area and the manner in which the person must do so (including the routes)***

- 4.3 Maps showing the proposed areas of the PSPOs is attached as Appendix Three. These indicate the extent of the proposed PSPO areas.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the areas of the PSPO for Newark Town centre matches exactly that which is already included within the PSPO for alcohol controls.
- 4.4 Consultation is required to be undertaken and it is proposed that the following are part of a formal consultation process:

#### **Newark Town Centre:**

Newark Town Council

Nottinghamshire Police

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue

Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Outreach teams

Members of the Public

Licensed premises via Pub Watch

Retail premises via Shop Watch

Public Consultation via NSDC Website & Nottinghamshire Police Website

Change, Grow, Life

**Coronation Park, Balderton Lakes, Lakeside Shopping Area:**

Balderton Parish Council

Nottinghamshire Police

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue

Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Outreach teams

Members of the Public

Banks, Long & Co Management Company for Lakeside Shopping Centre

Lakeside Shopping Centre shops

Public Consultation via NSDC Website & Nottinghamshire Police Website

Change, Grow, Life

**5.0 Equalities Implications**

- 5.1 The introduction of these PSPOs should not have any impacts on any protected characteristic groups. The consultation will inform of any equality issues.
- 5.2 Any enforcement of the PSPOs will be undertaken in line with the Councils Corporate Enforcement Policy.

**6.0 Digital Implications**

- 6.1 None from This report

**7.0 Financial Implications (FIN20-21/2085)**

- 7.1 There is sufficient current budget in the Environmental Health Service to cover the costs of advertising the PSPO.
- 7.2 The costs for signage can be met within current budgets. The signs, setting out the controls in place, will need to be distributed across each area.
- 7.2 PSPOs can be enforced by the use of fixed penalty notices. It is not anticipated that any significant income will be generated by this activity.

**8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

- 8.1 The objectives that this report is relevant to, they are:
  - Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and increase feelings of safety in our communities
- 8.2 The creation and enforcement of the PSPOs as proposed will assist in the delivery of this element of the Community Plan.

## 9.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to:

- (a) support the proposal to consult on the possibility of introducing a Public Space Protection Order in Newark town centre; and to,
- (b) support the proposal to consult on the possibility of introducing a Public Space Protection Order on Coronation Park, Balderton; and to,
- (c) support the proposal to consult on the possibility of introducing a Public Space Protection Order on Balderton Lakes, Balderton; and to,
- (d) support the proposal to consult on the possibility of introducing a Public Space Protection Order at Lakeside Shopping Centre, Balderton; and to,
- (e) Agree the terms of the PSPO as set out in Paragraph 4.2
- (f) Agree the list of consultees as set out in paragraph 4.4; and that,
- (g) A further report setting out the results of the consultation be brought back to the committee.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

To put appropriate controls in place to control anti-social behaviour nuisance in Newark town centre, Coronation Park – Balderton, Balderton Lakes, and Lakeside Shopping Centre – Balderton.

Background Papers - Nil

For further information, please contact Alan Batty ext. 5467.

**Matthew Finch**

**Director - Environment and Communities**

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

Document is Restricted



**PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS – NEWARK TOWN CENTRE, BALDERTON LAKES, CORONATION PARK, AND LAKESIDE SHOPPING CENTRE, BALDERTON**

Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Section 59

- (1) A local authority may make a public spaces protection order if satisfied on reasonable grounds that two conditions are met.
- (2) The first condition is that:
  - (a) Activities carried out in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or
  - (b) It is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.
- (3) The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities:
  - (a) is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,
  - (b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and
  - (c) Justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.
- (4) A public spaces protection order is an order that identifies the public place referred to in subsection (2) (“the restricted area”) and:
  - (a) Prohibits specified things being done in the restricted area,
  - (b) Requires specified things to be done by persons carrying on specified activities in that area, or
  - (c) Does both of those things.
- (5) The only prohibitions or requirements that may be imposed are ones that are reasonable to impose in order—
  - (a) To prevent the detrimental effect referred to in subsection (2) from continuing, occurring or recurring, or
  - (b) To reduce that detrimental effect or to reduce the risk of its continuance, occurrence or recurrence.
- (6) A prohibition or requirement may be framed—
  - (a) So as to apply to all persons, or only to persons in specified categories, or to all persons except those in specified categories;
  - (b) So as to apply at all times, or only at specified times, or at all times except those specified;
  - (c) So as to apply in all circumstances, or only in specified circumstances, or in all circumstances except those specified.

- (7) A public spaces protection order must—
- (a) Identify the activities referred to in subsection (2);
  - (b) Explain the effect of section 63 (where it applies) and section 67;
  - (c) Specify the period for which the order has effect.
- (8) A public spaces protection order must be published in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State.

**Public Space Protection Order – Balderton Lakes, Lakeside Shopping Area and Coronation Park**



**HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**  
**15 MARCH 2021**

**HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update Members on performance with regard to corporate health and safety within the previous calendar year and to demonstrate that the council's legal responsibilities are being met.

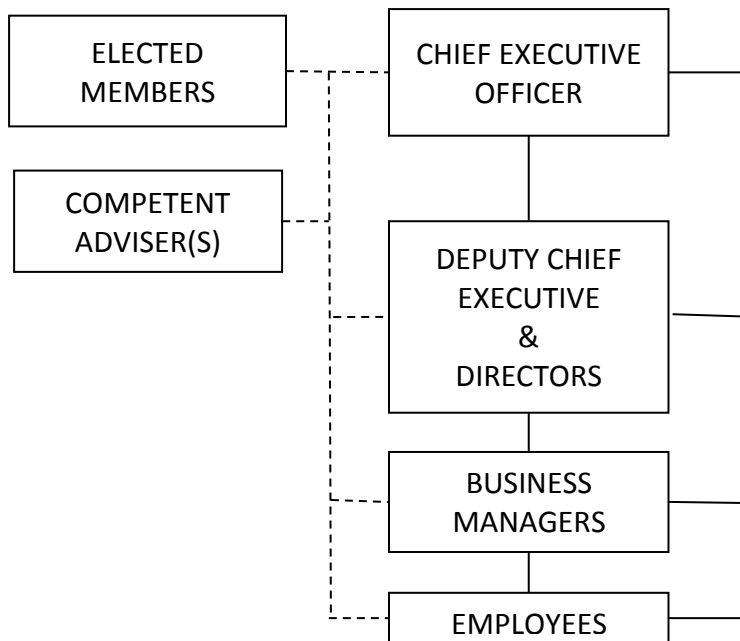
**2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The council's corporate Health & Safety Policy sets out the responsibilities of various posts within the organisation. Elected Members provide the council with leadership and strategy direction and determination in the allocation of budgets to enable services to be delivered. Because of their influence on budgets and policy decisions, elected Members can affect how health and safety is managed. Therefore Members, when carrying out their functions, shall ensure:

- a) The provision of such resources, that are necessary, for securing the health, safety and welfare of the council's employees and anyone else who may be affected by its undertakings.
- b) That the decision making process they employ includes and considers risks to employees and others in the decisions they make.
- c) The Chairman of the Homes & Communities Committee shall be the lead elected Member for corporate health and safety.

2.2 As part of fulfilling this responsibility Members are given the opportunity to receive an update report on current performance around compliance with our corporate health and safety responsibilities and duties.

2.3 The diagram below shows the structure of how the health and safety responsibilities and accountabilities are set up. The solid black lines show the route of responsibility whereas the hashed lines illustrate the route of accountability.

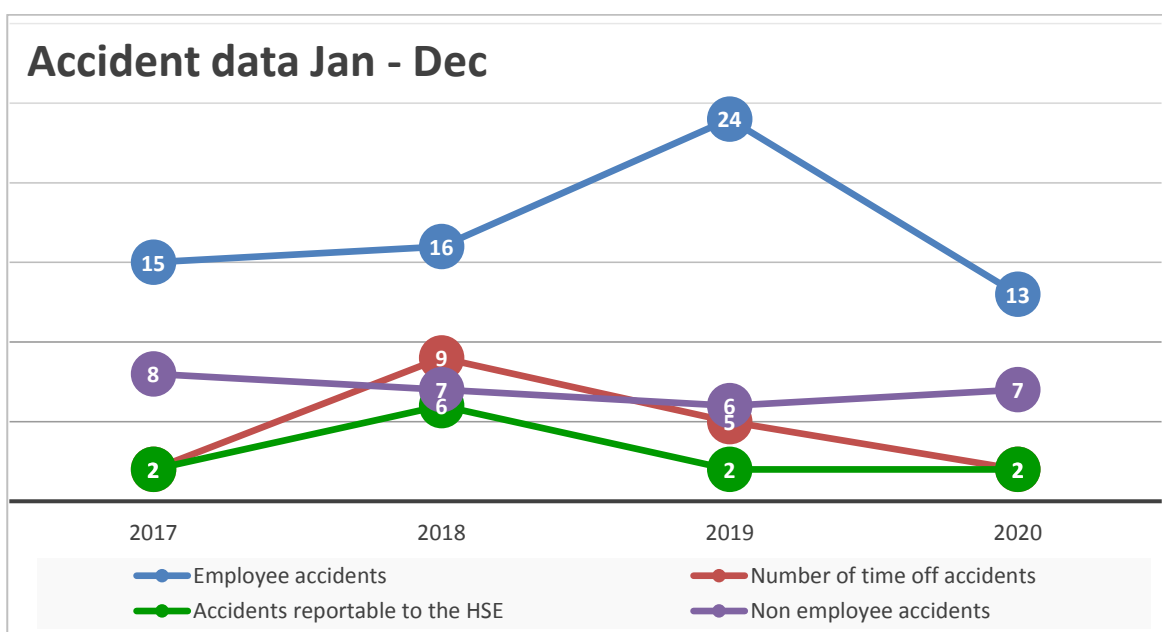


————— = Responsibility  
 - - - - - = Accountability

2.4 The current Health and Safety Policy is presently being reviewed and updated. On completion of this technical review the policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Once approved by SLT it shall be sent on to the Joint Consultative Committee for consultation with the Unions and staff. As soon as this process is complete, it will be formally approved and communicated to all staff.

### 3.0 Accident Statistics

3.1 The graph below illustrates the council’s accident data for the previous four years, reporting period (1<sup>st</sup> Jan to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec inclusive).



- 3.2 A total of 20 accidents were reported for the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.
- 3.3 13 of the 20 reported accidents involved employees with the remaining 7 accidents involving non-employees.
- 3.4 There was a decrease in the number of reported employee accidents and fewer lost working days. The number of severe accidents requiring reporting to the Health and Safety Executive remained the same.
- 3.5 A total of 2 accidents resulted in employees taking time off work during the last year. The total number of days lost due to these accidents was 4.5 days. Both these accidents occurred within the Environmental Services Business Unit.
- 3.6 The following table identifies the number of employee accidents reported in 2020.

<b>EMPLOYEE ACCIDENTS - 2020</b>			
<b>Business Unit</b>	<b>Number of accidents reported</b>	<b>Days Lost</b>	<b>RIDDOR</b>
Environmental Services	4	4.5	1
Housing Management, Responsive Repairs	5	0	0
ICT	2	0	0
Palace Theatre	1	0	0
Asset Management & Car Parks	1	0	0

- 3.7 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013 (known as RIDDOR) puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, over 7-day absences from work, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses) to the Health and Safety Executive.
- 3.8 One employee accident required notification to the Health & Safety Executive. This accident involved a soft tissue injury received during refuse collection. Notification was triggered due to the amount of time taken off (greater than 7 days) rather than type or severity of the injury.
- 3.9 The following table identifies the number of non-employee accidents reported in 2020.

<b>NON-EMPLOYEE ACCIDENTS - 2020</b>			
<b>Business Unit</b>	<b>Number of reported accidents</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>RIDDOR</b>
Heritage and Culture	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCWC</li> <li>• Palace Theatre</li> </ul>	0
Environmental Services	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sconce &amp; Devon Park</li> <li>• Vicar Water</li> </ul>	1
Asset Management & Car Parks	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beacon Centre</li> <li>• Castle House</li> </ul>	0
Housing Management	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic housing</li> </ul>	0

3.10 The single non-employee accident, requiring notification to the Health & Safety Executive, involved a volunteer. The volunteer was undertaking unsupervised and unauthorised pruning works which resulted in a cut injury to a finger. This injury resulted in the injured person being taken directly to hospital, where stitches were administered. All accidents involving non employees being taken from site to hospital, for treatment, are reportable as defined by the RIDDOR.

#### 4.0 **Violent Incidents**

4.1 The following table illustrates the number of serious incidents, involving violence towards council staff, reported in 2020. Figures for the preceding 3 years have been added to help with comparison. Violent incidents include verbal abuse and threats.

Business Unit	Violent incidents leading to inclusion on Incident Risk Register			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Legal	1			
Environmental Services	2	1		
Revenues & Benefits	1	1		
Housing Benefits	1			
Customer Services		6	1	5
Public Protection			1	2
Housing, Health & Community Relations			1	
Housing Management	na	na	na	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>

4.2 There are currently 13 entries within the council’s Potentially Violent Person Risk Register. This is an increase of 10 on the previous year. Whilst this is a significant increase, when compared to previous years, it should be noted that 6 of the 10 can be directly attributed to the adoption of the housing register, following the bringing back of this service into council early last year.

4.3 There was a small increase, based on previous year’s figures, in incidents reported by Customers Services based at Castle House. Of the 5 incidents reported only 2 related directly to council staff and our services. The remaining 3 involved partners based at Castle house and their customers.

4.4 The Potentially Violent Person Risk Register records details of people who present a risk to our staff. It exists to act as a point of reference for officers who may have to deal with potentially violent members of the public. All entries remain on the register for a period of 18 months.

4.5 All individuals entered onto this register are notified of their inclusion, warned that the council is not prepared to accept such behaviour towards its staff and will, where necessary, take appropriate legal action.

## 5.0 COVID 19

5.1 COVID 19 has placed exceptional and unprecedented demands on the council, over a prolonged period, to provide its services in a COVID secure and safe manner.

5.2 Responding to COVID 19 and ensuring the safe delivery of district council services has been the prime focus for the corporate health & safety team. Significant resource of this small unit has been focused on:

- Producing COVID secure safe systems of work and risk assessments for council services,
- Visiting all sites and operations to develop new methods of work and ensure compliance with current COVID regulations and ensure COVID secure operations.
- Ensuring the safety of those staff required to undertake higher risk activities,
- Ensuring the safety of those staff required to work from home,
- Providing advice and information to all business units,
- Ensuring availability of COVID 19 PPE and cleaning materials are available to services with an identified need. This has included participation in a regional response co-ordinated by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) in ensuring supply COVID PPE to front line services.
- Assisting in ensuring the council is able to respond to the wider COVID issues within our communities.

5.3 The corporate health & safety unit have ensured that all NSDC sites and activities have been visited/inspected and safe systems of work developed, reviewed and approved. Higher risk sites/services such as front line service delivery and extra care housing sites (Gladstone House and Vale View) are constantly monitored and assistance provided as necessary to ensure vulnerable tenants are safe and services can continue to function.

5.4 The government has required, since late March 2020 that people do not travel unnecessarily and where possible work at home. As a direct consequence of this government instruction a significant number of council staff have been working from home since late March 2020.

The number required to work from home has increased further following notification of the current lockdown and the emergence of the more virulent new UK COVID variant.

5.5 The Health & Safety at Work Etc. 1974 requires employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all its employees whilst at work. This includes whilst working from home.

5.6 To ensure the continued health and safety of those required to work from home a number of initiatives have been undertaken. These have included:

- Working from home risk assessments
- Provision of information and training
- Provision of working from home equipment
- Mental health support and services

5.7 To date a total of 321 working from home Display Screen Equipment assessments have been carried out. This has resulted in the provision of the following equipment being provided to staff:



- 180 ergonomic chairs
- 47 footrests
- 6 back supports for chairs
- 5 mouse wrist rests
- 4 keyboard wrist rests

5.8 The above items are in addition to working from home kits (including keyboards, mice and laptop risers) provided to all staff working from home. Older, surplus display screens, made available following a recent upgrade of equipment at Castle House, have also been made available to those staff who have requested them.

## **6.0 Fire Risk Assessments.**

6.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that employers and/or owners in control of workplaces undertake fire risk assessments of all buildings under their direct control.

6.2 An annual review of fire risk assessments for all council owned/managed buildings is currently being undertaken. There are 22 sites identified as requiring fire risk assessments. Of those 12 have been completed to date.

6.3 It is currently estimated the review will be completed by the end of March 2021.

Whilst every attempt will be made to complete these assessments by this date it should be noted that COVID restrictions have significantly hampered this project to date.

6.4 A management/action plan is currently being produced by Asset Management and the Safety & Risk Management Officer. This plan details all actions identified within the fire risk assessments, identifies a responsible person and prioritises actions with a suitable target completion date.

6.5 Outstanding actions identified will be monitored by Asset Management, reported to the Risk Management Group and where necessary escalated to the relevant Director and SLT.

## **7.0 Asbestos Registers.**

7.1 The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires that employers and/or owners in control of workplaces suitably manage all asbestos materials within all buildings under their direct control.

7.2 This duty requires the duty holder to undertake a suitable survey to initially identify asbestos materials within the buildings under their control and to implement suitable management arrangements to ensure that asbestos materials identified within the surveys are suitably managed.

7.3 Asset management have appointed competent contractor to resurvey and produce new updated asbestos registers for all commercial buildings.

7.4 There are 103 sites identified as requiring asbestos surveys. Of those, 99 have been completed to date.

7.5 It is currently estimated the review will be completed by the end of March 2021.

Whilst every attempt will be made to complete these assessments by this date it should be noted that COVID restrictions have significantly hampered this project to date.

7.6 The existing asbestos register is updated, as necessary, when individual surveys are received.

In addition to the register update an asbestos management/action plan is currently being produced by Asset Management and the Safety & Risk Management Officer. This plan details all actions identified within the building surveys, identifies a responsible person and prioritises actions with a suitable target completion date.

7.7 The asbestos management plan will be monitored by Asset Management, reported to the Risk Management Group and where necessary escalated to the relevant Director and SLT.

## **8.0 Significant Incidents**

8.1 A contractor, whilst preparing a commercial unit for occupation by a tenant, cut through a live incoming 100amp electric mains supply cable with an angle grinder. This subsequently caused a loud bang and electrical short. Fortunately, the contractor's employee (site manager) was extremely lucky and did not receive any injuries.

8.2 Power was lost to the unit and due to the presence of an unsafe live incoming power cable the service provider (Western Power) were required to attend site as an emergency to make the cable safe.

8.3 The incident was fully investigated by ourselves, the Principal Contractor and the Principal Designer. The findings of this investigation concluded:

- The unit's electric meter had been safely and correctly removed by Western Power prior to commencement of the unit's refurbishment. However, the live feed cable could not be removed at this point. It was therefore made safe by Western Power, to their required standards. This included the installation of a "cap end" to insulate exposed live conductors and labelling with hazard warning tape, conforming with relevant safety signs regulations, identifying "Live Dangerous – Electricity".

- Even though it was clearly labelled and instruction had been issued confirming this, the contractor's site manager incorrectly believed the cable was dead. He had also incorrectly tested the cable prior to works and believed it was safe to remove. It should be noted that there were 4 electricians on site at the time of the incident. At no time did the site manager request the onsite electricians to undertake a test of the cable.

- The contractor acknowledges that their site manager did not adhere to HSE guidelines or their own safe working arrangements for handling/removing electrical services.

8.4 It was therefore determined by all parties that the contractor's operative was at fault.

8.5 Although this was a serious incident it did not require reporting to the Health & Safety Executive.

- 8.6 No enforcement action was taken as a result of this incident.
- 8.7 The incident has been reported and discussed by SLT. After consideration of the investigation report SLT acknowledged that the incident was due to contractor error. It was subsequently agreed, by SLT that due to the identification of significant health and safety failures, by the contractor, they would not be utilised in future works.

## **9.0 Proposed Work Plan - 2021**

- 9.1 Set out below are the significant objectives identified within the Corporate Health & Safety work plan for 2021:
- a) To develop, implement and embed the new corporate risk assessment software. This includes:
- Development of the software to suit the council's requirements
  - Provision of appropriate training to approximately 100 users
  - Support risk assessors in producing suitable and sufficient risk assessments for their relevant areas
  - Ensure that risk assessments are suitable embedded with the operation of all business units
  - Implement a review and reporting process for risk assessment performance
- b) Review, update, and implement the Health & Safety Policy
- c) Review and evaluate health & safety arrangements. Utilise the findings of this review to develop and implement a risk based corporate health and safety inspection programme.

## **10.0 Equalities Implications**

- 10.1 None of the incidents reported had any equality implications identified at the time. Incidents which involve any of the 'protected characteristics' set out under the Equalities Act 2010 would be taken account of as part of any investigation.

## **11.0 Digital Implications**

- 11.1 There are no implications for the council's digital services arising from this report.

## **12.0 Financial Implications (FIN20-21/7669)**

- 12.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendation within this report. Where appropriate, analysis of the incidents and resultant improvements to prevent reoccurrences can reduce the financial exposure of the council.
- 12.2 An effective health and safety management system, in which risks are identified and either eliminated or reduced will result in a reduction in costs to the organisation.

### **13.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**Members are asked to:**

- (a) note the health and safety activity for the past year, and to;**
- (b) support the action plan set out in paragraph 9.1**

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

**To allow the Committee to satisfy themselves through the process of scrutiny that corporate health and safety is being adequately managed and resourced across the authority.**

#### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Richard Bates on Ext 5593

Matthew Finch  
Director – Communities and Environment

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2021**

### **SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER “THE CHARTER FOR SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS”**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To inform members about the Charter for Social Housing Tenants White Paper released in November 2020 and future positive impact this will have on the relationship between tenants and the Council going forward.
- 1.2. To set out for Members the new responsibilities placed upon the Council (and members) as a stock holding authority and landlord.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 Further to the release of the consultation Green Paper “A New Deal for Social Housing” released in August 2018, the Government released the much anticipated “Charter for Social Housing Tenants”.
- 2.2. The Charter aims to “Raise the standards of social housing and meet the aspirations of tenants throughout the country, today and in the future”. To do this, the paper splits the key themes into seven elements that form the Charter.

#### **2.3 To be safe in your home**

- 2.4 This section put tenants back at the heart of building safety and to ensure tenants feel safe in their homes, particularly poignant following the tragedy of Grenfell. The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) who already set standards for the sector (both consumer and financial) will extend its reach by including safety in its consumer regulations.
- 2.5 The Council are required to nominate a responsible person to ensure that the landlord function complies with health and safety requirements. This person will ensure that an Engagement Strategy will be developed to ensure tenants have a say in all “high risk” buildings, (currently buildings over 6 floors or 18 metres high). The nominated person will also drive a strong culture across the organisation for prioritising and delivering health and safety requirements, ensure strong and robust health and safety systems are in the place and provide assurances to Members that health and safety risks are being managed effectively.
- 2.6 The RSH will also work closely with the Health and Safety Executive, sharing information where necessary to prevent further tragedy. Consultations closed in January on proposals for mandatory installations of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in social housing, and measures to prevent poor electrical safety in tenants’ homes. Statutory and good practice guidance will be developed to ensure all tenures are engaged with in regards to home safety issues.

## **2.7 To know your landlord is performing**

- 2.8 Performance monitoring has been a main stay of tenant engagement for some years. The Charter seeks to strengthen this to by including specific engagement on monitoring aspects of housing including safety. The RSH is expected to bring in a set of clear comparable tenant satisfaction measures above and beyond the usual information provided through the tenant annual report – and things that tenants care about - so they can hold their landlord to account.
- 2.9 To aid this, the RSH will collect and publish a core set of tenant satisfaction measures which the Council and all other social landlords will follow. Themes will be ‘good repair’, ‘building safety’, and ‘engagement and neighbourhood management’ (including ‘anti-social behaviour’). A mix of qualitative (tenants views and opinions) and objective quantitative measures to show not only that the Council are performing in line with the measures outlined, but also gives tenants an understanding of how the Council compares to others.
- 2.10 As Members will be aware, local authorities are covered by the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently not extended to housing associations or private registered providers, the paper discusses a new access to information scheme private registered providers.
- 2.11 To ensure openness and transparency, the Council will be asked to share with their tenants’ financial information: how much money is available and specifically what it is spent on (including senior pay and employment costs) so tenants can see whether value for money has been achieved. The Council will provide a clear breakdown of spending to the RSH in an accessible format, so tenants can see - and challenge - whether money is being spent on things that matter to them.
- 2.12 The Council is required to identify a ‘responsible person’ at a senior level to ensure that the Council understand its commitments to the existing and enhanced consumer regulations, including providing excellent customer services to tenants. This person should be clearly identified to tenants, the regulator and the Housing Ombudsman.

## **3.0 To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly**

- 3.1 The Charter seeks to strengthen the role of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) and to connect it more closely with the RSH in response to tenants’ feedback that it is difficult to make complaints and matters took a long time to resolve.
- 3.2 To speed up resolutions of complaints and hold landlords to account, the ‘democratic filter’ which requires tenants to consult with an MP or Tenant Panel or Councillor, or wait eight weeks before tenants can contact the Ombudsman has been removed. The HOS will also receive extended powers to require landlords to address matters effectively and quickly though the intention is for landlords to resolve complaints without the HOS being involved. The Council have removed this filter and complainants can opt to have the independent view of an involved tenant at Stage Two of the (now shortened) complaints process.
- 3.3 Landlords and tenants have access to a ‘Complaint Handling Code’ for guidance on the HOS

website. The code sets out what tenants can expect from landlords who were required to undertake a self-assessment process and publish it by 31 December 2020. The Council's self-assessment is on our website and progress being made against areas of improvement identified.

- 3.4 The HOS can issue failure orders in many areas including: not completing complaints in a timely manner; making complaints process inaccessible for tenants, failing to abide by policy or failure to respond by set timescales without good reason. In extreme cases, legal action may follow.
- 3.5 Awareness campaigns will be run by HOS to ensure that tenants are aware of its powers and know their rights, how to complain and how to escalate unresolved matters. The Government will also make it a statutory requirement for the RSH and the HOS to co-operate in their requirements at holding landlords to account so 'systemic' failures in organisations can be investigated and clear breaches of the consumer standards reporting appropriately.
- 3.6 Landlords will also be 'named and shamed' on the HOS website detailing the complaints that have been handled by the Ombudsman and the outcomes, including determinations of individual cases.
- 3.7 **To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator for tenants**
- 3.8 The paper sets out a stronger cooperation between the HOS and the RSH and joint working on consumer standards, while enhancing the powers available to both agencies. The Building Safety Bill will give powers to both parties to information share and sets a reciprocal duty of co-operation.
- 3.9 The Government intend to introduce a probative, proportionate, outcome focused, and risk based approach to consumer regulation, providing parity with the RSH's economic regulation.
- 3.10 On top of the changes already mentioned, such as the removal of the serious detriment test and the increased robustness of the Ombudsman, the Government intend to change the objectives of the regulator to focus on safety and transparency to look at reviewing its current consumer standards and deliver its revised objectives. This will be followed by a code of practice on the new standards when produced, making it easier for landlords to follow what is required of them in delivery.
- 3.11 The RSH will also have increased enforcement powers on failing landlords, introducing 'no cap' fines and improvement plans to ensure compliance including a new power to arrange emergency repairs when needed when a survey uncovers systemic landlord failures.
- 3.12 There will also be a review of the statutory Right to Manage guidance.
- 3.13 Landlords are required to self-refer if it feels it has breached the consumer standards. The existing co-regulation regime relies on elected Members as local authority landlords to ensure that the authority complies with the outcome focussed standards set by the RSH. As such, Members need sufficient oversight to ensure that the authority is compliant with the standards.

3.14 'Oversight' by RSH will be increased through the introduction of routine inspections (every four years for NSDC) to ensure that landlords are complying with the standards which will be published on the RSH website. Landlords with greatest risk or impact of failing could have priority for closer inspection. Greater scrutiny could occur where a significant breach has been identified on a routine inspection. Further detail to follow on how these inspections will occur; the approach and likely notice periods to the landlord.

3.15 In cases where other regulatory interventions have not addressed the problem, the Government will legislate to require a landlord, in emergency situations to inspect a property where tenants are living in unsafe or unacceptable conditions. This requirement will fall from the current 28 days to 2 days to allow the RSH to take decisive action including arranging emergency repairs of dwellings where there is clear systemic failure by a landlord. Costs would be recovered from the Landlord.

#### 4. **To have your voice heard by your landlord**

4.1 The RSH expects the Council to seek out best practice and ensure continuous improvement on the way we engage with tenants and that we deliver new opportunities for engagement and empower tenants to engage more effectively - with the tools to influence us and hold the Council to account. We need to ensure that staff are trained to a high standard of customer care.

4.2 Engagement will need to be tailored to suit the needs of tenants, using more of a menu approach so that tenants can choose the level of involvement suitable to them and their needs, together with a culture of 'continuous improvement'. This could be drawing on best practice and success in other locations where engagement is proving successful or introducing innovative and exciting opportunities ourselves. The Council need to evidence how we have done this. Tenant led national bodies will provide learning and support to tenants to enable them to know their rights and how to influence us as their landlord.

4.3 Mentioned in the green paper and also briefly in the Charter, is the issue of tenant stigma, where people who live in social housing are seen as lesser citizens in the community than those who own their own properties. Tenants felt the stigma needs to be addressed and a campaign to do this called 'See the Person' is being championed by TPAS and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIOH) and Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH).

#### 4.4 **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in**

4.5 The paper recognises the need for the Council to play our part in providing decent homes in a good clean neighbourhoods, to build on the pride that tenants feel for their communities.

4.6 Funding opportunities are coming through to support the decarbonisation of social housing. A 25 years Environment Plan to improve health and wellbeing in communities is also mentioned. There is a willingness to provide design and planning guidance to ensure more green space is made available for communities in development. The Government are considering a review the Decent Homes Standard to see if it should be updated to reflect this.



- 4.7 The government also propose to consider professionalization in relation to housing staff who work with people with mental health needs and encourage best practice; clarify the roles of agencies involved in tackling ASB and signposting tenants to the most appropriate agencies for support. This will include the Council advertising the 'Community Trigger' brought about by the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 4.8 We have a duty to protect the most vulnerable in our communities and in particular when domestic abuse occurs. The Council must have a policy setting out standards for tackling issues surrounding domestic abuse.
- 4.9 Allocations will also be considered to ensure that housing is allocated in the fairest way possible and achieves the best outcomes for local places and communities. This includes provision for those in the Armed Forces who can be exempt from any local connection test, and that our systems can identify applications from the armed forces community to ensure they are considered appropriately.
- 4.10 **To be supported to take your first step to ownership**
- 4.11 The Government is seeking to increase the supply of social housing and a new Shared Ownership model giving tenants the opportunity to purchase 10% or more of all grant funded new homes.
- 4.12 The Government want Local Authorities to build more homes and take advantage of the new Affordable Homes Scheme; including the possibility of providing greater flexibilities for local authorities to use receipts from Right to Buy sales. This is currently being considered following consultation.
- 4.13 The Government have pledged their commitment to promoting fairness and transparency for leaseholders both in the private and rented sector including the reform of ground rents, banning new leasehold houses, making it quicker and easier to extend a lease or buy a freehold, reinvigorating common hold and the Right to Manage.
- 5.0 **Digital Implications**
- 5.1 There are no direct digital implications arising from this report though digitalisation of services for tenants is likely to form part of future papers to this committee.
- 6.0 **Financial Implications FIN20-21/1350**
- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper although a request may be made to set aside budget for independent scrutiny of our compliance with the Charter.
- 7.0 **Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**
- 7.1 This report support two objectives in our Community Plan – to create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to the local area and to create more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority.

## **8.0 Comments of Director(s) or Housing Advisory Group**

- 8.1 This paper was presented to HAG on 21 December 2020 and was welcome by the Group who support all recommendations and ask for regular updates on progress to be reported to this Committee and tenant forums.
- 8.2 Following the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February, the involved tenants and HAG members confirmed they have had discussions on the White Paper with TPAS and some members have taken part in Webinars discussing the new roles of the Regulator and Ombudsman.
- 8.3 With this in mind, involved tenants are presently updating the terms of reference and related procedures and will be presenting to Council to endorse. The group are looking at existing and future ways to improve meaningful Tenant Engagement and Involvement.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**Members note the contents of the report and that:**

- 1. The Director of Housing and Health and Wellbeing is nominated as the ‘responsible person’ who is the point of contact and ensures compliance with the housing regulatory standards until such time as any legislative guidance being issued.**
- 2. The Business Manager for Asset Management is nominated as the ‘responsible person’ for ensuring Health and Safety in Council properties and buildings in advance of any legislative guidance being issued.**
- 3. Support the production of an action plan to address the requirements of the Charter with regular updates on progress reported to Homes and Communities Committee.**

### **Reason for Recommendation(s)**

To take proactive first steps in complying with the requirements of the Tenants Charter and to commence ongoing action planning to ensure this important and wide reaching change in approach is given sufficient priority and consultation as we move forward.

### **Background Papers**

Social Housing White Paper “The Charter For Social Housing Tenants”

For further information please contact Terry Bailey, Tenant Engagement Officer on Ext 5833

**Suzanne Shead**  
**Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing**

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2021**

### **CUSTOMER JOURNEY – TENANT ENGAGEMENT REVIEW UPDATE**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update members on the outcomes of Phase 1 of the review into tenant engagement and involvement agreed at Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- 1.2 To support a number of proposals to move our tenant engagement arrangements forward, utilising efficiency savings.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 Members will recall at the March 2020 meeting of this committee that the proposed three phase approach to undertake a review of involvement and engagement services was approved.
- 2.2. In November 2020, the Council recruited a Tenant Engagement Officer (TEO) to look at the review and commence the first phase which was to agree the purpose of tenant involvement and engagement, how it will be used to improve homes and services, inform the work of the Committee and enable tenants to hold the Council to account

#### **2.3 Initial Findings – our starting point**

- 2.4 The TEO has undertaken a thorough desk top review of policies and procedures and spoken at length with involved tenants and front line officers and managers. Most of the work examined is based on arrangements transferred from the Newark and Sherwood Homes.

- 2.5 In Newark and Sherwood, tenants have been involved with the housing service since 1921 when the first tenants association in the Country was formulated on Hawtonville in Newark. Tenants have been having a say in the district for more than 100 years.

- 2.6 Previously, three tenants were invited on to the Board at Newark and Sherwood Homes and played a key role in deciding the strategic path of the company. The tenants involved during the transition period have now migrated to the Housing Advisory Group which Members will be aware of is in place whilst the new framework for engagement is being created.

- 2.7 The present structure includes the following groups and is supported by ad-hoc, service specific feedback requests from individual services.

- Performance Monitoring Group,
- Service Improvement Group
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- The Tenant Forum.

- 2.8 Tenants are also involved in estate walkabouts and some Task and Finish Groups. Although on the surface, this seems a formidable set of groups, which does see tenants monitoring and scrutinising services, the move back to the Council has seen this structure lose

momentum and so needs a regular injection of time from Officers to keep up the enthusiasm and drive to see improvements come to fruition.

- 2.9 Involved Tenants and tenant members of the Housing Advisory Group have recently been incorporated into the Council's Complaints Process and offered their services as advocates to tenants who need someone to talk to when they are experiencing difficulties with the service.
- 2.10 Although the structure outlined in 2.7 can be seen to hold the Council to account, officers will support tenants to review the structure in light of the new White Paper, feedback from tenants on how they wish to be involved and consider new ways to make tenant engagement stronger, representative, focused, flexible to the tenants available time and more appropriate. This will feed into phase 2 of the review.
- 2.11 Independence comes in the form of the Tenant Forum, which is chaired by a tenant and involves tenants from across the other elements of involvement, such as the Performance Group etc. Currently they number 12. These members are not formally elected and do not directly represent the community although they are very dedicated and keen to make a difference to housing services.
- 2.12 Newark and Sherwood District Council had previously supported a number of tenants and residents associations, giving people in communities an opportunity to get involved independently at a local level. There is no information to suggest these groups had been developed during the time of the ALMO and only one group has been found still in operation, based in Ollerton and Boughton.
- 2.13 The service also relies on feedback from tenants and leaseholders and there is a number of opportunities throughout the year where surveys and discussions with non-involved tenants do get fed into the system to inform policies and processes.
- 2.14 Publicity and website presence does not seem to show any obvious direction with regards to what is on offer, what tenants can be involved in and how their involvement makes a difference.

### 3. The purpose of tenant involvement and engagement

- 3.1 A new National Standards for Tenant Engagement have been produced by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service which recognises the importance of tenants' contributions to landlord services as does the Government's White Paper 'A Charter for Social Housing Residents'.
- 3.2 Tenant involvement and scrutiny can deliver better outcomes and can impact our tenants in different ways, covering a wide range of activities. Tenant engagement can be viewed as a continuum, from ensuring effective governance and delivery of core services to supporting individual and community empowerment. It is an investment and a pathway to cost savings and provision of better, more targeted and effective services to tenants and leaseholders based on their values and opinions.
- 3.3 As a housing provider it is essential that we give tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to influence the services they receive through appropriate representation as they experience the service on a day to day basis and they know **Agenda Page 92** This

could be at any level they wish to be involved at, whether it be to just feedback on something they have experienced or to let the Council know “what works well, even better if” often referred to as www.ebi.

- 3.4 Tenants have an interest in making sure their rent is being used properly and gaining the very best value from it. The current involved tenants see their role as:
- making a difference for the betterment of services for tenants and leaseholders and wider communities
  - Scrutineers of services (working in partnership with housing colleagues).
  - Influencing the Council through raising suggestions, concerns and ideas to consider for future service delivery

#### 4. How can Tenant Engagement improve homes and services, inform the work of the Committee and hold the Council to account?

- 4.1 In addition to the existing structure, there is a real desire by tenants to help develop in the following areas:

- Developing contract specifications for investment works
- Driving up quality and reporting poor performance and work with officers when those levels drop below expected outcomes.
- Assessing the effectiveness of delivery from a tenant and leaseholder perspective.
- As sounding boards for new ideas or just to get the service user perspective
- Estate walkabouts with Members, Officers and Tenants as well as other agencies, to view their communities and work together to identify improvements.
- Developing existing work on void Inspections to monitor the impact of new standards.
- Working closely with this committee to benefit tenants and the wider community.

- 4.2 The Council are just awaiting feedback from consultation around the customer experience of various landlord services and how they wish to engage and influence going forward which will supplement the list above and influence the structure we will adopt in phase two of the review.

### 5. **Proposals following Phase 1 review**

#### 5.1 The commitments requested of the Committee to ensure influence and accountability

- 5.2 For the Committee to commit to the following pledge:
- i. To seek, recognise, listen to and respect the voice of the tenant at the Committee level
  - ii. To be held accountable where tenants feel this isn't the case
  - iii. To invite regular updates on the work, views and feedback of tenants
  - iv. Commission activities/work/reports at the request of tenants following scrutiny, mystery shopping, legislative changes and regulatory notices
  - v. Encourage regular feedback from tenants and show how this informs existing and new service delivery
  - vi.

5.3 **Additional Tenant Engagement Officer - £37,622**

5.4 Going forward it is envisaged that the level of involvement will increase exponentially, both in individual involvement and representative groups and stretch across a larger section of the District reflecting the diverse demographic of households.

5.5 To facilitate this, the Council are looking for additional resources in the form of an additional TEO, to support the development work of the existing TEO and to engage more tenants and leaseholders. There is significant work to do to develop new and innovative opportunities for involvement including our digital offer to tenants.

5.6 **Training investment for existing involved tenants - £16,700**

5.7 We are in the process of conducting a training needs survey for tenants and it is clear that the digital 'barrier' makes it difficult for some to be engaged effectively. Building the capacity and upskilling our communities digitally will contribute to the Council's Community Plan through supporting the creation of vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to the local areas .

5.8 The committee is asked to support funding for a pilot project for involved tenants which will train them around digital and online use, and then they, will deliver this training to others in the community. The benefits to the community being:

- Feeling better connected to family, friends and their local community
- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- Greater understanding of what you can do online e.g. order prescriptions, book appointments
- Improved digital confidence & skills
- Better equipped to access information, advice and support that will support their health and well being
- Reduced loneliness and isolation – be able to for example access support groups
- Opportunities to build new friendships via for example on line forums
- Increased awareness of the 'online world'

5.9 Involved tenants will volunteer their time into this project and help deliver the programme, in exchange for the investment in their development. This will also benefit their engagement with the Council.

5.10 Newark Community and Voluntary Service (CVS) are keen to support this initiative, and will engage a Worker to work with tenants, often on a one to one basis, to fully capacitate them going forward. Each tenant will have a personalised plan including goals they want to achieve or aspire to. We will evaluate the current level of skills and confidence, reviewing at regular intervals as to measure progress against their plan.

5.11 At the end of the programme, we will assess the progress tenants have made in terms of skills and confidence levels and CVS will provide an evaluation report of the project. As a result we will also develop a support pack which can be rolled out to tenants as part of the training and online for those that want to try it themselves.

5.12 The pilot will require the Council to meet the wages and expenses of a CVS worker for six months including some equipment. We would also need 10 tablets which can be

loaned to tenants who do not have access to appropriate hardware. These will be returned once the training is over and could be reused to start another round of training. The cost of this activity is £16,700.

#### **5.13 Community Chest Fund - £20,000**

5.14 Tenants are keen to try and reinvest some of the efficiency savings back into communities. Suggestions have been made about putting security gates in to Howe's Court in Newark, two benches to remember former tenant reps who had sadly passed, (sited in communal areas for tenants), repairing an alley way fence damaged along Ash Rd due to anti-social behaviour, provide new chairs for Cleveland Square Community Centre, flower boxes and beds at Magda Close, Lowdham. Ideas continue to come in.

5.15 It is proposed that we allocate £20,000 as a 'community chest' for these small community based ideas which will improve people's local space, especially when Covid is under control. If this idea is popular it may be that committee will be asked to consider providing a similar 'community chest' in subsequent years.

#### **6.0 Digital Implications**

6.1 Despite the transformative impact of technology on society, many people in the UK remain digitally excluded. This matters as those who are excluded digitally are also far more likely to be disadvantaged according to many other social and economic measures. The digital divide exacerbates inequality. Tenant engagement initiatives aims to tackle this inequality by upskilling tenants and consulting with those tenants on how the Council can shape its digital services to its customer needs.

6.2 Upon signing the Local Digital Declaration a commitment was made for a community focused project that works towards digital inclusivity. Tenant engagement working with partners Newark CVS is a project that achieves this commitment.

#### **7.0 Financial Implications – FIN20-21/4691**

7.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has a small annual budget of £5,000 for Tenant Involvement, which for the last two years as hardly been used. The initiatives outlined in this report have a threefold financial impact on NSDC, totalling 74,322, along with future years costs to be financed.

7.2 Firstly, the cost of an additional Tenant Engagement Officer on NS10 (including on-costs) of £37,622 is to be funded from the HRA Efficiency Reserve. This was created in the current financial year from budget savings identified in bringing the service back in-house. This reserve currently totals £691,000, and was created to finance further improvements to service provision, with approval from the H & C Committee. Future years' costs will also come from the Efficiency Reserve, or be incorporated into the base budget.

7.3 Secondly, the £16,700 identified in paragraph 5.7 for the CVS digital worker and purchase of tablets, will also be funded from the Efficiency Reserve, but will be a one off cost.

7.4 Thirdly, the initiative around a 'Community Chest' for tenant led ideas and improvements, can be funded from underspends identified in the HRA in the current year. The £20,000

proposed base will go into a Tenant Initiative Reserve, to be accessed and utilised to fund such suggestions as those mentioned in paragraph 5.10.

## **8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

8.1 These proposals link to supporting the creation of vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to the local areas and contribute to % of residents attending a digital skills course who now feel more confident in using our services online.

## **9.0 Comments of Director(s) or Housing Advisory Group**

9.1 Comments from the Housing Advisory Group on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021 commented that tenants were concerned about budgets and value for money. The group support the need to invest in tenant participation and engagement to build a wider, inclusive and modern engagement model. Increasing resources in this area will enable the existing Tenant Engagement Officer to achieve the outcomes required from this review – including implementing in a timely manner and linking into building community spirit and truly engaged communities.

9.2 The group also recognise that to bring the Council up to the standard of what the Government White Paper demands is also challenging. The group feel that tenant involvement at NSDC is far behind other local housing providers in what they offer, through a lack of investment for a number of years, the demands of the White Paper shows this has to change and they welcome these proposals as first steps.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**Members note the contents of the report and that:**

- 1. Members support the pledge set out in 5.2 around tenant influence**
- 2. Members approve proposal set out in 5.3 – 5.15 for**
  - a. the recruitment of an additional Tenant Engagement Officer;**
  - b. the pilot of “Let’s Connect” digital project and;**
  - c. a community chest budget of £20,000 for community based & tenant led improvements.**
- 3. Members to note that further feedback will come to this Committee on the customer journey findings as they are available.**

### **Reason for Recommendation(s)**

The additional role supports the commitment of the District Council to tenant engagement and involvement and strengthens compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing - Tenant Engagement and Empowerment Standard

The support of the ‘Lets Connect Pilot’ supports the Community Plan in engaging with tenants to make them more aware of opportunities for digital use and in particular provides enhanced communication techniques when using council services



## Background Papers

For further information please contact Terry Bailey, Tenant Engagement Officer on Ext 5833

Suzanne Shead  
Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing

**HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**  
**15 MARCH 2021**

**GAS SERVICING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To provide Committee with details of our current access procedures to carry out gas servicing and an opportunity to consider alternatives designed to improve access and ensure the Council continues to comply with its statutory duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

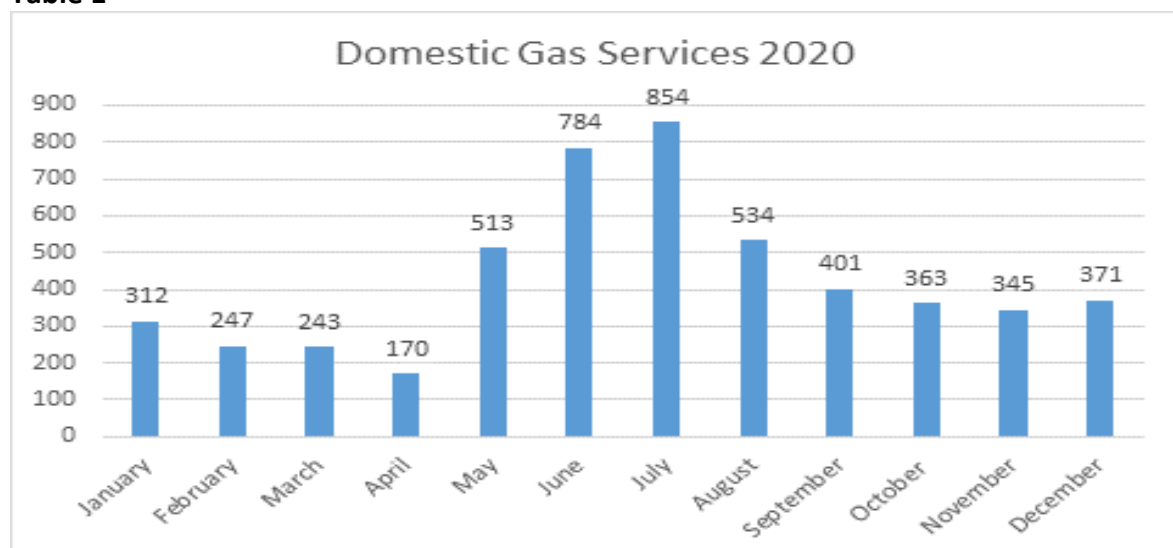
**2.0 Background Information**

2.1 Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 landlords are required to ensure that each and every fitting, appliance and flue, to which that duty extends, is checked for safety within 12 months of being installed and at intervals of not more than 12 months since it was last checked for safety.

2.2 As a landlord, the Council must comply with its duties under Regulation 36 of the Gas Safety Regulations to safety check/service any domestic gas fittings (not including residents own cookers) and any flues that serve them, within 12 months of the previous service anniversary date. Our objective is to ensure all our gas fittings have a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) in place ensuring maximum safety for all our residents, their families and neighbouring properties.

2.3 Gaining access for Gas Servicing is an issue for all Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and the former Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) made risk and compliance a governance priority, with some RSL's being downgraded for non-access and non-compliance in this specific area. It has been widely reported in the housing press that gas safety non-compliance puts any organisation and its customers at significant risk. Table 1 indicates the number of properties requiring access by Newark & Sherwood District Council over the annual programme, a total of 5137 every year. The budget for the work is c.£250,000/annum.

**Table 1**



## 2.4 The Current Process

2.5 NSDC follow an 11-month gas servicing cycle. This means we commence access procedures for servicing gas appliances one month in advance of the service anniversary date, with a number of appropriate letters, communications and telephone calls to the resident taking place. This will shortly be reduced to a 10-month cycle in an attempt to improve access rates before properties reach their service anniversary date.

2.6 Where means of contacting the tenant for access described above has failed, the current escalation process utilises Injunction Orders issued by the courts to gain access. This can be a lengthy process which has left properties without a valid Gas Safety Record for up to 6 months in extreme cases.

2.7 The escalation commences following 3 failed attempts by our contractor to gain access to carry out the work, supported by written letters of appointment requesting access each time, the matter is then passed to our Tenancy & Estates team to commence the legal process.

2.8 The tenant receives a legal “Letter Before Action” making a final request for access before the matter proceeds to court. If this fails a court hearing is requested to obtain an injunction to allow access under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, namely clause 3g which states:

*“We have a right, upon giving you 24 hours’ written notice, to come into your home at all reasonable times to inspect it or to carry out work in your property or an attached property. The Council, our employees, contractors, subcontractors and agents also have this right. (We do not have to give you 24 hours’ notice in an emergency).”*

2.9 An injunction is then usually provided by the Court authorising the Council to gain entry to the property to carry out the work. The cost of this process, including the forced access if still required, is recharged to the tenant. The costs are currently in the region of £500.

2.10 Historically, failure to allow access would require a court application every time that a tenant would not allow access. More recently, we obtain “in perpetuity” injunctions so access can be gained in future years without a further injunction application and therefore costs to the Council and the tenant are reduced.

2.11 Current non –access performance for 20/21 is as follows:

Cases sent to legal for final drafting but cancelled <u>before</u> sending to court:	1
Cases that were sent to court and issued but then withdrawn (due to tenant providing access prior to being served with application)	21
Cases we have obtained an order to adjourn generally with liberty to restore (as tenant had provided access after being served but before court hearing)	7
Cases we have obtained an injunction:	3
Current cases we have sent to court and waiting hearing date/have hearing in the future	9

### **3.0 Proposals**

3.1 The current arrangements and ultimate sanction of an injunction have proven highly successful over the years with the pre- pandemic numbers of properties without a valid gas service record - seldom reaching double figures.

3.2 Despite this success we should not be complacent as we rarely achieve 100% compliance, currently 99.7% and alternative means of gaining access, including incentives, are always worth considering. This is especially important following the COVID-19 pandemic which has resulted in even greater difficulty in accessing properties due to tenant's concerns over admitting gas engineers into their home and the heightened risk of contracting the virus. The remainder of this section of the report considers these alternatives.

### **3.3 Forced Entry**

3.4 Some social landlords force entry to properties in order to undertake the gas safety inspection. Whilst this may be quicker and cheaper than pursuing court action for an injunction this is certainly not a recommended course of action. Whilst such a landlord may be seeking to comply with their obligation to service the gas appliances it is a potential breach of a tenants rights as there is no legal right to force access to a property, even if all other routes have been exhausted. Landlords who undertake such action are at risk of claims being brought against them by their tenants.

### **3.5 Possession Orders**

3.6 Alternatives to the injunction process include Possession Orders which are considered to take longer and are more costly than to obtain Injunctions and could potentially result in a resident losing their home. For those reasons, as a responsible landlord we would not propose this action as proportionate or good practice.

### **3.7 Use of the Environmental Protection Act**

3.8 The use of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is a legal way to ensure access into tenant's property more quickly than through an injunction. It is an accepted method, used in the correct circumstances and is already used by other local authorities to gain access for gas safety checks. Utilising the EPA is generally cheaper than the injunction process and takes less time and does not pose the risk of the tenant losing their home, unlike a Possession Order.

3.9 However, not all Local Authorities consider their use appropriate, as the EPA provisions only empower the Local Authority to access a property to investigate whether there is a statutory nuisance or not. It does not necessarily provide a legal power to enter to do annual gas safety checks and servicing.

3.10 The advice of our Senior Legal Officer is that their use involves a high risk of challenge, judicial review and being sued for falsely entering the premises and preventing the tenants' quiet enjoyment of same. For these reasons this option is also not recommended.

### 3.11 **Capping Off External Meters**

3.12 From time to time we do encounter situations where we cannot arrange access with the tenant, perhaps where they have been taken into care or are otherwise away from the property for a protracted period. In situations such as this, where an external meter is present, we can cap off the gas supply at the meter – current costs around £100.

3.13 This process would be subject to a pre- capping protocol, requiring a risk assessment of the individual's circumstances, with reference to the tenancy team and authorisation to cap from the BM for Tenancy and Estates Management. Once the tenant returns, the supply would be reinstated and the gas safety checks carried within 24 hours, or sooner if required. This safeguards the property and surrounding area from the risk of gas explosion, where the property is left unoccupied.

### 3.14 **Service Interval Timers**

3.15 Where tenants *persistently* fail to provide access for the annual gas service and safety check, the use of Service Interval Timers could assist with gaining access.

3.16 These devices: -

- start a countdown to let the tenant know the service is becoming due
- display a message on the screen to remind the tenant that a boiler service is due.
- When the service is overdue, the programmer can be set by the Council to switch off the heating system for a proportion of each hour, to ensure the tenant's safety and provide a telephone number to contact us to arrange the service or
- Provide an override and alarm to allow the boiler to continue running intermittently to create a nuisance situation rather than to shut the system down completely.

3.17 These devices are relatively inexpensive and easy to install and we would recommend considering their use only where tenants *persistently* deny access.

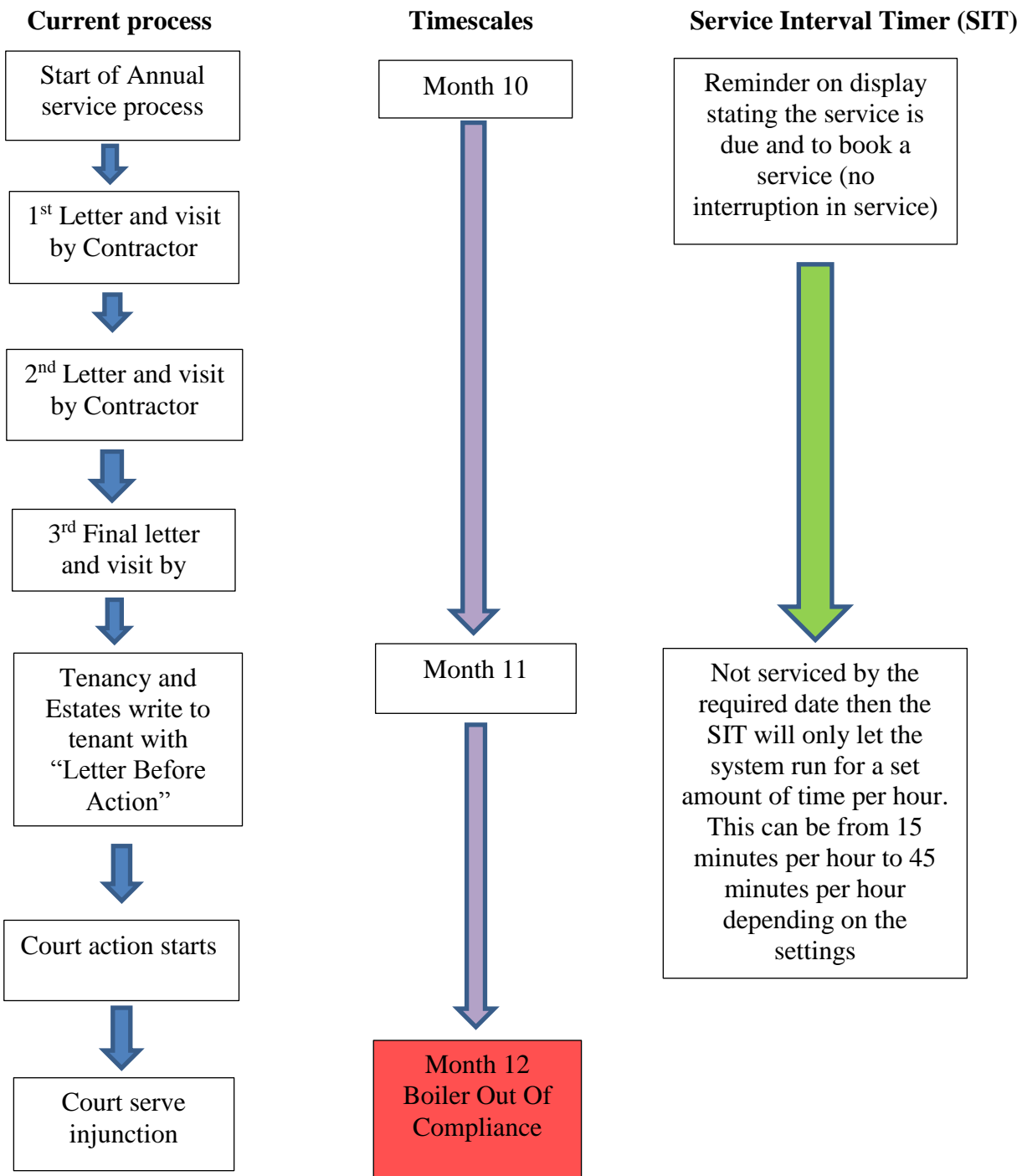
3.18 This device is normally incorporated into a programmable room thermostat and as such is inconspicuous. It also can be turned on or off by the service engineer at any time and the date can be reset any time the boiler is serviced (such as when a new tenant moves in).

3.19 If supported by the Committee, this would be best rolled out on all new boiler installations where the Service Interval Timer could either be set as a fail-safe on all new boilers or could be set to operate on the persistent hard to access properties. It would also be possible to retrofit a new Programmer/Thermostat (which includes the Service Interval Timer function) on any existing system where we had difficulty gaining access.

3.20 Where it would be unsuitable for tenants with known needs to have heating/hot water interrupted we could turn off the Service Interval Timer and rely on the more traditional means to gain access.

3.21 The following process shows how the Service Interval Timer would work alongside the current process and on a servicing cycle of 10 months.

**Gas Servicing with Service Interval Timers (ten month cycle)**



**Note** at any time during this process the service can be completed and the process will be stopped.  
Any known venerable tenants will be looked at on an individual basis to find the best way forward and to ensure they are safe at all times

### 3.22 **Incentives**

- 3.23 Some landlords incentive their tenants to encourage access through monthly prize draws for *honouring their first appointment for the gas service*. The winner is selected at random each month and awarded the advertised prize. The cost of the incentive would be shared with the gas servicing contractor, as they benefit considerably from improved first-time access.
- 3.24 This report recommends monitoring of costs implications for non access for 12 months to enable members to revisit this option in the future as part of our toolkit to increase access.

### 4.0 **Equalities Implications**

- 4.1 Activities to restrict service may affect tenants with additional needs and protected characteristics to a greater extent although the arrangements in place are there to protect the health and safety of all by achieving timely access to servicing. Significant preparation work using risk assessment of individual circumstances is in place to understand and mitigate any impact.

### 5.0 **Digital Implications**

- 5.1 There are no digital implications arising from this report.

### 6.0 **Financial Implications FIN20-21/2287**

- 6.1 There are no material financial implications arising from this report. However, it should contribute to Members' understanding of the way in which resources are allocated to meet our statutory and regulatory responsibilities to ensure we keep our tenants and residents safe in their homes.
- 6.2 The cost of supplying service interval timers is approximately £150 per unit. Based on non-access cases that have reached court over the last year, the financial implication would be minimal and contained within the existing budget of £258,690.
- 6.3 The costs of running an incentive scheme would be £1200 per annum which again would be contained within existing budgets and offset against resources that are involved in the preparation of legal papers, attendance at Court, home visits and chase letters.

### 7.0 **Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

- 7.1 The performance of the gas servicing contract contributes to the delivery of the objective "To create more and better homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority".

### 8.0 **Comments of Director(s) and/or Housing Advisory Group**

- 8.1 Our landlord responsibilities relating to gas safety are of the highest priority. This report explores additional tools available that will enhance an already high performing service.

Representatives at Housing Advisory Group held on 29/10/20 supported the use of capping and interval timers only in exceptional circumstances. There were mixed views around the use of incentives.

- 8.2 The HAG wanted to ensure that any move to an MOT style takes account of the effect this will have on anniversary dates i.e. bringing the service forward will effectively mean certification goes over twelve months.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 9.1 Committee is asked to note the content of the report and to approve the recommendations to:

- Cap off external gas meters in the circumstances described at 3.11
- Install Service Interval Timers in the circumstances described at 3.14
- Monitor costs of failed access to the Council before revisiting incentives
- Revisit the impact of the above recommendations in 12 months time.

## **9.2 Reason for Recommendation(s)**

To improve the performance of the gas servicing programme to 100% compliance and to further enhance tenant safety. Particularly given the current challenges around access whilst we live with Covid-19.

### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Mark Plant, Compliance & Safety Manager on ext 5603

Suzanne Shead  
Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing



## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2021**

### **HOUSING SERVICES QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To provide the Homes and Communities Committee with an overview of performance and satisfaction within housing services for Quarter 3 of 2020/21.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The Committee has direct responsibility to ensure that homes and services are of a high standard and meet legal and regulatory requirements.

2.2 This report provides assurance to Members that standards and performance are high, and where they are not, actions are in place to address this, particularly where there are risks associated. Therefore enabling the Committee to meet its obligations outlined above.

2.3 The revised Community Plan was presented to and approved at Full Council on 13 October. Further work is now required in terms of aligning performance to the new Community Plan objectives and the annual business planning process.

2.4 In addition, Members also have an opportunity to comment on and review the information required by the Committee to oversee the performance of housing services, including the format in which it is presented.

#### **3.0 Performance Monitoring**

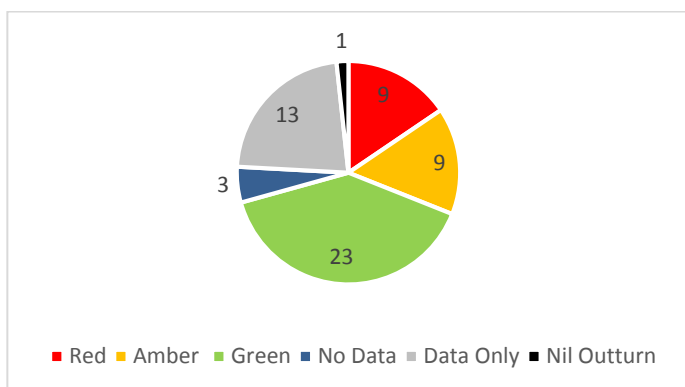
3.1 Performance monitoring is split into three elements to help Members consider different aspects of housing services performance.

- Performance Indicators – measured performance across a range of key services.
- Customer satisfaction - feedback from surveys across key services.
- Compliance performance – this covers landlord responsibilities for a range of building safety measures including fire protection, gas, asbestos, electrical and water. It also summarises details of the Council's housing stock.

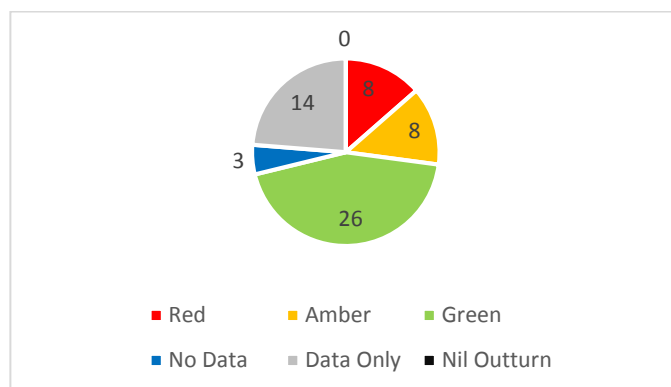
3.2 The first two elements are presented within this report, and given its significance, overall compliance is reported separately to this Committee.

3.3 Of the 59 quarterly PIs, 45 have a target and 14 are data only indicators. Of these 45, 26 are green (on or above target), 8 are amber (slightly missed target) and 8 are red (well below target). Of the remaining 3, 3 have no data at this present time. There are 3 PIs with no data at this time, one is due to no walkabouts taking place and the other 2 PIs are being worked upon and will be brought up to date and included within the report going forward.

Quarter 2 2020/21



Quarter 3 2020/21



3.4 There has been an improvement since Quarter 2 in the increased number of indicators that are green and a reduction in those performance indicators that are amber and red. Further detail is found in the table below at 3.5, which also highlights that 5 of the red PIs are improving.

3.5 The 8 PIs which have missed target are shown in the table below with comments outlining reasons.

PI Name	2020/21 Q3 Value	2020/21 Annual Target	Latest Note	Direction of Travel
Number of properties without a valid Gas Servicing certificate	3	0	The three cases have been through the access procedure and are currently with our legal team to gain injunctions for access. We continue to cold call those with outstanding certificates at the same time	Improving
% of rent loss through dwellings being vacant	0.90%	0.60%	Although this remains over-target it is getting better month by month. Rent loss is likely to remain high for the duration of this year due to not letting any properties for a period of 3 months due to Covid-19.	Improving
Average time (days) to re-let Council properties	33	16 days	There is continued improvement with the overall relet times reducing each month, however this will still miss the target for the year end as the performance required is irrevocable.	Improving

PI Name	2020/21 Q3 Value	2020/21 Annual Target	Latest Note	Direction of Travel
Customer satisfaction with ASB	69%	90%	ASB satisfaction is often outcome related and overall numbers are low, so a small number of dissatisfied customers can have a huge impact on performance. Just 14 customers were surveyed during the most recent quarter. Prior to the most recent quarter, performance had been above 80% for the year to date.	Declining
Amount of current arrears as a % of annual rent debit	2.15%	1.80%	Arrears balances are increasing as a result of tenants moving away from weekly HB payments onto rent accounts to the monthly in arrears payment of UC. We have also seen a higher than anticipated movement of tenants onto UC as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy and an increase in claimants.	Improving
Former tenant arrears as a % of annual rent debit	1.11%	0.88%	Former tenant arrears have increased due to a number of factors: - We have seen an increase in agreements defaulting, which are in part due to wider economic pressures. - An increased number of tenants are moving on with large balances which are as a result of multiple reasons such as the impact of UC and difficulty in gaining possession of properties before arrears escalate.	Declining
Amount of Current Arrears	£522438.13	£420,000.00	Arrears balances are increasing as a result of tenants moving away from weekly HB payments onto rent accounts to the monthly in arrears payment of UC. We have also seen a higher than anticipated movement of tenants onto UC as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy.	Improving
Average "End to End" time for all reactive repairs (CALENDAR days)	8.5	6.16	In December we completed all emergency repairs within 0.48 days and all routine repairs within 17days, which shows us on average coming well under the targets currently set within our new priorities.	Declining

#### 4.0 Tenant Satisfaction

4.1 Customer satisfaction is monitored through the key housing services and undertaken independently by an external contractor.

Service	Quarter 3 %	2020/21 YTD %	Target
Overall	93	93	
Adapts (Major)	100	98	90
Adapts (Minor)	100	98	90
ASB	45	69	90
CAS	91	90	95
Gas Servicing	97	95	95
Generic	70	77	
Legionella	89	89	
Lettings	91	93	90
Major works	96	96	90
Repairs	92	94	95
Right to Buy	100	94	90

4.2 The figures shown is for the levels of very satisfied or quite satisfied customers. This does not necessarily equate to the remaining percentage all being dissatisfied. Within the remaining amount are dissatisfied customers and those who have declared to be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

4.3 As the table above shows, most areas are performing at above 90% for the third quarter, with just two falling below (ASB and CAS).

4.4 Further work will take place throughout the year across all council services to measure customer satisfaction and use customer insight to improve performance, as part of the customer insight project.

4.5 Housing management has not yet undertaken the STAR survey this year due to the impact of Covid-19. This is an independent survey of tenants which can be run annually or less often. The aim is to run in Spring 2021, following discussion and agreement of the Chair.

## **5.0 Equalities Implications**

5.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

## **6.0 Digital Implications**

6.1 There are no digital implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 Financial Implications (FIN20-21/395)**

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 A financial performance report as at November 2020 forecast to the year end was reported to Policy and Finance and functional Committees during the January cycle.

## **8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

8.1 The performance of the housing service contributes to the delivery of several of the objectives of the Community Plan 2019-23 and will continue to reflect this as outlined at 2.3.

## **9.0 Comments from Director and/or Housing Advisory Group**

9.1 At the meeting of 18 February 2021, the group fed back that they recognised the continuing challenges to staff regarding Covid and its impact on performance figures, which are not to the standards they would like to see.

9.2 Regarding gas servicing access, it was good to see the gas compliance figures are back to where they were a few years and the group passed on their thanks to the team for this.

9.3 The relet times (affected by a three month period of only letting in emergency circumstances) are a disappointment. The interest in properties to let shown on the website are below a normal year but are still there so we are not sure why the slow take up so would like to explore this further.

9.4 The scrutiny group have not been able to complete any void inspections with the team, but have identified a property, let to a relative that was found to be below an acceptable standard. The appropriate officer was informed and agreed and most of the issues which were addressed. We look forward to reinstating this programme as soon as restrictions are lifted.

9.5 Another area for future scrutiny is the performance for the Customer Access Services, noting that communication is the issue – which has been an ongoing problem for a number of years.

9.6 The group is requesting the Committee to explore the suggestion of a dedicated Complaints Officer to deal with all grumbles and complaints at the first stage, all complaints/grumbles received by CAS would be passed to this Officer to resolve. This Officer could have the seniority over all departments to resolve any issues that arise and he/she would be the single contact point for Tenants instead of no one owning the situation.

9.7 ASB figures are also below where we would like them to be. The group are continuing with their scrutiny of ASB and will present their findings to this committee in the future. We also note this is an area for focus that was highlighted from customer consultation last year when looking to bring housing services in house.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 **That the Committee notes the performance of the housing service.**

10.2 **That Members feedback their observations about the content and presentation of performance information.**

10.3 **That members support the recommendation set out in 9.6 to explore a Complaints Officer**

10.4 **That Members note the future agenda item from involved tenants around ASB scrutiny.**

### **Reason for Recommendations**

To enable the Homes and Communities Committee to proactively monitor and manage the performance of housing services as set out in the Community Plan.

### **Background Papers**

Community Plan 2019/23

For further information please contact  
Natalie Cook, Transformation Manager ext 5275

Deborah Johnson  
Assistant Director – Transformation & Communications

## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

15 MARCH 2021

### HOUSING SERVICE COMPLIANCE PERFORMANCE – QUARTERLY REPORT

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of compliance performance of the housing service at the end of December 2020.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The Committee has the direct responsibility to ensure that homes and services are of a high standard and meet legal and regulatory requirements.

2.2 This report gives a summary of the performance of the housing service compliance functions at the end of December 2020.

2.4 This report provides Members with an opportunity to comment on the performance of the housing services compliance functions.

#### **3.0 Performance report**

3.1 The report contains information on compliance performance to provide Members with oversight and input into these essential services. The report includes, amongst other matters information on the following:

- Landlord responsibilities for a range of building safety measures including fire protection, gas, asbestos, electrical and water. It also summarises details of the Council's housing stock.

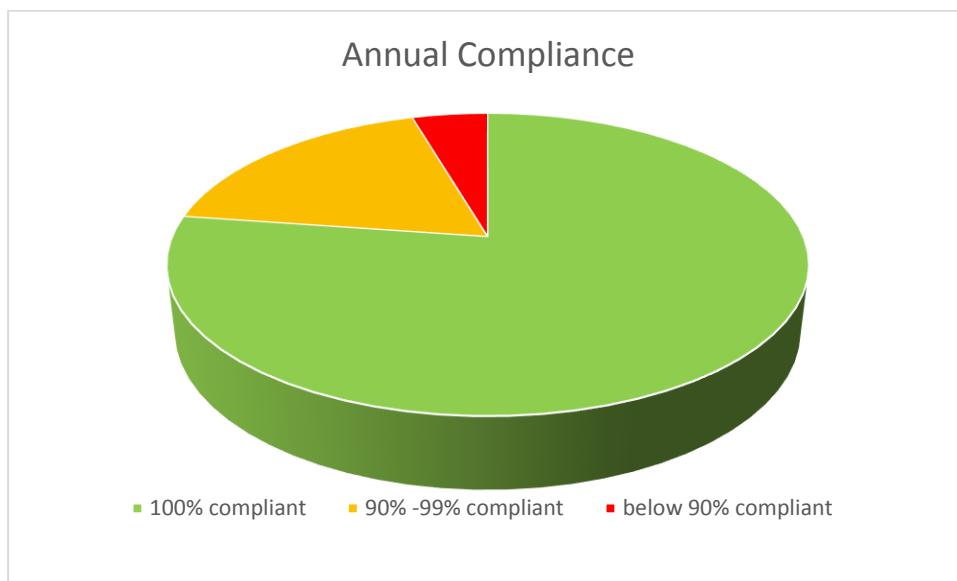
3.2 A separate report will be submitted to this committee relating to the operational performance of other key housing services.

3.3 The metrics included in this report were last considered by this Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

3.4 Current overall annual performance has improved since the last report and is shown in the pie chart below, the 22 areas that are reported upon, are broken down as follows:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Compliant (Green)</b>	<b>90% -99% compliant (Amber)</b>	<b>Below 90% compliant (RED)</b>
July 2020	14 Areas	4 Areas	4 Areas
September 2020	16 Areas	5 Areas	1 Area
December 2020	17 Areas	3 Areas	2 Areas

3.5 Full details of these performance indicators along with associated commentary are included at Appendix 1 to this report. All the areas out of compliance relate, in the main, to issues arising from the COVID-19 lockdown.



3.6 To assist the reader, performance against the 22 indicators are RAG rated, as follows:

- Green: At target.
- Amber: Within 10% of target.
- Red: below 10% of target

3.7 Of note within the amber segment is the position on gas servicing, which is now only 0.06% out of compliance with 3 properties not having their annual service carried out by the anniversary date of the previous one. This has reduced from 49 at the end of July. Prior to lock down this figure was around 5 properties in any given month, rising to a peak of 158 properties in June 2020, at the height of the pandemic.

3.8 Within the red segment, the report highlights access problems due to the pandemic, affecting our performance on undertaking the servicing of Hoists. Efforts are being made to access the outstanding properties. These properties have doctor's notes stating they are vulnerable and are self-isolating. We are also in discussions with OT about access and the equipment use

#### 4.0 **Equalities Implications**

4.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. Where tenants are may have additional needs, an individual risk assessment is carried out to ensure all tenants are supported.

#### 5.0 **Digital Implications**

5.1 There are no digital implications arising directly from this report.

#### 6.0 **Financial Implications**



6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, it should contribute to Members' understanding of the way in which resources are allocated to meet our statutory and regulatory responsibilities to ensure we keep our tenants and residents safe in their homes.

## **7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 The performance of the housing service contributes to our services as a landlord, and our responsibility to keep tenants safe in their homes.

## **8.0 Comments of Director or Housing Advisory Group**

8.1 Performance remains strong across our compliance functions and will remain of the highest priority going forward, with a zero tolerance on gas servicing to keep our tenants safe in their homes.

8.2 Feedback is also welcome on areas of service where the Committee would benefit from a more in depth briefing to enhance Members' understanding of the services being provided including our legal and regulatory responsibilities.

8.3 At Housing Advisory Group on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the group acknowledged the strong performance on gas servicing and gave examples of a responsive service for a tenant who had an issue with a boiler under warranty to ensure they were not left for days due to delays with the contractor attending.

8.4 Although the Periodic Electrical testing figures are not where they would like them to be the group understand that unlike the gas inspection, electrical testing in our homes is quite invasive and so the precautions taken by the Contractor are understandable and the measures taken by NSDC to bring back to acceptable figures is welcomed.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That the Committee notes the performance of the housing service compliance functions.**

### **Reason for Recommendation(s)**

This report provides an opportunity for members of the Homes & Communities Committee to have continued oversight into the performance of the housing management service, in relation to statutory and regulatory compliance and best practice.

### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Mark Plant, Compliance Manager on Ext 5603.

Suzanne Shead, Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing

## Newark & Sherwood District Council Compliance Reporting

For the month of December 2020 (Housing Services Compliance Performance)

### 1) Asset Base

Total no. of individual dwellings / properties being managed	5534
Total no. of "blocks" being managed Note: "Blocks" relates to multiple dwellings contained within one building i.e. flats, bedsits, maisonettes, apartments, HMO's etc.	334
Total no. of non-residential units (i.e. commercial properties including offices, retail units, storage facilities etc.)	3

### 2) Stock Type

<b>Residential</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>
<b>Social &amp; affordable housing</b>	
General Needs (Social rented)	2933
Shared Ownership	0
Housing for older people	2576
Supported housing	92
<b>Affordable (non-social) housing</b>	
Market Rented	0
Affordable Rented	288
Leasehold (Leaseholder owns 100% of equity)	159
Other – Wellow Green and Seven Hills	39
<b>Non-Housing</b>	
Offices and commercial premises	18
Garages & car parking spaces	430
Community centres	33

## How to Read This Report

This document reports on the compliance activities due to take place each month.

**The Annual Target** column indicates the total number of compliance activities expected in the year.

The number of activities due in the month is shown in the column headed **Target for Month**.

Note: Any work not carried out in the previous month will be carried forward and added to this figure.

**The Total for Month** column records the actual number of compliance activities carried out in the month



The **Outstanding** column records the number of activities due in the month but not completed by the end of the month.

The final 2 **Compliance** columns record the annual and monthly compliance percentage at the time of the report.

**RAG Rating** is included to assist the reader, as follows;

- Green: At or above your target.
- Amber: Within 10% of your target.
- Red: Less than 10% of your target

### 3) Work Activity



Fire	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Fire Risk Assessments	135	0	0	0	100% 	100% 

Comments:

Total number of annual reviews required is 135



The Type 1 fire risk assessments (FRA's) currently in place are a 5-year assessment and all are currently still valid and provide the necessary compliance. An annual review is then carried out to ensure no changes have been made to the property which would have an impact on fire safety.

The new programme of Type 3 FRA's in January 2021 which will continue through until April 2021 or beyond. This type of FRA will potentially highlight additional areas of remedial work not routinely identified through the Type 1 FRA inspection. Budgets have been increased to meet the increased cost of any additional work identified and future reports will include any outstanding follow up actions.

Fire	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Fire Alarm Testing (including emergency lighting)	6760	524	524	0	100% 	100% 



Comments:

There are 130 sites which receive a weekly visit to check and test the system

Fire	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Sprinkler Servicing	3	0	0	0	100% 	100% 

Comments:

This item relates to the sprinkler system at Gladstone House and a pair of houses on Beech Avenue, New Ollerton which require a sprinkler system under the building regulations.



Asbestos	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total to Date	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Asbestos Surveys (Domestic)	333 <i>(464 completed this year)</i>	0	83	0	100% 	100% 

Comments:

Although there is no statutory requirement to carry out domestic asbestos surveys it is considered good practice to do so.



Asbestos surveys are planned to be carried out at all domestic Council properties; this was commenced with a 20% survey in 2008. Subsequently we have targeted circa 333 (27 per month) surveys on domestic dwellings per annum, this is a fluid target as it is subject to removal costs where the material is identified and needs to be replaced. The programme was slow to mobilise this financial year because of the COVID-19 lockdown.

We have completed this year's target but will continue to carry out asbestos surveys for any works that are required between now and the end of March 2021. We will continue to record the amount of surveys carried out and report on this monthly

Asbestos	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Asbestos Surveys (Communal)	112	0	0	0	100% 	100% 

Comments:



This is a statutory responsibility and the survey programme has now been completed. A programme of re-inspecting any high/medium risk asbestos found and not replaced, will commence in January 2021 as required by the Asbestos Management Regulations (this will run alongside the Type 3 Fire Risk Assessments)



Heating Systems	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Valid Gas Annual safety Inspection*	5202	380	377	3	99.94% 	99.21% 



Comments



All outstanding properties are now with the legal team but additional attempts are still being made to gain access.



Heating Systems	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Solid Fuel	25	0	0	0	100%	100%

						
Comments: All on target						



Heating Systems	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Oil Servicing	205	0	0	0	100% 	100% 
Comments: All services are complete.						



Heating Systems	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
LPG Gas Servicing	3	0	0	0	100% 	100% 
Comments: All services are complete.						



Heating Systems	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Commercial Boilers	3	0	0	0	100% 	100% 
Comments: All services are complete.						



Electrical 5 Year	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Domestic Testing	718 <i>(196 left to do from the original programme)</i>	97	66	31	72.7% 	68.04% 
Certificate Audit	387	0	0	0		
<b>Comments:</b> The Contractor suspended work due to lockdown until early May 2020, and is now completing a restricted programme of testing, avoiding tenants who are shielding or over 70 years of age, where requested. However, we do expect to complete target by the end of the year. We have also carried out an audit of all electrical certification and have found that 387 certificates are not registered on our system. We have now added these to the contractors programme and they are putting additional resources on to ensure that these are recertified by the end of March 2021. There is sufficient funding in this year's budget to cover the additional surveys.						



Electrical Testing	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Non-domestic Testing	130	0	0	0	100%	100%

						
Comments: All non-domestic electrical testing is completed and certified in line with a five-year testing programme						



Electrical Testing	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
PAT Testing	37	13	13	0	100% 	100% 
Comments:						

Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Legionella	120	11	5	6	95% 	45.45% 
Comments: Access issues on the six outstanding blocks was due to an issue with key safe which has now been rectified and we are now waiting for an update from the contractor and their written report.  The programme is progressing on target and a Legionella Risk Assessment has been completed for each building where this is required, these risk assessments are currently being updates. Additional work is now taking place to produce a 'written Scheme' for each building which describes the ongoing testing and cleansing that takes place to mitigate any safety issues highlighted within the risk assessment.						



Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
General Block Inspections	1164	97	97	0	100% 	100% 
Comments: All blocks inspected						



Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Play Park Inspections	884	85	85	0	100% 	100% 



Comments:  
Currently on target with no issues to report



Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Tree Surveys	1	0	0	0	100% 	100% 



Comments:  
Tree surveys are undertaken every 5 years and were completed in March 2019

Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Passenger and Goods Lift Servicing	96	0	0	0	100% 	100% 
Comments All now complete.						

Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Stair lift Servicing	95	10	9	1	98.95% 	90.00% 
Comments: The contractor has continued to offer service during the Coronavirus lockdown but access rates have been affected by tenants self-isolating. Efforts are being made to access the outstanding property. This property has doctor's notes stating they are vulnerable and are self-isolating. We are also in discussions with the OT about access and the equipment use.						

Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Hoist Servicing	36	12	8	4	88.89% 	66.67% 
Comments: The contractor has continued to offer service during the Coronavirus lockdown but access rates have been affected by tenants self-isolating. Efforts are being made to access the outstanding properties. These properties have doctor's notes stating they are vulnerable and are self-isolating. We are also in discussions with OT about access and the equipment use to manage any risks.						

Other Safety Works	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Commercial Ductwork	1	0	0	0	100% 	100% 
Comments: This relates to Gladstone House commercial boiler. Inspection carried out by H&S officer as part of Fire Risk Assessments						

Gladstone House	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
Bacteria Testing Potable Water	1	0	0	0	100% 	100% 
Comments: A dip test of the tank has been completed and no issues were found with the quality of the water.						

Gladstone House	Annual Target	Target for Month	Total for Month	Outstanding	Compliance	
					Annual	Month
<b>Air Conditioning</b>	1	0	0	0		
Comments: A contractor has been appointed and a date of 29/1/2021 has been arranged with the management at Gladstone						



## HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

15 MARCH 2021

### UPDATE ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN NEWARK AND SHERWOOD

#### 1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Homes and Communities Committee with an update on the current position regarding refugee resettlement in Newark and Sherwood and consider future scenarios for the management of the programme in a changing national and global landscape.

#### 2.0 Background Information

##### 2.1 **Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)**

In 2014, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme was launched nationally and the government made a pledge for the UK to accept 20,000 vulnerable persons displaced by the conflict in Syria.

NSDC made an initial pledge to accept **45 individuals (approx. 10 families)** over the course of the programme, which ran until March 2020. NSDC received its first families in November 2016 and, with continuing Member support, has since resettled 65 individuals (13 families) which exceeded our original pledge and is summarised below:

	2016	2017		2018		2019				Totals
	Nov	Mar	Jun	Jun	Sep	Mar	Jul	Sep	Dec	
<b>Adult</b>	4	4	4	2	3	4	3	3	3	30
<b>5-18</b>	2	3	3	1	2	4	2	3	2	22
<b>3-4</b>	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
<b>U3</b>	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>65</b>

##### 2.2 **UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)**

In June 2019, central Government announced a consolidation of existing national refugee resettlement schemes under a single United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (“UKRS”), with an objective to resettle 5,000 individuals across the UK in 2020.

A paper was taken to the Homes and Communities Committee on 25 November 2019 to seek approval to continue with the ‘award winning’ resettlement work in Newark and Sherwood. The committee agreed and pledged to resettle (*at least*) 9 individuals (approx. 2-3 families) during 2020/21.

Unfortunately, due to risks and mitigations arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, international arrivals under the UKRS were suspended in March 2020 and have not yet resumed. However, the Home Office has recently agreed to the resumption of arrivals but this will merely be to complete the original pledge of welcoming 20,000 individuals in the period 2015 -2020 under the legacy VPR Scheme. It is anticipated that the final few hundred individuals will commence their departure process from host countries in early 2021. Newark and Sherwood, having exceeded its initial pledge, have not been asked to assist in meeting the national shortfall to complete the scheme.

At present, the Home Office have given a verbal commitment to a new scheme but details are yet to be shared with local authorities. The only certainty is that it will not be the planned UKRS scheme which was announced in 2019, and will be low key with regard to publicity.

NSDC had already secured two properties in Newark in preparation for the successor UKRS scheme, and were working towards accepting two family arrivals in June 2020. However, due to COVID-19 and on advice from the Home Office and East Midlands Councils, the Council surrendered these void properties and now await future communication on any resumption of refugee resettlement.

With this pause in refugee arrivals, we continue to focus on our partnership work to support our existing resettled families; moving them towards integration and independence.

### **2.3 N&S Resettlement Partnership**

The Newark and Sherwood Resettlement Partnership model has been recognised across the East Midlands and nationally as being exceptional in its creativity, successful integration and empowerment of the local community to welcome and support the families. This was further acknowledged by receiving the 'Highly Commended' prize in the Transforming Lives category at the Municipal Journal Awards in 2019.

The partnership continues to go from strength to strength. Key partners are Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum, Framework Housing Association (Opportunity and Change), Home-Start Newark, Support for Syrian Refugees and Support Refugees in Southwell. The trajectory of progress for each family has been truly astonishing as they follow a well-supported programme towards work and independence.

Council staff resource has been made available by drawing down funds from the Home Office tariff to support the families in all areas including wellbeing, access to employment and skills, community development of local charities and general integration activity.

### **2.4 Funding and Nottinghamshire Partnership Delivery Model**

VPRS funding is allocated per capita and each individual participates across a five year grant-funded programme, intended to be cost-neutral for Local Authorities in the first year. Families are funded on a tariff basis of £8,520 per individual in the first year (with school-aged children attracting additional funding contributions for education costs). The funding profile tapers across Years 2-5, with families in their final year funded at only £1,000 per individual.

Our partnership model with Nottingham City Council (NCC) is delivered under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). SLT and Members agreed the MoU which places NCC as the accountable body for managing funds from the Home Office in accordance with their Contract and Procedure rules and Data Protection Policy (for which they take an 8 % management fee). The Nottinghamshire Partnership includes Gedling, Rushcliffe, Broxtowe and Bassetlaw and casework is commissioned as a grant-aid service level agreement between NCC and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum, which is monitored against a robust framework of outcomes. NCC has recently negotiated a reduced fee with NNRF running to the end of financial year 20/21, taking into account COVID-19 impacts and the current suspension in arrivals.

### Funding income for NSDC to date from VPRS Tariff (managed by NCC)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total VPR income
Nov 16 arrivals	£184,680								
Mar 17 arrivals		£205,200							
Jun 17 arrivals		£205,200							
Jun 18 arrivals			£102,600						
Sep 18 arrivals			£102,600						
Mar 19 arrivals				£205,200					
Jul 19 arrivals				£102,600					
Sep 19 arrivals				£123,120					
Dec 19 arrivals				£102,600					
									<b>£1,333,800</b>

### Costs for the VPRS programme

The main costs under this programme are:

- Nottingham City Council management of contracts and budget.
- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum caseworker contract
- NSDC coordination of the local partnership
- Provision of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Language) tuition
- Employment support
- Accommodation provision and furnishing
- Integration activities

Clearly, the suspension of resettlement arrivals impacts upon anticipated income profiling across the partnership, creating resource implications for current levels of service provision. However, given funding is spread across five years of participation, there remains a period of resilience within budgets for the immediate/short term future based on the current number of families resettled.

However, in light of the suspension on future arrivals, NSDC are in discussions with NCC and wider Nott’s partners to consider future resourcing contingencies on the basis of the tapering of income as highlighted below. NCC have provided the figures below as anticipated income for NSDC from the Home Office to the end of the financial year 2024/25.

<b>20-21</b>	<b>21-22</b>	<b>22-23</b>	<b>24-25</b>
£268,566	£148,200	£69,800	£26,000
			£512,566

### **3.0 Proposals**

#### **3.1 Scenario Planning**

Looking ahead, there are three potential scenarios which will frame resource planning for this activity:

##### **Scenario A – Arrivals resume within FY21/22.**

In this scenario, funding profiles and operational planning will inevitably be impacted upon by a reduction in income due to the current suspension of refugee arrivals. However, there is sufficient resilience within existing budgets to maintain existing service levels, skills, and resource continuity across the partnership.

Likewise, there may be operational impacts around scaling up and restarting of services, but presuming that existing skills and experience are retained, risks in this scenario remain minimal.

##### **Scenario B – Arrivals remain suspended into FY21/22, but are still intended to resume.**

Under this contingency, it is highly probable that services may require restructuring if an operational restart date remains unclarified in the medium/long term. Careful consideration will be required regarding legacy funding profiles and resourcing implications, to account for a sharp tapering of budget moving into FY22/23. Loss of key programme management skills and experience (required to efficiently restart operations) vs sustainability of budget becomes a principal risk factor across the partnership.

However, it should also be considered that with new arrivals suspended, the intensive initial family support needs are negated, allowing potential savings around third-party casework provision and local authority resource (both NCC and NSDC).

Unless further clarity emerges around resumption of arrivals, the closer the approach of end FY21/22, the more likely it is that planning for severe service reduction will be required.

### **Scenario C – Arrivals remain suspended beyond FY21/22, and into FY22/23.**

In the absence of absolute clarity from the Home Office around planning for resumption of arrivals, it may be necessary to begin to scale-back or completely wind-up resettlement operations to remain within the existing funding envelope and disband the partnership.

Risk factors remain similar to previous scenarios, however loss of programme management skills, particularly at NCC, and support capacity due to reduction in service provision is considered highly probable under this scenario.

#### **3.2 Mainstreaming Resettlement into Health and Community Engagement at NSDC**

In order to mitigate some of the risks posed above, it was agreed with the Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing, that resettlement activity should be managed within the Health and Community Engagement Business Unit and this is now co-ordinated and delivered by the 4 x Community Relations Officers, supported by the Senior Officer and Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager. This will ensure sustainable and appropriate support remains in place locally for our families, for the N&S Resettlement Partnership and local charity groups; Support for Syrian Refugees and Support Refugees in Southwell.

In addition, the officer responsible for the coordination of the resettlement scheme to date (Maria Brambles) was the successful candidate in the Community Relations Officer recruitment process on Friday 4 December, and is now in post in the Health and Community Engagement Business Unit.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 The recommendation helps to support vulnerable people with a ‘protected characteristic’ under the Equalities Act 2010 and therefore has a positive impact on equality and diversity.

#### **5.0 Digital Implications**

5.1 The resettlement programme uses multiple digital solutions in the performance of its operations and contact has been maintained with this vulnerable group throughout the pandemic by using various digital platforms. A recent bid for ‘Home Office Exceptional Funding’ was successful in accessing additional funds to provide digital skills training for all of the refugee adults in Newark and Sherwood and this is being delivered by our ESOL education partner, Enable.

5.2 In addition, the programme coordinator will continue to work closely with the Council’s ICT team to develop further digital solutions as deemed appropriate to ensure that the resettled families and the programme partners are digitally assisted and enabled in self-serve as far as is reasonably practicable in order to meet the Council’s Digital Agenda and Local Digital Declaration.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications - FIN20-21/8275**

6.1 There are no direct additional financial implications to NSDC as a result of this update report. All the details of the funding are contained within the body of the report. Any changes to this will be reported to the Committee should they arise.

## **7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 The ongoing work supporting the resettled families supports and contributes to Community Plan objectives:

- *Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to the local area.*
- *Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and increase feelings of safety in our communities.*
- *Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.*

## **8.0 Comments of Director(s) or Housing Advisory Group**

8.1 None

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that:

- a) Homes and Communities Committee note the contents of this report, and;
- b) a further report be presented to members when further information is available in relation to the resumption of the programme.

## **Reason for Recommendation(s)**

To keep members apprised of the current programme.

## **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Andy Hardy, Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager on 01636 655708

Suzanne Shead  
Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing