



*Castle House
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Friday, 14 January 2022

Chairman: Councillor T Wendels

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Mrs R Holloway

Members of the Committee:

**Councillor M Brock
Councillor Mrs B Brooks
Councillor S Carlton
Councillor R Crowe
Councillor Mrs L Dales
Councillor L Goff
Councillor S Haynes
Councillor J Lee
Councillor T Wildgust
Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead**

Substitute Members:

**Councillor D Cumberlidge
Councillor P Harris
Councillor J Kellas
Councillor Mrs S Michael
Councillor P Peacock**

MEETING: Homes & Communities Committee

DATE: Monday, 24 January 2022 at 6.00 pm

**VENUE: Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road,
Newark, Notts NG24 1BY**

You are hereby requested to attend the above Meeting to be held at the time/place and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the business on the Agenda as overleaf.

If you have any queries please contact Karen Langford on Karen.Langford@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk 01636 655992.

AGENDA

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Confidential & Exempt Items

None

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Homes & Communities Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 22 November 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor T Wendels (Chairman)

Councillor M Brock, Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor R Crowe, Councillor L Goff, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor J Lee and Councillor J Kellas

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Mrs R Holloway (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Mrs L Dales (Committee Member) and Councillor T Wildgust (Committee Member)

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

NOTED that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

39 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

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

40 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 'new normal' meeting.

The Chairman informed the Committee that as part of the preparations for winter, a refresh of all the emergency flood resilience stores is taking place to ensure contact details and stocks within the stores are replenished prior to winter. The County Council have recently undertaken consultation on their new revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and a joint response from Public Protection and Planning was submitted.

The Council takes its Safeguarding duties seriously and refresher training has been provided over the past few months for all new staff. This will be further supported by training for all Business Managers early in 2022.

The local implementation of the Council's duties under the Domestic Abuse Act continue to be developed in partnership with the County Council and local partners. A domestic abuse case worker has been appointed and additional funding for the sanctuary scheme (which provides additional security measures to enable people to

stay in their home) has been secured. Further actions will be developed over the coming weeks and months.

The Chairman advised that the Annual Tenant Report for 2020-2021 has been produced, detailing performance over the past 12 months, how the rental income we collect from tenants has been spent and how tenants feel about our services, as well as sharing some of the future tasks they are looking to deliver. The Chairman reminded the Committee that it is an online report and to keep an eye out for it.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Tenant Forum has been busy with digital training and a two-day course on Mystery Shopping, which is hoped to start rolling out early next year. The Forum have reviewed the Repairs Policy and Consumer Regulation Gap Analysis as well as supporting a number of surveys of tenants and events.

A survey of all tenants in Chatham Court has provided further insight to what activities tenants would like to see at the hub (recalling this was part of the Safer Streets legacy) and the best times of day for these to happen. It is clear the children and youth activities are important and we are continuing to hold monthly sessions supported by Play Support and The Youth Service. The weekly drop in to see the Tenancy Officer has also started to gain pace, as has the coffee mornings with involved tenants seeing more new faces. New activities include a Gardening Club hosted by Newark in Bloom, which started in October and Police drop in sessions throughout November are being trialled.

The Chairman advised that currently they are experiencing increased levels of ASB, criminal behaviour and breaches of tenancy on one of our larger estates on the Sherwood side of the district. This has prompted a multi-agency approach involving our housing team, the Police, the local members, colleagues in Environmental Health and Public Protection and the youth service. A number of enforcement actions have already been undertaken and secured at court; including three injunctions prohibiting individuals entering the estate.

The Chairman was pleased to report some great progress in relation to the replacement of the temporary accommodation at Seven Hills, as the project team have reached the milestone of handing the vacant site to the contractors on Monday 1st November 2021 following months of hard work and planning to make alternative arrangements for customers. The new provision will be constructed using modern methods and there are many green initiatives being included, the Chairman advised the Committee to watch this space for further updates.

The team has worked closely with colleagues from the varying departments including Tenancy and Estates and Repairs to source and make ready the alternative provision. All in all it has been a massive team effort to get to this point but the reward for all this hard work will be a brand new facility due to complete in 2023. Demolition of the existing site has commenced and Woodheads, the allocated contractor, will then begin preparing the site to start construction early January 2022.

This followed hot on the heels of the formal opening of The Broadleaves Extra Care Village in Boughton on November 5th. The Chairman was delighted to attend this

event along with the Vice-Chairman and the Chairman of the Council and met some of the residents. This is a very thoughtful and well-designed build that is something it is hoped members, the residents and those who have brought it to life are very proud of.

42 FORWARD PLAN - DECEMBER 2021 TO NOVEMBER 2022

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

It was noted that there would be only 2 meetings of the Committee taking place in the new year as moving from a Committee system to a Cabinet from May. A Committee Member therefore requested that a further Yorke Drive update be provided in March. The Chairman was also mindful that any other relative reports were also included in the January or March meetings.

43 REVIEW AND UPDATE OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection seeking Members approval for amendments to the Council's Disabled Facilities Grants Policy.

The report highlighted to the Committee that Disabled Facilities Grants are the mandatory grants that are designed to provide adaptations to the home to allow a disabled person to continue living in the community. These grants are subject to a means test and some applicants do have to pay a contribution towards the cost of the work. Referrals for these grants come from the Occupational Therapy team of the County Council.

Providing a policy gives a transparency of approach to service users and they can clearly see the circumstances that might apply to their need.

The Committee were informed that the revised policy does not differ fundamentally from the previous document but seeks to address a number of consistency issues identified via a Nottinghamshire County wide review, which included the seven District Councils and the County Council Adult and Children's Occupational Therapy services.

AGREED (unanimously) that the draft Disabled Facilities Grant Policy be approved.

44 NEWARK AND SHERWOOD COMMUNITY LOTTERY ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FROM INCOME GENERATION PROPOSAL

The Committee considered the report from the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager providing an update on the progress of Newark and Sherwood Community Lottery since its launch in May 2021 and to secure approval for the process of spend for income generated through both the lottery 'Central Fund' and 'Operator Fund'.

The Committee were informed that there are currently 54 Good Causes within the District signed up to the lottery, meeting the annual target of 50 within 3 months of its launch date. Case studies and positive feedback from registered 'Good Causes' were provided in Appendix A of the report.

The report advised that the lottery is forecast to generate approx. £22,600 each year, with a full breakdown of finances provided in Appendix B.

One of the key proposals was the total income generated through the 'Central Fund' is used to establish a 'lottery within a lottery', whereby funds are distributed to registered 'Good Causes' through a 6 monthly raffle style draw.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the proposed method and process of spend for income generated through Newark and Sherwood Community Lottery 'Central Fund' (3.1 and 3.2), and the 'Operator Fund' (3.3) be approved.
- b) the process for spending income generated through both the 'Central Fund' and 'Operator Fund' is reviewed on an annual basis, with the flexibility to adapt and modify the process if required, subject to Member approval as part of the annual report.

45 NEWARK AND SHERWOOD EEM LOCAL INITIATIVE FUND PROPOSAL

The Committee considered the report from the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager to secure Committee approval to use the Council's EEM (Efficiency East Midlands) contribution through the establishment of the Newark and Sherwood EEM Local Initiative Fund and the proposed process of distributing donations within the district.

The report highlighted that EEM is a non-for profit organisation that chooses to distribute a proportion of its operating surplus to its Members in the form of community donations. The council currently holds EEM community donations to the total value of £26,616 (£12,783 2018/2019 and £13,833 2019/2020). Donations for the year 2020/2021 are not yet confirmed and are dependent on a sufficient surplus with consideration of the uncertainty of the pandemic.

EEM have requested that the donation should be spent on a project or multiple projects that benefit a community and for those that are not covered by budgets as standard. EEM also request that details of how the donation is spent are provided to enable good news stories to be shared publically.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the establishment of the proposed Newark and Sherwood EEM Local Initiative Fund as outlined in 3.1 be approved.
- b) the proposed process for submitting, reviewing and approving applications as outlined in 3.2 and 3.3 be approved.

- c) the proposed reporting and update arrangements as outlined in 3.4 be approved.

46 SAFER STREETS FUND

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection updating the Members on the progress of the Safer Streets Two project.

The report highlighted the success of the Safer Streets project and how a smaller Safer Streets project continues with a similar focus on crimes associated with the areas identified referring to the map at appendix one.

The partners being involved are:

Newark and Sherwood DC

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Nottinghamshire Police

Nottinghamshire County Council

The project is scheduled to end by 31 March 2022 and the Committee were informed that progress is going well and a table at 2.5 of the report as at end of September 2021 sets out the work achieved so far.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the progress of the Safer Streets Two project.

47 HOUSING SERVICE COMPLIANCE 2ND QUARTER OUT TURN PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the report from the Director for Housing, Health and Wellbeing providing the Committee with an overview of compliance performance of the housing service at the end of September 2021.

The report provided the compliance performance to provide Members with an oversight and input into the essential services. The report included information on the following:

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

A committee member referred to Appendix 1 and highlighted how 'Red' performance can be seen as 'good' to then show as working to increase performance.

The operational performance of other key housing services was provided as a separate report to the Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee noted the performance of the housing service compliance functions.

48 COMMUNITY PLAN PERFORMANCE - YEAR TO DATE

The Committee considered the report from the Transformation Manager presenting the year to date performance report covering Q1 and Q2 (April to September 2021).

The Committee were informed that Quarter 1 had not been reported to the Committee as the development of the new style of reporting had been underway. As an alternative, a year to date (combined quarters 1 and quarter 2) report had been developed and was attached as Appendix 1. Additional performance indicators were provided at Appendix 2 as to the Council's tenanted properties.

The report provided a new approach to performance to develop performance management from a counting device and into a tool for change. This expanded report provides greater learning and feedback and easier for residents to understand. The Chairman noted that tenants were happy as seen as the Council were doing something right.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members reviewed the Community Plan Performance report attached to the report as Appendix 1.
- (b) Members noted the RIPA and Ombudsman reports (Appendices 3 and 4).

49 YORKE DRIVE AND LINCOLN ROAD PLAYING FIELDS REGENERATION - UPDATE

The Committee considered the report from the Growth & Regeneration Lead Officer updating the Committee on progress with the Yorke Drive and Lincoln Road Playing Fields Regeneration project including the successful grant funding award from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of £1.05m.

The report was able to show the next steps to achieving the next milestone of submitting reserved planning.

The Committee were informed that the Residents Panel had resumed, the last meeting being held on 10 November which made clear the Council's ongoing commitment to the regeneration scheme and what the residents can expect to see on the ground in the coming months following the result of a successful bid with DLUHC.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) progress on the delivery of the York Drive Regeneration Project is noted.
- (b) a further recommendation to Policy & Finance that as and when grant funding is received, that is absorbed into the capital programme budget to enable spend to be achieved within timeframes set.

50 WINTER PROVISION UPDATE

The Committee considered the report from the Assistant Business Manager for

Housing and Estate Management to update Members on the winter provision being provided for any rough sleepers in the Newark and Sherwood district this year.

An update was provided at the meeting to inform the Committee that Public Health had advised both the Council and the Church that plans they wanted to put in place were not Covid safe and to be withdrawn for this year and that the Council would have to revert to looking for self-contained accommodation as Plan B.

Future funding is expected over the next three years and the Committee were advised that currently there is one rough sleeper, who has been made an offer of accommodation but had not at this point taken up the offer.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the content of the report as updated.

51 HOMES & COMMUNITIES REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2022 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Financial Services comparing the Revised Budgets for the period ending 31 March 2022 with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period, based on meetings with Financial Services staff and the appropriate Business Manager. These are based on six 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 25 November 2021.

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

Meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Chairman

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

UPDATE ON ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND INTERVENTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide the Committee with information on the current position with regard to anti-social behaviour across the district and the interventions and enforcement used to combat this behaviour.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 ASB covers a wide range of unacceptable activity that causes harm to an individual, to their community or to their environment. Anti-Social Behaviour may include but is not limited to the following examples,

- Persistent, unnecessary or excessive noise
- Excessively loud or persistent parties
- Dogs persistently barking
- Verbal or written abuse including via social media
- Threats of violence
- Damage or threats to damage property
- Graffiti
- Dumping rubbish and littering
- Dog fouling
- Anti-social behaviour as a result of alcohol or drug misuse, including street drinking
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicles e.g. off-road motorbikes

2.2 Levels of ASB in Newark and Sherwood

ASB does not recognise council structures or partnerships and therefore there are a number of ways in which ASB is measured and recorded. However, the measure used in this report are the ASB incidents reported and recorded by the police.

2.3 The Council's ASB Officers work within the Public Protection Business Unit and this team is the council's main focus for addressing ASB. The ASB team are supported by the Council's Community Protection Officers. Certain types of ASB, i.e. noise nuisance, dumping of rubbish, are also dealt with by colleagues in Public Protection and Environmental Services.

2.4 There are other posts within the Council that have a role to play in reducing ASB, such as Housing Officers, Licensing Officers, Street Wardens, Tenancy Officers Environmental Health Officers, Park Rangers, Environmental Protection Officers.

2.5 The police are a key partner in addressing ASB and they record levels of ASB. The figures for the year to date compared to the same 12 months in 2019/20 are shown below.

2019/20	2021/22	% change
1,759	2180	+24

2.6 One of the Councils key performance indicators is the ‘% Reduction in ASB’. Prior to the pandemic the trend for ASB was a decreasing figure with each year showing a decline in the number of reported cases.

2.7 The impact of the pandemic has resulted in an increase in ASB. In order for a comparison to be meaningful the current level of ASB is being compared to 2019/20. Therefore it can be seen that there has been an increase in ASB but this is well below that being experienced last year.

2018/19	- 4.0
2019/20	- 1.5
2020/21	+71
2021 to date	+24

2.8 The increase in ASB over the past two years is not a Newark and Sherwood phenomenon, but is a picture that is repeated across the county. The percentage increase across the Nottinghamshire force for the past 12 months is 18% and a neighbouring authority to Newark and Sherwood has seen an increase of 33%.

2.9 The Housing service play an important role in dealing with ASB within the council’s own housing stock. The number of ASB incidents recoded over the same period as set out above are:

2018/2019	193
2019/2020	211
2020/2021	195
2021 to date	104

2.10 ASB incidents are also reported directly to the Public Protection team. These can be from a range of sources and can often result in the requirement for partnership working with the police, Housing Services and many other agencies.

2.11 The numbers of cases recorded by Public Protection’s ASB team are set out below.

2018/2019	259
2019/2020	236
2020/2021	248
2021 to date	161

3.0 Enforcement and Interventions

3.1 There are a range of interventions available to both the Council and the police to tackle ASB. The response will very much depend on the type of ASB being caused. Whilst officers will do all they can to reasonably prevent ASB, at the same time they will take proportionate enforcement action, and will do so at the same time as employing preventative measures if necessary.

- 3.2 The use of the available powers and tools are never done in isolation. One or a number of these powers may be used in succession or concurrently and in most cases at least one partner organisation will be involved.
- 3.3 ASB does not recognise housing tenure, and therefore it is essential that there is effective joint working between the Anti-social Behaviour officers and colleagues in Housing Services. Officers from all services will employ a range of measures to tackle ASB and the overriding principle is that victims must be protected from those who perpetrate ASB and that the Council is committed to reducing ASB in its communities. This means that the officers will use all legal powers at its disposal and also work with and encourage partners to do likewise.
- 3.4 The Business Manager for Public Protection meets regularly with the local Neighbourhood Policing Inspector to discuss a range of issues. Staff at operational level across the Business Units with the council work effectively together and with the police and with other agencies to identify the sources of ASB and to implement solutions.
- 3.5 The Community Safety Partnership at its last Joint Strategic Board agreed that ASB should remain a priority. The Community Safety Partnership annual delivery plan identifies number of activities to address this priority.

4.0 Actions and Interventions

- 4.1 Whilst there are very apparent reasons for the increase in ASB across Newark and Sherwood this should not detract from an ambition to reduce ASB back to the pre covid levels. A range on interventions and activities have been developed and implemented to address ASB
- 4.2 The police have dedicated team that is deployed to respond to reports of ASB. This has now been in place for a number of months. It is deployed to known ASB hotspot for proactive patrolling but is available to react to live reports and to provide a swift response to try and catch the perpetrators in the act of committing ASB.
- 4.3 The Council's ASB team have worked in a number of local communities where ASB has been identified. This have included, Newark town centre, Church Gardens, Hawtonville, Balderton, Fernwood and Boughton. The ASB seen in these areas has covered a wide range of activities including youths gathering, wildlife crime, low level vandalism and general neighbourhood disruption. The interventions delivered in these areas has been designed and delivered to match that ASB taking place.
- 4.4 The Newark neighbourhood policing team joined forces with Newark and Sherwood District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council to combat criminal activity in the Hawtonville area in response to concerns raised by the local community and businesses. The behaviour included reports received of youths causing issues such as throwing bricks and eggs, shouting abuse at people, shoplifting and kicking doors. Dispersal powers have used to deal with people causing issues, enabling police to order those people to leave the area and not return for up to 24 hours. There were 16 people issued with Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. These contracts specify prohibited acts and the consequences of any breaches.
- 4.5 The ASB team along with the Community Engagement officers and Housing colleague's team have delivered a range of diversionary activities in these areas where ASB is prevalent. The

graffiti project on two bridges on the Sustrans cycle route adjacent to Clay Lane Newark is a good example of this type of activity.

4.6 The ASB team have worked very closely with the police to address serious crime and disorder in Boughton. There has been a multi-agency approach to tackle specific individuals involved in incidents of violence, violence with weapons and drug related issues.

4.7 Whilst there is a low level of begging in Newark the ASB team continue to work with local businesses to find solutions to any problem areas.

4.8 As part of the Clipstone Day of Action a graffiti project was delivered that provided positive engagement with a large number of school age children. The project centred on respect for each other and local areas. It was very well received by all those that took part. A summary of the outcomes from the day of action are set out below.

- handed out 2 community warnings
- issued 5 speed warnings to motorists
- visited 25 businesses
- issued 30 dog fouling notices
- worked with 3 classes on the graffiti project
- Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue visited 31 houses and fitted 16 fire alarms
- collected 10.5 tonnes of waste which included 9 tyres, 2 gas bottles, a car front bumper, ironing board and rocking horse.

4.9 In addition to reacting to reports of ASB the council is also proactive in identifying ASB in its earliest stages and seeking to prevent it escalating. The Community Protection Officers and Housing Street Wardens play a key role in this. The patrols the Community Protection Officers carry out are targeted based on local intelligence and they seek to provide the early intervention that will reduce or eliminate ASB.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 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.

5.2 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

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 None from this report.

7.0 Digital Implications

7.1 None from this report

8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

8.1 All the work around ASB has an impact on the Community plan theme to ‘Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and increase feelings of safety in our communities.’

9.0 RECOMMENDATION that:

- a) **The Committee note the data relating to ASB and the range of activities, both delivered and planned that are in place to address ASB**

Reason for Recommendation

To update the Committee on the current position in relation to the enforcement and interventions relating to ASB

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Alan Batty (Business Manager – Public Protection).

Matthew Finch

Director – Communities and Environment

Forward Plan of Homes & Communities Committee Decisions from 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023

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.

Meeting Date	Subject for Decision and Brief Description	Contact Officer Details
14 March 2022	Compensation Policy	Jill.Baker@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Review of Responsive Repairs Performance on new priorities	Caroline.Wagstaff@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Decarbonisation Strategy (HRA Stock)	Caroline.Wagstaff@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Review of E-Newsletter take up	Sarah.Forgione@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Review of Exempt Items 2021/2022	Suzanne.Shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Housing Service Compliance Performance – Quarterly Report Q3	Suzanne.Shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Community Plan Quarterly Performance Report Q3	Ella.Brady@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	MEH LAD 2 Grant Funding Project – Final Report	Caroline.Wagstaff@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Sherwood & Newark Citizens' Advice - Annual Performance Report 2020-21 <i>The Chief Officer of Sherwood & Newark Citizens' Advice, Jackie Insley, to be in attendance at the meeting to present the report to the Committee</i>	Maria.Cook@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Voids Pilot Update	Nicola.Priest@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
14 March 2022	Yorke Drive Update	Cara.Clarkson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING – SELF ASSESSMENT

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an annual update to Committee on the results of the self-assessment of the Customer Feedback Policy against the Housing Ombudsman Effective Complaints Handling Self-Assessment.
- 1.2 Committee will recall receiving the inaugural update at the January 2021 meeting following the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman Effective Complaints Code in July 2020.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Complaint Handling Code placed a mandate for all Council's to undertake a self-assessment against the code by 31 December 2020, and an annual review thereafter.
- 2.2 The Complaint Handling Code provides a framework to promote high quality complaint management, in particular:
 - i. greater and easier routes of access for tenants and residents with faster resolutions
 - ii. how we use and share the learning from complaints to drive service improvements or amendments
- 2.3 The Tenant Forum have inputted into the self-assessment process again this year and provided feedback on the findings.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The December 2020 self-assessment highlighted that the Council was partially compliant, with a number of areas for improvement, further consideration and a mechanism for continued monitoring.
- 3.2 The 2021 update of these are:

December 2020 Findings	December 2021 Update
Include the full definition of a complaint in the Policy as suggested by the Housing Ombudsman	Full definition now included in Policy
Increased performance reporting regarding complaints, including satisfaction with outcome and capturing and sharing what learning has been gained/implemented as a result.	Complaints performance has been added to the Corporate Performance Report Quarterly reports are shared with Tenant Forum Satisfaction with outcome and handling of complaints is now being collected monthly

	<p>Complaints and learning are discussed at monthly Directorate Meeting</p> <p>Future Tenant Annual Reports will have a complaint/learning/feedback focus.</p>
The subsequent sharing of this learning (where appropriate) with SLT, residents and tenants via the website, the Housing Advisory Group and this committee.	See above
Continued monitoring of complaint handling with an annual review and completion of the self-assessment, including the publication of the assessment	Annual review of self-assessment in place Updated Self-assessment will be put on the Website following committee approval
The formation of a Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure full compliance with the Equality Act 2010 to accommodate an individual's needs	Draft policy done. See separate report to Homes and Communities Committee
The assignment of a person or team to take responsibility for complaint handling; the code uses the term "complaints officer".	<p>Business Manager - Customer Services has overall responsibility for Complaints Policy and Business Manager - Housing & Estates for the Compliance with Self-Assessment.</p> <p>The customer services team leaders are responsible for the day to day recording and monitoring of complaints on the corporate CRM system.</p> <p>Business managers are responsible for responding to complaints within business units and reviewing procedures etc. through any lessons learnt</p> <p>A complaints co-ordinator role has been included as a possible initiative to ensure complaints are high priority and highest levels of customer care are provided as part of efficiency savings. This role will focus on our duties and responsibilities as a Landlord.</p>
The discontinuation of a stage 3 within the Policy.	Stage 3 removed.
A procedure guide and templates are currently being progressed	Templates are now in place
Training sessions for all those involved in complaint handling.	Training has taken place with HHW Directorate

4.0 Digital Implications

4.1 Customers have the option of submitting their feedback online. This functionality is a requirement of the self-assessment. We will be investing in our various digital platforms to give a wide variety of options for residents to feed back.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 The production of a reasonable adjustment policy forms part of this report. We already have in place the option for tenant and residents to appoint a representative on their behalf.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN-21-22/2994

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

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 The Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment and associated Customer Feedback Policy aligns with the following objectives:

- i. Increasing participation with the Council
- ii. Increase residents satisfaction with the Council

8.0 Comments of Director

8.1 The Housing Advisory Group met on 6th January 2022 and confirmed they were happy with the direction of travel. Additional feedback was received that there could be confusion for tenants wanting to make a complaint being directed to a feedback form so it has been recommended that we amend our feedback mechanisms to make clear whether the tenants comments will be treated as feedback or a complaint.

8.2 The Housing Advisory Group recommended in December 2020 that a communications plan be created to ensure all tenants are aware of how to make a complaint, how to provide feedback and the process involved. This is yet to be progressed due in part to the redesign of our website.

8.3 The group endorsed the complaints co-ordinator proposal as a commitment to the importance of addressing issues quickly when our services fall below expectation and how we use this to improve our services.

8.4 Finally the group felt this is still a work in progress and they look forward to see improvements over the next year.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) That members note the progress and continued compliance against the self-assessment.
- b) That members note and endorse the actions put in place to support the Council's approach the effective complaint handling.
- c) The creation of a communications plan to promote the feedback policy as outlined in section 8.2.

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Customer Feedback Policy fully complies with the Complaint Handling Code and reflects the feedback of tenants.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Julie Davidson – Business Manager Housing Management on 5542 or Jill Baker – Business Manager Customer Services on 5810

Suzanne Shead

Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form Newark and Sherwood District Council – December 2020

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p><i>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i></p>	<p>Partial.</p> <p>Section 3.3 of the Policy – the full definition to be included in the Policy</p>	
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Section 2.2 of the Policy</p>	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Service requests are actioned by Customer Services All Policies are on the website and officers can offer verbal explanation</p>	

		<p>Statutory appeals in place, e.g. judicial review of decision for homelessness or allocations</p> <p>Cllr related complaints have an alternative route</p>	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes. Section 4.3 of the Policy	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		No Approval requested at Homes & Communities Committee on 18 January 2021
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		No This will be put in place going forward as part of a wider communications plan
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		No There is a single point of access for all complaints; Meritec, and these are

			logged by Customer Services Team Leader. The complaints are circulated to the relevant manager for action
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		No. The relevant manager has autonomy to resolve complaints
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?		No The complaint is managed wholly by the relevant manager who will have the authority to compel engagement
	<p>If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman does not believe a third stage is necessary as part of a complaints process but if a landlord believes strongly it requires one the reasons why should be detailed in the self-assessment.</p>	<p>Partial compliance</p> <p>For Council tenants access to tenant panel at 3rd Stage. This has since been reviewed and an alternative approach will be considered by Homes & Communities Committee on 18 January 2021</p>	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		No Council tenants only. There is a choice in the

			Policy for tenants to access this 3 rd stage or progress direct to the Ombudsman.
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?		No Suite of templates being progressed and the right to refer process is included
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage 1	
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	Partial compliance. This could be described as the escalation from stage 1 to stage 2	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?		No Suite of templates being progressed and the escalation process is included

	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	93% (2019/20 Data)	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	7% (2019/20 Data)	
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 		This data is not currently collected but new reports are being created
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?		This data is not currently collected but new reports are being created
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?		This data is not currently collected but new reports are being created
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction		This data is not currently collected but new reports are being created
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Data not available No recent cases	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	None	

	What was the reason for the refusal?	N/A	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/a	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?		The learning and remedial actions following things going wrong is identified as an area for improvement
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	Review of Fit To Let standard Review of Grounds Maintenance Contract	
	How do we share these lessons with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report? 		This is not currently done at a corporate level but recommendations for future sharing are: SLT, residents and tenants via the website, the Housing Advisory Group and Homes & Communities Committee

	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>Data not available yet but we are confident adhering to the code will improve complaint handling at the Council.</p>	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p>	<p>Inclusion of a 3rd stage for tenants by escalation to Tenant Panel</p> <p>Procedure has been reviewed to take into consideration this code and the revised Local Government Ombudsman guidance</p>	

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Newark and Sherwood District Council – Review December 2021

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p><i>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i></p>	<p>Yes. Section 3.3 of the Policy</p>	
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	<p>Yes. Section 2.2 of the Policy</p>	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Service requests are actioned by Customer Services All Policies are on the website and officers can offer verbal explanation</p>	

		<p>Statutory appeals in place, e.g. judicial review of decision for homelessness or allocations</p> <p>Cllr related complaints have an alternative route</p>	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	<p>Yes. Section 4.3 of the Policy</p>	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/customerfeedback/</p> <p>Tenant feedback indicates the policy is hard to find and suggest it is renamed from ‘Customer Feedback Policy’ to a more obvious title of “Complaints and Compliment Policy”</p>	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	Draft policy out to consultation	

		For approval at January 2022 committee cycle	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	<p>Yes. The Customer Feedback Policy is on the website</p> <p>Reports to Tenant’s Forum on a quarterly basis</p> <p>Creating a communications plan to promote it to tenants</p>	
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		<p>No. There is a single point of access for all complaints; Complaints are logged by the customer services team leaders on to corporate Customer Relations Management software Customer Services Team Leader.</p> <p>The complaints are circulated to the relevant manager for action</p>

	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		No. The relevant manager has autonomy to resolve complaints
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?		No. The complaint is managed wholly by the relevant manager who will have the authority to compel engagement
	<p>If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman does not believe a third stage is necessary as part of a complaints process but if a landlord believes strongly it requires one the reasons why should be detailed in the self-assessment.</p>		No Third stage was removed in line with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		No. Third stage was removed in line with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code
	Does the final stage response set out residents’ right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Yes. Suite of template letters are in place.	

		<p>There is a link on the website Councils website to this</p> <p>https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/</p>	
	<p>Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>All complaints are managed through the corporate CRM system and associated correspondence is kept electronically within this system in line with the Councils retention policy.</p>	
	<p>At what stage are most complaints resolved?</p>	<p>Stage 1</p>	
4	Communication		
	<p>Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	
	<p>Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Colleagues dealing with the complaint have the option to contact the complainant for discussion</p>	

		<p>This could be described as the escalation from stage 1 to stage 2</p> <p>For stage 2 complaints there is an option for the tenant to involve a tenant representative.</p> <p>The initial acknowledgment letter or email has the main Council details on it.</p> <p>Any future correspondence should have the contact details of the officer who is dealing with the complaint.</p>	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes.	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes. Suite of template letters are in place	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	95%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	5%	
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two 	<p>Stage 1 – 82%</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Stage 2 – 100%</p>	

	Stage two (with extension)	N/A	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes.	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes. Holding letters are always sent	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	60%	
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes.	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	No recent cases	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes.	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes. Quality checks are carried out and tabled at Directorate meetings across the Council	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	None.	
	What was the reason for the refusal?	N/A	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/A	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes	

		<p>1. Performance reporting with learning tabled at Housing Directorate meeting</p> <p>2. Development of Compensation Policy</p>	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	<p>Review and enhancement of Fit To Let standard</p> <p>Review and bringing back in-house of Grounds Maintenance Contract</p>	
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) Residents?</p> <p>b) The board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>	<p>Performance reporting with learning is tabled at Housing Directorate meeting and forms part of the Committee cycle of performance monitoring report.</p> <p>The committee reports are available to tenants, and the quarterly report is shared with involved tenants.</p> <p>There is a section in the AR relating to complaints</p>	
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	Complaint handling has historically been satisfactory, however the code has prompted a review of our Policy and processes.	
	What changes have we made?	<p>Inclusion of option for tenant representative at Stage 2.</p> <p>Production of Reasonable Adjustment Policy</p> <p>Production of Suite of Letter Templates</p>	

		<p>Production of a Compensation Policy Review of Vexatious Policy Performance reporting at Housing Directorate Meeting Elevated priority and awareness of complaint handling amongst managers and teams; the importance of receiving feedback to promote service improvements and learning. Internal Complaint Handling training.</p>
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HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT POLICY FOR CUSTOMERS REPORT

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Committee approval of the Reasonable Adjustment for Customers Policy, subject to final approval by the Policy & Finance Committee.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 One of the recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman self-assessment is for Councils to have a Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

2.2 Although the Council has always strived to meet the needs of its customers this was not documented in a formal policy.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The Policy in Appendix One details what is a reasonable adjustment. This includes how the Council communicates with customers and what we can do to support.

3.3 Each request will be considered on its own merits and the Council will do all it can to support the request within the parameters set out in the policy.

4.0 Digital Implications

4.1 There are no specific digital implications to the policy. However a customer may request that we communicate with them digitally.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 The policy is designed to be equal to all residents. The Councils lead officer for equalities has been involved in producing the policy.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN 21-22/6254

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

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 The associated customer Feedback Policy aligns with the following objectives:

- Increasing participation with the Council
- Increase residents satisfaction with the Council

8.0 Comments of Directors

8.1 The Housing Advisory Group felt this approach was necessary but a last resort where resources were being directed away from other residents and supported a right of appeal to ensure the Council were being objective in their application of the policy.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- a. That members of the committee support the Reasonable Adjustment for Customers Policy, and recommend it to the Policy and Finance Committee for final approval.**

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Council consider the needs of its customers and to meet the recommendation of the Housing Ombudsman Self – Assessment Code.

For further information please contact Jill Baker – Business Manager Customer Services on ext. 5810 or Julie Davidson – Business Manager, Housing and Estates on ext. 5542

Suzanne Shead
Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing

And

Deborah Johnson
Director Customer Services and Organisational Development

Document Name	Reasonable Adjustment Policy for Customers
Effective Date	1 February 2022
Date for Review	To be reviewed every two years or in response to changes in relevant legislation and/or other Newark and Sherwood District Council policies, procedures and agreements.
Version Number	<i>DRAFT</i>
Approved by	Senior Leadership Team Homes & Communities Committee Policy & Finance Committee
Responsible Business Manager	Business Manager Customer Services and

Customer Reasonable Adjustment Policy

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 The Council is committed to providing excellent customer service.
- 1.2 One of the Council's values is to be "Caring and Compassionate". To achieve this the Council strives to be sensitive to the different needs and circumstances of others.

2.0 Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy seeks to outline what a reasonable adjustment is and how the Council will action these requests when received to ensure we are compliant with Equality and Diversity legislation and regulations.
- 2.2 This policy is designed to:
- confirm our commitment to improving accessibility for everybody that we deal with;
 - set out some of the basic principles of our legal duty to provide reasonable adjustments; and
 - set out the factors that we will take into account in dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments.

3.0 What is a Reasonable Adjustment?

- 3.1 A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way that we usually do things to ensure that we are fair to all of our residents. This may involve departing from our usual practice in the way we do things if we find that the current position places that person at a substantial disadvantage. For example we would:
- allow more time for someone to respond or provide information; or
 - make sure our buildings do not present obstacles for disabled people, for instance by providing lifts or ground floor meeting rooms; or offer a suitable alternative locations
 - provide specialist equipment or additional support
- 3.2 We will not make assumptions about whether a disabled person requires any adjustments or about what those adjustments should be. We will discuss the requirements with the individual concerned and seek to reach agreement on what may be reasonable in the circumstances.
- 3.3 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council is required to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people, defined by the Act as those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3.4 This means that in some circumstances disabled people receive more favourable treatment than non-disabled people, which is lawful in the context of disability.

3.5 We will let residents know that we can provide reasonable adjustments, for example in the following ways:

- by including a note on our published documents indicating that we can provide the document in an alternative format on request;
- by publishing this policy on our website; and
- by working with key representative groups and others to raise awareness of this policy.

3.6 The Equality Act does not define what is "reasonable" but guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests that the most relevant factors are:

- Whether the adjustment will help the individual to overcome the difficulty they have
- The adjustment should be designed to fully address the disadvantage; it is meant to overcome, for example providing a meeting room which is accessible by wheelchair may not properly overcome the barriers faced by the wheelchair user if there are no disabled toilet facilities also available.
- Whether it is practical to provide the adjustment
- What the resource implications of making the adjustment are; how much it will cost and whether this is proportionate to the adjustment being requested

4.0 Requesting a Reasonable Adjustment

4.1 If you want to make a request for a reasonable adjustment in order to access our services please contact the Council by telephone, email or visit one of our offices. Our contact details are on our website.

4.2 Whilst we will consider each request on individual circumstances, there are some common adjustments which we can offer as a matter of course.

4.3 The adjustments will always be agreed with the individual.

4.4 Some examples of the simple reasonable adjustments we can make are:

- Offer additional support to residents with temporary or enhanced needs. These can include those with visual or speech impairment and varying degrees of memory problems.
- Provide support in different formats, face to face, digitally and scheme visits.
- Provide information in a format that is convenient.
- Provide a variety of communication channel options.
- Signpost to additional support services.

- Identify and carry out adaptations (i.e. make physical changes)
- Provide support with accessing disabled aids and equipment
- Support with financial matters, including Welfare Benefits

4.5 In most cases we will be able to agree and deliver the required reasonable adjustments with a minimum of delay. In some cases, we may need to consider in more detail how best to overcome the difficulty a person with disabilities may be experiencing. For example, where the adjustment requested may be difficult to provide or where it may interfere with our statutory or regulatory obligations.

5.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 We will record and monitor the reasonable adjustments that have been requested and made. This will allow us to review the services we provide and help us identify whether there are any wider steps that we can take to improve our services.

5.2 We will publish this information on our website.

6.0 Review

6.1 The Policy is to be reviewed every two years or in response to changes in relevant legislation and or other Newark and Sherwood District Council policies, procedures and agreements.

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Committee approval of the revised Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy, subject to final approval by the Policy & Finance Committee.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 At the November 2020 committee, members approved the revised Customer Feedback Report and in January 2021, slight amends to the policy were approved to reflect the Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment.

2.2 The Council is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and provide a high quality service to those who make them. Occasionally a complainant may display behaviour which is unacceptable, for example, abusive, offensive or threatening or repetitive and demanding. This type of behaviour cannot be tolerated and the Council will take action to protect its staff from such abuse.

2.3 Generally, dealing with a complaint is a straightforward process, however occasionally complainants become persistent complainers or make complaints which are vexatious, in that they persist unreasonably with their complaints, or make a high number of complaints which can make it difficult for the Council to provide services to others.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The revised policy detailed in the attached appendix explains how the Council will manage unacceptable behaviour.

3.2 These cases are the exception and each case will be dealt with on its own merit. The Policy clearly explains how the Council will apply the policy and how it operates.

3.3 It is recognised that a complainant has displayed unacceptable behaviour may still need to be in contact with the Council, particularly where we offer landlord or other services. The Policy defines controls which may be put into place as a last resort to manage further contact for example, restricting contact to one person or restricting the number of contacts within a specific time period.

4.0 Digital Implications

4.1 There are no specific digital implications and customers have the option of submitting their feedback online.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 The Policy is designed to be equal to all complainants. Each case will be considered on its own merit, taking into consideration any known characteristic of the particular complainant and equality impact assessments will be conducted to identify any areas where

6.0 Financial Implications FIN-22/7045

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

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 The associated customer Feedback Policy aligns with the following objectives:

- Increasing participation with the Council
- Increase residents satisfaction with the Council

8.0 Comments of Directors/ HAG

8.1 Housing Advisory Group at their meeting on 6th January 2022 agreed with the policy as being a key way of supporting customers through adjusting our services.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

That members of the committee support the revised Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy, and recommend it to the Policy and Finance Committee for final approval.

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy is fit for purpose.

For further information please contact Jill Baker – Business Manager Customer Services on Ext 5810.

Suzanne Shead
Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing

And

Deborah Johnson
Director Customer Services and Organisational Development

Document Name	Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour (including Vexatious Complaints) Policy
Effective Date	1 February 2022
Date for Review	To be reviewed every two years or in response to changes in relevant legislation and/or other Newark and Sherwood District Council policies, procedures and agreements.
Version Number	DRAFT
Approved by	Senior Leadership Team Homes & Communities Committee Policy & Finance Committee
Responsible Business Manager	Business Manager Customer Services

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 The Council recognises the importance of listening to the views of its residents about the service they receive from us.
- 1.2 One of the Council's values is to be "Welcoming and Responsive". To achieve this the Council strives to be approachable, open to feedback and challenge and swift to act.
- 1.3 The Council has a Customer Feedback Policy which clearly explains how to submit a complaint and the associated process [Customer feedback | Newark & Sherwood District Council](#).
- 1.4 We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and provide a high quality service to those who make them. However we will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, for example, that which is abusive, offensive or threatening and we will take action to protect our staff from such behaviour. If we find a complainants behaviour to be unacceptable we will consider taking proportionate, appropriate action to ensure complainant knows what behaviour is being displayed, the behaviour we expect and the consequences of not adjusting their approach.
- 1.5 Complaints generally follow a straightforward process. Occasionally complainants become persistent or make complaints that are vexatious such as unreasonable persistence; unreasonably demands or make a high number of complaints such as making serial complaints about different matters or continuing to raise the same or similar matters over and over again which can have significant resource implications for the Council in delivering its services to all.
- 1.6 In these situations we will consider how we manage the relationship going forward and use restrictions of access **as a last resort**. This will ensure that Council resources are used effectively and that other customers and or staff do not suffer any detriment as a result of the behaviour. The actions (detailed in section 5.2) can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the complaint investigation has been concluded by the Council.
- 1.7 Complainants displaying unreasonable behaviour will be addressed on a case by case basis.
- 1.8 This Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour (inc. Vexatious Complaints) Policy should be used in conjunction with other Council policies including the Customer Feedback, Managing Unreasonable Behaviour, Equalities and Violence at Work policies.

2.0 Classifications of unreasonable complaint behaviour and vexatious complaints

2.1 It is considered reasonable for complainants to be determined and assertive when making a complaint about services, and to provide the Council with regular updates if there have been further incidents or new information that the Council need to know or consider.

2.2 Examples of unreasonable actions and behaviours are detailed below. The list is not exhaustive but gives indicative guidance in what may constituted as unreasonable:

- Demanding responses within an unreasonable time scale
- Insisting on dealing with a specific person
- Continual contact e.g. phone calls, letters, emails
- Repeatedly changing the substance of the contact or raising unrelated concerns
- Refusing to accept that issues are not within the remit of the complaints procedure despite having been provided with information about the procedure's scope
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the Customer Feedback Policy complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Further demands relating to a specific issue there the Customer Feedback Policy has already been followed and exhausted.
- Persistent refusal to accept a decision or raising similar complaints where there is no benefit to the Council or complaint to pursue.
- Persistent refusal to accept explanations as to what the Council can and cannot do
- Continuing to pursue a matter that has been properly investigated e.g. raising a repeat complaint without providing new/pertinent information
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds and/or denying statements he or she made at an earlier stage.

2.3 Situations can escalate and sometimes customers can become abusive, offensive, threatening or otherwise behave unacceptably. Such situations would be managed in accordance with Managing Unreasonable Behaviour and Violence at Work Policies.

3.0 Considerations prior to action

3.1 As part of assessment of whether the complaint should be considered unreasonable we will consider:

- That the complaint is being/ has been investigated properly.

- Any decision reached on their complaint is the right one given the information available.
- That communications with the complainant have been appropriate.
- The complainant is not providing any significant new information which may affect our view on the complaint.
- Whether an Equality Impact Assessment needs to be completed to understand any unmet need/multi agency approach.
- The benefit of meeting the complainant via an suitable method to discuss the ongoing issues as this can dispel misunderstandings and move matters towards a resolution
- Designate one officer to co-ordinate the response if the complaint relates to more than one service area

3.3 In most cases we will write to the complainant explaining what unacceptable behaviour has been observed, the behaviour that the Council expect and the potential consequences if the behaviour persists.

3.4 Where behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety or welfare of our staff or others, the matter may be reported to the police or we may consider taking legal action (without giving notice) alongside any action under this policy.

4.0 The process for making the decision to adjust our services

4.1 Staff who consider a complainants behaviour falls within the remit of this policy will raise this with their Business Manager and two warning letters will normally be issued before a decision is made to adjust our services.

4.2 The decision to adjust our services following unreasonable behaviour by a complainant will normally be taken by the Business Manager in conjunction with the Director who may delegate a senior officer to do so on their behalf.

4.3 The Business Manager should also discuss the circumstances with another Business Manager not involved in the case to ensure impartiality of decision making that effectively restricts our services.

5.0 Restricting Access

5.1 The action taken in relation to unreasonable behaviour will be appropriate and proportionate, following written warnings and will be taken as a last resort.

5.2 Depending on the behaviour, one or more of following controls will be considered and recommended by the Business Manager:

- Time limits on contacts e.g. telephone conversations or face to face contacts
- Restricting the number of contacts during a specific period of time (for example, one call on one specified morning or afternoon per week)

- Limiting the complainant to one suitable communication channel e.g. telephone, letter or email and/or requiring the complainant to communicate only with one named member of staff
- Requiring a witness to be present for interactions
- Signposting to the relevant Ombudsman if the relevant route has been exhausted.
- Refusing to register and process further correspondence or separate complaints about the same matter though the correspondence will be logged.
- Future correspondence will be read and placed on the file but will be not acknowledged, unless it contains material new information. A designated officer will be identified who will read future correspondence

6.1 Operating the policy

6.1 Once a decision has been taken to apply the policy we will write or email the complainant to inform that:

- The decision has been taken to adjust our services in response to their behaviour
- What this means for their future contact with us
- How long any restrictions will last
- When the decision will be reviewed (dependant on circumstances)

6.2 New complaints about new issues will be treated on their own merits and this policy will be applied to determine any unreasonable behaviour.

7.0 Appeals and reviews

7.1 The decision to restrict our services does have a right of appeal to Senior Leadership Team. The Business Manager/Director will present the information on which the decision has been made and any submission by the complainant

7.2 The decision will be reviewed after an agreed period dependant on the circumstances.

7.3 When reviews are carried out, we will write to advise the complainant of the outcome and, if restrictions are to continue to be applied the date when these will next be reviewed

7.4 A report will be presented to SLT annually to show how the policy has been applied over the year inc. the persons where services have been restricted.

8.0 Review of the Policy

8.1 The Policy is to be reviewed every two years or in response to changes in relevant legislation and or other Newark and Sherwood District Council policies, procedures and agreements.

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

ALLOCATION OF HRA EFFICIENCY SAVINGS WITHIN HOUSING SERVICES

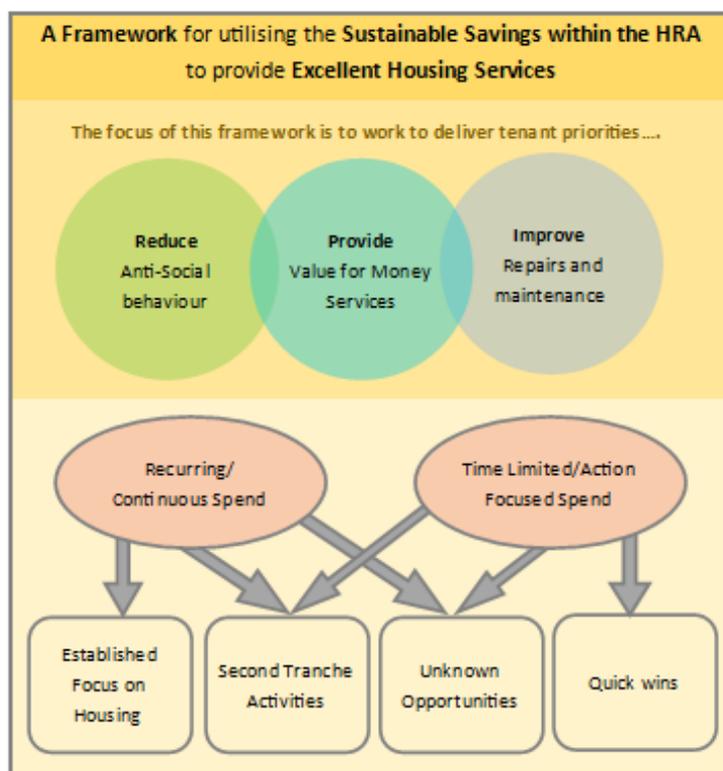
1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on proposed allocation of budget savings from the integration of housing services back to the Council.
- 1.2 To request delegated authority be given to the Homes & Communities Committee to approve the allocation of budgets subject to individual business case reports being presented.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 One of the principal reasons for the Council's decision to in-source the management of its social housing stock from Newark & Sherwood Homes (NSH) in February 2020, was the ability to generate significant cost savings through reductions in senior management costs.
- 2.2 Savings were estimated to be £0.95m per annum recurring through the life of the HRA Business Plan. In practice, savings of £1.053m were generated.
- 2.3 It was agreed that these savings would be used to improve the experience of tenants, through service enhancements, to the quality of homes and to neighbourhoods. To date, £0.410m has been invested in strengthening customer-facing staffing (such as tenant engagement) and other non-pay investments, as gaps existed, leaving £0.643m available for investment in improvements or reducing the level of HRA borrowing.
- 2.4 Since February 2020, energy has been directed at ensuring our services are fit for purpose and addressing challenges around our IT, resources, budgets and service delivery – including throughout a pandemic. We are now in a position to consider further improvements.
- 2.5 These proposals were taking the following principles into account:
 - Not about 'business as usual' activities but to enable spend that would not have otherwise been possible.
 - Consider the outcome of the initial tenant consultation and the 3 areas tenants highlighted as most important to them.
 - Balance across place and service type, ensuring that not all spending is one geographical or service specific area.
 - Consideration of immediate, ongoing and emerging opportunities, such that not all efficiencies accrued should be spent immediately.
 - Time should be taken to understand and look at the strategic opportunities through research and comparison to best practice.
 - A balance between recurring investment and one off/time limited actions and initiatives.
 - Ability for some of the efficiencies to be made available to undertake research/feasibility work for strategic service changes.

- 2.6 The framework below was agreed at both Homes and Communities and Policy and Finance Committee respectively.



- 2.7 Since bringing the service back into the Council, we have undertaken research to help us better understand the needs, expectations and priorities of our tenants. With SLT and HAG (Housing Advisory Group) agreement, we have also commenced pilot projects to improve the quality of customers' homes and services.
- 2.8 The Chair and Vice Chair of Homes and Communities met with a small number of tenants and officers in December 2021 to review nearly 3000 responses over two years from tenants on various services to provide some direction for projects and investment. The group agreed it was important not to spend "just because" and that it was important to make every penny count.
- 2.9 Clear priorities were ASB, Complaints, Repairs and Maintenance and Grounds Maintenance and the Council have already made some inroads into these areas, the proposals below complement these. The group were also keen to keep some budget for annual priorities and particularly as we learn more about the impact and recovery from Covid on our communities.
- 2.10 With the pilot projects not due to conclude until Spring 2022, we are yet to be in a position to draw firm conclusions on their outcomes. However, based on tenants' priorities obtained from feedback we have received through various engagement mechanisms, learning from pilots and the Council's strategic priorities for its social housing stock, we have been able to identify how we intend to prioritise the use of savings during 2022/23.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 These proposals balance value for money and maximum impact on service improvement through undertaking improvements in the short term and taking time to consider and frame the direction of ongoing improvement giving regard to the framework approach set out in 2.7.

3.2 These are (in priority order):

- Improved lettings standard (pilot in place) – this involves decoration preparation (stripping walls down to bare wall and where required, re-plastering) in addition to the previously identified revised core lettings standard. This will include an evaluation of the difference this pilot has made to a tenants experience of moving into a Council home (£200k)
- ‘Starting Well’ (pilot in place) – this is a discretionary funding pot to enable housing teams to offer financial support to new tenants that is tailored to their circumstances and intended to help with the costs of setting up a new home, which could include, redecoration, furniture packs, blinds/curtain rails etc. The budget to be set at £75k
- Community Chest (currently in place)– funding to make improvements to tenants’ communities and community centres so can be used as local hubs £20k
- Explore improvements to our ASB service e.g. use of smart tech e.g. camera door bells, respite, mediation services, new tools and approaches to rehousing to support ASB complainants. We have allocated £50k to this.
- Supporting the identification of approaches to carbon reduction in tenants’ homes – this involves undertaking small scale pilots to test carbon reduction measures and engaging with tenants on what zero carbon. These would be achieved either as stand-alone projects or by providing match funding to other initiatives. We have provisionally allocated £100k to this.
- Reducing fuel poverty – this provides the capacity to support interventions in individual homes where it can be demonstrated that fuel poverty can be reduced (this is outside of planned investment works) £70k
- Strengthening complaints handling – by recruiting a complaints co-ordinator and improvements to complaint handling, whose role will be to help improve the quality of our responses to tenants and learning from complaints (£50k)
- Other service improvement priorities not yet started or that emerge from our ongoing customer research, such as projects for rural areas, parking projects, responding to emerging issues as we recover from the pandemic or “fresh start” for tenants with unruly gardens £78k.

3.3 At this stage, costs associated with the above priorities would be limited to 2022/23 only. During 2022/23 we will be rebuilding the HRA Business Plan from base upwards and the above priorities are currently expected to influence expenditure assumptions over the medium-long term. The pilots will, of course, need to demonstrate their value and if they

are confirmed to be important, they will be considered alongside the other priorities, requirements, constraints and assumptions contained within the HRA Business Plan.

- 3.4 Finally, the group were keen to see how we can improve communication about existing and new services we can and will provide, to connect our Council with our communities in the most efficient way so this is another area to be explored.

4.0 Equalities Implications

- 4.1 Equality implications will be considered as part of the project management of each suggested element therefore overall there are no implications arising directly from this report.

5.0 Digital Implications

- 5.1 None identified from this report though individual projects may have digital implications which will be identified under separate cover.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN21-22/5668

- 6.1 As stated in paragraph 2.3, there is currently £0.643m unallocated funding from the Total efficiency savings of £1.053m resulting from bringing the Housing Service back in house. The initiatives, as detailed in paragraph 3.2, total £0.643m and can therefore be funded in total from this unallocated pot. Any future efficiency savings will also be utilised for further improvements to the service provided to our tenants and will be reviewed annually.

- 6.2 Spend in relation to the efficiency savings will be retained as a separate line for budget monitoring, with bi-annual reports to the Portfolio Holder and an annual update to Cabinet.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- 7.1 Supports the plan through creating more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority.

8.0 Comments of Director/HAG

- 8.1 Housing Advisory Group considered the proposals which are based on a meeting with tenants before Christmas and are satisfied with the breath and mixture of short and long term proposals and that the money will be spent wisely.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S):

- a. Homes and Communities note the comments and involvement of tenant feedback and endorse the proposals set out above; and
- b. That they recommend to Policy and Finance to approve the proposals as set out above to enable Officers to build these proposals into the budget process for 2022-23

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To give reassurance to tenants and members that efficiency savings are being used to develop and enrich services that are important and make a difference to them.

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".

For further information please contact (report author)

Suzanne Shead
Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

LANDLORD STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To share with Homes and Communities Committee the Councils Landlord Strategy which sets out the approach the Council intend to take with landlord services over the next five year
- 1.2 To show the proposal that will form the narrative and basis of our financial modelling of the 30 year HRA Business Plan.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 SLT have previously set out a strategic framework for Council strategies and the Landlord Strategy is a key element that sets out our ambitions for housing services
- 2.2 A landlord strategy is essential to show the journey of improvement through directed investment, modern and responsive services. To know where we are going, we need to understand our base line and our key priorities and objectives.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The document set out at a high level, our approach to tenure; tenant and leasehold management inc. engagement, sustainment, ASB and enforcement; income inc. rent and service charge management; services to older people and housing with care as well as asset management and regeneration.
- 3.2 See Appendix One for landlord strategy.

4.0 Equalities Implications

- 4.1 The Landlord Strategy sets out our overall approach. Individual services will undertake Equality Impact Assessments as required to ensure they meet needs and requirements and do not adversely affect any protected group.

5.0 Digital Implications

- 5.1 Part of our strategy involves investment in our ICT – both as a foundation of understanding our customers and our properties as well as a mechanism for engagement, feedback and service delivery. There is a separate project plan that sets out our significant plans for ICT.

6.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/308)

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications which result from the landlord strategy, as the strategy establishes the vision for Council-owned social housing within Newark & Sherwood. The financial implications of proposals to implement elements of the landlord strategy will be modelled into the 30 year HRA Business Plan, in order to determine their

affordability. If appropriate, affordable proposals will be included in the annual report presented to members each January/February to approve the proposed HRA budgets and rents for the forthcoming financial year (and provisional budgets for the three subsequent financial years), or in a report outside of this process if necessary.

6.2 Modelled within the business plan are the quantifiable priorities set out in the landlord strategy, such as existing services and projects such as Yorke Drive, and priorities which have been identified to use the efficiency savings. Other ambitions that are not currently quantifiable, such as the decarbonisation agenda and any future housing development programmes have not currently been modelled within the business plan.

6.3 Based on the known assumptions, the HRA business plan is currently sustainable over the next 30 year period.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 This strategy supports our objective to create more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority.

8.0 Comments of Director(s)

8.1 The Housing Advisory group endorsed this strategy at their meeting on 6th January 2022.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- a. **For Homes and Communities Committee to endorse the Landlord Strategy as the narrative for our 30 year HRA Business Plan**
- b. **To recommend adoption of this Strategy at Policy and Finance Committee on 27th January 2022**

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Council has a clear approach for our landlord services into the future and that we have the finances in place to support them.

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”.

For further information please contact (report author)

Suzanne Shead
Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Newark & Sherwood District Council - Landlord Strategy 2022-27

PICTURE

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This strategy establishes our vision for Council-owned social housing within Newark & Sherwood and the contribution that it will make to achieve the ambitions of the Community Plan 2020-23 and beyond.
- 1.2 Through the Community Plan we want to improve residents' quality of life and enable those who live, work and invest in Newark & Sherwood to prosper and fulfil their potential.
- 1.3 Social housing plays an invaluable role in providing homes which are affordable for local people and which enable them to establish and sustain roots within communities throughout the district.
- 1.4 However, social housing is a scarce resource which must be fairly allocated to people in housing need. It can provide a strong foundation from which local residents can flourish and fulfil their potential.
- 1.5 As a landlord, the Council has significant responsibilities to ensure that homes and the surrounding areas are well maintained, healthy and safe. This includes addressing the significant carbon emissions arising from social housing use.
- 1.6 The Council also has significant responsibilities to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in decisions affecting the services they receive and the quality of their homes.
- 1.7 Having brought the management of social housing back under the Council's direct control in 2020, this strategy sets out our ambitions for the next five years.

2 Our role as a Landlord

We want our tenants to be proud of being a tenant of Newark and Sherwood District Council, and they tell we listen and are responsive to their views as well as ensuring they are part of the decision making process for services that they receive and creating new ones.

We aim to have modern services that tenants can access in the way they wish with well resourced teams to ensure our homes and communities are well kept, safe and secure.

At the end of this strategy, we aspire to have:

- Customer Satisfaction Levels over 90% against our performance standards underpinned by strong set of performance standards that exceed our regulatory requirements
- A positive relationship with our tenants through proactive engagement opportunities and our annual visits process enabling us to know our customers
- A multi-channel engagement structure so tenants can get involved at a level they want, understand how we are performing and have opportunities to take part in scrutinising and improving our services
- Sound data across 100% of our housing stock which drives our investment in our homes and ensures we know our homes

- An understanding of the scale and costs to decarbonise our homes, having worked alongside our tenants to ensure there is clarity on what our approach and methods and how together we will achieve the targets
- Clear information on our assets such as community centres which are a hive of activity and a community hub
- Completed a further development programme following successful completion of our existing programme
- Completed the regeneration of Yorke Drive and other regeneration activities that involve our homes
- Have clear finances in place to service the activities set out in this Strategy through robust management of the 30 year HRA Business Plan through setting appropriate rent levels and acting commercially

3 Community Plan 2020-23

3.1 This strategy contributes towards achieving the following Community Plan objectives:

- Creating vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area
- Creating more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority
- Continuing to maintain the high standard of cleanliness and appearance of the local environment
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and increasing feelings of safety in our communities
- Improving the health and wellbeing of local residents

4 Contribution to other Council strategies

4.1 This strategy contributes towards achieving the following Council strategies, which also contribute to achieving the landlord strategy:

- Housing strategy
- Climate change strategy
- Customer strategy
- Community engagement strategy
- Crime and disorder strategy (CSP)
- Digital strategy

5 Context

5.1 The time of writing, the Council owns 5,576* homes, of which 2,576 are designated for older people. This includes our housing with care schemes at Gladstone House, Vale View and The Broadleaves.

5.2 These are a mixture of houses, bungalows and accommodation located within 337 blocks (including bedsits, flats and maisonettes). None of the blocks are 'high rise residential multi-occupied buildings', with the maximum height under 16 metres

- 5.3 In addition, the Council is responsible for 39 homes for temporary use (which are occupied by homeless households) and it has 159 leaseholders, who own their homes which are located within the 337 blocks. There are also 31 community centres located amongst Council homes.
- 5.4 Council homes are located throughout the district, in the principal settlements of Newark, Southwell, Boughton, Bilsthorpe, Edwinstowe and Collingham, as well as more rural areas.
- 5.5 Throughout the life of this strategy, the number of homes in ownership and management will vary as a result of additional social housing being developed by the Council, the regeneration of the Yorke Drive estate (and other projects), homes purchased through the Right to Buy and, potentially, through active asset management.

6 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 6.1 The Council is legally required to maintain an HRA. This is a ring-fenced fund which records expenditure and income (mainly from rents) related to the Council's homes and closely related services or facilities.
- 6.2 The landlord strategy provides the overarching direction for how the resources and assets held within the HRA are to be used. To accompany the strategy, the Council has established an HRA Business Plan which ensures that the Council's homes are well managed and maintained over the long term, social housing-related goals (such as our carbon reduction ambitions) are achieved and also enables new social housing to be developed within the district.

7 Operating environment

- 7.1 The principal external factors which were impacting upon social housing as this strategy was developed and which are expected to play a significant influence during the period 2022-27 are:
 - High demand for and an acute shortage of social housing and within Newark and Sherwood district, a shortage of private rented accommodation.
 - The continued social and economic implications arising from the Covid-19 global pandemic and the impact of this on service delivery models and hybrid services
 - Meeting the existing standards of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) which includes expectations relating to rents, tenant involvement and empowerment, neighbourhoods and communities, tenancies and tenants' homes (including property health & safety)
 - The Social Housing White Paper, which focuses on realigning the relationship between the tenant and social landlords, with a major focus on transparency and accountability. Within the life of this strategy, the RSH is expected to significantly strengthen its regulation of the Council with a focus on tenant safety, service quality, tenant influence and the quality of homes and neighbourhoods
 - An increasingly assertive Housing Ombudsman which has significantly raised expectations of social landlords for how tenants' complaints are addressed
 - Legislation relating to building and fire safety which will place more stringent requirement and cost implications on landlords around understanding our stock and implementing any works identified to meet new requirements.
 - Changes to the way in which tenants want to receive housing-related services and their expectations for customer service, reflecting wider societal changes, including greater

digital self-service for most transactions and more personalised solutions for more complex or sensitive issues.

- The climate emergency, including reaching the Council’s target of being carbon neutral by 2035 (excluding our housing stock).
- 7.2 Specifically, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that tenants are given opportunities to influence the:
- formulation of their landlord’s housing-related policies and strategic priorities
 - making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
 - the scrutiny of their landlord’s performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
 - management of their homes (in some circumstances)
- 7.3 The combined impact of these factors is expected to redefine the relationship between the Council, as landlord, and its tenants and this is reflected in the direction and ambitions which are set out in this strategy. Our approach to tenant influence and accountability is set out in our Community Engagement Strategy.

8 Obtaining a Council home

- 8.1 The Council is the largest source of social housing within the district and typically 400 homes are let each year.
- 8.2 All of the Council’s homes are let in accordance with the Allocations Scheme [\[insert link\]](#), which the Council administers on behalf of all social landlords which operate in the district through the use of a Housing Register.
- 8.3 Consistently, demand for social housing significantly exceeds the available homes and the Allocations Scheme establishes priorities based on applicants’ housing need including ‘reasonable preference’ for specified groups. Additional priority is also given to people with an armed forces connection and those who have a right to move. Anyone aged 16 years or over can apply to go on the Housing Register if they have a local connection and are not subject to immigration control.
- 8.4 The Allocations Scheme also explains how existing NSDC tenants may apply for a transfer to another property and specifies the circumstances in which a person may not be eligible to be allocated a Council home.

9 Tenure

- 9.1 The Council’s objective is to provide homes which offer long-term security of tenure. This provides a strong foundation from which tenants and members of their household can flourish and fulfil their potential. It also contributes to the creation of vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area.
- 9.2 Initially, Council tenants are offered an Introductory Tenancy which is for 12 months (extendable to 18 months) and enables them to demonstrate that they are able to sustain their tenancy. Upon successful completion, it converts to become a Secure Tenancy, which enables them (with some exceptions) to remain in their home for as long as they want to.

- 9.3 The Council reserves the right to apply to a Court to demote a Secure Tenancy to an Introductory Tenancy in certain circumstances where a tenant has been unable to sustain their tenancy.
- 9.4 The Council provides a small amount of accommodation which is occupied for a limited period of time. Due to their temporary nature, these homes are let on a license agreement.

10 Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement

- 10.1 The Housing White Paper and Consumer Standards set out how the Council needs to build on its engagement with tenants and leaseholders, regularly and in a meaningful way. Two Tenant Engagement Officers have already been recruited to ensure the resource is in place to service our engagement structure.
- 10.2 The Council is moving to a new Governance structure enabling the creation of the Tenant Engagement Board (TEB) to ensure tenants are central to the governance and scrutiny of landlord services.
- 10.3 The Council is consulting with tenants on the mechanisms to get involved in a way that suits their time commitments and level of involvement and will link these methods to the TEB.

11 Tenancy management

- 11.1 Whilst occupying their home, a broad range of tenancy management issues arise, ranging from a tenants' request to make improvements to their home or a desire to create a tenancy in joint or sole names through to a failure to look after their home or garden, issues relating to a relationship breakdown or what happens when they want to move home.
- 11.2 The Council's ambition is to ensure that tenants have clear information about their rights and responsibilities, where we may exercise discretion, the services they can expect to receive from us and the way in which we will respond when there are problems.
- 11.3 During the life of this strategy we will develop our existing self-service portal to make it easy for tenants to undertake most transactions online themselves, without the need to speak to a member of staff. This will enable increasing focus of our staffing resources on customer interactions which are complex or sensitive, requiring high levels of empathy or specialist knowledge. Accompanying this, we will procure a new housing management system and work to ensure systems talk to each other to provide a better customer experience.

12 Tenancy sustainment

- 12.1 The Council provides homes for a wide range of people, some of whom may find it challenging to sustain their tenancy.
- 12.2 During the life of this strategy, through our 'Starting Well' pre-tenancy approach, we will ensure that prospective tenants who may require additional intervention are identified and supported so that they understand what their responsibilities would be if they were offered a Council home and are likely to be able to sustain a tenancy with us.

- 12.3 Once an offer of accommodation has been made, our 'Start Well' approach would then ensure they are supported so that the likelihood of their Introductory Tenancy being converted to a Secure Tenancy is maximised.
- 12.4 The Council recognises that some tenants will experience difficulties during the course of their tenancy. During the life of this strategy we will be getting to know our customers better, through a range of means including home visits and enhanced customer insight capabilities.
- 12.5 Where required, we will continue to provide or signpost the necessary support and advice to maximise the likelihood of tenancy success.

13 Leasehold management

- 13.1 The Council provides services to leaseholders on the terms specified in their lease agreement. In general, these relate to ensuring the areas surrounding their homes are healthy, safe and well maintained (for example, undertaking grounds maintenance or providing fire safety equipment), insuring the building and maintaining the fabric and structure of the building in which their home is located (for example, replacing roofs or other significant building components).
- 13.2 The Council will ensure that costs are fair and transparent, ensuring that it meets legal and contractual obligations for consulting leaseholders so that costs can be recovered in full in accordance with the lease agreement.
- 13.3 Some leaseholders let their property and retain full responsibility for their tenants. The Council's relationship remains with the leaseholder.

14 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- 14.1 The Council's aim is to enable tenants and leaseholders, their visitors, staff, people working on our behalf and other members of the local community including businesses to undertake their lawful activities without harm to the individual, their community, home, business or to their environment.
- 14.2 ASB can include harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse. It can be perpetrated by a tenant, leaseholder, a member of their household, a visitor or any other person. When ASB occurs we will take prompt action to help resolve the situation. Our response will focus on prevention, enforcement and/or support depending on the circumstances.
- 14.3 We are committed to taking action and using the statutory powers available to us as a Council in addition to the contractual clauses contained within occupancy agreements, where we consider they can provide an effective solution.

15 Rents and service charges

- 15.1 To ensure they are affordable, tenants' rents set at levels which are below the levels charged in the private rented sector for comparable properties. The Council is required to comply with strict regulatory requirements and government direction in terms of their initial calculation, maximum level and the application of any increases or decreases.
- 15.2 Most tenants' rents are inclusive of the costs of services which relate to the area surrounding their homes such as grounds maintenance and building-related health & safety. Tenants who live in newer homes are charged separately for these items through a service charge.

- 15.3 During the life of this strategy, we will be reviewing the basis on which rents and service charges are set to ensure that they are fair and equitable, enable the provision of high quality services which meet tenant and leaseholder expectations and to ensure that the Council is able to ensure that homes and buildings remain healthy, safe and well maintained in the long term, whilst reducing carbon emissions.

16 Income management

- 16.1 Income received from tenants, leaseholders and other customers enables us to deliver this strategy as set out in the HRA Business Plan.
- 16.2 We will continue to maintain a rigorous approach to income collection, providing customers with a range of payment options which reflect their circumstances and preferences. This includes rents, service charges, Careline charges and one-off charges such as for building maintenance costs (leaseholders) and rechargeable repair costs (for tenants). We will also ensure they are able to understand the basis of their charges and have access to a statement of account.
- 16.3 Whilst tenants are not required to pay a deposit, we expect them to pay their rent in advance, in accordance with the terms of their tenancy agreement. Our 'Rent First' approach prioritises the payment of rent over other outgoings. For new tenants, this is a key element of our 'Starting Well' approach which will be embedded through the life of this strategy.
- 16.4 We recognise that customers' financial circumstances may vary over time and we will continue to provide support and guidance so that any welfare benefits are maximised and there is access to financial advice and assistance.
- 16.5 Where a customer does not pay their rent or other charges and reasonable avenues for recovery have been pursued, we reserve the right to recover any sums, together with our costs, through legal means.

17 Tenancy and lease enforcement

- 17.1 The Council has a responsibility to ensure that all tenants and leaseholders adhere to the terms of their occupancy agreement.
- 17.2 Where we have taken reasonable steps to inform a tenant or leaseholder of a breach of their agreement with us, explained what action is required of them and they have failed to rectify the situation in a way which is acceptable to us, the Council reserves the right to apply to a Court to enforce the terms of their tenancy or lease. This could result in the loss of their home.
- 17.3 Our approach will be firm but fair and we also reserve the right to recover any sums owed to use, together with our costs. In the case of the recovery of a tenancy, eviction will be a last resort.

18 Housing with care and for older people

- 18.1 The Council provides specialist accommodation which enables people to live independently as they get older or if they have certain medical requirements. There are four housing with care (or extra care) schemes located throughout the district. These provide a self-contained apartment with additional communal facilities, a range of social activities and personal care available (and delivered by third-party providers).

- 18.2 In addition, the Council provides a range of homes which are restricted to people aged 55 and over, including bungalows and former sheltered housing schemes. These tenants benefit from our Careline service.
- 18.3 During the next five years we will consider whether there are opportunities for the Council to develop further housing with care facilities within Newark & Sherwood and the success of our existing schemes. This will be undertaken in conjunction with our key stakeholders including Nottinghamshire County Council.
- 18.4 We will also continue to monitor the suitability of age restrictions on existing homes in respect of demand and community impact and, subject to consultation with tenants, redesignate homes as appropriate.

19 Careline

- 19.1 Careline is a service run for residents of Newark & Sherwood district. Also known as a lifeline service, it provides 24/7/365 contact with staff who can provide peace of mind for the resident and their family and friends.
- 19.2 Tenants who live in our age-restricted housing and our housing with care schemes automatically receive our Careline service, often through the provision of a fixed system which is installed in their homes, though increasingly through the use of mobile technology. Careline is also available to other Council tenants and all residents in the district.
- 19.3 Our ambition is to grow access to Careline facilities during the next five years as we believe there are many people within the district who would already benefit from the service and due to the aging population within the district. We also believe it can play an important role in overcoming some of the health and social care challenges we face.
- 19.4 Technological advances also mean that we expect the way in which customers receive the service to change in the coming years and the potential to access technology to help tenants remain independent for longer.

20 Right to Buy (RTB) and home ownership opportunities

- 20.1 Secure Tenants who live in many of our homes have the legal right to buy their home at a discount from its market value providing they meet legally-defined criteria and our own right RTB policy. The value of the discounts and any conditions associated with receiving the discounts are set by the government.
- 20.2 One of the outcomes of RTB is that it results in the loss of social housing in the district for future generations. We do, however, recognise the benefits to the individual arising from home ownership and for this reason we will seek opportunities to develop new homes which replace those lost through the RTB. We will also consider opportunities to help people into home ownership through the provision of new shared ownership homes (and similar tenures).

21 Strategic asset management

- 21.1 The Council is legally required to ensure that tenants' homes meet, as a minimum, the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). At the point of developing this Strategy, the DHS was being reviewed by the government.
- 21.2 During the next five years, we will develop our approach to strategic asset management so that it enables the Council to better respond to the changing operating environment

- (for example, the climate emergency and revisions to the DHS) and customer needs and expectations for their homes. We refer to this as active asset management and this will ensure that we sustain a long term and viable HRA Business Plan and are able to support the long term aims of the Community Plan.
- 21.3 This approach to active asset management will allow careful targeting of resources, informed investment decisions and identify areas for potential remodelling or growth that will maximise value for money and enable the Council to offer the highest quality homes and customer service.
 - 21.4 In order to ensure that we have accurate knowledge about our homes, a new externally-conducted stock condition survey of 50% of the housing portfolio is being undertaken in 2022 and further in-house surveys will take place over the following four years to achieve 100% stock condition information by 2025. We will use this information to reformulate the HRA Business Plan and to reconfigure our programmes of investment in tenants' homes.
 - 21.5 In addition, we will continue to invest in energy efficiency measures and initiatives that will reduce incidences of fuel poverty and the carbon created by our homes.
 - 21.6 We will develop knowledge and skills around carbon reduction measures to enable the Council to attract external funding to move away from fossil fuels but maintain affordability for our customers.

22 Building health and safety compliance

- 22.1 The Council recognises its responsibilities and obligations for building health and safety compliance and considers this a business-critical function, necessary to safeguard the well-being of tenants and leaseholders, their visitors, staff, people working on our behalf and other members of the local community. We also understand our obligations for building health and safety compliance when set in the context of regulation, legislation and approved codes of practice.
- 22.2 New policies and procedures are in place for all key areas of building health and safety compliance, including gas safety, electrical safety, fire safety, asbestos management and water hygiene. At the point of developing this strategy, we were implementing new software which aims to help us provide great assurance of our building health and safety compliance.
- 22.3 We will continue to develop our approach so that, as a minimum, it complies with the requirements being introduced by the Building Safety Bill, Fire Safety Act 2021 and those arising from the Social Housing White Paper published in November 2020.
- 22.4 We will also continue to ensure that contractor performance and data governance remain robust, customer liaison, engagement and information (including enforcement action) is effective and assurance mechanisms are effective and subject to periodic independent review.

23 Repairs and maintenance

- 23.1 The repairs and maintenance service is the very important to our tenants and a key determinant of customer satisfaction. The Council has contractual responsibility to maintain tenants' homes in a good state of repair and each year around 15,000 repairs are carried out.
- 23.2 Most repairs are delivered by the Council's in-house repairs team, with some work undertaken by external contractors where specialist skills or additional capacity is

- required. This approach provides flexibility and enables the Council to benchmark its costs and service quality.
- 23.3 We have aligned specifications where possible with our investment activity to ensure that materials used are standardised for greater efficiency.
 - 23.4 During the next five years, we will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the current delivery arrangements to ensure that we achieve value for money and high customer satisfaction. We will also keep under review our repairs policy to ensure that tenants are clear about the repairs which the Council will undertake and those which are a tenant's responsibility.

24 Empty homes (voids)

- 24.1 Each year around 400 properties become empty and they are prepared to our agreed re-let standard. This standard was increased during 2021 to ensure they are attractive to new tenants when they move in to their new home. Further improvements are being considered and any further changes are expected to be introduced during the first year of the Strategy.
- 24.2 Most void works are undertaken by the Council's in-house repairs team, with some work delivered by external contractors where specialist skills or additional capacity is required.
- 24.3 Some empty homes require substantial repair and investment to bring them up to the re-let standard. We will ensure that these properties are reviewed in line with our active asset management approach before incurring significant costs in bringing them back into use. This will allow us to determine the most appropriate solution which may include their disposal.

25 Environmental services and neighbourhood improvements

- 25.1 The Council is responsible for managing and maintaining a large number of communal areas near to our customers' homes. Our aim is to ensure that the tenants and leaseholders receive high quality, value for money services which result in them being healthy, safe and pleasant places. We also want to ensure that anyone who visits a communal area experiences a high quality physical environment.
- 25.2 The grounds maintenance service is, in particular, important to customers and since 2021 has been delivered by the Council's in-house team. We will monitor the service to ensure that it delivers the expected value for money and high levels of customer satisfaction.
- 25.3 We recognise that investing in the fabric of tenants' homes is not enough to create long term sustainable communities. We will therefore continue to invest in environmental improvements, such as improved lighting and security doors, as this is proven to reduce ASB and improve tenant satisfaction.
- 25.4 Alongside this, we will respond to some of the parking challenges that our tenants experience through targeted investment.

26 Community Centres

- 26.1 The Council has 39 community centres around the District, providing facilities for tenants and residents to improve their health and wellbeing and create social space.
- 26.2 We will assess the use and condition of our community centres and through our Tenant Engagement Team look to maximise their use as community hubs ensure they are well kept, clean facilities.

27 Provision of new homes and regeneration

- 27.1 The Council remains committed to providing new, high quality social housing within the district and, having established the capability and infrastructure, has delivered 300 new homes within the last four years, with a further 35 homes expected to be developed by the end of 2023 and the five year HRA development programme.
- 27.2 Our ambitions for new homes will be incorporated in the new HRA Business Plan which will be developed once the results of the new externally-conducted stock condition survey of 50% of the housing portfolio have been analysed.
- 27.3 We will continue to work in partnership with the Arkwood Living (the Council-owned housing development company), other property developers, with Homes England and other funders to secure more Council-owned social housing.
- 27.4 In addition, we will continue to pursue opportunities for the regeneration and redevelopment of existing sites. A key priority during the next five years is to ensure that the regeneration of Yorke Drive in Newark is delivered, building on the considerable work which has already been undertaken, and which will provide over 100 new social homes, enhanced community facilities and homes for private sale.

Appendix - Supporting Documents

The Landlord Strategy is supported by the following documents, which provide further information about the Council's strategic approach and plans for delivering the strategy:

- HRA Business Plan (with narrative focussing on financial plan and risk)
- Asset management strategy (HRA)
- Action plan(s) to achieve Landlord Strategy
- Tenancy Policy

Social housing-specific policies:

- Lettings and voids
- Abandoned properties
- Income collection
- Rent and service charges
- Repairs
- Aids and adaptations
- Gas safety
- Asbestos management
- Electrical safety
- Water hygiene and safety
- Lift safety
- Fire safety
- Customer improvements
- RTB
- Leasehold management

Council-wide policies (or similar) which will incorporate a housing-specific element:

- Complaints
- Customer service
- Community protection/ASB (could include domestic abuse or be separate policy)
- Safeguarding
- Tree management?
- Community engagement (inc tenant involvement, influence and scrutiny)
- Community investment
- Illegal occupation
- Environmental and neighbourhood services (e.g. grounds maintenance, estate cleaning, bulk refuse, dumped items, parking)

Approval, Consultation and Review Timetable

Document title	Landlord Strategy		
Version number	DRAFT v.2	Protective marking	Official
Lead Director	Director Housing Health and Wellbeing		
Lead Business Unit	Directorate Wide		
Lead contact	Business Managers Housing Repairs & Asset Management and Housing and Estates		
Date approved (SLT)		Date approved (Members)	
Reviews due:	April 2023 April 2024 April 2025 April 2026 April 2027		
Consultation			
Consultee	Date	Comments received	Material change requested (yes/no)
Tenants			
BMs			
HCC			
Audit			

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE **24 JANUARY 2022**

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Homes & Communities Committee with an overview of the Council's approach to managing HRA social housing assets and to explain how we expect our strategic approach to managing social housing assets is expected to develop.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Council owns 5,576 homes, of which 2,604 are designated for older people. This includes our housing with care schemes at Gladstone House, Vale View and Broadleaves.
- 2.2 In addition, the Council is responsible for 39 temporary homes (which are occupied by homeless households) and it has 182 leaseholders. There are also 32 community centres located amongst Council homes.
- 2.3 The Council is legally required to ensure that tenants' homes are well maintained and meet, as a minimum, the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).
- 2.4 Following the return of the management of social housing back into the Council, we have begun to review the strategic way in which our social housing assets are managed. This is to ensure that the long term investment requirements of the homes is known and accommodated within the HRA Business Plan and to ensure that accompanying planned investment programmes are arranged in a way which provides value for money and good customer outcomes.

3.0 Developing the HRA asset management strategy

- 3.1 Originally it was envisaged that a stand-alone asset management strategy would be presented to the Committee in order to provide assurance of our approach and this would have also been consulted on with tenants before being considered by the Committee.
- 3.2 However, having discussed the approach with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, we have agreed an alternative approach, the reasons for which are explained in the following paragraphs. Instead, this report and the appended document provide an overview of our current approach to asset management, our priorities and shares our thinking about the way in which a more robust asset management strategy can be developed.
- 3.3 To ensure the Council's strategic focus and priorities are aligned to the Community Plan, an overarching strategy hierarchy has been agreed. The primary document relating to the Council's social housing activities is the Landlord Strategy. This sets out our vision for the next five years, including for asset management, and it will be expressed (in financial terms) in the HRA Business Plan. The Landlord Strategy has been drafted and is due to be considered by this Committee on this agenda.

3.4 The Landlord Strategy will be supported by an HRA asset management strategy which will be developed over the next year. One of the key pieces of work is a new externally-conducted stock condition survey of 50% of the housing portfolio. This has been procured and is being undertaken in 2022. Further in-house surveys will take place over the following four years to achieve 100% stock condition information by 2026. We will use this information to reformulate the HRA Business Plan and to reconfigure our programmes of investment in tenants' homes.

3.5 Using this data, we will develop our approach to strategic asset management so that it enables the Council to better respond to the changing operating environment (for example, the climate emergency and revisions to the DHS) and customer needs and expectations for their homes, including continuing to reduce incidences of fuel poverty.

4.0 Priorities for 2021/22 and indicative priorities for 2022/23

4.1 To enable the Committee to gain assurance of how we continue to invest in our social housing, our priorities for 2021/22 are to:

- Deliver planned programmes of investment in existing homes including kitchen, bathrooms, roofing, windows and doors, estate improvements and re-wiring.
- Implement new asset management software to replace a legacy system which is no longer supported and to ensure that investment and servicing programmes are no longer managed on spreadsheets. This is an important project which also enables us to gain greater control of property and servicing data, both of which are critical elements in being able to provide assurance of our legal and regulatory compliance and the suitability of the investment in tenants' homes.
- Obtain funding from regional and national scheme for pilot schemes to decarbonise our social homes.
- Deliver an improved lettings standard for empty homes

4.2 Overall we have made good progress in delivering these objectives with spending 58% of this year's investment programme; implementation of Apex software under way; obtained nearly £2m in decarbonisation and fuel poverty government funding and introduced a new lettings standard for our empty homes.

4.3 Our priorities for 2022/23 are expected to continue many of the priorities for 2021/22 in relation to delivering planned investment programmes, taking opportunities to decarbonise tenants' homes and delivering an improved lettings standard.

4.4 The externally conducted stock condition survey (mentioned above) and further investigation of our tenants' priorities, needs and expectations will be important deliverables in 2022/23. Both of these are important foundations for the re-cast HRA Business Plan and will enable the Council to consider more effectively how it will meet some of the strategic challenges and opportunities, such as achieving net zero carbon for all homes and developing new social housing in the district.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report. The equalities implications of the emerging HRA asset management strategy will need to be assessed to provide assurance of the impact of the Council's investment in social housing in the coming years.

6.0 Digital Implications

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

7.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/8563)

7.1 There are no direct financial implications which result from either this report or the landlord strategy to which this report is supplementary. Further details regarding the council's approach towards the financial implications of proposals to implement elements of the landlord strategy can be found in the preceding report of this Committee's agenda.

8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

8.1 This report contributes towards achieving the following Community Plan objectives:

- Creating vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area
- Creating more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority
- Continuing to maintain the high standard of cleanliness and appearance of the local environment
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and increasing feelings of safety in our communities
- Improving the health and wellbeing of local residents

9.0 Comments of Director(s)

9.1 This report is intended to provide members of the Homes & Communities Committee with a briefing of our existing approach to asset management and to explain the steps that are being taken to ensure that the Council makes sensible, long term provision for the maintenance and repair of tenants' homes, including addressing associated strategic priorities.

9.2 The Housing Advisory Group that met on 6th January 2022 and were happy with the approach set out in the appendix. They also welcomed the stock condition survey and annual visits to help keep the Council up to date with the condition of homes and ensuring they are fit.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is invited to note the contents of this report.

Reason for Recommendation(s)

No decisions are required. This report is for information and assurance.

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".

For further information please contact Caroline Wagstaff on Ext 5637

Suzanne Shead
Director of Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Briefing for Homes & Communities Committee – January 2022:

Strategic Approach to Social Housing Asset Management

1. Introduction

This briefing is provided for the Homes & Communities Committee at its meeting on 24 January 2022. It provides an overview of Newark & Sherwood Council's existing approach to managing the housing related assets held in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

It covers a range of activities that ensure the housing stock meets the needs of customers and standards required. In essence, it explains the approach to social housing asset management which has been in place for many years and which is now delivered by the Council following the decision to return the management of the homes to NSDC in 2020.

The briefing begins to explain how (and why) we expect our approach to asset management to develop in the coming years. It does not include references to regeneration (including Yorke Drive) or the provision of new social housing as these have been subject to other recent reports to the Committee.

To ensure the Council's strategic focus and priorities are aligned to the Community Plan, a Landlord Strategy is currently being developed. This sets out our vision for the Council's social housing assets for the next five years, including for asset management, and it will be expressed (in financial terms) in the HRA Business Plan. The Landlord Strategy will be supported by an HRA asset management strategy which will be developed over the next year.

The emerging asset management strategy is intended to allow careful targeting of resources, better informed investment decisions and identify areas for potential remodelling or growth that will maximise value for money and enable the Council to offer the highest quality homes and customer service. It is a continuous cycle that takes account of a range of internal and external factors before any investment decisions and operational targets are set.

At the end of the briefing, we have summarised some of the external challenges and opportunities facing the Council that are expected to have a significant impact on the emerging asset management strategy and HRA Business Plan.

2. NSDC social housing at a glance

- Total number of social housing properties 5576
- Number of Community centres 32
- Number of non-residential properties 3
- General Needs total 2924
- Housing for Older People 2604
- Leasehold properties 182

- Housing Blocks over 11 meters (none over 18m) 45

More information can be found in Appendix 1

3. Our achievements at a glance

In the last five years we have:

- Fitted 986 kitchens
- Fitted 925 bathrooms
- Renewed 600 roofs
- Replaced 1240 windows & doors
- Carried out 1120 rewires and
- Replaced 1209 heating systems.

In addition:

- Over 400 solar photo-voltaic panels have been installed to reduce fuel poverty for our tenants
- At December 2021/22 we have received 512 requests and carried out 432 new adaptations to tenants homes.

4. Our asset management ambitions

The briefing explains how we manage the stock portfolio, in terms of not just age, condition and standard, but also as part of a process of assessment to guide policies of re-investment to meet the needs of current and future tenants.

The key objectives of our approach to asset management are to:

- Provide quality homes to an agreed standard – this is currently the Decent Homes Standard (DHS)
- Ensure our properties are safe for residents to live in;
- Ensure that tenants and residents are at the heart of everything we do and influence the way we shape our services
- Deliver value for money (VFM) through robust procurement practices
- Inform future investment plans and coordinating resources
- Provide a clear picture and route map for understanding and improving the overall performance of the property portfolio
- To regenerate poor performing assets and invest in new build development
- To develop a more holistic approach to capital spend which utilises carbon neutral initiatives when upgrading properties in a cost-effective manner
- Develop a methodology for assessing the success/impact of renewable energy heating systems that are currently being fitted into new build homes and installed, on a pilot basis, in some of our existing homes
- Seek opportunities to raise the standards of our homes, for example, by improving the re-let standard and tackling incidences of fuel poverty.

5. Maintaining our Assets

Introducing active asset management

It is commonly assumed that residential property is always an asset. In practice the market and high costs can often have the results that properties are actually liabilities, threatening business viability. Our aim is to ensure that there is a continuing demand for our properties and to identify stock that is or may become a liability. Such properties may be a drain on resources and are best suited for disposal or redevelopment.

Our emerging thinking is that we should not invest in properties if there is a question about their short to medium term future: NSDC's housing stock is not uniform and in reality, asset analysis will vary across the district with some assets creating surpluses and others potentially making losses. It is important that we seek to understand the cash flows associated with different assets in order to provide an objective basis for future decision making. The financial criteria used to identify those properties or estates which potentially could be a liability might include:

- Low net present value of assets in existing use
- Asset showing cash flow deficits in early years
- High capital expenditure in early years and over entire life of business plan
- High revenue expenditure on repairs over the life time of the asset
- Asset with high vacant possession value

The analysis of return on investment needs to include more than a purely financial measure, however. The financial results would need to be considered alongside an assessment of other sustainability factors linked to our housing obligations, these might include:

- Demand and housing need
- Cost of re-provision and viability of accomplishing a replacement
- Social return linked to our housing obligations
- Maintaining efficiencies in management costs.

One of the central features of an effective strategic approach to asset management is the robust measure and appraisal of the performance of housing stock and other assets. It is clear that data intelligence and management will become central to the work of the Asset Management Team in the future.

During 2021/22 we are replacing Keystone, the Council's asset management system with Apex Asset Management System. This is an important foundation in enabling NSDC to develop a more effective approach to strategic asset management together with the delivery of property investment programmes and a more robust approach to servicing.

In addition, and to ensure the Council fully commits to the principles of active asset management, we will explore the value of looking at the stock through a different lens such as Asset Performance Model (APE) provided by Savills

Procurement

NSDC has historically used frameworks, namely EEM, for the procurement of its building contracts using a widely adopted price/quality selection process which awards the highest

marks for the lowest price, with the other, more expensive bids, receiving pro-rated scores. This approach can, however, encourage a race to the bottom response from bidders, effectively asking bidders to guess the lowest price to win the contract – not the actual price they think is necessary to perform the contract. Such an approach can undermine any possible relationship between client and contractor and put the delivery of value-based outcomes at risk. Although this approach has delivered excellent results over the years, the Council acknowledges its potential shortcomings and the need to consider alternatives.

The sector is now researching viable and compliant changes to this approach using models that encourage the submission of bids that demonstrate sustainable value across the life of the contract, rather than commuted savings at the point of procurement. We will be keen to explore these options further during the coming years.

Stock Condition

The last wholesale stock condition survey took place in 2009 and involved a 20% sample of the stock undertaken by the asset specialists Savills. This has been supplemented over the years with in-house surveys to achieve survey information on around 64% of the stock by 2016. Since then, active surveying has ceased and the information has become outdated. Consequently, we have commissioned a new third party stock condition survey of 50% of the housing portfolio to take place in 2022. Our objective is to supplement this with in-house surveys over the following 4 years to achieve 100% stock condition information by 2026. We would then continue to resurvey the properties once every 5 years to ensure the stock data remains relevant and accurately informs our future investment planning.

Compliance

NSDC recognises its responsibilities and obligations for property compliance and considers this a business-critical function, necessary to safeguard the well-being of residents, staff, operatives and other stakeholders. We also understand our obligations for property compliance when set in the context of regulation, legislation and approved codes of practice.

New policies and procedures were put in place in 2020 for all key areas of property compliance, including gas safety, electrical safety, fire safety, asbestos management, lifts and water hygiene. These policies clearly set out NSDC's obligations under the relevant regulation, legislation and/or approved codes of practice and what we will do to comply with these obligations. A new compliance team has been recruited to ensure our policies are delivered. We also expect to appoint a person specifically responsible for complying with Health & Safety requirements and delivering the commitments within these Policies and as outlined in the Social Housing White Paper.

Repairs

NSDC appreciates the importance of the repairs and maintenance service to customers and will always carry out its contractual repair obligations as a landlord. The responsive repairs service has a budget of £2,394,200/per annum and carries out around 17,000 repairs per year which is predominantly delivered by the in-house repairs team, work undertaken by external contractors to support the service, also provides a benchmark on service delivery and cost. We have aligned specifications where possible with our investment activity to ensure that materials used are standardised for greater efficiency.

Void Property Management

NSDC relets approximately 400 empty homes (voids) per year with a budget of £659,880. In addition to our staff, we also utilise tenant inspections to ensure that the highest standard of re-let is being delivered. The Re-let Standard provides the specification for the quality and condition of the homes we offer to new tenants and is used by tenants to hold the Council to account. The standard of re-lets have been improved in 2021 following feedback from tenants and in consultation with them. Further improvements are being piloted and we will seek customer feedback to determine whether to make further changes to the re-let standard.

In addition to routine voids we also encounter properties requiring substantial repair and investment to bring them up to the Re-let Standard. In the coming years, in line with our emerging active asset management approach, we will ensure that high-cost voids are reviewed before incurring significant costs in bringing these properties back into service. This will allow us to determine the most appropriate approach to ensure that our assets are viable and fit for the future and in some circumstances may require their disposal.

Decent Homes & Major Works

NSDC is committed to ensuring all homes which are occupied by customers continue to remain fully compliant with the Decent Homes Standard which was achieved by the Council in 2010. Over £6,000,000 is spent on our Investment Programmes each year.

Compliance with the Decent Homes Standard will continue to be assessed as part of the Council's approach to gathering stock condition data information and any remedial works will be carried out where decent homes failures are identified. Tenant priorities for the Major Works Programme and the NSDC Decent Homes Plus Standard was last reviewed in 2013/14. The government is currently considering whether the Decent Homes Standard should be revised. We will, of course, monitor this closely and ensure that our approach to asset investment complies, as a minimum, with the required standards.

Energy Efficiency

We will continue to invest in 'energy efficiency' measures and initiatives that will reduce the incidence of fuel poverty for residents through our annual Major Works Programmes and government 'Green Homes' grant initiatives. The ongoing requirement to provide an Energy Performance Certificate with every new tenancy serves as an important opportunity to collect energy data on the stock, so that measures and initiatives can be fully considered on a property-by-property basis. We will also gather additional energy related information as part of the new stock condition survey being undertaken in 2022 and, using propriety software, calculate the costs of improving our current average band C rating to an individual property band C rating, or above, for the entire housing stock and build this into the HRA Business Plan projections. This is to ensure that we meet the government's target that all social homes should achieve an EPC 'C' rating by 2030.

Parking and Environmental Improvements

The Council recognises that investing in the fabric of dwellings alone is not enough to create long term sustainable communities. We understand that a well-managed and attractive external environment encourages people to remain where they are and improves their quality of life.

Safety has been highlighted by tenants as a priority in the past. Through environmental improvements we have been able to introduce improved lighting and security doors etc. that has both reduced the instances of anti-social behaviour and improved tenant satisfaction with their home. In addition, well maintained estates also contribute towards the general health and wellbeing of residents as the risk of accidents and injuries are reduced.

Flooding has been identified as a potential risk to the asset base in certain locations. This is likely to be an increasing risk over time due to the effects of climate change and was evidenced in the recent flooding in spring 2020.

Parking has been highlighted by tenants as an acute problem in localised areas across the district. Many roads and footpaths are adopted land under the management of Nottinghamshire County Council and, therefore, the solution to these issues involves a collaborative approach. As lifestyles have changed the increase in vehicles has made some areas difficult to park due to the road layout and/or narrow construction. Additionally, many properties do not have any off-street parking provision.

Currently, we invest in environmental improvements on an ad hoc basis and there is also a small budget provision for flood protection and parking improvements. Our ambition for the coming years is to develop a more strategic approach with funds specifically identified in the HRA Business Plan.

Tenant and resident involvement and engagement

The council is fully committed to resident involvement in all aspects of its approach to asset management. Resident involvement forms a very important part of the process of making decisions about our assets and how they will be maintained. Our ambition is to build on the existing methods of involving and engagement tenants and other residents more generally, and specifically in relation to asset management.

6. Investment in our assets

In view of our plans to rebuild the HRA Business Plan during the next year so that it incorporates the results of the external stock condition survey and other priorities including those of our tenants and to respond to the challenge of achieving net zero carbon emissions, we have provided limited financial information within this briefing.

Our current HRA Business Plan includes the capital investment requirements of the stock and how this investment will be funded. The plan was informed by the stock condition survey carried out in 2009 and utilises simple industry standard replacement dates. The capital investment is smoothed over the years to provide annual budgets that seldom fluctuate, which make financial planning and contract procurement and delivery simpler to manage

The existing HRA Business Plan includes an overall capital investment requirement of c£332 million over the next 40 years. This equates to an annual investment programme (including fees) of between £5.2m and £11.9m.

It is acknowledged, due to the high incident of replacements during the initial drive to meet the Decent Homes Standard between 2006 to 2010 that a spike in investment may arise when key components, like kitchens and bathrooms, reach the end of their industry standard life expectancy. Currently this is predicted to be around 2026 to 2030 and 2036 to 2040

respectively, though these assumptions will be tested through the forthcoming stock condition survey.

In addition to the capital programme there are also significant revenue items of expenditure that need to be financed over the same term, this includes, amongst others, responsive repairs, void property works and planned and cyclical maintenance, including compliance and grounds maintenance. Our existing annual expenditure on these items is currently as follows:

- Planned works £52k
- Responsive repairs £2.4m
- Void maintenance (empty homes) £660k
- Compliance services £1.01m

7. The external challenges & opportunities facing the Council

There are currently a number of significant changes facing the Council in the way we manage, maintain and develop our housing portfolio. The key influences which are expected to influence our emerging asset management strategy are summarised below.

The Social Housing White Paper was published in November 2020. Its focus is on realigning the relationship between the tenant and social landlords, with a major focus on transparency and accountability. It also seeks to change the role of the Regulator of Social Housing, currently focused on economic regulation primarily, to have more power and prescription in relation to consumer regulation. This latter change will take some time, as the role of the RSH is enshrined in primary legislation which cannot simply be altered overnight. However, we can undoubtedly expect change in the future, and the Council is already responding to the changes being brought about by the White Paper. The White Paper focuses on the following matters:

- Tenant safety
- Performance
- Complaints
- Regulation
- Tenant engagement
- Quality homes and neighbourhoods
- First steps to home ownership

The Council already delivers many of the requirements of the White Paper in its current management of the housing stock and commits to fully comply with all its requirements. Budgets and posts have been established to deliver fire door inspections, the installation of smoke and CO detectors and enhanced electrical safety inspections, all of which are expected in the draft legislation.

The draft Building Safety Bill was published on 20 July 2020, intending to ‘deliver the principles and recommendations for reform set out by Dame Judith Hackitt’s Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.’ The Impact Assessment states that the ‘overall effect of the Bill will be to deliver a stronger regulatory system and a stronger voice for residents which delivers better performance of all buildings across the built environment and better management of fire and structural safety risks in new and existing buildings.

Although the Bill relates, in the main, to high rise buildings there are issues in the Bill which the Council will wish to tackle in some of its high-risk residential buildings such as Gladstone House and Vale View, and its latest extra care scheme at Boughton. This will include, amongst other measures, the appointment of a Building Safety Manager, who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of fire and structural safety in the building(s) and the preparation of a Resident Engagement Strategy in conjunction with our residents.

The Fire Safety Act received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021 though a date has not yet been set when it is due to come into force. The Act focusses on the following key areas of activity:

- Strengthening the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005 (FSO).
- Implementing the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry phase 1 recommendations.
- Strengthening the regulatory framework for how building control bodies consult with and share fire safety information with the fire and rescue authorities.

The Act extends the provisions of the FSO to the following parts of a multi-occupied residential buildings:

- the building's structure, external walls and any common parts. The external walls include doors or windows in those walls, and anything attached to the exterior of those walls, e.g. balconies and cladding.
- all doors between the domestic premises and common parts

NSDC will commit to delivering all the key outcomes as they relate to the Council and its housing compliance responsibilities.

Fitness for Human Habitation Act Introduced on 20 March 2019, the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act requires all landlords in England (including letting agencies) to maintain their properties so they meet the minimum standard for human habitation at the beginning and for the duration of the tenancy. The Act aims to protect tenants by giving them the power to take legal action against landlords they believe are acting irresponsibly.

The Fitness for Human Habitation Act is an extension of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, which sets out guidelines for private and social landlords so their properties are fit for human habitation. Landlords don't need to meet new obligations or follow different rules under this Act. The legislation simply makes it easier for tenants to hold landlords accountable and take them to court if they believe their properties aren't in a habitable condition. The Council already fully complies with the requirements of the Act.

Zero Carbon Challenge. Under legislation passed in 2019, the UK is legally obliged to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Although specific legal targets for the social housing sector have not been set across the whole of the UK, energy use in UK homes accounts for 14% of the nation's emissions. A report by the Climate Change Committee concluded that

“the UK’s legally binding climate change targets will not be met without the near-complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from UK buildings”.

In the more immediate future, the UK government has said that all social housing should be upgraded to a minimum of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C, which equates to a SAP score of between 69 and 80, by 2030. Currently 33% (1,677 homes) in the council’s housing stock will need to be improved from an EPC rating of D to C by 2030.

The Council is currently working on its ‘Decarbonisation Strategy for Social Housing’ but in the meantime will undertake new stock condition surveys to ensure we have up to date information on our properties and a small programme of carbon reduction on power.

The Council is also currently investigate with partners a programme to replace or upgrade our Direct Labour fleet with electric vans and installations of EV charging infrastructure at our supplies depot.

Appendix 1

GENERAL NEEDS	Includes	Excludes
2924	Social Rented & A/B rent groups	Sheltered / New not let

HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE	Includes	Excludes
2604	Sheltered and Supported	General Needs / A&B rent / New not let

ASSESSMENT UNITS	Includes	Excluded
9	Gladstone non-rented sheltered	Gladstone rented sheltered flats

NON HRA HOSTELS	Includes
39	Wellow Green, Seven Hills and Northgate (Hostels)

TOTAL OF DWELLINGS	Includes	Excludes
5576	Occ/Void residentials W/A/B Rent	Sold / Disposed / New not let

LEASEHOLDS	Includes
182	RTB flats

NEW BUILDS	Includes
18	Both handed over but not yet let and not yet handed over

COMMUNITY CENTRES	Includes
32	Community Centres

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE 24 JANUARY 2022

2022/23 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET AND RENT SETTING

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The annual report being presented to the Committee on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) will:
- a) provide the actual outturn of the HRA for the 2020/21 financial year (1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021) (column 2 of **Appendix A1**);
 - b) examine the proposed income and expenditure on the HRA for the 2022/23 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 2023/24 to 2025/26 financial years (columns 5 to 7 of **Appendix A1**); and
 - d) set rent levels and service charges for 2022/23 (with effect from the first Monday in April 2022).
- 1.2 The following paragraphs provide the necessary detail for the matters above.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The key dates in the budget setting timetable are detailed in the table below:

Council determination of HRA budget and rent setting	8 February 2022
Newark & Sherwood District Council update of rent systems	By end of February 2022
Generation of rent cards and letters to notify tenants of variation of their rent levels (tenants are required to be given one month's notice by law of rent changes).	By end of February 2022

- 2.3 Any slippage from these key dates would jeopardise the implementation of rent increases from the first Monday in April 2022, and as a consequence, pose a risk to the sustainability of the 30-year HRA Business Plan (BP).

Statutory Duty

- 2.4 Section 76 of the *Local Government and Housing Act 1989* requires local housing authorities to set a budget annually for their HRA, and that implementation of the budget proposals will not result in a debit balance (deficit position) at year-end.
- 2.5 Following housing financing reforms (self-financing) in April 2012 the council's HRA has been operating within a 30-year business plan. The inputs and assumptions in the Business Plan

are key to setting the HRA budgets annually for each year of the HRA's four-year medium-term financial plan (MTFP).

- 2.6 Members will be aware that on 8 July 2015, Government announced that registered providers (including social housing stock-owning local authorities) had to reduce social housing rents by 1% each year for four years from 2016/17, in accordance with section 23 (Reduction in social housing rents) of the *Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016*. 2019/20 was the last year of the 1% rent reduction.
- 2.7 The 1% annual rent reductions resulted in the HRA Business Plan losing more than £11m (13%) in rental income over the four years. This was equivalent to more than six months' worth of rental income in 2019-20, or the funds to build more than 100 homes.
- 2.8 This budget supports the delivery of the Landlord Strategy (elsewhere on this agenda) and supports the aspirations for our services as detailed within the Strategy.
- 2.9 Members should note that any surpluses in 2021/22 are unlikely to be repeated and are the result of underspend due to an abnormal year in terms of a pandemic and the restructure of Housing services resulting in holding a number of senior posts vacant therefore these funds would not be annually available to offset against any rent increase.
- 2.10 Due to Covid-19 pandemic there have been supply problems for a wide range of products in the building and maintenance trade which has already lead to significant increases in costs this year. This is currently masked in the HRA as only essential repairs were carried out during the first lockdown period due to Covid-19. Now teams have caught up with the backlog and we enter the busiest half of the year this impact will become more visible as we reinstate our full services again. Officers are also predicting that these increases in costs will not reduce post Covid-19.
- 2.11 Members will also be aware that now that Brexit has been implemented, there will be an even greater impact on the supply chain for building supplies and other materials than as per paragraph 2.10 above. The HRA will need to position itself to be able to absorb cost increases as necessary.

Rent Standard 2020

- 2.12 In February 2019, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government published a Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to set a Rent Standard which would apply from 2020. This was published alongside a Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing 2018 (Rent Policy Statement) for the Regulator to have regard to when setting its Rent Standard.
- 2.13 The Rent Standard 2020 specifies that rents must be set in accordance with the Rent Policy Statement. The government's Rent Policy Statement now allows annual rent increases to social rent and affordable rent properties for at least five years, up to (and including) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate published for September of the preceding financial year plus 1%.
- 2.14 As the CPI for September 2021 was 3.1%, the Rent Policy Statement allows an annual rent increase of 4.1% for 2022/23. This would represent an average weekly social rent increase

of £3.18 per week based on 52 week social rent in 2021/22 of £77.60 (average of all our housing stock rents). This is equivalent to £165.36 per year or £13.78 per month, and will provide over £900,000 of additional income for the HRA.

2.15 By providing a five-year rent settlement, the Government has recognised:

“the need for a stable financial environment to support the delivery of new homes”, and that “enabl[ing] registered providers to plan ahead” will allow them “to make the best possible use of their resources”.

2.16 In restricting annual rent increases to CPI + 1%, the Government aims to:

“strike a fair balance between the need to maintain existing affordable homes and the provision of additional affordable housing; the interests of existing and potential social housing tenants; and the cost to taxpayers through Housing Benefit/Universal Credit”.

2.17 From 1 April 2020, therefore, social housing providers registered with the RSH (‘registered providers’) must now comply with the Rent Standard 2020.

2.18 It is worth noting the November 2021 CPI was 5.1% which means the Council’s rent increase is below the national CPI increase, however, our inflationary costs are increasing as a result.

Borrowing Cap

2.19 As part of the HRA self-financing reforms introduced in April 2012, the government set a maximum amount of housing debt that each local authority could have. In subsequent years, the government awarded some local authorities limited increases to their housing borrowing limits. On 29 October 2018, the Limits on Indebtedness (Revocation) Determination 2018 revoked all previous determinations that specified limits on local authority housing indebtedness.

2.20 Though councils are no longer restricted in how much they can borrow in their HRAs, there is still the requirement for councils to make sure that all borrowing is affordable and proportionate within the context of their 30-year HRA business plan (BP). The council has used the expert external advice it obtained on the assumptions in the BP to monitor the affordability of future indebtedness. Anticipated future levels of indebtedness are currently viable within the plan.

30-year HRA Business Plan (BP)

2.21 The BP summarises the viability of the council’s plans to fulfil its management, maintenance and investment responsibilities to its HRA assets over the next 30-years. Key assumptions are made in the BP based on the council’s strategic priorities and policies, detailed stock data and other factors.

2.22 The assumptions in the BP are key to setting the HRA budgets annually for each year of the HRA’s four-year MTFP. Adverse variations in these assumptions can have significant consequences, as the examples in paragraph 2.7 make clear. Failure therefore for Members to agree the proposals in this report could lead to a material impact on the delivery of housing management services to tenants, as well as the viability and delivery of any future

proposals for any further HRA development programmes, future phases (non-committed) for Yorke Drive regeneration scheme and other investment activities.

- 2.23 The council obtained expert external advice on monitoring the BP’s capacity for borrowing (paragraph 2.20). The narrative of the HRA BP and assumptions in the financial model will be reviewed and updated when circumstances allow and presented to the Committee for approval.
- 2.24 Officers monitor relevant government policy announcements and model the implications of these on the HRA BP. The Building Safety Bill and Fire and Building Safety (Public Inquiry) Bill are currently both with the House of Commons for review; any changes to the Decent Homes Standard, the carbon zero/green agenda and the detailed requirements arising from the Social Housing White Paper which was released in November 2020. Officers will model the impacts of these changes on the HRA BP as further details become available. There is an expectation of increased scrutiny on performance, accountability to tenants and an increased expectation of regulation.

Rent Cycle

- 2.25 Rent is currently charged over 48 weeks, giving tenants four rent free weeks albeit that the full years rent charge is the same as if charged across 52 weeks. Members will be aware we are looking at the possibility to move from a 48 week rent cycle (with 4 rent free weeks) to a 52 week rent cycle annually as part of the secure tenancy review which is planned for 2022/23.

Affordability Considerations

- 2.26 This section provides information regarding the impact of the proposed changes to rent and services charges, as well as data on how tenants pay their rent and the support they receive from Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

Rent level comparable data

- 2.27 *Table 1* compares 2020/21 data on average rent levels for the private rented sector (PRS) in Newark and Sherwood and in England to the council’s average social housing rents for general needs tenants.

Table 1: Comparison of 2020/21 data on average rent levels for the PRS in Newark and Sherwood, the PRS in England, and NSDC’s social housing rents for general needs tenants

Size of accommodation All amounts are average amounts per week	Private rented sector: Newark and Sherwood	Private rented sector: England	Social housing rents for general needs tenants: NSDC
Room only	£99.92	£95.08	-
Studio	£72.23	£132.69	£57.75
1 bedroom	£98.08	£150.00	£64.75
2 bedrooms	£126.92	£161.54	£72.15
3 bedrooms	£144.23	£184.62	£82.83
4+ bedrooms	£252.69	£311.54	£89.62

Average: all accommodation sizes	£126.92	£168.46	£79.95
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2.28 For all sizes of accommodation, the council's average social housing rents for general needs tenants are significantly lower than those in the PRS.

2.29 *Table 2* compares 2020/21 data on average rent levels for Private Registered Providers (PRPs) in Newark and Sherwood to the council's average social housing rents, split for each by whether properties are for general needs tenants or supported housing tenants.

Table 2: Comparison of 2020/21 data on average rent levels for PRPs in Newark and Sherwood and NSDC's social housing rents, split by general needs tenants and supported housing tenants

Type of accommodation	Social Rent: General Needs		Social Rent: Supported Housing/Housing for Older People	
	NSDC	Private Registered Providers	NSDC	Private Registered Providers
All amounts are average amounts per week				
Non-self-contained	-	-	-	£152.72
Bedsit	£57.75	£65.64	£68.96	£116.70
1 bedroom	£64.75	£75.95	£70.33	£93.67
2 bedrooms	£72.15	£90.03	£78.59	£91.05
3 bedrooms	£82.83	£92.02	£85.68	£109.69
4 bedrooms	£89.62	£101.41		
5 bedrooms	£95.70	£96.45		
Average: excluding non-self-contained	£79.95	£87.97	£75.08	£95.48
Average: all accommodation types	£79.95	£87.97	£75.08	£108.24

2.30 For all sizes of accommodation, the council's average social housing rents are lower than those of the PRPs. It should be noted that direct comparisons can only be made between the accommodation types for general needs tenants, due to variation in the type and nature of accommodation provided for supported housing tenants/housing for older people.

2.31 The average 2020/21 social rent levels of £87.97 (general needs tenants) and £108.24 (supported housing tenants) by Newark and Sherwood PRPs in *Table 2* excludes service charges. *Table 3* shows the average 2020/21 service charges for these groups.

Table 3: average 2020/21 net rent, service charge and gross rent charged by PRPs in Newark and Sherwood to general needs tenants and supported housing tenants

Type of tenant	Net rent	Service charge	Gross rent
All amounts are average amounts per week			
General Needs	£87.97	£4.67*	£90.61*
Supported Housing/Housing for Older People	£108.24	£71.39	£179.63

- 2.32 It should be noted in *Table 3* that the gross rent equals the sum of the net rent and service charge only for supported housing tenants: not for general needs tenants. This is because the average service charge relates only to those properties with service charges, and as all properties for supported housing tenants have service charges whereas not all properties for general needs tenants have service charges.
- 2.33 Further information on the council's limited range of service charges are provided in the 'Service Charges' section below.

Housing Benefit (HB) and Universal Credit (UC)

- 2.34 A snapshot of data taken in December 2021 shows that of the 5,448 current tenants, 3,474 (64%) received help from benefits towards paying their rent. 2,179 (40%) were in receipt of Housing Benefit and 1,295 (24%) were in receipt of Universal Credit. The remaining 1,974 (36%) of tenants paid their rent without receiving help from benefits.
- 2.35 Universal Credit (UC) is the Government's working-age benefit which combines six means-tested ('legacy') benefits, including Housing Benefit (HB), into a single monthly payment. UC was a central feature of the government's *Welfare Reform Act 2012*. The Government started rolling out UC in 2013, with the full service commencing in 2018 across Newark and Sherwood.
- 2.36 Since 2018, there has been a significant increase in the number of council housing tenants claiming UC, increasing from 95 to 1,295 between June 2018 and December 2021. Of these 1,295 UC claimants, around 31% have their rent paid directly to the council, either due to being in arrears or due to a vulnerability. Over 70% of these 1,295 UC claimants are general needs tenants.
- 2.37 UC cases increased significantly during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but have since stabilised as people have moved off the benefit. It is anticipated that over 2,000 tenants will be claiming UC once all relevant households have transferred to UC.
- 2.38 As the number of council housing tenants claiming UC is increasing, the number claiming Housing Benefit (HB) as a standalone ('legacy') benefit is decreasing. Around 2,300 of council households had tenant(s) in receipt of legacy HB in December 2020, compared to the 2,179 currently receiving legacy HB.
- 2.39 Despite the trends outlined above, a significant number of council housing tenants will continue to receive legacy HB even after all relevant households have transferred to UC. This is because eligible adults of all ages (including older people) can claim legacy HB, whereas only eligible adults of working-age can claim UC. Around 47% of the council's social housing stock is designated for older people.
- 2.40 Around 1,406 of the 2,179 households, or just under two-thirds, are entitled to the maximum amount of HB, and around 773 households to partial HB.
- 2.41 Residents claiming HB or UC who need additional help with meeting their housing costs can request a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from their local council. Claimants are supported to make claims for DHP where appropriate with a view to sustain tenancies wherever possible.

- 2.42 The Committee should note that officers recognise the importance of supporting tenants at an early stage to sustain their tenancies, especially around rent collection, benefit entitlement and arrears management.
- 2.43 This commitment to a supportive approach is illustrated by two specific projects within the Community Plan, the Starting Well project and the Targeted Arrears Support Project, which seek to ensure tenancies are sustained wherever possible.
- 2.44 The Starting Well project will implement a range of initiatives to ensure new tenancies start in a positive way to give the best chance of tenancy success; whilst the Targeted Arrears Support Project will aim to provide targeted support to tenants that have been financially affected by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Service Charges

- 2.45 In addition to rent, local authorities can charge for other services they provide (service charges). Section 93 (Power to charge for discretionary services) of the *Local Government Act 2003* requires charges to be set such that taking one financial year with another, the income from charges for a service does not exceed its costs of provision.
- 2.46 The Policy Statement on Rent for Social Housing (February 2019) sets out an expectation that service charge increases remain within the limit of rent charge of CPI + 1% in order to keep service charges affordable. **Appendix C** details the current (2021/22) and proposed (2022/23) service charges, with proposed increases to current charges of 4.1% (CPI + 1%). Subsequent paragraphs provide details about the services that tenants are charged for.

Housing-Based Services for Supported Housing and Extra Care Services

- 2.47 The main housing-based support service provided is a community alarm service, to help tenants live more independently. Tenants with lifeline units in their properties can raise an alarm call from anywhere in the home if they require this. Around half of the council's social housing properties have these lifeline units.
- 2.48 Tenants in properties with lifeline units currently pay £1.78 per week for the community alarm service and this report proposes to increase that charge by 7 pence a week to a weekly charge of £1.85 per week. This represents an increase of around 3.93% per week. This charge is mandatory, in line with the terms of their tenancy agreement. This charge is not eligible for housing benefit.
- 2.49 In addition to these support services, tenants in the extra care housing schemes receive additional housing management and housing-related services due to their specialist needs. The council currently has four extra care housing schemes. These are at Gladstone House, The Broadleaves, Vale View and the Bilsthorpe Bungalows.

Other Housing-Based Services

- 2.50 Other weekly service charges applied to tenants are for the costs of water and sewerage provided to properties at Vale View (£3.88 per week) and for the costs (where appropriate)

of landscaping, lighting and drainage provided to 70 general needs properties (average weekly charge of £5.53 per week).

- 2.51 The council provides a number of housing-related services for which it does not currently recover the cost of provision through service charges, therefore resulting in costs being met through rent income. Such services include communal cleaning, communal lighting and grounds maintenance. It is proposed that work is undertaken to identify these costs and how they might be separated from the rent charge and identified as distinct service charges. This would help to meet the cost of provision, increase transparency and meet the expectations of the Regulator.

Non-Housing Based Services

- 2.52 Officers manage the garages, garage ports (or car ports/parking spaces) and garage plots (or parking plots) within the council's HRA. Garages and garage ports are structures owned by the council, fully enclosed and partially enclosed respectively, whereas garage plots are pieces of land on which tenants supply their own garage structure. The charges for garages (garage rents) and garage plots are weekly, whilst those for garage ports are annually. All garage-based charges exclude standard rate value-added tax (VAT) if let to council housing tenants, and include VAT if let to non-council housing tenants.
- 2.53 Whilst it may be possible to increase rents by more than 4.1% (CPI + 1%) for more desirable garages, officers are aware that a large increase in rent may increase the expectations of tenants around improvements to the condition and security of garages. It is therefore proposed not to introduce differential rent levels at the current time.
- 2.54 Officers continue to identify existing and redundant garage sites which could be suitable for inclusion in the council's approved housing development programme.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 In light of the above, officers are proposing to the Committee that it recommends to Council at its meeting on 8 February 2022:
- a) the HRA budget for 2022/23, as set out in **Appendix A1** to this report;
 - b) an increase of 4.1% (CPI + 1%) in the 2022/23 rents of all properties in the HRA as at 31 March 2022; and
 - c) the 2022/23 service charges as set out in **Appendix C** to this report.

4.0 Digital Implications

- 4.1 There are no digital implications directly arising from this report.

5.0 Equalities Implications

- 5.1 The proposed rent increase would apply to all council social housing properties, whether or not these are occupied, rather than to the tenants themselves or to tenants in specific

properties. The proposed rent increase is therefore not expected to discriminate against any of the characteristics protected under the *Equality Act 2010*.

- 5.2 The proposed rent and service charge increases are, however, expected to adversely impact tenants in receipt of benefits. The government's increase of 3.1% in State Pension and working-age benefits for 2022/23 is less than the 4.1% proposed increase in rent and most service charges for next year.
- 5.3 As outlined in paragraph 2.41, working-age council housing tenants claiming benefits in need of help with housing costs can request a DHP from the council. The Government has not yet announced how much DHP it will be giving councils for 2022/23.
- 5.4 Officers recognise the importance of supporting tenants of all ages to sustain their tenancies, as outlined in paragraph 2.42.

6.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/6206)

- 6.1 The majority of the financial implications are set out in the body of this report or its **appendices**. The financial implications of tenants' Right to Buy (RTB) are covered in further detail below.

Right to Buy (RTB)

- 6.2 The council signed a Retention Agreement with the Secretary of State to use 40% of its retained receipts (1-4-1 receipts) from properties sold under the RTB scheme on the provision of replacement social housing. The one-for-one replacement of RTB sales with new affordable rent homes is at the national level.
- 6.3 If the council is unable to spend its retained receipts within three years of receiving them, it must return these to Government with interest of 4% above the base rate (currently 0.25%).
- 6.4 By December 2021, the council managed to spend all of the 1-4-1 receipts received between April 2013 and December 2016; and by December 2026, the council anticipates that it will spend all of the 1-4-1 receipts received between January 2017 and December 2021.
- 6.5 Officers closely monitor spend against the council's approved HRA development programme to ensure that 1-4-1 receipts are used as appropriate.
- 6.6 The number of RTB sales affects how much the council receives in 1-4-1 receipts, and thus how much the council must spend on replacement social housing from its own resources or borrowing, though also affects the number of properties from which the council receives weekly rent.
- 6.7 Officers consider current and prospective local and national trends in RTB sales when setting the HRA budget annually.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- 7.1 The implementation of the proposals in this report will directly support the council's HRA to meet multiple objectives of the Community Plan 2020-2023, such as to:

- a) *“Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities...”*; and
- b) *“Create more and better quality homes...”*.

7.2 Some of the actions the council is taking to achieve the Community Plan objectives are:

- enhancing the quality of empty homes when let;
- exploring & developing carbon neutral initiatives to upgrade properties and improving fuel efficiency;
- encouraging tenancy success in a home by developing and delivering the first phase of the 'Starting Well';
- integrating the management of housing revenue account green spaces within the public realm and provided by our in house StreetScene;
- supporting the regeneration of a central estate and improving local amenities through delivering Yorke Drive Regeneration Project; and
- contributing to the offer of digital inclusion for tenants and local communities.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the following recommendations be made to Policy and Finance on the 27th January and Full Council at its meeting on 8 February 2022:

- a) **the HRA budget for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix A1 to this report;**
- b) **an increase of 4.1% (CPI + 1%) in the 2022/23 rents of all properties in the HRA as at 31 March 2022; and**
- c) **the 2022/23 service charges as set out in Appendix C to this report.**

Reason for Recommendations

To advise Members of the proposed HRA budget and changes in rent and service charge levels for 2022/23 and for these to be recommended to Council at its meeting on 8 February 2022.

Background Papers

Nil.

For further information please contact Caroline Wagstaff (Business Manager - Housing Projects) on Extension 5637 or Mohammed Sarodia (Assistant Business Manager - Financial Services) on Extension 5537.

Sanjiv Kohli
Director – Resources/Deputy Chief Executive

Suzanne Shead
Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) - OUTTURN 2020/21, BUDGET 2021/22 and BUDGETS 2022/23 to 2025/26

Annual rent increases of Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1% between 2022/23 and 2024/25

CPI + 1%

CPI + 1%

CPI + 1%

CPI

4.1% estimate 3.0%

estimate 3.0%

estimate 2.0%

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
SUMMARY	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	OUTTURN	BASE BUDGET				
	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME						
Rents: dwellings	(22,188,938)	(22,761,110)	(23,913,120)	(24,702,590)	(25,773,480)	(25,690,480)
Rents: non-dwellings	(165,938)	(169,140)	(169,140)	(169,140)	(169,140)	(169,140)
Charges for services	(975,869)	(1,172,560)	(1,218,570)	(1,255,140)	(1,292,810)	(1,331,600)
Contributions to expenditure	(1,017,297)	(954,750)	(1,230,630)	(1,259,160)	(1,288,460)	(1,318,550)
Sub Total - Income	(24,348,042)	(25,057,560)	(26,531,460)	(27,386,030)	(28,523,890)	(28,509,770)
EXPENDITURE						
Repairs & maintenance	4,330,381	4,381,500	4,477,620	4,451,550	4,558,390	4,667,970
Supervision & management	4,850,633	4,517,740	4,853,220	4,991,160	5,113,330	5,238,830
Special services	675,651	1,614,270	1,780,770	1,712,020	1,748,220	1,785,390
Rents, rates, taxes & other charges	574,588	535,250	587,980	595,740	614,160	633,260
Depreciation & impairment	4,859,663	5,420,200	5,516,280	5,635,870	5,635,870	5,635,870
Debt management costs	12,350	80,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Revenue expenditure funded by capital	104,969	0	0	0	0	0
Revaluation loss or (gain)	3,254,313	0	0	0	0	0
Pension-related one-off costs	43,147	0	0	0	0	0
Efficiency savings: prospective revenue initiatives	0	0	0	0	0	0
Efficiency savings: revenue initiatives	0	100,000	643,000	643,000	643,000	643,000
Efficiency savings: contribution to capital	0	590,000	0	0	0	0
Sub Total - Expenditure	18,705,696	17,238,960	17,883,870	18,054,340	18,337,970	18,629,320
NET COST OF SERVICES	(5,642,346)	(7,818,600)	(8,647,590)	(9,331,690)	(10,185,920)	(9,880,450)
Interest payable/(receivable)	4,263,865	3,770,030	3,904,450	3,650,750	3,446,350	3,312,160
Increase/(decrease) in provision for bad debt	53,484	0	0	0	252,800	251,830
Capital grants & contributions	(355,278)	0	0	0	0	0
(Profit)/loss on sale of non-current assets	427,679	32,500	27,300	27,300	27,300	27,300
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	(1,252,597)	(4,016,070)	(4,715,840)	(5,653,640)	(6,459,470)	(6,289,160)
APPROPRIATIONS						
(Profit)/loss on sale of non-current assets	(427,679)	(32,500)	(27,300)	(27,300)	(27,300)	(27,300)
Financial instrument account	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pension-related costs	(1,029,187)	208,170	208,170	250,000	250,000	250,000
Revaluation loss or (gain)	(3,254,313)	0	0	0	0	0
Capital grants & contributions	355,278	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue expenditure funded by capital	(104,969)	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue contribution to/(from) Major Repairs Reserve	5,008,627	3,840,400	4,534,970	5,430,940	6,236,770	6,066,460
Contributions to earmarked reserves	704,840	0	0	0	0	0
HRA (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR YEAR	(0)	0	0	0	0	0
WORKING BALANCE brought forward (b/f)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)
WORKING BALANCE carried forward (c/f)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) - BUDGET 2021/22 to 2025/26

SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY

CODE	SERVICE	2021/22 BASE BUDGET £	2022/23 BASE BUDGET £	MORE/(LESS) £	2023/24 BASE BUDGET £	2024/25 BASE BUDGET £	2025/26 BASE BUDGET £
	EMPLOYEES						
111	SALARIES AND WAGES	3,783,170	3,923,970	140,800	4,022,770	4,103,220	4,185,290
113	NATIONAL INSURANCE	346,510	375,260	28,750	381,850	389,480	397,280
114	SUPERANNUATION	678,440	711,090	32,650	724,160	738,630	753,410
	EMPLOYEES SUB-TOTAL	4,808,120	5,010,320	202,200	5,128,780	5,231,330	5,335,980
	PREMISES-RELATED EXPENDITURE						
211	REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	598,260	594,870	(3,390)	499,360	508,110	517,120
212	ENERGY COSTS	185,170	215,940	30,770	226,740	238,060	249,960
214	RATES	8,400	9,000	600	9,270	9,550	9,840
215	WATER SERVICES	48,780	44,590	(4,190)	45,920	47,300	48,710
216	FIXTURES AND FITTING	14,330	13,000	(1,330)	13,120	13,240	13,370
217	CLEANING AND DOMESTIC	5,030	8,700	3,670	8,780	8,860	8,940
	TRANSPORT-RELATED EXPENDITURE						
311	TRANSPORT	29,340	97,390	68,050	94,250	97,100	100,020
312	RECHARGE FROM TRANSPORT POOL	193,800	126,450	(67,350)	114,000	117,420	120,950
315	CAR ALLOWANCES	103,660	104,550	890	92,550	92,550	92,550
	SUPPLIES & SERVICES						
411	EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE	20,830	32,210	11,380	33,030	33,880	34,750
412	MATERIALS	545,900	575,600	29,700	565,560	582,530	600,010
421	CATERING	123,330	130,000	6,670	133,900	137,920	142,050
431	CLOTHING AND UNIFORMS	6,860	8,420	1,560	7,320	7,320	7,320
440	NASH PROJECTS	138,590	110,670	(27,920)	112,790	114,970	117,220
441	GENERAL OFFICE EXPENSES	18,000	18,540	540	19,100	19,670	20,260
451	CONTRACTUAL	1,062,070	1,210,210	148,140	1,179,160	1,213,500	1,248,880
452	OTHER SERVICES	2,475,550	2,645,880	170,330	2,721,010	2,798,390	2,878,060
461	COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTING	44,090	45,450	1,360	46,700	48,080	49,500
471	STAFF	8,900	9,420	520	9,230	9,460	9,690
482	SUBSCRIPTIONS	63,920	65,840	1,920	67,820	69,850	71,950
491	INSURANCE	344,670	355,010	10,340	365,660	376,630	387,930
492	CONTRIBS TO FUNDS AND PROVISNS	9,468,770	10,259,420	790,650	11,316,810	12,122,640	11,952,330
493	OTHER	891,160	889,530	(1,630)	878,420	1,133,180	1,134,220
	TRANSFER PAYMENTS						
612	OTHER TRANSFER PAYMENTS	(32,500)	(27,300)	5,200	(27,300)	(27,300)	(27,300)
	RUNNING EXPENSES SUB-TOTAL	16,366,910	17,543,390	1,176,480	18,533,200	19,772,910	19,788,330
	CAPITAL FINANCING						
811	LOANS POOL	3,775,030	3,909,450	134,420	3,655,750	3,451,350	3,317,160
817	DEBT MANAGEMENT EXPENSES	80,000	25,000	(55,000)	25,000	25,000	25,000
821	CAPITAL CHARGE	32,500	48,300	15,800	48,300	48,300	48,300
	CAPITAL FINANCING SUB-TOTAL	3,887,530	3,982,750	95,220	3,729,050	3,524,650	3,390,460
	INCOME						
922	CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OTHER LAS	(2,000)	0	2,000	0	0	0
926	RECEIPTS FROM OTHER FUNDS	(33,910)	(35,120)	(1,210)	(36,340)	(37,610)	(38,930)
928	RECHARGE NON GF ACCOUNTS	(5,650)	(5,880)	(230)	(6,060)	(6,240)	(6,430)
931	SALES	(263,820)	(440,820)	(177,000)	(449,030)	(457,400)	(465,940)
932	FEES AND CHARGES	(552,610)	(632,940)	(80,330)	(650,910)	(669,420)	(688,480)
933	RENTS	(24,019,350)	(25,244,810)	(1,225,460)	(26,068,120)	(27,173,870)	(27,126,770)
938	FEES AND CHARGES	(37,000)	(17,000)	20,000	(17,000)	(17,000)	(17,000)
939	OTHER RECEIPTS	(143,220)	(154,890)	(11,670)	(158,570)	(162,350)	(166,220)
941	INTEREST	(5,000)	(5,000)	0	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
	INCOME SUB-TOTAL	(25,062,560)	(26,536,460)	(1,473,900)	(27,391,030)	(28,528,890)	(28,514,770)
	COMMITTEE TOTAL (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	0	0	0	0	0	0
	WORKING BALANCE brought forward (b/f)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	0	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)
	WORKING BALANCE carried forward (c/f)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	0	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Each year, the council must set rents for its housing properties and notify each individual tenant of any proposed rent change, in accordance with legislation.
- 1.2 This policy outlines how Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC, the council) will calculate and charge rent for the housing properties that it owns within its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and has responsibility to manage and maintain.

2.0 Purpose of Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is primarily to ensure that rents are set in accordance with all relevant legislation and obligations; and provide a clear framework for setting and reviewing the rent levels of properties.

3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 On 08 July 2015, the Government announced that registered providers (including social housing stock-owning local authorities) had to reduce social housing rents by 1% each year for four years from 2016/17, in accordance with section 23 (Reduction in social housing rents) of the *Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016*. 2019/20 is the last year of the 1% rent reduction.
- 3.2 In February 2019, the Government published a Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to set a Rent Standard which would apply from 2020. This was published alongside a Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing 2018 (Rent Policy Statement) for the Regulator to have regard to when setting its Rent Standard.
- 3.3 The Rent Standard 2020 specifies that rents must be set in accordance with the Rent Policy Statement. The government's Rent Policy Statement now allows annual rent increases to social rent and affordable rent properties for at least five years, up to (and including) the CPI rate published for September of the preceding financial year plus 1%.
- 3.4 By providing a five-year rent settlement, the Government has recognised:
 - 3.5 In restricting annual rent increases to CPI + 1%, the Government aims to:

“the need for a stable financial environment to support the delivery of new homes”, and that “enabl[ing] registered providers to plan ahead” will allow them “to make the best possible use of their resources”.

“strike a fair balance between the need to maintain existing affordable homes and the provision of additional affordable housing; the interests of existing and potential social housing tenants; and the cost to taxpayers through Housing Benefit/Universal Credit”.

4.0 The Policy

4.1 In accordance with the Rent Policy Statement, the council will calculate and charge rent for all housing properties that it owns within its HRA and has responsibility to manage and maintain. The paragraphs below summarises the relevant content from this document.

Social Rent

4.2 Social rent properties here refers to accommodation, as defined by section 69 (Low cost rental) of the *Housing and Regeneration Act 2008*, not classified as:

- a) affordable rent accommodation;
- b) let to social tenants with high incomes;
- c) shared ownership low cost rental accommodation;
- d) intermediate rent accommodation;
- e) specialised supported housing;
- f) relevant local authority accommodation;
- g) student accommodation;
- h) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) social housing;
- i) temporary social housing; or
- j) care homes.

4.3 The council will set the initial rent on a social rent property at a level no higher than 10% above formula rent for supported housing, and no higher than 5% above formula rent for all other social rent properties.

4.4 Formula rent is based on:

- a) 30% of a property's rent being based on relative property values;
- b) 70% of a property's rent being based on relative local earnings; and
- c) a bedroom factor, so that other things being equal, smaller properties have lower rents.

4.5 Formula rent will increase by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% each year, based on the CPI rate for September of the previous financial year.

4.6 Formula rent is subject to a rent cap based on the number of bedrooms in a property. Where formula rent would be higher than the rent cap for a particular property, the rent cap will be used instead.

4.7 The rent cap will increase by CPI plus 1.5% each year.

4.8 The annual change in rent for tenants in a specific property will increase by no more than CPI plus 1% each year.

4.9 The rent for a property which exceeds the rent flexibility level will increase by no more than CPI each year, until the rent for the property is brought within the rent flexibility level.

4.10 The rent for a property which exceeds the rent flexibility level will not exceed formula rent plus the rent flexibility level when the property is re-let.

- 4.11 A social rent property will not be converted to market rent, intermediate rent or affordable rent properties, except for the latter where agreed to by Homes England or the Secretary of State.

Affordable Rent

- 4.12 Affordable rent properties here refers to accommodation which Homes England or the Secretary of State have agreed can be let at an affordable rent (including service charges).
- 4.13 Affordable rent will not exceed 80% of gross market rent (including applicable service charges).
- 4.14 Gross market rent is the rent the property would reasonably be expected to be let for in the private sector. Factors including property size, location type and service provision will be taken into account when determining gross market rent.
- 4.15 The council will comply with the terms of any agreements with Homes England or the Secretary of State when setting affordable rents.
- 4.16 The council will also have regard to the local market context, including the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for the Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) the property is located in, when setting affordable rents.
- 4.17 Affordable rent will, as a minimum, be the potential formula rent for the property.
- 4.18 Affordable rent properties will not be converted to market rent or intermediate rent.
- 4.19 The annual change in rent for tenants in a specific property will increase by no more than CPI plus 1% each year.
- 4.20 The rent of an affordable rent property let to a new tenant (or licensee) or re-let to an existing tenant (or licensee) will be based on a new valuation, so as to ensure the new rent does not exceed 80% of relevant market rent.
- 4.21 The rent of an affordable rent property re-let to the same tenant because their probationary tenancy has ended will not be re-set.

2020 Limit for Social Rent and Affordable Rent Accommodation

- 4.22 In 2020/21, the maximum rent increase for existing tenants will be calculated using the 2020 limit.
- 4.23 The 2020 limit is the average weekly rent payable by a tenant for accommodation in 2019/20. For properties re-let in 2019/20, the average weekly rent will be calculated based on the period since the property was last re-let.
- 4.24 The average weekly rent will be calculated based on the council's annual rent cycle of 48 weeks in a 52 week financial year, and 49 weeks in a 53 week financial year (four rent free weeks a year).

Service charges

- 4.25 The council is expected to set reasonable and transparent service charges which reflect the service provided to tenants.
- 4.26 The council is expected to identify service and rent charges separately for social rent properties.
- 4.27 The council should endeavour to keep service charge increases within the CPI + 1% limit of annual rent changes, so that charges remain affordable.
- 4.28 The council should consult with tenants where an additional charge may need to be made for new or extended services.

Garages

- 4.29 The approach to charging for garages, garage ports (or car ports/parking spaces) and garage plots (or parking plots) may differ from the approach to charging for rents and the approach to charging for housing-based support services.
- 4.30 The council should endeavour to strengthen the relationship between garage-related expenditure and income, and to adopt a more transparent pricing structure which better reflects garage-related demand.
- 4.31 The council should consider factors including the location, condition and availability or demand when setting garage-related rents.

Notification of rent changes

- 4.32 Tenants will be given at least four weeks' notice in writing of any changes in rent due and the reasons for the rent change.

Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC): proposed 2022/23 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) service charges

Service charge	2021/22 charge (£)	Proposed 2022/23 charge (£)	Frequency	Other information
CareLine service				
Lifeline alarm monitoring. Advice, contact of next of kin or emergency service if required by tenant	1.78	1.85	per week	All tenants
Lifeline installation fee	25.37	25.00	one-off	General needs tenants only
Sensor rental and monitoring for two to five sensors	1.56	1.61	per week	All tenants. Lifeline customers only
Lifeline plus two to five sensors installation fee	35.52	36.52	one-off	New general needs tenants only
5 x 5 minute calls at times agreed between 6am - 8pm	3.55	3.66	per week	All tenants. Lifeline customers only
Additional Tenancy Assistance (opt-in service)	5.20	5.36	per week	
Gladstone House				
Support Charge	1.78	1.85	per week	
Intensive Housing Management Charge	98.16	72.08	per week	Due to reduce from £98.16 to £69.25 from February 2022 because of changes in service provision
Communal TV Licence	0.21	0.21	per week	
Meal Charge	37.64	39.18	per week	
Broadleaves				
Support Charge	1.78	1.85	per week	
Intensive Housing Management Charge	69.90	72.76	per week	
Communal TV Licence	0.27	0.27	per week	
Meal Charge	47.25	49.18	per week	
Vale View				
Intensive Housing Management Service	79.71	82.97	per week	
Support Charge	1.78	1.85	per week	
Water Charge	3.88	4.03	per week	
Extra Care Bungalows, Bilsthorpe				
Intensive Housing Management Service	102.70	106.91	per week	
Support Charge	1.78	1.85	per week	
Other charges relating to dwellings or tenants				
New build landscaping, lighting and drainage	2.93 - 7.08	3.05 - 7.37	per week	
Garages				
Garage Rent	9.00	9.36	per week	VAT added if let to non-council tenant
Garage Plot	44.58	46.40	annually	VAT added if let to non-council tenant
Garage Port	4.02	4.18	per week	VAT added if let to non-council tenant

Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan (BP): some key assumptions

Assumption topic	Assumption										
Income: inflation	<p>Increase in 2022/23 rental income by 4.1%, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2021 (3.1%) plus 1%.</p> <p>The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee forecasts CPI inflation in 2022 to average 4.5%, though sets monetary policy to sustainably return to the government’s target inflation rate of 2%, typically over a period of around two years.</p> <p>For prudence, and in light of the current volatility, 3% increases (CPI of 2.0% + 1%) have currently been assumed in rental income for future years of the government’s five-year rent settlement (2023/24 and 2024/25). For 2025/26, a 2% increase (CPI of 2.0%) has currently been assumed.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="421 909 1281 992"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2022/23</th> <th>2023/24</th> <th>2024/25</th> <th>2025/26</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Rent change</td> <td>4.1%</td> <td>3.0%</td> <td>3.0%</td> <td>2.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Rent change	4.1%	3.0%	3.0%	2.0%
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26							
Rent change	4.1%	3.0%	3.0%	2.0%							
Income: rent loss from void properties	1% in each year between 2022/23 and 2025/26.										
Expenditure: capital	Capital expenditure between 2022/23 and 2025/26 is updated in line with the reports presented to Policy & Finance Committee as part of the annual budget-setting and quarterly budget monitoring processes.										
Right to Buy (RTB)	<p>21 sales in each year between 2022/23 and 2025/26.</p> <p>The council has had 16 RTB sales in 2021/22 Q1-Q3.</p> <p>Nationally and locally, the number of RTB sales seemed to have peaked in recent years. The current environment could increase the ability or likelihood of some RTB sales (such as for tenants whose properties become relatively more affordable to purchase, if the ratio of house prices to rents decreases); and decrease the ability or likelihood of other RTB sales (such as for tenants whose financial circumstances have worsened as a result of the pandemic).</p>										

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

HOMES & COMMUNITIES REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2022 AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2021

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report compares the Revised Budgets for the period ending 31 March 2022 with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period, based on meetings with Financial Services staff and the appropriate Business Manager. These are based on eight months' performance information on the Council's revenue and capital budgets.
- 1.2 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.

2.0 Background Information

General Fund Performance

- 2.1 As at 30 November 2021, the forecast General Fund revenue outturn position for the Homes & Communities Committee is a favourable variance of £0.251m. **Appendix A** contains the main reasons for this variance, whilst **Appendix B** summarises the changes in variance between this report and the previous report.
- 2.2 As at 30 November 2021, the forecast General Fund capital outturn position for the Homes & Communities Committee is a favourable variance of £0.030m. **Appendix C** provides further details.

Housing Revenue Account Performance

- 2.3 As at 30 November 2021, the forecast Housing Revenue Account revenue outturn position is a favourable variance of £0.782m. **Appendix D** provides further details.
- 2.4 As at 30 November 2021, the forecast Housing Revenue Account capital outturn position is a favourable variance of £0.136m. **Appendix E** provides further details.

3.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/1741)

- 3.1 The financial implications are all contained within the report to be presented to Policy & Finance Committee on 27 January.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the contents of this report be noted.

Reason for Recommendation

To inform Members of the proposed forecast outturn position for Homes & Communities Committee as at 30 November 2021.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Nick Wilson, Business Manager – Financial Services on Ext. 5317

Sanjiv Kohli

Deputy Chief Executive, Director - Resources and Section 151 Officer

Homes & Communities Committee: General Fund Revenue Outturn Variance Analysis as at 30 November 2021

Favourable variances are bracketed and in red - £(0.123)m. Unfavourable variances are in black - £0.123m.

Homes & Communities - £(0.251)m	£'m
Private Sector Speech Call: reduced costs, and increased income due to an increase in customer demand	(0.033)
Housing Options: vacant posts, in-year change in proportion of employee costs rechargeable to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and service charge income from in-year occupation of Northgate site	(0.086)
Strategic Housing: vacant posts	(0.034)
Customer Services: vacant posts	(0.063)
CCTV: reduced external income due to contract terminations	0.011
Commissioning Contributions: reduced expenditure on certain community-based organisations	(0.031)
Other small variances	(0.015)
Total	(0.251)

Homes & Communities Committee Revenue Outturn Change in Variance Analysis as at 30 November 2021

Favourable variances are bracketed and in red - £(0.123)m. Unfavourable variances are in black - £0.123m.

All amounts are in millions of pounds (£'m)

Homes & Communities - Variance as at 30/09/2021	(0.159)
Private Sector Speech Call: increased income due to increased demand in light of COVID	(0.012)
Housing Options: change in proportion of employee costs rechargeable to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	(0.050)
Strategic Housing: changes in assumptions regarding recruitment to vacant posts	0.016
Customer Services: vacant posts offset by an assumed recharge of most of the costs of the posts which have transferred from the HRA to the General Fund (GF)	(0.060)
Other small variances	0.014
Homes & Communities - Variance as at 30/11/2021	(0.251)

Project	Capital Description	Project Manager	Revised Budget Policy & Finance 25.11.21	Variations Proposed to Policy & Finance Period 8	Revised Budget including Variations for Approval	Actuals to 30.11.21	Current outstanding orders	Additional anticipated spend in year	Total Projected spend in year	Variance Unavourable / (Favourable)	Comments - Spend to date
TA1221	SLC Fire Safety Remedial Works	S Young	77,000	0	77,000	5,385	0	41,615	47,000	(30,000)	14.12.21 Instructed some of the works, still awaiting quotes for others. Currently anticipate a £30k underspend on project
TA2210	Purchase of Alms Houses	M Cook	0	0	0	(96)	96	0	0	0	14.12.21 - Project complete
TA3097	Yorke Drive Regeneration and Community Facility	C Clarkson	110,000	100,000	210,000	50	0	209,950	210,000	0	14/12/2021 currently working on design and planning applications. Requested £3,248k to be reprofiled to next financial year. Additional £100k added to the programme following the award of £1.05m from Levelling Up Fund (Brown Field Land) to be split between HRA and GF project. The additional £100k to be proposed at P&F Jan 22
TA3286	Information Technology Investment	D Richardson	748,850	44,750	793,600	91,997	237,776	463,826	793,600	0	14.12.21 On target to spend in year. Request to increase budget by £44,750 approved at P&F in Nov, included on appendix C for approval to be added at P&F Jan 22
TF2000	CCTV Replacement Programme	A Batty	140,500	0	140,500	0	0	140,500	140,500	0	14.12.21 Report to H&C in September with a full review of CCTV. Support was given to complete the CCTV replacement programme at this meeting
TF3221	Southwell Flood Mitigation	A Batty	453,421	0	453,421	0	0	453,421	453,421	0	14.12.21 Requested info from NCC re drawing down funding.
TF3228	Homeless Hostel	K Shutt / M Cook	603,590	0	603,590	47,922	24,106	531,562	603,590	0	14.12.21 Contractor appointed and additional budget agreed at recent P&F meeting. Reprofiling as set out below proposed and agreed at P&F Nov 21 - £2.650m to 22/23 and remaining £0.050m to 23/24 to cover retention
TF6011	Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grants	A Batty	700,000	0	700,000	311,081	12,067	376,852	700,000	0	14.12.21 £600-£700k spend in the current year will review as
TF6012	Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants	A Batty	90,000	0	90,000	17,416	0	72,584	90,000	0	year progresses.
TF6020	Flood Grants - 2020 - 2022	A Batty	429,901	0	429,901	56,448	0	373,454	429,901	0	14.12.21 Dependant on applications. Not all flooded properties have taken up the opportunity to claim. Nov 19 & Feb 20 floods, grant dates have been extended.
TF6807	Warm Homes on Prescription	H Richmond	70,000	0	70,000	46,319	8,412	15,269	70,000	0	14.12.21 Covid caused delays but enquires have picked up. Any unspent monies will be rolled forward to next financial year
TF6809	Fairholme Park (Ollerton) Conversion to Mains Gas	H Richmond	9,289	0	9,289	5,992	3,167	130	9,289	0	14.12.21 Project is now complete
TF6810	PV Units - EON	H Richmond	567,854	0	567,854	0	0	567,854	567,854	0	14.12.21 delivery agents (NEP and E-ON) are still undertaking marketing and engagement activities. The project (along with the rest of the Country's LAD2 projects) has been extended. Phase 2 will be granted additional time to complete works. This means the ability to complete retrofit co-ordinator assessments by 31st March 2022, complete upgrades by 30th June 2022 and have until the 31st July 2022 to submit final reports and lodge measures with Trustmark.
Homes & Communities Committee			4,000,405	144,750	4,145,155	582,515	285,624	3,247,017	4,115,155	(30,000)	

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Outturn Variance Analysis as at 30 November 2021

Favourable variances are bracketed and in red - £(0.123)m. Unfavourable variances are in black - £0.123m.

HRA Revenue - £(0.782)m	£'m
Services: a significant number of posts temporarily vacant	(0.334)
One-off insurance-related savings recognised in-year	(0.235)
Reduced rental income from The Broadleaves due to occupancy delays, partly offset by reduced expenditure	0.117
Other Operating Expenditure: additional capital-related income	(0.107)
Yorke Drive: delays in one-off regeneration-related expenditure	(0.057)
Community Centres: reduced expenditure on cleaning contract due to COVID-related closures	(0.030)
Other small variances	(0.136)
Total	(0.782)

Project	Capital Description	Project Manager	Revised Budget Policy & Finance 25.11.21	Variations Proposed to Policy & Finance Period 8	Revised Budget including Variations for Approval	Actuals to 30.11.21	Current outstanding orders	Additional anticipated spend in year	Total Projected spend in year	Variance Unavourable / (Favourable)	Comments - Spend to date
PROPERTY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME											
S91100	ROOF REPLACEMENTS	D Bamford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies transferred to S91115 and S91116
S91115	Roof Replacement Works	D Bamford	324,710	20,000	344,710	100,101	58,290	186,319	344,710	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate overspend on initial budget of £60k (responsive repairs on top of planned). Funded from within HRA - Request made within Budget movements to P&F Nov. Still anticipate further overspend of £20k, movement from Doors & Windows works to be requested at P&F Jan 22
S91116	Flat Roof Replacement Wrk	D Bamford	200,000	0	200,000	99,969	100,135	0	200,104	104	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget
S711	ROOF REPLACEMENTS		524,710	20,000	544,710	200,070	158,426	186,319	544,814	104	
S91200	KITCHEN & BATHROOM CONVERSIONS	A Tutty	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies Transferred to S91218
S91218	Kit & Bathrooms	A Tutty	1,625,330	(170,000)	1,455,330	510,013	542,199	403,119	1,455,330	0	14.12.21 Ongoing, programme slowed down due to isolation. The budget includes the underspend carried forward from last year which we will spend with the current contractor circa £700k. The remainder is this year budget we are yet to touch in a meaningful way following a prolonged re-procurement. Request to reprofile £590k to 22/23 at P&F Nov. Request to move £170k to Major Adaptations to be made at P&F Jan 22
S712	KITCHEN & BATHROOM CONVERSIONS		1,625,330	(170,000)	1,455,330	510,013	542,199	403,119	1,455,330	0	
S91300	EXTERNAL FABRIC	G Bruce	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies moved to S91336
S91336	External Fabric Works	G Bruce	300,000	0	300,000	47,314	0	252,686	300,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget
S713	EXTERNAL FABRIC		300,000	0	300,000	47,314	0	252,686	300,000	0	
S91400	DOORS & WINDOWS	D Bamford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies moved to S91412
S91412	Doors & Windows Works	D Bamford	264,000	(35,000)	229,000	55,683	197,154	(52,837)	200,000	(29,000)	14.12.21 102 jobs provided to contractor 35 completed to date. Anticipate an underspend in year of £64k. Request to be made at P&F Jan 22 to move £15k to Adaptation Stair Lift/Hoist. £20k to Roof Replacement works - Remaining £29k declared as underspend
S714	DOORS & WINDOWS		264,000	(35,000)	229,000	55,683	197,154	(52,837)	200,000	(29,000)	
S91500	OTHER STRUCTURAL	G Bruce	85,000	0	85,000	39,112	6,107	39,781	85,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Budget Movement of £35k requested from S91511 at P&F Nov
S91511	Walls Re-Rendering	G Bruce	15,000	0	15,000	0	0	15,000	15,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Budget Movement of £35k requested to S91500 at P&F Nov
S715	OTHER STRUCTURAL		100,000	0	100,000	39,112	6,107	54,781	100,000	0	
S93100	ELECTRICAL	A Tutty	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies transferred to S93115
S93115	Rewires	A Tutty	500,000	0	500,000	211,871	192,692	0	404,562	(95,438)	14.12.21 The budget includes the underspend carried forward from last year which we will spend with the current contractor . The remainder is this year budget we are yet to touch in a meaningful way following a prolonged re-procurement. Request to reprofile £400k to 22/23 at P&F Nov. Estimated underspend of £95k to be taken as underspend in year at P&F Jan 22
S731	ELECTRICAL		500,000	0	500,000	211,871	192,692	0	404,562	(95,438)	
S93500	HEATING	D Bamford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies transferred to S93510
S93510	Heating/Boilers	D Bamford	688,000	0	688,000	334,755	320,509	32,736	688,000	0	14.12.21 75 in progress, anticipate spend in full this financial year. Projection to realign orders to budget
S735	HEATING		688,000	0	688,000	334,755	320,509	32,736	688,000	0	

Project	Capital Description	Project Manager	Revised Budget Policy & Finance 25.11.21	Variations Proposed to Policy & Finance Period 8	Revised Budget including Variations for Approval	Actuals to 30.11.21	Current outstanding orders	Additional anticipated spend in year	Total Projected spend in year	Variance Unavourable / (Favourable)	Comments - Spend to date
S93600	ENERGY EFFICIENCY	D Bamford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies transferred to S93600
S93622	PV Invertors	C Wagstaff	91,760	0	91,760	0	0	91,760	91,760	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Original budget of £150k plus LADS2 grant of £92k. LADS2 monies to be spent by year end as part of conditions of grant
S736	ENERGY EFFICIENCY		91,760	0	91,760	0	0	91,760	91,760	0	
S95100	GARAGE FORECOURTS		0			0	0	0	0	0	0
S95109	Garages		4,000	0	4,000	0	10,000	(6,000)	4,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget. Request to move monies of £30k to Resurfacing works to P&F Nov
S95115	Resurfacing Works		105,000	0	105,000	0	0	105,000	105,000	0	14.12.21 Currently being re-tendered. Additional monies of £30k to be transferred from S95109
S751	GARAGE FORECOURTS		109,000	0	109,000	0	10,000	99,000	109,000	0	
S95200	ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS	M Carman	206,090	(150,000)	56,090	3,309	0	52,781	56,090	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate underspend to budget of £60k, monies requested to be moved to Roofs budget at P&F Nov. Further underspend anticipated in year of £150k, request to P&F Jan 22 to reprofile to 22/23
S95203	Car Parking Schemes	D Roxburgh	100,000	0	100,000	(2,817)	0	102,817	100,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget
S95206	Chatham Court Target Hardening - Safer Neighbourhoods	A Batty	3,945	0	3,945	2,183	1,401	361	3,945	0	14.12.21 Complete - Underspend back to HRA programmes
S95207	Vineway Gated Access	M Carman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.12.21 Project now complete
S95208	Roewood Lane Sewerage Treatment Station	D Bamford	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	10,000	10,000	0	14.12.21 Work is in progress
S95250	Communal Lighting	G Bruce	4,000	0	4,000	1,439	0	2,561	4,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to revised budget - Request to reprofile £16k to 22/23 to P&F Nov
S95252	Flood Defence Systems	D Bamford	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	10,000	10,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget - Reactionary budget
S95253	Play Areas	L Powell	40,000	0	40,000	40,234	0	0	40,234	234	14.12.21 Works complete.
S95254	Estate Remodelling	G Bruce	30,000	0	30,000	0	13,600	16,400	30,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend of £30k in year. Request to reprofile £35k to 22/23 to P&F Nov
S95303	Target Hardening - HRA	Andrew Kirk	18,625	0	18,625	0	1,200	17,425	18,625	0	14.12.21 Designs currently been drawn up. Anticipate full spend in year
S752	ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS		422,660	(150,000)	272,660	44,348	16,201	212,345	272,894	234	
S97100	ASBESTOS	J Knowles	0			0	0	0	0	0	0
S97115	Asbestos Surveys	J Knowles	43,000	0	43,000	20,909	18,240	3,851	43,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget
S97116	Asbestos Removal	J Knowles	28,000	0	28,000	3,310	24,061	629	28,000	0	14.12.21 Spend will follow the above surveys
S771	ASBESTOS		71,000	0	71,000	24,219	42,301	4,480	71,000	0	
S97200	FIRE SAFETY	J Knowles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Monies moved to S97221
S97218	Enhanced Fire Risk Assessments	J Knowles	450,000	0	450,000	95,308	132,177	222,516	450,000	0	14.12.21 Actions from FRAs to complete
S97221	Fire Risk Assessments	J Knowles	86,870	0	86,870	0	0	86,870	86,870	0	14.12.21 Amalgamate budgets
S772	FIRE SAFETY		536,870	0	536,870	95,308	132,177	309,386	536,870	0	
S97300	DDA IMPROVEMENTS	L Powell	20,000	0	20,000	2,334	1,166	16,500	20,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Further works planned fitting metal handrails to steep path at The Stackyard plus a mobility scooter storage scheme at Wm Bailey House. Full spend anticipated.
S773	DDA IMPROVEMENTS		20,000	0	20,000	2,334	1,166	16,500	20,000	0	

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S97400	DISABLED ADAPTATIONS	L Powell	0			0	0	0	0	0	0
S97416	Major Adaptations	L Powell	472,000	170,000	642,000	342,279	65,529	234,192	642,000	0	14.12.21 Still expect to spend current PO in place with M & T by end of November. We're typically paying £42k a month on M & T's PO so this will be enough to pay up to Decembers valuations. We also have some large extensions to deal with £60k+. Given the current level of spend and the anticipated addition in year of £42k per calendar month. A request to increase allocation by £170k to be made at P&F Jan 22. Monies moved from Kitchens & Bathroom underspend
S97417	Minor Adaptations	L Powell	33,000	0	33,000	19,791	13,209	0	33,000	0	14.12.21 Referrals still similar in number to 20/21 as of end of Sep 2021. Typically £2500 a month therefore might not be quite enough for March 2022 payment on current PO but i see there is £3000 further in budget we can add to that PO which will be enough.
S97418	Adaptation Stair Lift/Ho	L Powell	43,000	15,000	58,000	40,656	2,359	14,984	58,000	0	14.12.21 We have 3nr further jobs due which will cost £7275 collectively and therefore take us over the £40,000 order value raised. Will need PO value raising to £43000 in order to pay these and then some additional funds transferring into this budget to take us through the next 6 months. There has been a large volume of stair lift and hoist jobs in first six months, many being of an expensive nature. Signs in last couple of months of a slow down in this type of request. Request for additional £15k to be made at P&F Jan 22
S774	DISABLED ADAPTATIONS		548,000	185,000	733,000	402,726	81,098	249,176	733,000	0	
S97500	LEGIONELLA	A Tutty	30,000	0	30,000	224	24,095	5,681	30,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget
S791	UNALLOCATED FUNDING		30,000	0	30,000	224	24,095	5,681	30,000	0	
S99100	PROPERTY INVESTMENT CONTINGENCY	M Carman	50,000	0	50,000	0	0	50,000	50,000	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget
S99102	Housing Capital Fees	M Carman	270,680	0	270,680	0	0	270,680	270,680	0	14.12.21 Ongoing - Anticipate spend to budget
S791	UNALLOCATED FUNDING		320,680	0	320,680	0	0	320,680	320,680	0	
	PROPERTY INVESTMENT		6,152,010	(150,000)	6,002,010	1,967,976	1,724,124	2,185,811	5,877,911	(124,099)	

Project	Capital Description	Project Manager	Revised Budget Policy & Finance 25.11.21	Variations Proposed to Policy & Finance Period 8	Revised Budget including Variations for Approval	Actuals to 30.11.21	Current outstanding orders	Additional anticipated spend in year	Total Projected spend in year	Variance Unavourable / (Favourable)	Comments - Spend to date
AFFORDABLE HOUSING											
SA1031	Site Acquisition (Inc RTB)	K Shutt / J Sanderson	1,996,632	(1,745,882)	250,750	0	750	250,000	250,750	0	14.12.21 3 sites with Legal, One site to be completed by November (2 for phase 4, cluster 4 and 1 potentially phase 5). Firmer idea on potential slippage to be confirmed quarter 3. Request to slip £1,746k into 22/23 to be made at P&F Jan 22
SA1032	New Build Programme	K Shutt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.12.21 - Miscodes corrected - Project complete
SA1033	Estate Regeneration	C Clarkson	1,482,000	950,000	2,432,000	428,006	163,472	1,840,523	2,432,000	0	14.12.21 - Currently working on design and planning applications. Monies of £2,951k has been reprofiled to 22/23. Additional £950k added to the programme following the award of £1.05m from Levelling Up Fund (Brown Field Land) to be split between HRA (£950k) and GF (£100k) project. The additional £950k to be proposed at P&F Jan 22
SA1036	Affordable Homes Southwell	J Sanderson	240,497	0	240,497	0	0	240,497	240,497	0	14.12.21 - Approved at P&F 23rd October. Anticipate spent in full this financial year
SA1047	New Build Contingency	K Shutt	109,800	(109,800)	0	0	0	0	0	0	19.08.21 Ongoing - Movements to contingency from SA1048 £600k, SA1062 £47k, SA1063 £234k. Request for budget of £110k + Movement of £881k to be moved to 22-23 to be made at P&F Jan 22
SA1048	Boughton Extra Care	K Shutt	1,213,379	(600,000)	613,379	508,704	31,626	73,049	613,379	0	14.12.21 Full PC including fit out by august 21, ready for tenants. Expecting an underspend against the full budget of £350k. Request to move £350k to contingency to be made at P&F Jan 22, along with reprofile of £250k relating to the retention to be paid in 22/23
SA1053	Phase 2 Cluster 3 - Hawtonville	K Shutt	0	0	0	(3)	0	0	(3)	(3)	14.12.21 - Project complete - No further spend
SA1054	Phase 2 Cluster 3 - 1-4-1 Hawtonville	K Shutt	0	0	0	(0)	0	0	(0)	(0)	14.12.21 - Project complete - No further spend
SA1055	Phase 2 Cluster 4 - Sherwood	K Shutt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.12.21 - Project complete - No further spend
SA1060	Phase 3	K Shutt	0	0	0	19,943	71,450	(91,393)	0	0	14.12.21 to be moved to appropriate cost centres. Investigation works, planning.
SA1061	Phase 3 - Cluster 1 Stand Alone	K Shutt	0	0	0	(23,170)	23,170	0	0	0	14.12.21 Retention only outstanding, due December 2021.
SA1062	Phase 3 - Cluster 2 Various	K Shutt	100,310	(46,731)	53,579	27,976	21,604	4,000	53,579	0	14.12.21 Retention only outstanding, due Feb 2022. Request to be made at P&F Jan 22 to move the remaining £47k budget to contingency
SA1063	Phase 3 - Cluster 3	K Shutt	1,208,513	(261,765)	946,748	943,693	3,055	0	946,748	0	14.12.21 Completion by end of September 2021. Anticipate underspend of £234k on this project, to be moved to contingency. Request to reprofile £28k to 22-23 and the balance to be moved to contingency at P&F Jan 22
SA1064	Phase 3 - Cluster 4	K Shutt	3,029,810	(900,000)	2,129,810	923,013	583,714	623,082	2,129,810	0	14.12.21 Expected completion by April/May 2022. Request to reprofile £900k to 22/23 to be made at P&F Jan 22
SA1070	Phase 4	K Shutt	1,921,126	(570,900)	1,350,226	78,951	106,982	1,164,294	1,350,226	0	14.12.21 - Will be redistributed as new clusters for phase 4 as they come on board. Request to allocate £571k to SA1074 (200k 21/22 + £371k 22/23) to be made at P&F Jan 22
SA1071	Phase 4 Cluster 1	K Shutt	1,480,861	0	1,480,861	1,200,405	269,021	11,434	1,480,861	0	14.12.21 Expected completion early 2022 (9 units). Any underspend on project to be moved to contingency
SA1072	Phase 4 Cluster 2	K Shutt	1,189,329	0	1,189,329	426,833	762,496	0	1,189,329	0	14.12.21 Start on site July (5 units) - Monies to be moved from SA1070 to fund
SA1073	Phase 4 Cluster 3	K Shutt	2,400,000	0	2,400,000	194,145	1,304,127	901,728	2,400,000	0	14.12.21 Started on site November (20 units). Anticipate two thirds of works to be completed this financial year. To be confirmed in quarter 3 before reprofile request
SA1074	Phase 4 Cluster 4	K Shutt	0	200,000	200,000	0	0	200,000	200,000	0	14.12.21 Start on site by end of November (17 units), Budget to be allocated from Phase 4 once numbers finalised. Request to be made for £571k at P&F Jan 22. £200k for 21/22 and remaining balance £371k for 22/23
SA1080	Phase 5	K Shutt	1,900,000	(1,400,000)	500,000	4,092	0	495,908	500,000	0	14.12.21 - Planning permission being progressed. Anticipate spend in year £0.5m. Request to be made to reprofile £1.4m into 22/23 at P&F Jan 22
SA3001	Ollerton Local Office Refurbishment & Repurpose	J Baker	29,610	0	29,610	28,286	1,018	0	29,304	(306)	14.12.21 Works ongoing
SC2000	Careline Analogue to Digital	S Hartley-Hill	80,540	0	80,540	0	80,540	0	80,540	0	14.12.21 Works complete just awaiting payment
SC2001	Asset Data Software Migration	C Wagstaff	90,765	0	90,765	79,278	0	0	79,278	(11,487)	14.12.21 - Expect completion this financial year. Slight underspend envisaged on project. Balance to be returned to HRA reserve
SUB TOTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING			18,473,172	(4,485,077)	13,988,094	4,840,151	3,423,024	5,713,123	13,976,299	(11,796)	
TOTAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT			24,625,182	(4,635,077)	19,990,104	6,808,127	5,147,148	7,898,934	19,854,209	(135,895)	

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Committee for the 2022/23 base budget in **Appendix A** to be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2022 for inclusion in the overall council budget; and
- 1.2 To seek approval from the Committee for the 2022/23 fees & charges in **Appendix D** to be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2022 and Council at its meeting on 08 March 2022.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Business managers and service budget officers have been working with officers in the Financial Services team to prepare a general fund budget for 2022/23 and medium-term financial plan for between 2022/23 and 2025/26. The general fund budgets have been prepared in line with the Budget Strategy agreed by Policy & Finance Committee on 24 June 2021.
- 2.2 The budget and medium-term financial plan have been developed to reflect, in financial form, the corporate priorities of the Council. Where further targeted areas of focus have been identified, additional resources have been directed to these business units.
- 2.3 **Appendices A** and **B** summarise the budgets proposed for the Committee for 2022/23 by service team and subjective level respectively. These **appendices** exclude capital charges and central support recharges, because service officers do not have direct influence over how much they pay for these. The budgets in this report and its **appendices** are for controllable costs: costs which service officers have direct influence over.

Revenue Budget

- 2.4 The 2022/23 General Fund revenue budget will be derived from the 2022/23 base budget within the 2021/22 - 2024/25 (2021/25) Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) approved by Full Council on 9 March 2021. This will be adjusted for changes which have been approved by either SLT or Policy & Finance (P&F) Committee since 9 March 2021; changes in inflation and other assumptions; and growth and efficiencies proposed by services.
- 2.5 *Table 1* summarises the changes between the 2022/23 base budget within the 2021/25 MTFP and the current draft 2022/23 budget for services in the Committee.

Table 1: changes between the 2022/23 base budget within the 2021/25 MTFP and the current draft 2022/23 budget for services in the Committee

2022/23 base budget (approved by Full Council on 9 March 2021)	£2.107m
Changes agreed by either SLT or P&F after approval of 2021/25 MTFP	£0.046m
Changes in assumptions (such as inflation)	£(0.246)m

Growth	£0.032m
Efficiencies	-
2022/23 budget (current draft for services in the Committee)	£1.939m
2022/23 budget: change from Full Council approval on 9 March 2021	£(0.168)m

2.6 **Appendix C** lists the main reasons for the changes in *Table 1*.

Fees & Charges

2.7 Officers have considered the Fees and Charges Toolkit approved by Economic Development Committee on 20 November 2019 when setting the level of fees & charges. The proposed fees & charges for 2022/23 are in **Appendix D** for consideration.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 Officers are proposing to the Committee that it recommends to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2022:

- a) the 2022/23 base budget in **Appendix A** for inclusion in the overall council budget;
- b) and to Council on 08 March 2022 the 2022/23 fees & charges in **Appendix D**.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 Business Managers consider the implications on equalities when assessing how best to deliver the services they are responsible for.

5.0 Digital Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/4451)

6.1 The Committee's proposed 2022/23 budget is £168,000 less than its base budget within the 2021/25 MTFP: a decrease of 8%. Employee budgets of £2.287m account for 75% of controllable costs. Significant budget savings cannot be achieved without affecting staffing levels.

6.2 The council's medium-term financial plan for between 2022/23 and 2025/26 requires significant savings in future years, as changes to how councils manage their finances and other challenges take effect.

6.3 It is important that the Committee continually scrutinises and reviews its budget in order to identify additional savings which will be achieved in future years.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 The proposals in this report support the council to achieve multiple objectives of the Community Plan 2020-2023, though particularly the objectives to:

- a) *“Create more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority”;* and
- b) *“Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and increase feelings of safety in our communities”.*

8.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) **that the following recommendations be made to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2022:**
 - i. **the 2022/23 base budget in Appendix A for inclusion in the overall council budget;**
 - ii. **and to Council on 08 March 2022 the 2022/23 fees & charges in Appendix D.**

Reason for Recommendations

To ensure that the budgets and fees & charges finally proposed for 2022/23 are recommended to Policy & Finance Committee on 21 February 2022.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Nick Wilson (Business Manager – Financial Services) on Extension 5317 or Mohammed Sarodia (Assistant Business Manager – Financial Services) on Extension 5537.

Suzanne Shead
Director - Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Sanjiv Kohli
Director - Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

2022/23 General Fund revenue base budget approved by Full Council in March 2021 against current 2022/23 draft budget (January 2022)

Cost centre	Cost centre name	2022/23 Base Budget: Mar-21	Changes agreed by SLT or P&F	Changes in assumptions: net effect	Growth	Efficiencies	2022/23 Base Budget: Jan-22	2022/23 Base Budget: Variance
A10212	Private Sector Speech Call	(55,980)					(55,980)	0
A10213	Housing Options	436,070		(171,560)	26,740		291,250	(144,820)
A10215	Strategic Hsg (Was Community)	101,600		(51,230)	100		50,470	(51,130)
A10809	Customer Services	499,560		(7,990)			491,570	(7,990)
A10810	Communications	260,730	46,180	19,990			326,900	66,170
A10814	Licensing Admin	(55,190)		9,050	4,490		(41,650)	13,540
A10816	Community Safety	23,050		0			23,050	0
A10823	Anti-Social Behaviour	92,000		450			92,450	450
A10826	Domestic Violence	35,210		0			35,210	0
A10834	Southwell Library Service	1,760					1,760	0
A11126	Cctv	152,060		580			152,640	580
A11607	Energy And Home Support	76,750		(2,730)			74,020	(2,730)
A11921	Grants And Concessions	376,490		(41,740)			334,750	(41,740)
A11922	Commissioning Contributions	110,650		0			110,650	0
A11923	Emergency Planning	52,510		(1,230)			51,280	(1,230)
A11932	Community Lottery	0			1,000		1,000	1,000
	Committee Total	2,107,270	46,180	(246,410)	32,330	0	1,939,370	(167,900)

2022/23 General Fund revenue base budget approved by Full Council in March 2021 against current 2022/23 draft budget (January 2022)

Code	Description	2022/23 Base Budget: Mar-21	Changes agreed by SLT or P&F	Changes in assumptions: net effect	Growth	Efficiencies	2022/23 Base Budget: Jan-22	2022/23 Base Budget: Variance
RE111	Salaries And Wages	1,673,280		140,880			1,814,160	140,880
RE113	National Insurance	140,970		29,180			170,150	29,180
RE114	Superannuation	274,190		28,050			302,240	28,050
	Employees Sub-Total	2,088,440		198,110			2,286,550	198,110
RE212	Energy Costs	0		28,000			28,000	28,000
RE213	Rent	8,340		(2,580)			5,760	(2,580)
RE215	Water Services	0		12,200			12,200	12,200
RE216	Fixtures And Fitting	0		5,250			5,250	5,250
RE217	Cleaning And Domestic	0		12,000			12,000	12,000
RE219	Contribution To Funds	16,000					16,000	0
RE315	Car Allowances	9,400		3,300			12,700	3,300
RE411	Equipment And Furniture	2,450			6,740		9,190	6,740
RE431	Clothing And Uniforms	5,310					5,310	0
RE441	General Office Expenses	43,230	40,000	1,110			84,340	41,110
RE451	Contractual	23,520		(4,140)	1,000		20,380	(3,140)
RE452	Other Services	18,220	6,180				24,400	6,180
RE461	Communications And Computing	10,330		1,460			11,790	1,460
RE471	Staff	4,010					4,010	0
RE481	Grants	487,140		(41,740)			445,400	(41,740)
RE482	Subscriptions	3,040		10			3,050	10
RE492	Contribs To Funds And Provisns	186,900		(700)			186,200	(700)
RE493	Other	165,400		162,210	20,100		347,710	182,310
RI928	Recharge Non Gf Accounts	(416,750)		(171,600)			(588,350)	(171,600)
RE612	Other Transfer Payments	108,220					108,220	0
	Running Expenses Sub-Total	674,760	46,180	4,780	27,840		753,560	78,800
RI911	Government Grants	0		(246,670)			(246,670)	(246,670)
RI922	Contributions From Other Las	(102,860)		(165,290)			(268,150)	(165,290)
RI928	Recharge Non Gf Accounts	(25,280)		20			(25,260)	20
RI931	Sales	(126,150)			1,850		(124,300)	1,850
RI932	Fees And Charges	(99,010)			9,930		(89,080)	9,930
RI933	Rents	(186,290)		(44,350)			(230,640)	(44,350)
RI938	Fees And Charges	(46,630)		6,990			(39,640)	6,990
RI939	Other Receipts	(69,710)			(7,290)		(77,000)	(7,290)
	Income Sub-Total	(655,930)		(449,300)	4,490		(1,100,740)	(444,810)
	Committee Total	2,107,270	46,180	(246,410)	32,330		1,939,370	(167,900)

Variances between 2022/23 General Fund revenue base budget approved by Full Council in March 2021 against current 2022/23 draft budget (January 2022)

Favourable variances are bracketed and in red - £(0.123)m. Unfavourable variances are in black - £0.123m.

Variances between 2022/23 base budget (March 2021) and current 2022/23 draft budget (January 2022) by service (cost centre)	Increase or (decrease) in budget (£m)
Housing Options: budgeted transfer of Homelessness Prevention Grant to reserves, partly offset by reduced employee costs rechargeable to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in light of establishment changes and increase in supplies & services expenditure	(0.145)
Strategic Housing: reduced employee costs in light of establishment changes	(0.051)
Communications: budgeting of marketing-related costs which transferred from Heritage & Culture and increased employee costs in light of establishment changes	0.066
Licensing Administration: increased employee costs and reduced licensing income	0.014
Grants and Concessions: reduction in forecasted annual amount payable to Newark Town Council, based on revised approach towards calculation of Newark Council Tax Base.	(0.042)
Other small variances	(0.010)
Committee Total:	(0.158)

GAMBLING ACT 2005 (STATUTORY)*(Charges are inclusive of VAT where applicable)*

Permit		2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
Family Entertainment Centre	Transitional	£100.00	£100.00
	New	£300.00	£300.00
	Renewal	£300.00	£300.00
	Change of Name	£25.00	£25.00
	Copy Permit	£15.00	£15.00
Prize Gaming Permits	Transitional	£100.00	£100.00
	New	£300.00	£300.00
	Renewal	£300.00	£300.00
	Change of Name	£25.00	£25.00
	Copy Permit	£15.00	£15.00
Gaming Machines in Alcohol Licensed Premises	Notification of up to 2 machines	£50.00	£50.00
	Gaming machine permit for more than 2 - existing operator	£100.00	£100.00
	Gaming machine permit for more than 2 - new operator	£150.00	£150.00
	Variation (number of category)	£100.00	£100.00
	Transfer	£25.00	£25.00
	Annual fee	£50.00	£50.00
	Change of name	£25.00	£25.00
	Copy of permit	£15.00	£15.00
Club Gaming and Club Machine Permits	Existing Operators (transition)	£100.00	£100.00
	New Application	£200.00	£200.00
	Renewal	£200.00	£200.00
	Variation	£100.00	£100.00
	Annual Fee	£50.00	£50.00
	Copy of Permit	£15.00	£15.00
Temporary use notice		£100.00	£100.00
Small society Lottery	Exempt Lotteries – Registration Fee	£40.00	£40.00
	Exempt Lotteries – Annual Fee	£20.00	£20.00

GAMBLING ACT 2005 (DISCRETIONARY)

These fees are set at the discretion of the local Authority within a framework on minimum and maximums set in statutory regulations

(Charges are inclusive of VAT where applicable)

Activity	Application type	2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
BINGO	New application	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
	Application for reinstatement of licence	£800.00	£800.00
	Application for provisional statement	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
	Application to convert provisional statement	£650.00	£650.00
	Application to Vary licence	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
	Application to transfer licence	£150.00	£150.00
	Notification of Change	£60.00	£60.00
	Copy of Licence	£50.00	£50.00
	Annual Fee	£520.00	£530.00
ADULT GAMING CENTRE	New application	£950.00	£950.00
	Application for reinstatement of licence	£500.00	£500.00
	Application for provisional statement	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
	Application to convert provisional statement	£650.00	£650.00
	Application to Vary licence	£830.00	£830.00
	Application to transfer licence	£150.00	£150.00
	Notification of Change	£60.00	£60.00
	Copy of Licence	£50.00	£50.00
ADULT GAMING CENTRE	Annual Fee	£520.00	£530.00
FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE	New application	£950.00	£950.00
	Application for reinstatement of licence	£500.00	£500.00
	Application for provisional statement	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
	Application to convert provisional statement	£650.00	£650.00
	Application to Vary licence	£830.00	£830.00
	Application to transfer licence	£100.00	£100.00
	Notification of Change	£60.00	£60.00
	Copy of Licence	£50.00	£50.00
	Annual Fee	£530.00	£530.00

BETTING PREMISES (excl. tracks)	New application	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
	Application for reinstatement of licence	£800.00	£800.00
	Application for provisional statement	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
	Application to convert provisional statement	£650.00	£650.00
	Application to Vary licence	£1,100.00	£1,100.00
	Application to transfer licence	£150.00	£150.00
	Notification of Change	£60.00	£60.00
	Copy of Licence	£50.00	£50.00
BETTING ON TRACK	Annual Fee	£530.00	£530.00
	New application	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
	Application for reinstatement of licence	£800.00	£800.00
BETTING ON TRACK	Application for provisional statement	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
	Application to convert provisional statement	£650.00	£650.00
	Application to Vary licence	£1,100.00	£1,100.00
	Application to transfer licence	£150.00	£150.00
	Notification of Change	£60.00	£60.00
	Copy of Licence	£50.00	£50.00
BETTING ON TRACK	Annual Fee	£530.00	£530.00

LICENSING*(Charges are inclusive of VAT where applicable)*

Relevant Act or Order*		Duration	2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
1. Hypnotism - Grant	Ref 001	Occasional for specific dates	£75.00	£85.00
2. Sex Establishment - Grant/Renewal	Ref 002	Up to 1 year	£3,540.00	£3,540.00
3. Vehicle Licences				
(a) Hackney Carriage	Ref 003	Annual	£235.00	£235.00
(b) Private Hire Vehicle	Ref 003	Annual	£185.00	£185.00
(c) Ambulance Vehicles	Ref 003	Annual	£115.00	£115.00
(d) Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers	Ref 003	3 years or lesser depending on circumstances	£145.00 renewal £220.00 new applicants	£145.00 renewal £220.00 new applicants
(e) Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers Licence (persons over 65 years)	Ref 003	Per Year	£55.00	£55.00
(f) Ambulance Drivers	Ref 003	3 years or lesser depending on circumstances	£110 renewal £95 new applicants	£110 renewal £95 new applicants
(g) Ambulance Drivers over 65	Ref 003	Annual	£40.00	£40.00
(h) Private Hire Operators	Ref 003	5 years *		
(i) Basic			£350.00	£350.00
(ii) plus per vehicle			£35.00	£35.00
(i) Ambulance Operators	Ref 003	5 years *		
(i) Basic			£350.00	£350.00
(ii) plus per vehicle Plates			£25.00	£25.00
(j) Knowledge Test	Ref 003	One-off	£40.00	£40.00
(k) Drivers Test	Ref 003	One-off	£40.00	£40.00
(l) Replacement Badge	Ref 003	One-off	£25.00	£25.00
(m) Replacement Plate	Ref 003		£45.00	£45.00
(n) Transfer of Plate (No replacement plate to be issued)	Ref 003	One-off	£50.00	£50.00

(o) Temporary Plate/Transfer of Plate (including Plates and magnetic roundals)	Ref 003	One-off	£85.00	£85.00
(p) Temporary Plate/Transfer of Plate (including Plates and stick on roundals)	Ref 003	One-off	£75.00	£75.00
(q) Temporary & Permanent Magnetic Roundels	Ref 003	One-off	£15.00	£15.00
(r) Additional stick on Roundels	Ref 003	One-off	£10.00	£10.00

LICENSING ACT 2003 (STATUTORY)*(Charges below are not subject to VAT)*

Type of licence	Comments	2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
Premises licence - Application	The fee payable depends on the rateable value of the premises which are prescribed / set nationally.	Variable	Variable
Premises Licence – Annual Fee	The fee payable depends on the rateable value of the premises which are prescribed / set nationally.	Variable	Variable
Premises Licence - additional fee for large events	The fee payable depends on the rateable value of the premises which are prescribed / set nationally.	Variable	Variable
Premises Licence - Full Variation	The fee payable depends on the rateable value of the premises which are prescribed / set nationally.	Variable	Variable
Premises Licence - Minor Variation		£89.00	£89.00
Personal Licence		£37.00	£37.00
Temporary event Notice		£21.00	£21.00

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

These charges relate to the sites at Northgate, Newark; Seven Hills, Newark; and Wellow Green, Ollerton.

Charge	2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
Hostel Service Charge	£31.78 per week	£33.08 per week
Hostel Support Charge (non-Housing Benefit (HB))	£4.35 per week	£4.52 per week

PRIVATE SECTOR CARELINE SERVICE

Product	2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
Lifeline - Provision of a dispersed alarm, pendant. - 24 hours a day 365 days a year monitoring of lifeline. - Provision of advice and or contact of next of kin or emergency service if required on receipt of call	£4.30 per week	£4.43 per week
Lifeline installation fee	£25.00 one-off	£25.00 one-off
Keysafe	£40.00 one-off	£40.00 one-off

Product	2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
Sensor monitoring To receive this service tenants must also subscribe to the lifeline service. The sensors available are: i. Additional sensor ii. Smoke alarms iii. Carbon monoxide alarms iv. Flood alerts v. Bed sensors vi. Panic alarms vii. Fall detectors	£2.55 for two to five sensors, per week	£2.63 for two to five sensors, per week
Sensor monitoring installation fee: falls detectors	£0.00	£0.00
Sensor monitoring installation fee: all other sensors (per visit)	£35.00 one-off	£35.00 one-off

Product	2021/22 Charge	2022/23 Charge
Welfare calls To receive this service tenants must also subscribe to the lifeline service. - 5 x 5 minute calls per week made to the customer on agreed days between the hours of 7am and 7pm within a mutually agreed 1 hour time slot. - Ensure the welfare of the customer, provide advice and or contact of next of kin or emergency service if required.	£4.30 per week	£4.43 per week

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

HRA GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICE UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Homes and Communities Committee on the performance of the Grounds Maintenance Service for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land and council owned homes provided by StreetScene.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Grounds Maintenance Service was brought back in house from April 2021 from an external contractor and has been running for nine months, with the Council employing an additional seven staff to facilitate the contract.

2.2 There four aspects to the HRA Grounds Maintenance contract of HRA land:

- Programmed grounds maintenance such as grass cutting, shrub/ hedge maintenance, and weed treatment of HRA green spaces and hard surfaces (such as parking and pathways).
- Programmed tree works budget for arboriculture maintenance of trees on HRA land.
- Fly tipping on HRA land, including green spaces, playgrounds and other areas.

This service is funded through tenants' rents and not as a separate charge (with exception of Gladstone Housing and The Broadleaves – both housing with care schemes)

2.3 StreetScene completed extra preparatory work ahead of handover to ensure the grass cutting season could commence as planned. Alongside delivering the contract, StreetScene have been working to review the schedule and refine the data to ensure all areas we are responsible for are in scope of the contract and are being charged correctly.

2.4 StreetScene are working on a pricing schedule to enable transparent charging for new developments and any future additions/removals from the schedule. The teams are also exploring other initiatives that will benefit tenants and communities as part of reinvestment of efficiency savings for 2022/23.

2.5 The following additional activities have been completed:

- Within the Safer Streets Project, working with “Newark in Bloom” volunteers on building raised flower beds for the Community Gardening Group at Chatham Court.
- Working alongside a Ministry of Justice Community Payback Group, provided improvements at Beaumont Walk Community Centre at Yorke Drive including new flower beds and painted fence panels, reset ground paving and removing historic dumped hard core.

- Worked alongside “Newark in Bloom” Volunteers and Community Payback Teams on Communal Garden Improvements at Carswell Close Complex and Howes Court Newark. These Partnerships have enabled NSDC Street Scene to provide enhanced improvements to areas over and above the SLA specification whilst also engaging local community groups.

2.6 The grass cutting programme for the season has now finished and with the onset of cold weather we move all resources onto Winter Pruning and Hedge Cutting. We update our service status on our website to show progress through the year against the contract with narrative to explain why it is ahead or behind schedule.

3.0 Performance

3.1 Tenant Satisfaction

Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) 2019-20 provided our baseline performance benchmark of 82% and the survey is due to be completed again in March 2022. To complement the annual figure, the Council have now commenced collecting monthly feedback from customers and it is showing an improving picture of satisfaction with the service.

August	63%		
September	70%		
October	71%	Year To Date	69%
November	72%		

3.2 In terms of wider satisfaction with the service, there were 17 complaints between 1 April and 30 November 2020 specifically relating to grounds maintenance / street scene. There were eleven directly related to the quality of the public areas. Themes are overgrown weeds, shrubs and grass, overflowing litter bins, lack of dog bins and dog fouling. Five complaints were not NSDC land/responsibility and were not upheld. 5 were partially upheld and 1 was upheld. The 1 upheld was related to Bishop’s Drive cemetery in Southwell and is an ongoing operation between CPO’s and Police. Actions have been taken to address other issues, for instance reviewing bin emptying schedules and meeting residents for a walkabout.

3.3 We have received very positive feedback from tenants about the quality of the service and are looking for further community engagement opportunities including communal gardening days, wildlife workshops, gardening workshops and diversionary activities to help with tackle anti-social behaviour.

3.4 So far this year, our indoor projects have been on hold due to Covid restrictions however our participation with the projects at Chatham Court/Yorke Drive/Howes Court and Carswell Close has made the Street Scene service be very visible within these communities.

3.5 In addition in 2022-23, NSDC Street Scene are looking to offer ‘Job roadshows’ in the community showing careers within the service, as well as providing employment, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities for residents. In the meantime, all vacancies have been promoted on all of our social media channels.

- 3.6 We are exploring how we can bring added value to the service for our tenants over the coming years and have begun involving our tenants to feed back on the quality of the service and how the contract operates e.g. the number of cuts and the specification for garage sites and paths.
- 3.7 Tenants have been involved through the “walkabout” system and raised queries directly with the Street Scene and Tenant Engagement Officers. Separate projects have been established with the support of Street Scene Team at Chatham Court, where a number of raised beds have been provided, some of which have been turned into mini vegetable patches. In Ollerton and Boughton, a Garden Competition is being established to give tenants and residents the opportunity to personally contribute to improving the look of the area to increase pride, quality of life and outlook for all residents - particularly those previously susceptible to fly tipping and generally untidiness.
- 3.8 Due to Covid, tenants have not been as widely active as we would have normally expected but in the next year a regular spot check system will be underway to ‘dip test’ sites throughout the district with results fed back into the service improvement group. There are planned meet and greet sessions due in the Spring and this will also give us an opportunity to hear from tenants about how they feel the grounds maintenance team have performed and what, if anything can be improved.

3.9 **Contract Performance**

Street Scene and Housing colleagues meet bi-monthly to review performance against the contract schedule. Performance is measured from 1 (excellent) to 5 (referral). Below is the Average Total for 180 Site Inspections.

November 2021 figures		December 2021 figures	
Grass	1.29	Grass	1.00
Litter & Bins	1.10	Litter and Bins	1.07
Garage Site	1.67	Garage Site	1.00
Shrubs	1.48	Shrubs	1.40
Spraying	1.56	Spraying	1.47
Hedge Cutting	1.50	Hedge Cutting	1.38

4.0 **Equalities Implications**

- 4.1 The aim of bringing grounds maintenance in house was to improve the service for all residents and in doing so, those with protected characteristics. Some of the future improvements/possibilities may positively impacted residents with additional needs.

5.0 Digital Implications

- 5.1 Now the improved website is up and running, we will be more regularly updating our performance against the schedule and our service status so residents can see how the weather and other elements impact our performance. We will also provide a feedback button to encourage residents to let us know if they are satisfied with the quality of the service being provided.

6.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/1559)

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 6.2 Now that the council delivers in-house grounds maintenance services to the HRA, all HRA-related costs are initially borne by the Street Scene Grounds Maintenance service within the council's General Fund (GF), then transferred from the GF to the HRA as appropriate. Further information regarding the 2021/22 performance and 2022/23 draft budgets for the Street Scene Grounds Maintenance service can therefore be found within the budget monitoring and budget setting reports to be presented respectively to the Leisure & Environment Committee on 25/01/2022.
- 6.3 Further information regarding the allocation of efficiency savings, 2021/22 performance and 2022/23 draft budgets for the HRA can be found within the respective reports of this Committee's agenda.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- 7.1 This links to a number of objectives: Creating vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to the local area and creating more and better quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority.

8.0 Comments of Director(s)

- 8.1 The Housing Advisory Group reviewed the update at their meeting on 6th January 2022 and endorse the findings with first hand experience of the improved level of service quality and responsiveness.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Homes and Community Committee note the positive progress of the service.

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To provide reassurance on the benefits of an in-house grounds maintenance service and the additional value for money it provides.

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".

For further information please contact (report author)

Suzanne Shead
Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing