

Date of Meeting 15th June 2023

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Chartered Institute of Housing qualifications

Report summary:

This report provides a brief background into the reasons that are driving the need to professionalise the Housing service and the broader context for this. It describes what we are doing to understand the current levels of professional qualification and the options available to increase the level of professionally qualified managers in our EDDC housing service, taking account of capacity and budget and the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the board approve the approach set out and support the drive towards ensuring our Officers have or work towards achieving a relevant professional housing qualification which will improve our ability to deliver a service that meets the needs of our tenants and the standards required by the Social Housing Regulator in a sustainable and timely way.

Reason for recommendation:

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To inform the Board of the requirement for relevant professional qualifications for Housing sector employees and agree a sustainable plan to meet the standards of the Social Housing Regulator.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☒ Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- ☐ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

The training requirements and solutions outlined in this report will comply with the EDDC Corporate Training and Development Plan and all equalities measures and considerations set out in it.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: High Risk; Failure to deliver services to tenants in line with the consumer standards, best practice and regulation could bring scrutiny from the regulator and action taken against EDDC as well as expose tenants to risk due to failures in service delivery.

Links to background information .

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ Better homes and communities for all
- ☐ A greener East Devon
- ☐ A resilient economy

1. Background:

The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill is continuing to make its way through parliament and as part of that, in January it tabled an amendment which requires all senior social housing managers to have a professional qualification (as defined by the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education's occupational standards for Senior Housing and Property Management". This will also apply to executives as part of the senior management team who are jointly or solely responsible for day-to-day management of social housing.

It has been recommended that it will be a requirement that senior housing manager qualifications will be regulated by Ofqual and will be equivalent to a Level 4 or 5 Certificate in housing or a foundation degree from the Chartered Institute of Housing for those senior managers/executives.

The government say that this will raise standards and bring the housing sector in line with other sectors providing front line services. Whilst this may be good news for the sector in raising awareness of the importance of the work and contributions that the housing sector makes, it brings increasing pressure on already stretched services.

It will however be a requirement and a failure to meet the requirements of the new standards could receive an unlimited fine from the Regulator.

The finer detail of the amendments are not yet clear; however, for now what is clear is that the professional body is the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) who do already provide a broad range of training options.

[February 2023 – update on government's work to improve the quality of social housing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

2. Current Position:

2.1 Audit

We know that some of our housing employees have a Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) qualification. We want to be able to report with confidence that we know who is qualified and at what level and whether this meets the incoming standards that will be required by the Regulator.

We are currently carrying out an audit of all housing employees with the expectation that this audit is completed by 30th June so that we can report further and inform an effective plan to meet the standards.

From a preliminary desk top analysis it appears that 33 employees would be regarded as managers who may need degree level, Level 4 or 5 CIH; 4 of those are already qualified at an appropriate level. The figure of 33 includes 15 who are surveyors who do have specialist professional qualifications, but not necessarily CIH and we will need to confirm whether or not those with specialist professional qualifications also need to achieve CIH qualifications at the right level.

2.2 The CIH training is based around 7 key characteristics or behaviours. In many ways these already align to the EDDC behaviours framework and therefore it is anticipated that we could blend these with our existing expectation for behaviour.

Integrity:

A housing professional has a clear understanding of their values and acts in accordance with them – they will do the right thing, for the right reasons, based on the best evidence and without partiality

Inclusive:

A housing professional acts transparently and fairly; builds good relationships; and works collaboratively with partners, customers and communities to achieve better outcomes

Ethical:

A housing professional acts fairly and makes choices and decisions by applying principles and values consistently. They understand the impact that poor decisions can have both on people's lives and the reputation of their organisation and they challenge unethical practice in a fair and considered way

Knowledgeable:

A housing professional has relevant and up-to-date practical and specialist knowledge as required by their job role, understands the bigger picture and has a passion for continuous learning

Skilled:

A housing professional equips themselves with the relevant skills to deliver effective services to tenants, customers, colleagues, and partners

Advocate:

A housing professional acts as an ambassador for the wider housing sector and an advocate for the housing profession

Leadership:

Housing professionals at all levels should demonstrate leadership, be forward thinking and create opportunities. They find solutions to improve outcomes for their organisation, tenants and communities and demonstrate their ability to adapt to the latest ideas, situations, and change

It is suggested that the CIH professional standards are embedded into the culture and performance of the housing service and become part of our regular discussions at 121s and annual performance excellence reviews to ensure they are current and alive. This work is currently already underway.

3. What are the options and costs:

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) provide a broad range of training options. The table below describes these in some detail.

The starting point is a self-assessment tool for individuals to understand where they are on their professional journey and it is recommended that we encourage employees to undertake this self-assessment to help plan their development with a view to undertaking some of all of the initial e-Learning modules that can help support the learning process. (see further details and costs below).

There are a number of ways to increase knowledge and learning:

Once the self-assessment tool has been completed and areas for improvement have been identified, the eLearning modules support employees in the start of their development journey and helps to address those gaps with a module for each of the CIH professional standard as well as an introductory module on professionalism. This report would recommend that all who work in housing complete this module as part of their induction and introduction to housing.

These e-learning modules are self-directed, interactive and include videos, case studies and real-life examples where employees can themselves, download information, reflect and go into as much detail as is right for them. A certificate of completion for each module will be received.

General Qualification Levels - [Qualifications - Chartered Institute of Housing \(cih.org\)](https://www.cih.org/qualifications)

Level Two:

Level two qualifications are typically for people who are new to the housing sector, or who wish to pursue a career in the housing sector. They are designed to provide you with an introduction to the subject and are suitable for residents, assistants and administrators. On completion of this level of qualification you can become a member of CIH.

It appears this can also form part of an apprenticeship route and there are a number of training providers available for this.

[Apprenticeships | Chartered Institute of Housing \(CIH\)](https://www.cih.org/apprenticeships)

Level Three:

Level three qualifications are for housing practitioners who are already working in the sector. They are designed to provide you with contextual and specialised knowledge to support you in your role and career. They are suitable for officers and co-ordinators. On completion of a certificate at this level of qualification you can become a certified practitioner member of CIH

For example – Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice - £1,560 – 11 months - (various units available at Level 3)

Level Four:

Level four qualifications are for those in or aspiring to a supervisory or management role in housing. They are designed to explore in greater depth the contextual and specialised knowledge for the housing professional. They are suitable for supervisors and managers. On completion of a qualification at this level you can become a certified practitioner member of CIH

For example – Level 4 Certificate in Housing Practice - £2,160 – 12 months (minimum entry requirements)

Suggest this is the minimum requirement for housing management roles with the expectation that managers work toward achieving level 5. Additional expectation that they are a Member of CIH

Level Five:

Level five qualifications are for those in a management role in housing. They are designed to explore the contextual and specialised knowledge for the housing manager. On completion of a qualification at this level you can become a chartered member of CIH

For example – Level 5 Diploma in Housing - £2,790 – 12 months (minimum entry requirements) route to Chartered Membership

Suggest this is the minimum requirement for senior managers in housing management roles with the expectation that managers work toward achieving graduate level. Additional expectation that they are a Member of CIH

Under-graduate/Post-graduate:

Graduate qualifications are for those in or aspiring to a strategic management role in housing. They are designed to provide academic and practical perspectives to meet your professional aspirations

Various

Study can be completed through the CIH Housing Academy as well as Learning Curve who act as a training partner to CIH and a number of other providers, depending on the level being studied.

Depending on the regularity and volume of learnings, it may also be a consideration for us to become a learning centre, particularly as it would be reasonable to expect that there will be a greater demand for CIH qualifications. Currently, there are a limited number of providers in the South West.

4. Budgetary Implications:

Based on the preliminary desk top analysis and some assumptions about the CIH levels that would be applied to certain management roles, the following estimates are put forward based on CIH 2023 fees:

Level 5	-	2 to qualify @ £2,790
Level 4	-	7 managers to qualify @ £2,160
		15 surveyors to qualify @ £2,160 (if this is required)

There may be ancillary costs that should be considered. Once the audit has been completed and further guidance is received about the CIH levels expecting to be applied, we can give clearer guidance on costs.

In addition, if the recommendation that housing employees complete the e-Learning modules as part of induction and as part of the initial move to professionalising the housing sector, there would be additional costs. A detailed plan to upskill current employees to ensure they are operating with the right level of knowledge and learning is being drafted.

There is a cost for each of these initial e-learning modules is £35 + VAT for members and £40 + VAT for non-members. Each modules is a short, one hour unit and is available on demand. To complete all 8 modules the cost for members is £280 + VAT and for non-members is £320 + VAT.

We anticipate that we may be able to fund some of the training costs through the apprenticeship levy and where additional funding is available, we will make use of this. It is likely that there will be a lead time to achieving these qualification standards and we will make use of that to minimize impact on immediate budget spend.

5. Other considerations:

We will be setting the expectation for a higher level of qualification through job descriptions with the expectation as part of the person specification that it will be an essential criteria to have or to work toward achieving the required level of Chartered Institute of Housing qualification. This means that over time, the required standard will be met. In the meantime, we will develop a detailed plan to achieve the required standards set by the Regulator.

It is expected that we would want to encourage our qualified managers to subscribe to the Chartered Institute of Housing professional body and EDDC currently supports the payment of one professional membership per employee. Not only will this ensure relevant continuing professional development (CPD) is maintained for our housing managers, it will also give opportunities for networking and communication with professional colleagues across the housing sector to ensure that we remain current and well informed.

6. Conclusion:

We are expecting that it will be a requirement for housing sector managers to be qualified; although it is not clear exactly what those levels are. We are building the picture of what our current position is so that taking into account capacity, budget and timeframes, we can achieve the required standards that are set by the Regulator.

Financial implications:

The financial implications are within the body of the report.

Legal implications:

Legal implications which will be required by the Housing Regulator are set out in the report.