

## Agenda for Housing Review Board Thursday, 29th April, 2021, 10.00 am

### Members of Housing Review Board

Councillors: T McCollum (Chair), P Sullivan (Vice-Chair), C Drew, C Summers, I Hall, H Parr, C Collier, C Morrison, B Taylor and S Chamberlain

**Venue:** online via the zoom app

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(or group number 01395 517546)

Wednesday, 21 April 2021

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- 1 Public speaking  
Information on [public speaking](#) is available online
- 2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 12)
- 3 Apologies
- 4 Declarations of interest  
Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)
- 5 Matters of urgency  
Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online
- 6 Confidential/exempt item(s)  
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There is one item which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.
- 7 Housing Review Board forward plan (Page 13)
- 8 Housing Strategy refresh and scoping (Pages 14 - 37)
- 9 Updated housing policies (Pages 38 - 39)
- 10 Integrated asset management contract void report (Pages 40 - 48)
- 11 Ian Williams complaints and compliments (Pages 49 - 61)
- 12 Grounds maintenance additional costs (Pages 62 - 65)
- 13 Housing Revenue Account and Housing Capital finance report (Pages 66 - 68)

- 14 Complaints handling (Pages 69 - 83)
- 15 HouseMark annual performance report (Pages 84 - 92)
- 16 Covid 19 performance (Pages 93 - 97)
- 17 Annual report of the achievements of the Housing Review Board (Pages 98 - 101)
- 18 Renewal of Advantage South West subscription (Pages 102 - 106)
- 19 Stock condition survey (Pages 107 - 126)
- 20 Exclusion of press and public

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt and private information (as set out against each Part B agenda item), is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing the items in private session (Part B).

- 21 Stock condition survey report (Pages 127 - 132)

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If you are recording the meeting, you are asked to act in a reasonable manner and not disrupt the conduct of meetings for example by using intrusive lighting, flash photography or asking people to repeat statements for the benefit of the recording. You may not make an oral commentary during the meeting. The Chairman has the power to control public recording and/or reporting so it does not disrupt the meeting.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Question Time will be recorded.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

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**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****Minutes of the meeting of Housing Review Board held at online via the Zoom app. on 21 January 2021****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 5.00 pm

**85 Public speaking**

There were no matters raised by the public.

The Chair advised the Board that it was proposed that the start time of the HRB meetings would change to 10am from the start of the new civic year.

The Housing Solutions Manager informed the Board that one of the tenants many would have known, Marcus Masterson, had sadly passed away recently. Marcus had been a key member of the Homelessness Strategy Review group over the last few years, passing on his views and opinions in respect of plans for tackling homelessness. His contributions, from a former service user perspective, had been greatly appreciated and helped to shape the strategy. Along with Cllr Megan Armstrong, who had known Marcus for several years, officers wished for their appreciation of the contribution that Marcus had made to the service over the years to be acknowledged.

**86 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Housing Review Board meeting held on 17 September 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

**87 Declarations of interest**

Cat Summers, Personal, housing tenant.

Cindy Collier, Personal, housing tenant.

Councillor Ian Hall, Personal, mother is a tenant and a Homesafeguard customer and he is a Devon County Councillor.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Personal, housing tenant.

Peter Sullivan, Personal, housing tenant and vice chair trustees of Sidmouth Consolidated Charities.

**88 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

**89 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There was one confidential/exempt item.

**90 Housing Review Board forward plan**

The Acting Housing Service Lead presented the forward plan and advised members that the forward plan acted as a reminder of agenda items to come forward to future meetings. Members were reminded that they could add further issues to the next forward plan by informing either herself or the Democratic Services Officer. During the meeting the following items were added to the forward plan:

- Green Homes Grant update
- Housing strategy
- Stock condition survey
- Compliance

RESOLVED: that the forward plan be noted and updated.

## 91 **Housing Service Plan 2021/22**

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment presented the draft Service Plan for the Housing Service covering the period 2021-2022, for consideration by the Board.

The Service Plan was a working document produced annually by all EDDC services and set out the key achievements over the past year and the forthcoming issues to be faced by the service. It linked closely with the Council Plan and the aim of the process was to produce a work plan for the coming year with a realistic view of the challenges and risks ahead. Producing a Service Plan presented a good opportunity to look back and reflect and also the ability to forward plan. Performance should be monitored constantly against the 'live' document. The Service Plan was coordinated annually with budget planning.

This year the plan reflected some of the service interruptions due to the pandemic and the move of the Private Sector Housing team to the Environmental Health and Car Parks Service. The plan also considered service challenges and pressures over the next three years, including climate change implications, tenant safety measures, the implications of the Social Housing White Paper, and the ambitions to increase the supply of social housing.

A range of service improvements were identified through a number of SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound). The plan linked closely with the Housing Strategy and was designed to complement a number of other housing plans and policies as part of how the Council managed its own housing stock, managed homelessness, and the services it delivered. There was also a strong link with the Council's Public Health Strategic Plan to ensure more people were helped to be and stay healthy, ensure self-care and community resilience and integrate and improve support for people in their own homes.

Headlines from the Housing Service Plan were:

- A focus on delivering our housing purpose(s).
- A commitment to tackle homelessness.
- Recognition of poverty as a significant factor in people's lives.
- Revision of the HRA Business plan with updated stock condition data.
- A focus on new development opportunities with the need to review the current acquisition programme.
- Emphasis on the importance of compliance and keeping tenants safe in their homes.
- A focus on mental health and how we are addressing the challenges this is presenting us as a landlord.

- Embedding the Integrated Asset Management Contract.
- Mapping the future of Home Safeguard with a realistic view of risks ahead including digital switchover, refresh of the marketing strategy, relocating the service, review of the staffing rota.
- An emphasis on evidencing value for money with the need to scrutinise some areas to satisfy ourselves that we are achieving what matters most to the customer, in line with our systems thinking purpose.
- Acting on the climate change agenda and building towards a carbon neutral council.

The service planning day was a virtual event and involved input from senior managers, the Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Board, on the day to day challenges of the job, ideas for service improvement, and the needs of the customers. The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment acknowledged that ordinarily there would be greater tenant involvement in the service planning process, but due to service pressures and focussing on the pandemic the process had been curtailed. The Service Plan would be presented to the tenant groups over the next few months and cascade to housing staff through team meetings and service briefings. The Board's input into the Service Plan was welcomed and gave tenants an additional opportunity to comment, before it was finalised and reported to Cabinet.

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment commented that despite the pressures over the previous year the housing teams and contractors had responded incredibly well and were doing a fantastic job.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve the Housing Service Plan for 2021/22.

## 92 **Housing Revenue Account budget**

Consideration was given to the Housing Accountant's report which presented the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22. At the same time as preparing the draft budget, draft Service Plans had been prepared and aligned, and linked back to the Council Plan.

Recommendations from the Board would be presented to Cabinet on 3 February 2021, when members would finalise budget proposals to be recommended to Council.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was underpinned and influenced by the business plan. The Strategic Lead – Finance explained that this plan needed to be refreshed, but this had been delayed by other work commitments. The updated plan needed to:

- Undertake a full conditions survey to inform future programme costs.
- Consider the implication of the new maintenance contract.
- Reflect additional work on asset management planning and compliance requirements.
- Consider the end of rent reductions.
- Consider the implication of Universal Credit.
- Reconsider the debt level and use of Right to Buy Receipts linked to future development ambitions, and
- Consider the implications of the climate change action plan.

This work was progressing for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget. The draft 2021/22 budget continued to invest in and maintain existing properties at a similar level. It also

provided an acceptable surplus which would need to be prioritised between competing demands:

- the purchase programme to counteract the impact of continuing Right to Buy (RTB) sales and the development ambitions to significantly add to the Council's stock/social housing. This was a key priority in the statement of intent.
- to ensure new compliance requirements were met.
- to implement the carbon reduction actions.

The Strategic Lead – Finance explained that the budget assumed a rental income of £17.8 million. The budget had been prepared to maintain council homes to a high standard with a comprehensive planned programme of expenditure, adaptations and routine repairs and an overview of expenditure items was contained in the report. The draft HRA budget currently showed a surplus of £0.985 million. It was proposed that this be held for the purpose of additional housing and climate change measures. Reports on priority and proposed actions to be considered would be reported to the HRB through 2021/22.

The HRA balance was maintained within the adopted range of £2.1m and £3.1m, being projected to be retained £3.1m level at the end of 2021/22. There was an additional £1.6m being held in the HRA debt volatility fund which remained unchanged.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet recommend the draft revenue capital estimates in the draft Housing Revenue Account to Council.

### 93 **Right to Buy spending 20/21**

The Acting Housing Service Lead's report provided the Housing Review Board with an update on right to buy spending for 2020/21 and raised awareness of the challenges faced due to Covid-19. The report contained information on the amount of receipts spent or committed to spend in the financial year and the amount that could be returned to Government. In response to concerns raised by local authorities on spend and the impact of Covid-19 on the housing and building market the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government granted a temporary relaxation on the deadlines for spending right to buy receipts, however it would not be long enough for all the receipts to be spent. Officers would continue to look for suitable properties to buy on the open market, but given resourcing issues and the demands put on the housing market industry with the stamp duty holiday ending, it was unlikely that the end of March deadline would be met. This would be the first time the Council would have to pay back any receipts since entering into the agreement with the Secretary of State in 2012.

During 2020/21 19 properties would be purchased at a spend of around £3.06m. This however resulted in a shortfall of spending and EDDC would be required to pay back approximately £844,000 in receipts and £121,000 in interest on the returned amount.

The Board acknowledged that whilst it was disappointing that receipts would have to be returned, the year's spend requirements was always going to be a challenge and that was before Covid-19. Investment in staffing and a different strategy for spending receipts was needed to ensure the Council was best placed to spend the receipts and provide the much needed replacement affordable housing for its stock.

This would also ensure that EDDC was getting the right type of properties that would meet its climate change agenda.

Members expressed concern at Government policy which allowed tenants greater discounts when purchasing Council properties, whilst imposing constraints on local

authorities around spending the Right to Buy receipts. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities reassured the Board that she would continue lobbying the Government about the Right to Buy scheme and had requested a meeting with the MPs.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the contents of the report and the spend information.

#### 94 **Review of the furniture project**

The Housing Solutions Manager's report summarised progress made to date on the review of the furniture and household item recycling service known as the 'furniture project' or the 'magic garages'. The report gave a brief history of the inception of the service and highlighted that it was currently unsustainable to continue delivering the service in its current format. Four options for the service had been developed and these were presented in the report and outlined in the meeting:

1. Keep the service in-house, funded through HRA budgets.
2. End the service and utilise existing alternatives.
3. End the service and replace it with a voucher scheme.
4. Limit the service to furniture/items acquired through void clearance of Council stock.

The report also highlighted the benefits of the current service in relation to the Council's broader strategic aims. The importance of PAT testing for electrical goods and ensuring current furniture fire regulations were being met was raised during discussion.

RESOLVED:

1. that option one, to keep the service in-house, funded through HRA budgets should be further evaluated.
2. that a further report on option one be brought back to the Board to review progress in six months time.

#### 95 **Integrated Asset Management Contract update and analysis of housing complaints**

The Housing Review Board considered a detailed report of the Property and Asset Manager which updated members on progress made over the last year, during the Covid-19 pandemic, and gave an annual review of the Council's partnership with Ian Williams Ltd.

The contract with Ian Williams commenced in July 2019 and there had been many challenges along the way. Consultants Echlon had recently carried out the first detailed review of the contract and their report was currently being reviewed in detail. Generally the review looked at how the contract was progressing, areas that needed attention and areas that were working well. Officers were currently reviewing the recommendations in the report and working with Ian Williams to agree and implement the recommended changes and improvements. Overall the contract was going well.

The Covid-19 pandemic had impacted the contract, with co-location of staff being put on hold, whilst staff worked from home. Ian Williams were fully staffed at management level but the operative's numbers fluctuated. The recruitment of multi-skilled operatives in East Devon had proved difficult, which had impacted on their ability to complete a range

of jobs on one visit. There were a number of vacancies in the Property and Asset team and recruitment was underway to fill the roles and address the understaffing issue.

Following challenges incurred due to Covid-19, the contract had now returned to a relative state of normality, with compliance across all areas. The Property & Asset Manager answered details questions in relation to compliance and it was suggested that compliance be added to the forward plan with future compliance reports being brought to the Board.

It was noted that void costs could vary significantly from month to month depending on the condition of the properties returned.

The report explained in detail complaints and how these were being reviewed and addressed. A complaint management programme had been developed. All complaints were actively monitored and to date all had been remedied at or before stage one of the Council's complaint process.

Customer satisfaction surveys had fallen off the radar during Covid-19, but efforts were now re-focused on gathering information in this area, with the questionnaire being revised. The Property and Asset Manager outlined the steps being taken to improve on gaining customer satisfaction.

**RESOLVED:** that the Housing Review Board note the update report on the integrated asset management contract.

## 96 **Social Housing White Paper**

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment's report summarised the recently published White Paper on Social Housing. The contents of the White Paper were likely to be translated into legislation and would signal a significant change in the governance of social housing. The proposals recognised the importance of social housing and the need to prioritise tenant safety, involvement, satisfaction, complaint handling and good housing management. Much of the detail contained in the White Paper was centred on customer regulation, in effect a social housing charter, and would recreate a stronger regulatory regime providing the Regulator of Social Housing with more powers.

There were seven chapters in the White Paper:

1. Addressed the catalyst behind the need for change – the Grenfell Tower fire.
2. To know how your landlord is performing.
3. To have complaints dealt with promptly.
4. To be treated with respect backed by a strong regulator.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership.

The Housing Service Lead explained the White Paper to the Board in greater detail and advised that the Board would continue to receive reports on progress.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet approve:

1. that the Housing Service start to make preparations for the forthcoming legislation and ensure that its policies and procedures were up to date in respect of tenant safety and tenant involvement.

2. that the Housing Service improve its complaints handling processes to improve tenant satisfaction.
3. that the Housing Service revisit its systems thinking purposes to ensure it focuses on what matters to tenants and reduce failure demand.
4. that the Housing Service work with tenant representatives to embrace the sentiments and contents of the White Paper.

## 97 **Your Home Your Wellbeing research report**

The Information and Analysis Officer's report presented the results and conclusions of a three year research partnership between East Devon District Council's (EDDC) housing department, the University of Birmingham's Research Centre on Household Assets and Saving Management (CHASM), and LiveWest.

The objective of the partnership was to build a richer understanding of people's experience of their home and the relationship between their home, landlord and wellbeing. Over 3,500 social tenants, private renters (those on the Devon Home Choice housing register) and those in shared ownership responded to the survey. 58 respondents were also interviewed, some of whom were contacted over all three years of the study.

The key findings were that:

- Having a good home mattered to overall life satisfaction and happiness.
- Social housing had a positive impact on all aspects of wellbeing. It helped to reduce levels of anxiety, particularly for those facing mental health challenges.
- Respondents who did not feel safe or who felt they had no control in their home were more likely to report lower levels of life-satisfaction and were more likely to be anxious. Respondents who felt that they had privacy and control in their homes were more likely to report being happy.
- Satisfaction with the local area in which a home was situated was associated with higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction, and with lower levels of anxiety.
- Half of all of those who were surveyed reported that they are struggling to make ends meet. Those struggling to make ends meet were more likely to be anxious and less likely to be happy or satisfied with their life.
- Respondents were likely to report that they experienced poor mental health if they were less than 65 years old, living alone, living with non-dependent children or felt like their home affected their wellbeing in a negative way.
- Universal Credit was not working well for everyone and, in particular, it had a negative impact on the wellbeing of claimants with mental health challenges.

The report emphasised that what the Council did as a social landlord really made a difference to the lives of its tenants from ensuring stock was maintained to a high level, to the additional support services provided to tenants as a social landlord.

The report also supported the growing national consensus that something needed to be 'done' about housing for many people living in East Devon. It was well documented that there was not just a shortage of housing across all tenures but for many people they were living in unsuitable and unaffordable homes and with few options for how to improve their housing situation. The result for many people was housing insecurity and financial struggle, with resultant negative impacts on wellbeing.

The Information and Analysis Officer was thanked for her involvement in the fantastic piece of work. She advised the Board that she could provide members with ward level information if the requested it.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve that:

1. Where appropriate evidence is used from the research to support housing's decision making and service planning.
2. All teams within housing have access to the advice and expertise of the mental health specialist for supporting East Devon tenants.
3. There is better understanding of the housing needs of those on the Devon Home Choice register and they are supported on their housing journey.
4. The Council continues to invest in our homes and neighbourhoods and ensure repairs and the programme works done to our properties are of a high standard.
5. The Housing Service supports universal credit claimants by helping them to maintain their tenancies and offer budgetary and financial advice where necessary.
6. The Council continue to work with others to provide more housing opportunities and choices for people living in East Devon.
7. The study be used on a wider scale to promote the research with the Council's partners nationally to promote the value of social housing.

98 **Covid-19 performance monitoring report**

The Housing Review Board was presented with the December week 2 Covid-19 report, which had been monitoring different areas of the service since March 2020, and had been included for the Board's information. The Acting Housing Service Lead explained that this information was used weekly by the housing management team to monitor performance.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the performance of the Housing Service.

99 **Quarter 2 Housing performance indicator report**

The Housing Review Board was presented with the Housing Service performance indicator report for quarter 2 2020/21, with details of selected indicators measuring performance across the Housing Service.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the performance of the Housing Service.

100 **Exclusion of press and public**

RESOLVED: that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

101 **Purchase of 51 St Andrews Road, Exmouth**

The Acting Housing Service Lead's report sought authority to proceed with the purchase of 51 St Andrews Road, Exmouth subject to approval of the Certificate of Lawfulness, using Right to Buy receipts. The report recommended that the purchase of the seven units of accommodation would be a beneficial addition to the current Council property portfolio and that flexibility should be exercised with rent level to help with affordability for tenants if required.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet note that pursuant to the delegated authority approved by the Board, Cabinet and Council in January/February 2020 as set out in the body of the report to purchase properties from Right to Buy receipts, the Strategic Lead has approved the purchase of the freehold interest of 51 St Andrews Road (subject to certificate of lawfulness) in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder and the HRB Chair.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Board members present:**

Councillor Tony McCollum (Chair)  
Peter Sullivan, Tenant (Vice-Chair)  
Cat Summers, Tenant  
Councillor Ian Hall  
Councillor Helen Parr  
Cindy Collier, Tenant  
Councillor Brenda Taylor  
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain

#### **Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

M Armstrong  
P Faithfull  
S Gazzard  
G Jung  
D Ledger  
P Millar

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer  
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer  
Jo Garfoot, Acting Housing Service Lead  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Graham Baker, Senior Technical Officer Asset Management  
Sue Bewes, Housing Services Manager  
Natalie Brown, Information and Analysis Officer (Housing)  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead Housing  
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor  
Andi Loosemoore, Rental Manager  
Giles Salter, Solicitor

#### **Councillor apologies:**

Christine Drew, Independent Community Representative  
Christine Morrison, Tenant

Chairman .....

Date: .....

# HOUSING REVIEW BOARD – FORWARD PLAN

This forward plan identifies reports and other agenda items for future meetings of the Housing Review Board. It is also intended to assist agenda management and act as a reminder of items to come forward to future meetings.

Report title	Meeting date	Author
Housing Strategy refresh and scoping	March 2021	Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment and Housing Projects Officer
Stock condition survey	March 2021	Housing Service Lead
Grounds Maintenance additional costs	March 2021	StreetScene Operations Manager
Integrated Asset Management Contract variation	March 2021	Property & Asset Manager
Complaints handling	March 2021	Property & Asset Manager
Policy updates	March 2021	
HouseMark performance report	March 2021	Strategic Lead - Housing, Health & Environment
<b>Quarterly performance reports and regular reports</b>		
Responsive repairs	Quarterly report	Property & Asset Manager
Letting of Council homes/voids	Quarterly report	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager
Devon Home Choice	Quarterly report	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager
Rent management	Quarterly report	Housing Services Manager
Systems Thinking leading & lagging measures New Tenants Survey	Quarterly report	Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment
Forward Plan	Every meeting	Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment
Benchmarking survey	Annual report	Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment
Evaluating the achievements of the Board	Annual report	

Board Members can propose agenda items during meetings/debates that can be included on the Forward Plan for future meetings, or outside the meetings with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice chairman.

Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## Housing Strategy 2021- 2025

### Report summary:

This report presents the draft Housing Strategy for Board member consultation. The report seeks member feedback on the structure, focus and content of the strategy and seeks approval for the proposed timeline to publication. It is in draft form at this stage in order that the Board can genuinely assist in shaping the final version of this important policy statement.

It is important that the Housing Strategy is underpinned with robust housing needs evidence, it confronts challenges in the housing sector, and it picks up on and articulates the priorities and ambitions of the Council. It needs to be a forward looking document that has regard to past performance and the local housing market operating within national policy and legislation. It is necessarily a high level document and in recent years we have sought to keep our statement short, to the point and linked with other corporate and service specific policy documents.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That the draft Housing Strategy is approved for the purposes of final drafting after the Board have provided a steer on the consultation questions set out in this report.

### Reason for recommendation:

To enable the Housing Review Board to influence and shape the emerging updated Housing Strategy Statement.

Officer: John Golding Strategic Lead - Housing, Health and Environment

[jgolding@eatdevon.gov.uk](mailto:jgolding@eatdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Medium Impact: we will ensure that the Housing Strategy has a positive impact in terms of equalities and will provide support for vulnerable and excluded individuals. A process of monitoring will provide a check on the impact.

**Climate change** High Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk: The current housing strategy period ended in 2020 meaning a refresh is required. The Housing Strategy is closely linked to the corporate council plan, and formalises the approach that the Housing Service will take to meet the councils broader objectives

**Links to background information .**

Link to [Council Plan:](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

## Report in full

- 1.1 Our current Housing Strategy expired at the end of 2020 and requires a refresh. Our current Housing Strategy is explained in some detail on our website: [Housing Strategy - East Devon](#)

The strategy was usefully summarised in the chart below, which members will be familiar with from previous reports.

Our over-riding vision	A decent home for all residents of East Devon		
Our responsibilities	To provide a housing options service for all who are homeless or threatened with homelessness	To provide, maintain and manage our own council housing stock	
	To work with housing developers and housing associations to deliver more affordable housing	To regulate and improve other social rented, private rented and owner occupied housing	
<b>Our priorities</b>	<b>To have consistently satisfied customers</b>		
	<b>Providing homes</b>	<b>Improving homes</b>	<b>Improving communities</b>
	prevent homelessness and make sure that accommodation is found for those who do become homeless  provide a range of affordable	bring sub-standard housing (of all tenure) up to current standards  improve the use and safety of housing  improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of housing and eliminate fuel poverty	support the improvement and regeneration of local communities by encouraging social inclusion, involving children and young people with housing issues, and enabling residents to actively

	<p>housing to meet housing needs</p> <p>widen the choice of housing, especially for those in priority need</p>	<p>enable elderly people disabled people and people with special needs to live as independently as possible and remain in their own homes if they so wish</p> <p>maintain and manage the council owned housing stock to a high standard, actively involving tenants in all aspects of the service.</p>	<p>participate in their communities</p>
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A local housing strategy is the local housing authority’s vision for housing in its area. It sets out objectives and targets and policies on how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role and provides an overarching framework against which the authority considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues. The Local Government Act 2003 put Housing Strategies on a statutory basis.

- 1.2 Preparation for the new strategy began in 2019 with an internal review, not only of performance against the objectives set out in the strategy, but also to consider the challenges that we faced during that period. It is vital that the work demonstrates a thorough understanding of the local housing market and the national legislative framework and housing policy. The strategy needs to be underpinned with good housing data on needs, opportunities, supply, stock condition and a range of other factors that inform the direction of travel for the strategy to ensure that it addresses the housing needs of our communities.
- 1.3 Initial conversations with senior Housing managers were also held at the end of 2019. These were informal discussions where we aimed to identify what challenges they felt lay ahead for the Housing Service over the next 3 years and beyond.
- 1.4 Since then, there have been a number of new considerations to factor in including:
  - A new political administration coming in and subsequent development of a new Statement of Intent, with housing (better homes and communities) seen as a priority
  - The production of the EDDC Climate Change Strategy, setting challenging targets for all departments, including Housing
  - Covid-19 pandemic and the impacts on housing
- 1.5 Following the publication of the council’s **Statement of Intent**, and development of the **Housing Service Plan** for 2021-22 we are now in a position to present a first draft of the housing strategy to members for their feedback and input.

## 2. The Housing Strategy 2021 – 2024

- 2.1 The draft housing strategy document has been added to this report as **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 The structure of the document has broadly followed the same format as the previous strategy. We have intended this document to be a high level, overarching document rather than too detail-orientated. It is felt that more detail can be found in other strategies and policies, such as the **Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy**, **Resident Involvement Strategy**, and **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan**, and that duplication of that detail is best avoided. We also have numerous policy statements underpinning our approach from Devon Home Choice policy to tenancy succession policy, rent arrears policy to our pets policy and tenancy conditions.
- 2.3 We are seeking to link the strategic approach outlined in the housing strategy to the themes of the forthcoming Council Plan, with the annual Housing Service Plan providing the more detailed actions required to meet the priorities of our strategy. The strategy needs to be ambitious, but realistic and achievable. Outcomes need to be specific, measurable and time bound. We will assign lead officers and use objectives and actions to inform individual and team priorities.
- 2.4 We have chosen to keep the three high level priorities of the previous strategy for the new document. This has proved to be a useful approach in the past as it has helped to focus work on core principles of housing service delivery, tying in individual departmental actions to common goals.
- 2.5 For this strategy, a fourth priority has been added to reflect the need to develop our internal systems to better meet future challenges.
- 2.6 Our four priorities are:
- Providing Homes
  - Improving Homes
  - Improving Communities
  - Improving Services

### **3. Feedback requested**

- 3.1 As previously stated, this document is currently in a draft format. We are keen to get the feedback of HRB members at this time to shape the final draft. We raise the following questions for discussion.
- 3.2 Are you happy with the broad structure and format of the document?
- 3.3 Are you happy with the four priorities identified in 2.6 above and in the Strategy draft?
- 3.4 Is there a clear vision and purpose articulated in the draft document?
- 3.5 Are there areas that you would like to be included that are not currently covered in the document?
- 3.6 Is there sufficient evidence to justify the priorities?
- 3.7 We propose monitoring our progress against the priorities through the production of annual service plans. Are you happy with this approach?

- 3.8 Once we have collated the Board's input we will redraft the strategy document, reengage with the managers and the Portfolio Holder prior to presenting the strategy to Cabinet and Council for adoption.
- 

**Financial implications:**

There are no specific financial implications requiring comment

**Legal implications:**

As identified in paragraph 3.8 of this report, full Council will need to approve the proposed Strategy prior to implementation.

# **EDDC Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024**

**A better home for all residents of East  
Devon**

# Context

## The Housing Situation

East Devon District Council has a role within the local housing market as:

- a landlord of over 4200 properties
- a regulator of standards within the private rented and owner occupier sectors
- the planning authority with a duty to bring forward more homes including more affordable homes
- the provider of a housing options service to help those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

Key conditions within the housing market influence standards and provision.

- A high average house price in the district is £277,000 - the second highest in Devon. The Devon average is £250,000.
- A low average gross annual wage for those living in the district of £27,597, one of the lowest in England.
- A high affordability ratio of 10.04. This is one of the highest in Devon, above both the national average of 8.00 and the south west average of 8.76.
- A high proportion of owner occupied properties at 74.9% with only 9.3% of properties available for social rent. This compares to national proportions of 63.6% and 17.6% respectively
- High private rent levels compared to the rest of Devon (average monthly private sector rents almost £700)

(Note – STATS to be updated if available)

## Challenges:

The challenges faced by the Housing Service have historically been similar and ongoing; a lack of suitable affordable housing, tackling rough sleeping and homelessness, how to help and support the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. We have risen to these challenges in previous years, although they remain stubbornly present. However, two massive global issues cast an additional shadow over us at this time. These are the coronavirus pandemic, which has

placed enormous pressure on the service in 2020, and Climate Change, where too little action on a local, national and global scale now means that significant investment and work is required to address this emergency situation. We also need to factor into our plans the ongoing need to ensure tenant safety and our priority for compliance with building standards whether they be gas or fire safety, asbestos or general health, safety and welfare.

### **Coronavirus management and recovery**

The upheaval caused by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic has required the whole Council to make significant changes to their operations. The main headquarters at Honiton and Exmouth Town Hall remain closed to the public, and can now only offer “covid-secure” office space to a small number of staff. However, the Housing Service have been able to continue essential services albeit with social distancing and additional PPE and through increased home working and relying on email and telephone for contact with customers and tenants in most cases.

Over the year, further spikes in the disease have led to more periods of stringent restrictions. The Housing Service has had an effective plan in place to pull back from and reintroduce services in line with the ebb and flow of the infection rates.

The recovery from Covid-19 also provides opportunities to learn lessons. The community efforts to maintain contact with and support our more vulnerable residents were inspirational. We will seek to keep that sense of community support through the recovery.

### *Homes at the Heart campaign*

The pandemic forced all of us to spend more time in our homes. In July 2020, The National Housing Federation (NHF), in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Crisis and others, called for the home to be at the centre of our national recovery from the Coronavirus. The campaign highlighted the poor quality and lack of space in many homes across the country. For those people living in substandard or crowded homes, the negative mental and physical health impact caused by multiple lockdowns and restrictions are even starker as a result of the poor conditions they have been forced to live under. The NHF led partnership has called for greater investment in social housing as part of the recovery from the pandemic providing both economic and social recovery.

In addition to this the National Housing Federation has identified 5 key areas in housing that should be prioritised as part of the recovery, which resonated with us:

1. No return to rough sleeping
2. A new generation of affordable homes
3. Helping people to thrive at home
4. A new drive to decarbonise social housing
5. Change for communities across the country

These are national priorities, but it is clear that they align closely with ambitions that EDDC hold. We will work with our social housing partners across the district towards these common aims, strengthening existing relationships and forging new ones to improve the future for all East Devon residents.

The Council have already committed to a green recovery plan, and the Housing Service will focus on opportunities to adopt a greener approach to our work as we move forwards.

### **Climate Change**

In 2019, EDDC became a full signatory of the Devon Climate Declaration. We are seeking to reduce our carbon footprint across the council in order to meet the ambitious target of being a carbon neutral authority by 2040. Housing is a big part of the Council's energy consumption, and the Housing Service will need to assess the impact of our stock on the environment and seek to reduce that impact. A corporate Climate Change Strategy has been produced, and a number of actions have been developed for the Housing Service from that.

We intend to carry out a Stock Condition Survey over the next year to 18 months. This will provide the information to enable us to develop and carry out a far reaching and comprehensive programme of improvement works focused on improving the energy efficiency of our stock. The Housing service will also need to adjust its ways of working, reflecting on the impact of its activities on the environment (including travel, meetings and stationary usage) and adjusting its practices accordingly. We will also seek to train staff and educate tenants

### **Lack of suitable housing**

EDDC have been undertaking a longitudinal study of tenants and housing register applicants. This study, "Your Home: Your wellbeing", has been produced in

partnership with LiveWest and Birmingham University and is already confirming the wider benefits that living in affordable, secure accommodation brings in relation to money matters, mental health and general wellbeing.

In East Devon, we have a combination of high house prices, high private rents and a low proportion of social and affordable rent properties across the district. There is currently a waiting list of almost 4000 (*check stat*) on Devon Home Choice. This environment is the backdrop for a number of challenges that EDDC face, but it also underlines the value of the service we can offer.

### **Increase in homelessness**

The introduction of new legislation and duties on local authorities in 2018 has opened up homelessness prevention services to more people. Whilst this impacted on the level of work required by our Housing Options team to assist those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless it also means that we are helping more people in need.

Due to a reduction in the amount of supported accommodation in the district there has been an increase in approaches from people with more complex needs (including mental and physical health issues).

Further pressure on the system was added with the arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic early in 2020. The need for people to self-isolate, the “everybody in” strategy to house all rough sleepers and the additional influx of people who had been sofa-surfing led to a big increase in the number of people in temporary accommodation. Although this has now subsided, It is anticipated that there will be another rise in homelessness applications when restrictions ease and the moratorium on evictions ends.

### **Financial Stability**

The reduction in central government funding for local services has resulted in the council having a budget gap of £2.7 million over the next 4 years (*check stat*). Although a lot of the funding for our housing services are covered through the Housing Revenue Account, it is incumbent on all council departments to seek out opportunities and activities that can generate income. This will enable the Council to continue to deliver outstanding services to all residents of East Devon.

## **Welfare Reform and the Poverty Agenda**

Tackling poverty in East Devon is a high priority for EDDC. A report to the council's Overview committee in November 2019 provided a stark picture of the struggles that many families across our district face. Close to 11,000 households are living below the poverty line, with 22% of children in the district classed as being in poverty. Changes in the welfare system have exacerbated the situation. Looking at our tenants alone, the impact of Universal credit on rent arrears is marked. **As at September 2019, we had 382 tenants in receipt of UC (9.3% of our tenant population). Over 60% of these were in arrears at this time. Taking the rent arrears total across our stock, the 9.3% of tenants on UC were responsible for 20% of total rent arrears. *More up to date stats?***

## **Social Housing White Paper**

Published in November 2020, the Government's social housing white paper introduces a new charter for social housing residents which sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect:

1. To be safe in your home
2. To know how your landlord is performing
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
4. To be treated with respect
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership

It is our desire to be the gold standard as a social landlord and many of the priorities identified within the white paper reflect our own ambitions. That said,

## **Strategic Context**

This housing strategy is informed and influenced by a number of key local strategies. These are set out below.

## **EDDC Council Plan**

The Council Plan provides the overarching corporate objectives that inform the focus of all council departments. As a consequence our Housing Strategy will

strongly reflect those ambitions. This is highlighted within the Priorities section of the strategy.

A new Council Plan is currently in development, but a Statement of Intent published in late 2020 provides us with the overall vision and themes of the final Plan.

The vision is: to achieve a positive difference to residents' lives and our environment in East Devon. The four key themes underpinning this ambition are:

- 1 A Greener East Devon
- 2 Better Homes and Communities for all
- 3 A Resilient economy
- 4 Services that matter to all of us

## **Housing Service Plan**

Each council department produces their own Service Plan each year, setting out how their work will meet the aspirations of the broader EDDC Council Plan as well as highlighting future challenges for the services over the next 3 years.

The actions identified in the Housing Service Plan will reflect the objectives of our Housing Strategy. The service plan will also provide us with an opportunity to reaffirm our strategic approach to emerging issues on an annual basis, review our progress against our stated aims, and add further actions as we strive to achieve our longer term goals.

## **Links to other strategies**

### **Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP)**

This sub-regional strategic plan is currently in development, and aims to coordinate planning and spatial strategies across Exeter and the surrounding districts of Mid Devon, Teignbridge and East Devon.

In 2020, East Devon District Council made the decision to pull out of this strategic plan. It is anticipated however, that we will continue to work with our local authority neighbours to maintain links as part of a refreshed EDDC Local Plan

## **Devon Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025**

The vision of this strategy is that the Health outcomes and health equality in Devon will be amongst the best in the world and will be achieved by Devon's communities, businesses and organisation working in partnership.

It has 4 priorities:

- Create opportunities for all (inclusive economic growth, education and social mobility)
- Healthy, Safe, strong and sustainable communities (creating conditions for good health and wellbeing where we live, work and learn)
- Focus on mental health (building good emotional health and wellbeing, happiness and resilience)
- Maintain good health for all (supporting people to stay as healthy as possible for as long as possible)

## **EDDC Local Plan 2013 to 2031**

Adopted in 2016, the local plan sets out planning policy for the whole of East Devon. It seeks to deliver a plan for the development of new jobs and homes whilst recognising and protecting our outstanding natural environment. Following the decision to step away from the GES in 2020, the document is now due to be refreshed.

Our Housing Strategy will focus on the provision of more affordable and social homes; we will therefore seek to influence planning strategy to ensure that sufficient housing of all tenures for people on lower incomes is built. We will also seek to ensure that sufficient supported housing is available.

## **East Devon Public Health Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023**

Improving the health and wellbeing of our residents is a high priority for EDDC. The 2019-2023 plan seeks to help more people to be healthy and stay healthy, to

enhance self-care and support community resilience, and to integrate and improve support for people in their homes.

Across the council we aim to achieve these aims by:

- tackling environmental and social conditions to promote good health
- encouraging healthier behaviour so fewer people become ill
- addressing loss of independence
- promote wellbeing and self-care

Our Housing strategy will support this work through improving the quality of homes across the district, including our own stock. We will also seek to expand our Home Safeguard service, providing equipment and support to vulnerable people across East Devon to enable them to live independently in their own homes for longer. Our Community Development team will continue to work with our tenants to promote good health and healthy lifestyles. They will also be working to improve and encourage community led support activities to improve community cohesion and reduce social isolation. We will seek to fulfil the actions identified within the Housing Mental Health Strategy to improve the mental wellbeing of residents (see more detail below).

## **EDDC Housing Mental Health Strategy**

Awaiting publication

## **EDDC Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2023**

Our refreshed Homelessness Strategy focuses on 4 main areas:

1. Maximise prevention activities and outcomes
2. Increasing accommodation options
3. Minimising rough sleeping
4. Improving health and wellbeing

An action plan, refreshed annually is in place to ensure that teams continue to work to the priorities outlined above. Resolving homelessness is a statutory requirement for EDDC. Our Homelessness Strategy effectively acts as part of our Housing Strategy, but sits as a document in its own right to reflect the importance of this work.

## **Other Housing policies**

There is a suite of housing policies that provide greater detail on specific aspects of service delivery. These policies are regularly reviewed and can be found on our website. Hard copies are also available on request.

DRAFT

## Your home: Your Wellbeing

EDDC have been working with LiveWest and Birmingham University to carry out a longitudinal study to establish and better understand the relationship between tenant wellbeing and their home. We have engaged with the same social housing and private sector tenants over the last three years, an approach which enabled us to measure the impact of policy changes and to map our tenants' journey. This in turn provided us with that deeper understanding of the positive impact that safe and secure housing can have on a person's mental and physical wellbeing.

The data coming out of this research strongly suggests that social housing has a positive impact on individual wellbeing relative to other tenure options, in particular around anxiety and life-satisfaction.

The research also showed the important role that a landlord can play in tenant wellbeing. The evidence suggests that respondents who were satisfied with their landlords are 25% less likely to say there is a problem with their home that negatively affects their wellbeing. Satisfaction with maintenance and repairs are both also associated with more happiness and less anxiety.

*(NOTE – presentation of statistics could be presented here through use of infographics etc)*

The findings of this important research have been used to support and inform the direction and priorities set out in this Strategy.

## Structure of the Housing Service

*This section will summarise the teams that make up the Housing Service*

## High level Priorities

We have four main priority areas that reflect the overall objectives of the housing service. These are summarised below:

### 1. Providing homes

- Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping
- Providing council housing for those who need it, reflecting their needs
- Work with the private sector and Housing Associations to increase availability of homes for low income households
- Take an overview of the total housing market in East Devon and maximise effort to match housing demand and provision

### 2. Improving homes

- Bring sub-standard housing (of all tenure) up to the required standards
- Improve the use and safety of housing
- Improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of housing and eliminate fuel poverty including our own housing stock
- Enable vulnerable people to live as independently as possible and where possible and practicable remain in their own homes if they so wish
- Maintain and manage the council owned housing stock to a high standard, actively involving tenants in all aspects of the service

### 3. Improving communities

- Support the improvement and regeneration of local communities by encouraging social inclusion, involving children and young people with housing issues, and enabling residents to actively participate in their communities
- Invest in improvement of communal areas and grounds, encouraging more nature and green sites across the district
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our tenants by ensuring regular communication and encouraging mutual support within our communities.

### 4. Improving Services

- Develop and expand internal systems to optimise service delivery

## Meeting our Priorities

Although the bulk of this strategy and the priorities that are set out within it are focused on the Housing Service, successful implementation of this strategy will require the support and commitment of wider council teams and external partners.

In relation to housing standards and energy efficiency, as a social landlord we can drive up the standard of our own housing stock. However it will require Housing Associations and Private sector landlords to also take their own steps to improve their properties. Some already are, and it will be through working in partnership with these groups, sharing good practice from other social landlords, and providing support and guidance to private sector landlords that we will have the greatest success. Proactive action, engaging with existing forums, inviting discussions and creating new groups will all contribute to this goal.

Our Private Sector Housing team is located within Environmental Health rather than the Housing Service which can present challenges. However, if there is a positive to be taken from the pandemic restrictions, it has been to prove that physical separation between teams does not have to be a barrier to joint working.

Over and above local conditions, there are national restrictions that can negatively affect us at district level. The policy of Right to Buy has for a long time impacted on our ability to maintain our housing stock levels, and without change this will only get worse, particularly as we seek to “level up” our housing stock to become carbon neutral by 2040.

The table below summarises our proposed actions to meet the priorities of our housing strategy. It also indicates how our actions align with the Council plan objectives for the next 4 years.

*(NOTE – alternative approaches to presenting this information will be considered)*

page 32

<b>1) PROVIDING HOMES</b>		
<b>Key Service Objectives</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Council Plan Objective</b>
Refresh the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, incorporating a review of our approach to delivering affordable housing with the aspiration of building more Council housing, as well as delivering climate change actions and new building safety requirements.	Cross-department	2) Better Homes for all
Meet the increased demand from homeless households and secure suitable temporary and permanent accommodation, supporting households who present with physical and mental health needs, poverty and other issues, to ensure they are able to sustain their tenancies.	Housing Solutions	2) Better Homes for all
Continue to review and monitor outcomes from the Homelessness Strategy in order to reduce homelessness. Review service delivery and demand at Honiton and Exmouth offices to ensure our triage arrangements and resourcing is 'fit for purpose'.	Housing Solutions	2) Better Homes for all
Engage with owners of Empty homes to bring back houses into use	Private Sector Housing	3) A balanced economy
<b>2) IMPROVING HOMES</b>		
<b>Key Service Objectives</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Council Plan Objective</b>

Carry out an updated Stock Condition Survey on our Council owned housing stock in order to collate up to date information, including energy performance, and use it to inform a new stock investment programme to decarbonise the Housing assets.	Property and Assets	1) A greener East Devon
Once the Stock Condition Survey has been completed we will use the data to update and inform the 30 year HRA Business Plan that includes detailed Asset Management considerations.	Property and Assets	1) A greener East Devon
Implement the actions contained in the Climate Change Action Plan relating to housing, specifically a phased replacement of heating systems reliant of burning fossil fuels and improved energy efficient homes for tenants.	Property and Assets	1) A greener East Devon
Addressing Fuel poverty and energy efficiency in owner occupied and rented homes.	Private Sector Housing	1) A greener East Devon
Refresh and clearly define our offer of sheltered accommodation ensuring clarity and a commitment to the levels of support that can be offered.	Housing Services	2) Better Homes for all
Improve void turnaround times and review the Void Standard for properties being relet as part of our Price Per Void contract, and ensure that a suitable lettable standard is achieved for new tenants achieving 'right first time'.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all
Develop and consult tenants on an EDDC Home Standard that exceeds the Decent Homes Standard and that can be applied to all homes.	Cross-department	2) Better Homes for all
Publish a five year planned maintenance and cyclical decoration programme to provide tenants with visibility of planned works.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all
Develop and expand on Year 2 of the Integrated Asset Management Contract to further increase customer satisfaction. Look to implement the first series of social value objectives, review the Handyperson offer and consider the inclusion of the planned works programme under the contract.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all

Introduce a Programme of Property MOTs.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all
Implement a robust process for dealing with Disrepair Claims, ensuring that this is embedded into all team processes. Prepare to meet the requirements of the Homes Fitness for Human Habitation Act.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all
Identify areas of Housing land that are being used by residents without permission and ensure the appropriate signage is posted at all entrances and exits to prevent future claims of easements over our land.	Housing Services	2) Better Homes for all
PWS To review; risk assess; sample and enforce on private water supplies so that homes are fit for occupation and have a wholesome and safe water supply.	Private Sector Housing	2) Better Homes for all
To engage and work with residents in filthy and verminous properties.	Private Sector Housing	2) Better Homes for all
Increase the use of enforcement powers in the private rented sector to improve housing conditions and tenant safety.	Private Sector Housing	2) Better Homes for all
To deliver an increased in home improvements and adaptations using the Better Care Fund	Private Sector Housing	2) Better Homes for all
To license and inspect all houses in multiple occupation and residential caravan sites	Private Sector Housing	2) Better Homes for all
Work with landlords and managing agents to encourage standards to be raised and advise on regulatory issues	Private Sector Housing	2) Better Homes for all
Work towards a ratio of 70/30 spend on Planned to Responsive repair works.	Property and Assets	3) A balanced economy
Develop and introduce mobile/floating support service to assist vulnerable tenants, particularly those with mental health issues, sustain their tenancies.	Housing Services	4) Outstanding council and council services
Improve our approach to safeguarding by implementing the protocol developed for Registered Providers.	Cross-department	4) Outstanding council and council services

Embrace the changes anticipated in the Building Safety Act, including the appointment of building safety managers.	Property and Assets	4) Outstanding council and council services
Continue to develop and enhance the Open Housing System in order to continually improve efficiency and the customer's experience of contact with our service. Work alongside colleagues Corporately with the roll out of Firmstep in order to develop and release the tenant portal.	Housing Systems	4) Outstanding council and council services
<b>3) Improving Communities</b>		
<b>Key Service Objectives</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Council Plan Objective</b>
Implement Phase 2 of t+34:45he #inhoniton project by working with tenants in Honiton to identify areas we can manage differently and re-wild.	Housing Services	1) A greener East Devon
Identify Housing land for Nature Recovery Networks, re-wilding and wildlife improvement corridors and liaise with tenants to deliver blue heart areas.	Housing Services	1) A greener East Devon
SWITCH groups to make bug hotels with Countryside to encourage learning and appreciation of the natural world. The educational element links to our carbon reduction commitments.	Housing Services	1) A greener East Devon
Invest in the improvement of the communal areas on housing estates, including tree planting and encouraging a greater diversity of wildlife.	Housing Services	1) A greener East Devon
Encourage the Creative Cabin from the Thelma Hulbert Gallery visiting Housing estates.	Housing Services	1) A greener East Devon
Invest in the improvement of the communal areas on housing estates, including tree planting and encouraging a greater diversity of wildlife through re-wilding and nature recovery corridors.	Housing Services	1) A greener East Devon

Develop the re-use and recycling furniture programme to assist residents with setting up their home, recognising the increasing amount of people arriving in our homes with few possessions.	Housing Solutions	2) Better Homes for all
Develop our existing tenancy support and sustainability service who are tasked with pro-actively supporting tenants to maintain tenancies, to include Budgeting workshops, New tenant induction workshops, new tenancy "sign-up" briefings, Floating support for vulnerable tenants in sheltered and general needs housing, annual visits to all tenants who reside in council housing	Housing Services	2) Better Homes for all
Complete and publicise the final phase of the Your Home - Your Wellbeing Project.	Housing solutions	2) Better Homes for all
Develop the Axminster Fairshare project working with Tesco in Axminster and Nourish to collect food from the supermarket, cook and freeze it, and distribute to people with an identified need. Aim to do more for rural areas and link with other work e.g. new applicants for Universal Credit who have limited income for the first six weeks.	Housing Services	2) Better Homes for all
Deliver the priorities from the emerging poverty strategy and action plan.	Cross-department	3) A balanced economy
Provide and enable budgeting advice for tenants through our own staff and partner organisations (HomeMaker and CAB) to reduce the incidence of poverty.	Housing Services	3) A balanced economy
<b>3) Improving Services</b>		
<b>Key Service Objectives</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Council Plan Objective</b>
Ensure that the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Integrated Asset Management Contract are closely monitored and standards set are met or exceeded.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all

Ensure that all of our major building components are loaded onto our asset database, and the database maintained as items get replaced and upgraded.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all
Maintain up to date Fire Risk Assessments and publish documents and renewal dates.	Property and Assets	2) Better Homes for all
Create a comprehensive KPI dashboard of performance information to provide greater visibility of Service health and compliance assurance.	Housing Systems	3) A balanced economy
Review multi-agency and key stakeholder relationships to ensure understanding of processes and information sharing is effective and GDPR compliant.	Cross-department	4) Outstanding council and council services
Review the Service against the Social Housing Regulators Standards and ensure that we are fully compliant.	Cross-department	4) Outstanding council and council services
Review compliance procedures by an external body to drive continuous improvement.	Property and Assets	4) Outstanding council and council services
As part of pro-active succession planning, explore the creation of a housing apprentice post that can work across housing teams to support the housing sector as a career path.	Cross-department	4) Outstanding council and council services
Deliver Covid-19 Response & Recovery Plans to maintain housing services for tenants.	Cross-department	4) Outstanding council and council services



Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Updated Housing Policies

### Report summary:

This report is to inform members that the following housing policies have been reviewed by the relevant housing manager to ensure that they continue to reflect current practice and legislation.

Policy name	Responsible Reviewing Officer
<a href="#">Pets Policy</a>	Housing Services Manager
<a href="#">Car Park Management Policy</a>	Housing Services Manager
<a href="#">Anti-Social Behaviour Policy</a>	Housing Services Manager
<a href="#">Succession Policy</a>	Housing Solutions Manager
<a href="#">Responsive Repairs Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Recharge Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Property and Assets Compensation Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Decant Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Gas Safety Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Improvements to Council Properties Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Leasehold Management Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Asbestos Policy and Management Plan</a>	Property and Assets Manager
<a href="#">Adaptations Policy</a>	Property and Assets Manager

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

1. That members of the HRB note the content of this report

### Reason for recommendation:

This report is for information only

Officer: Jo Garfoot, Acting Housing Service Lead, jgarfoot@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies  
 Coast, Country and Environment  
 Council and Corporate Co-ordination

- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; Policies are required to reflect current legislation, and can be used as evidence in disputes arising in cases of breaches of tenancy agreements

**Links to background information** <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/housing-and-homelessness/housing-strategies-and-policies/>

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
  - Outstanding Homes and Communities
  - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
  - Outstanding Council and Council Services
- 
- 

**Financial implications:**

None that require comment”

**Legal implications:**

There are no legal issues raised in this report. Legal Services will advise on any of the policies as requested.

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## **Integrated Asset Management Contract; Operational Changes for the delivery of Voids**

### **Report summary:**

Operational changes for the delivery of Voids under the Integrated Asset Management Contract

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### **Recommendation:**

That the Housing Review Board accept the operational changes to the Void process, component list and price per void cost delivered under the Integrated Asset Management Contract

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To ensure Members are up to date with operational changes in the delivery of the Integrated Asset Management Contract

Officer: Graham Baker – Property & Asset Manager – [gbaker@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:gbaker@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Medium Impact

We have involved tenants throughout the process through the Housing Review Board, tenants groups and as part of the evaluation process. We have continued to involve tenants throughout mobilisation through tenant groups and through direct representation on a number of working groups.

### **Climate change** Medium Impact

We have engaged with Ian Williams as one of our key Partners in relation to their Carbon Footprint and this work is ongoing.

**Risk:** High Risk;

Not having sufficient contracting arrangements in place presents risks to management and maintenance of tenant's homes.

**Links to background information** [HRB Agenda 21 January 2021](#) (Item 13) [HRB Agenda 24 January 2019](#) (Item 10) [HRB 20 September 2018](#) (Item 11) [HRB 21 June 2018](#) (Item 13) [HRB 11 January 2018](#) (item 11) [HRB 12 January 2017](#) (item 14 and 15) [HRB 9 March 2017](#) (item 11) [HRB 15 June 2017](#) (item 9) [HRB 7 September 2017](#) (item 10) [HRB 28 March 2019](#) [HRB 20 June 2019](#) (item 11)

### **Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## **Report in full**

### **1. Annual Review:**

1.1 Under the terms of the IAMC Contract there is a requirement to carry out an Annual Review; the Review is carried out by our specialist Consultant, Echelon who led the procurement of the Contract.

### **2. Voids:**

2.1 In addition to the Annual Review our Consultants Echelon also carried out a detailed review Voids, the outcome identified operational areas that could be changed to improve the service delivery of the Voids and value for money.

### **3. Void Pre-inspection, Type and Programme:**

3.1 During the mobilisation period of the IAMC the following was agreed:

- The pre-inspection process would be carried whilst the property was still occupied all to enable the Void work to commence the day after the keys were returned; in reality:

- Outgoing Tenants were reluctant to allow access to carry out pre-inspections whilst they were still residing in the property meaning such inspections could only be carried out when the Keys had been returned.
- Government imposed Covid related working restrictions meant that both our own and the Contractors surveying teams could not access the properties whilst they were still occupied.

**4. Three void types were agreed:**

- V1 which covered the PPV works and a major component (e.g. a Kitchen) with a target completion of 10 working days.
- V2 which covered the PPV works and 2+ major component changes (e.g. a Kitchen, a Bathroom, an electrical re-wire etc.) with a target completion of 28 days.
- V3 which covered major works (e.g. a full property refurbishment) with a period for completing the work to be agreed between both parties.

4.1 The V1 and V2 voids were both subject to discussion with parties having difficulty in deciding where a particular property should sit, V1 or V2; whilst the description seemed sufficient some properties required extensive remedial work with the Contractor believing they should be classified as V2 whereas we believed they should remain as a V1.

4.2 With use of both the V1 and V2 Voids types the KPI's became increasingly challenging to interpret and calculate; the KPI for voids should only be applied to V1 Voids.

4.3 The onset of Covid working restrictions also impacted on the delivery time for **Voids.**

5. In the light of the confusion relating to interpretation of Void Type both parties, after discussion agreed that moving forward there should be two Void Types namely:

- V1 which covers the PPV void works and up to 2 major component changes with a target completion of a maximum 14 days.
- V2 which covers major voids requiring 3+ major component upgrades and/or exceeding £10k in value; the period for completing such voids will be agreed on an individual basis by both parties.

6. The programme for the Pre-inspect and the V1 void period is appended to this document.

7. Generally all voids will fall under the V1 classification, the requirement to use a V2 void will be exception and by agreement by all parties.

8. The KPI for Voids will be calculated using V1 Void data only, this change will improve both the performance of the delivery of Voids and ability to accurately report.

## **9. Void Inclusions/Exclusions and PPV Price:**

9.1 The Void review highlighted exclusion works being regularly required and carried out voids under the term of 'Price per Void Exclusion (PPV excl)'; as part of the Void review 150 works orders were reviewed, the findings are summarised below:

- The 150 orders equated to an exclusion value of £299,782 in total. This is an average exclusion value per work order of £1998.55 for these orders. As above the majority of these appear to be acceptable, however some items are unclear as to whether they were correctly applied based on the job descriptions provided.
- 70 of the 150 works orders as mentioned were in sheltered units and 80 in general needs units. The average exclusion cost for sheltered properties was £1557 per work order and for general needs properties was £2384 per work order.
- Legionella costs are very low at £776 as they are deemed to be part of the PPV cost, partnership to review why this was charged.
- Asbestos costs are high at £32,770 which could be considered to be a reflection of the age of the EDDC stock in general.
  - a. Subsequent review of the work revealed that asbestos related work can be built into the PPV cost which in turn significantly reduces the exclusion cost.
- EPC costs are very low at £63 as they are deemed to be part of the PPV cost, partnership to review why this has been charged; subsequent investigation revealed that this was charged in error.
- CP12 costs amount to £3030. It is to be noted that normally these works are carried out by Liberty Gas as part of their contract, but these were picked up by Ian Williams during the period of the first Covid lockdown and thus are a chargeable item. This element of work is now back with Liberty Gas with no charge to the IAMC Contract being incurred.
- Covid de-contamination costs amount to £11,924 and are an added cost bought about by the Co-Vid virus and deemed necessary by the partnership.

Such specialist cleaning/de-contamination is required under the Government imposed Covid H & S working practices, as restrictions are lifted such costs are reducing and eventually will no longer be applied.

- Re-Decoration works amount to £16304. Generally re-dec works in this contract are carried out in sheltered units but not in general needs units except where authorised by EDDC. The value of the re-dec works though appears to be the reverse, in that £14899 worth of re-dec works has been carried out in general needs properties and only £1404 in sheltered properties. EDDC need to be clear in their interpretation of the void specification in relation to re-decs, and it is suggested that any re-dec works recommended are agreed/signed off by the Contract Manager. It is apparent that at certain times the team have been pressured into carrying out re-dec works to make the property more attractive to re-let.

EDDC's Contracts Manager is now reviewing the Specification for all General Needs properties where re-dec is being recommended, it transpires that in the majority of cases such work is not required and the PPV should be applied with no additional cost being incurred.

- Garden Clearance amounts to £13985 of works. Around 40% of this cost is arguably down to the resident in that they have not maintained the property in line with the rent agreement. EDDC are advised to review this as part of their re-charge policy and as part of the termination process.

We have now implemented the re-charge process to recover such costs, in addition our colleagues in Housing Services need to be reviewing and addressing the issue of poorly maintained gardens.

- Tenant damage is an obvious area of concern as 11% (£33,643) of the review value can be attributed to damage or miss-use of the property by the outgoing resident/s. Again EDDC are advised to review their re-charge process, and a thorough review of the termination process to ensure residents are aware of their requirement to maintain the property to an expected standard when they terminate their contract. It is apparent that currently there is minimal re-course to the outgoing resident/s at a significant cost to EDDC.

We have now implemented the re-charge process to recover such costs.

- Exclusions that may be considered as Inclusions amount to £13,004 in this review. It is difficult to assess exactly as supporting notes from EDDC's side (Open Housing) are generally not available. Generally though the figure for year 1 of a contract is low and would suggest that overall there is a good understanding of the specifications.

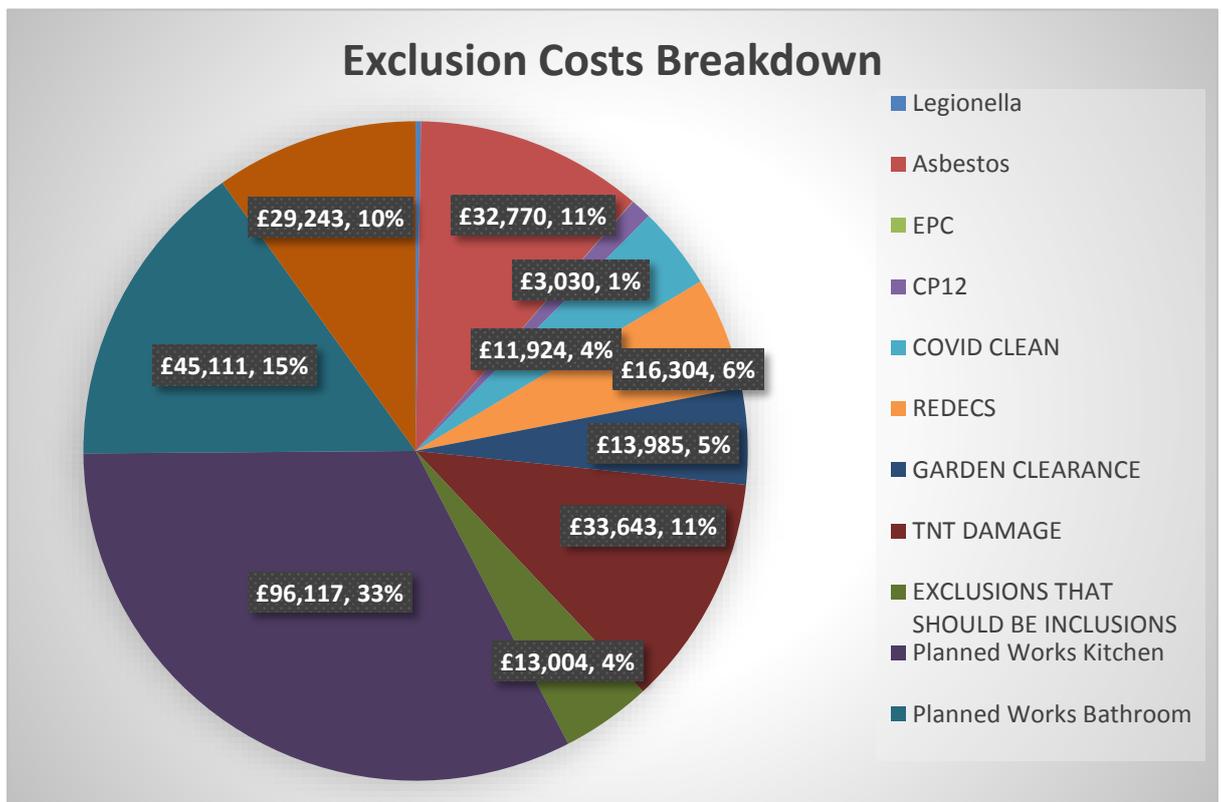
As the Contract evolves the understanding of inclusions/exclusions has improved/continues to improve and the amount of exclusions is reducing.

- Planned works make up a significant amount of the exclusions value totalling around 48% of the cost. The nature of these works are high value as they are full replacement works. In total 27 (18%) of the 150 works orders had a kitchen replacement and 16 (11%) had a bathroom replacement. These figures are slightly higher than what would generally be expected and this may be a reflection of the age of the stock or a slight under-investment on the planned programmes overall.

The necessity to carry out replacement Kitchens/Bathrooms is in many cases a result of Tenant damage whilst some such components are nearing the end of their life, however a much tighter inspection process has been initiated as the Contract has evolved with the focus being more on repair rather than replacement.

- The remaining part of the exclusions work is those exclusions deemed to be genuine in that they are not captured in the PPV specification. These amount to £29,243 and will be picked up as potential additions to the PPV specification later in this report.

A breakdown of the exclusion type was carried out and the results are as per chart below. With an explanation of each line below the chart.



10. In light of the above findings and as well as the measures already implemented the Component list on which the PPV cost is based was also reviewed with the

aim of including those works that regularly appear as exclusions to become inclusions; the main areas of focus related to:

- Asbestos work (removal and drilling)
- Fire door inspections and repair
- Clarification of Fire Alarm requirements (LD2 standard to BS 5839) as a result on change in Statutory Regulation
- Clarification of the Carbon Monoxide alarm provision.

The inclusion of the above within the PPV will minimise the confusion surrounding such issues and significantly reduce the number and costs of the exclusions, in some cases the costs for such exclusion work often exceeds £1,000.00 particularly for asbestos and fire related work, therefore the increase in the PPV price of £456.56 highlights the potential cost benefit that will be achieved.

11. With the amendments of the Component list agreed Ian Williams re-priced the PPV the outcome of which resulted in an increase in the PPV cost of £456.56 including the 1.8% CPI uplift.

11.1 The revised PPV cost is **£2,876.56**

## 12. Conclusion:

12.1 All the above operational changes namely the Void Types/Period, the PPV Component list and the PPV Price followed the Governance process set out in the Servicing Term Briefs, specifically the Price per Void (PPV) all of which form the IAMC Contract, these were formally ratified/signed off by the Core Group at their Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

12.2 A Document Amendment Form was duly prepared for signing by both parties to enable the changes to be implemented.



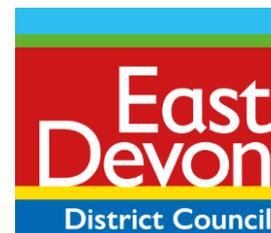
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**Financial implications:**

The financial implications are contained within the body of the report.

**Legal implications:**

“It is key that the provisions of the Council’s constitution are followed in respect of any amendment to a contract. If there is an additional spend required over and above that which is budgeted then this will need to be a recommendation to Council via Cabinet”.



# Complaint and Compliment Report

Property & Asset – Ian Williams

**Contact details**

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To request this information in an alternative format or language please phone 01395 516551 or email [csc@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:csc@eastdevon.gov.uk)

**Contents**

Introduction and Timescale	4/5
Key Headlines	6
Complaint Statistics	7/8
Compliment Statistics	9/10
Lessons Learnt	11/13

## Introduction and Timetable

East Devon District Council is committed to being an organisation that listens to customers and work closely with our Main Contractor, Ian Williams, to provide a quick responsive solution. Therefore, both customer feedback and the way that the Property & Asset respond to this feedback, whether negative or positive, are vital indicators of the overall performance of the Ian Williams contract, impacting KPI's.

Property & Asset aim to maintain a high level of performance and improve the quality of service offered to customers, who fee that they have not received a high standard. This includes providing timely responses to complaints whilst continuing to learn and improved.

Property & Asset strive to ensure we respond to customer concerns in an open and transparent way within defined timescales that has been agreed with both ourselves and Ian Williams. The purpose of this report is to outline the complaints and compliments that our Housing and Customer Business Improvement Manager has received 1st July 2019 – 31st December 2020, highlighting key themes and trends. Our report also explains how Property & Asset working hand in hand with Ian Williams have performed and includes case studies demonstrating how we have learnt from complaints received. This is the most important aspect of the complaints process.

It should also be noted that the format and overall presentation of the report is based over a year and a half of the contract, moving forward these reports will be produced on a quarterly basis to be presented at the Core group meetings, alongside our Monthly PDF reviews.

Whilst customer feedback provides a valuable insight into how Ian Williams are and have been performing, complaints and compliments figures do not reflect the full picture. This report should therefore, be understood within the context of the number of customers interacting with our repairs service, averaging all repairs to 4200+ properties.

Furthermore, building on the key developments and lessons learnt in 2019/2020, priority areas of focus for 2021 will include:

- Increasing the number of compliments recorded. Our Housing and Business Customer Improvement Manager will promote the procedure for reporting compliments via our social media platforms and website to ensure that tenants are having an opportunity to relay positive feedback.
- Addressing current and upcoming issues, using complaints as direct customer feedback to make immediate service improvements, working alongside Ian Williams CLO, Business Manager and our Contract Manager.
- Reviewing the way that the Property & Asset highlight and considers learning from complaints to ensure that each complaint enquiry is fully considered and used to positively grow our service and improve customer relationships.

## Key Headlines

**32** (AV 1.7 PM)  
Formal Complaints Received.  
Managed via Corporate complaints  
alongside Sophie

**106** (AV 5.88PM)  
Informal Complaints Received.  
Managed by Sophie

**24**  
Compliments received

**12**  
Direct Councillor Involvement

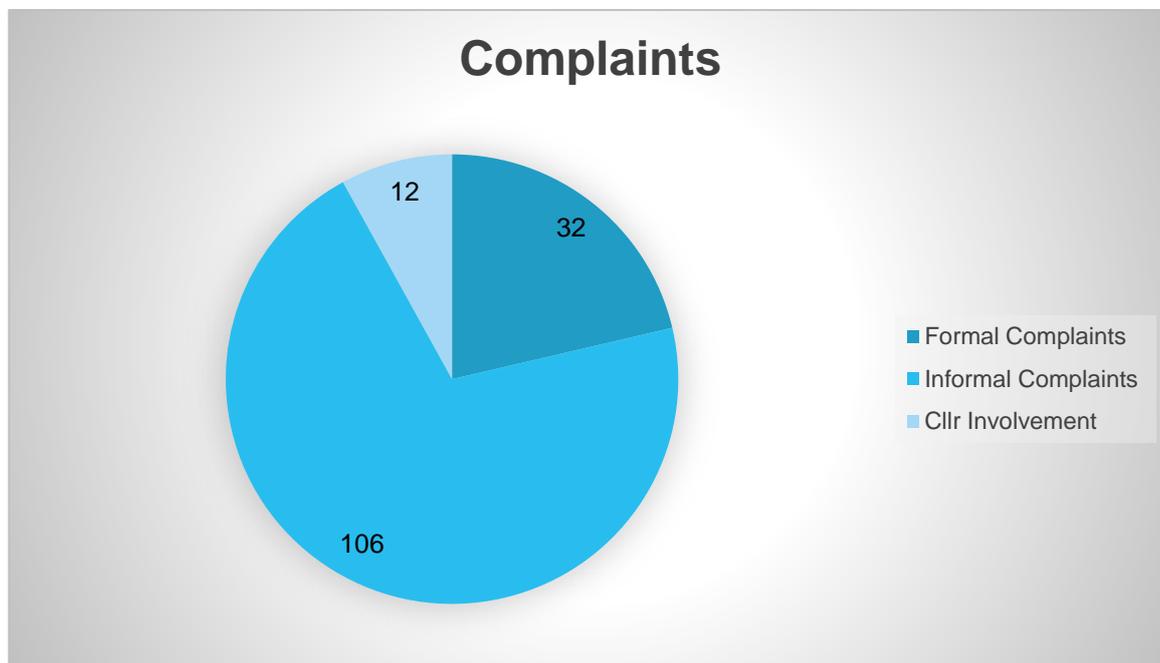
**87%**  
Informal Complains responded to  
within 3 days.

Top trend of reactive complaint  
received was in relation to  
communication

**18**  
Complaints needing assistance from  
Estate Management

Top trend of void complaint received  
is in relation to managing tenants  
expectations

## Complaint Statistics



### Formal Complaint Process and Statistics

Our Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager works closely alongside East Devon District Council's formal complaints team managing the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible. Sophie will collate all the information required, discuss the complaint with Ian Williams and agree on a resolution and action plan, this is then fed back to the complaints team alongside a timeline.

Between July 2019 and December 2020;

- 32 Complaints received
- 28 in relation to Reactive Repairs
- 4 in relation to the Void

The top 3 trends of complaint;

- Mould and Damp issues
- Heating issues

- Lack of communication / cancelled appointments / no shows

### Informal Complaint Process and Statistics

Our Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager will receive complaints directly from tenants. We aim to acknowledge within 2 days and respond with an action plan within 8 days.

Sophie will liaise directly with Ian Williams via weekly and monthly meetings, as well as daily interaction to resolve the issue and ensure that the matter is dealt with promptly.

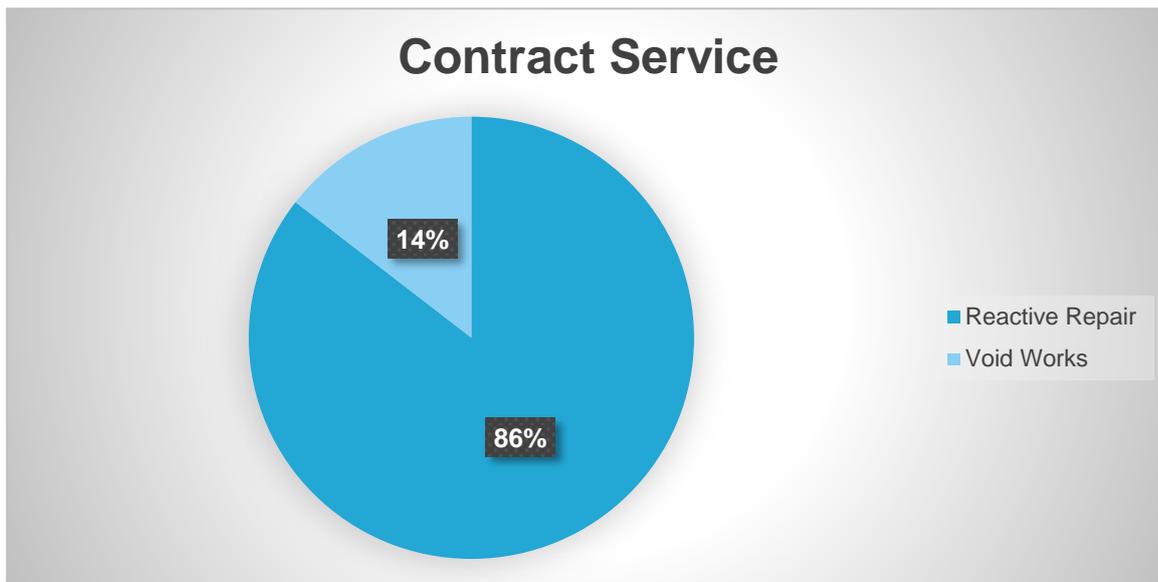
Understanding the complaint and the history may involve further discussions with our Contract Manager and our Surveying team.

Between July 2019 and December 2020;

- 106 Complaints received
- 88 in relation to Reactive Repairs
- 18 in relation to the Void

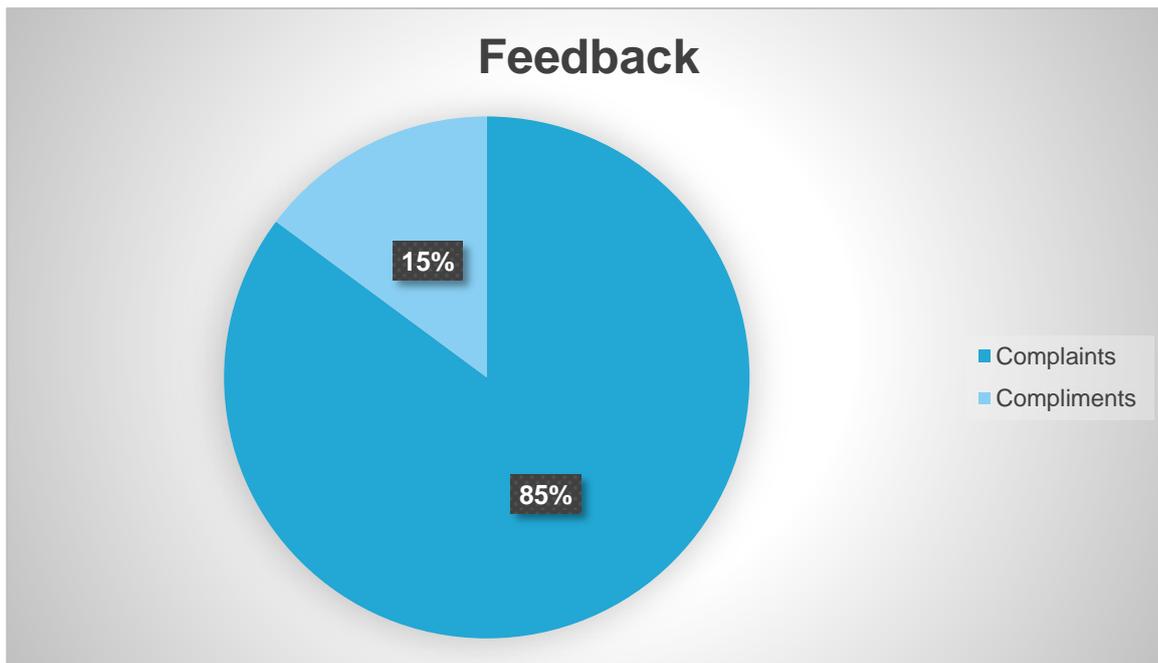
The top 3 trends of complaint;

- Lack of communication
- Cancelled appointments / No shows
- Repair timescales



### Compliments Statistics

Our Housing and Business Improvement Manager is currently working on ways to better and clear our communication channels for tenants to be able to relay positive feedback as well as negative. Although it is easy to focus on the negatives and the complaints; it is as equally important to focus on the compliments received and trend report these too, by doing this, we can ensure that both East Devon District Council and Ian Williams are continuing to keep a high level of service.



Compliments received from July 2019 – December 2020

- 24 Compliments

The top 3 trends of compliment;

- Operatives work
- Operatives Manners
- Timescales

Although one of our top trends in the complaints is down to repair timeframes, this also sits under the compliment section too. This highlights that we need consistency with our reactive repair timeframes, we need to ensure that any larger jobs are dealt with as a project and the tenant is informed throughout the whole process.

## Lessons Learnt

Improving the way that complaints are dealt with requires a whole 'one team' approach, with Property & Asset alongside Ian Williams prioritising complaints and making improvements based on the feedback from customers. Therefore, it is the responsibility of our Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager to make responding to complaints and learning from customer feedback a priority, whilst continuing to highlight complaints and issues daily, weekly and monthly.

A number of reactive repair service improvements have been made over the year based on feedback from our customers.

Key themes of service improvements have included the training of internal staff to fully understand the requirements of the contract and the revision of communication materials, from our first point of contact, repair advisors, through to the Ian Williams scheduling hub.

Further work will be undertaken in 2021 to continue to improve the approach to dealing with complaints.

Examples of the most common complaint received against Ian Williams are as follows:

- Number 1 – Lack of Communication

*We have now introduced the Repair Advisors managing issues with the communication with the Hub at Ian Williams on a bi – weekly basis, escalating any issues to the Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager who holds a senior meeting monthly.*

*Our surveyors now have a dedicated 'Duty Surveyor' role, to pick up any enquiries immediately from on site with our operatives as well as technical issues that have arisen from the Repair Advisors.*

- Number 2 - Repair timescale

*Ian Williams have increased their operative numbers on both the reactive side and the void side, this helps create slots for repairs to be scheduled in a timely*

*manner. This has resulted in our Repair Advisors being able to book more appointments at the first point of contact with the tenant.*

- Number 3 – Ian Williams missed appointments / no attendance

*This has been escalated to the Business Manager at Ian Williams, this has reduced significantly. We now have weekly calls with the Contracts Manager at Ian Williams to ensure appointments are kept and that any overdue appointments are attended to and discussed*

- Number 4 – Operatives attitude

*The Contracts Manager hold Bi – Weekly toolbox talks with the reactive teams to ensure that treating our tenants with respect is a priority. Any complaints of this nature is discussed individually with the Operative in question and investigated.*

### Next Steps

Further steps will be taken in 2021 to ensure that the approach that Property & Asset take to dealing with complaints and responding to customer feedback continues to improve.

Our key actions will include:

- Continuing with monthly PDF reports highlighting 'Lessons learnt' and collating these into a quarterly report for Core Group to discuss.
- Comprehensive relook of all complaint guidance, including the policy, guide to officers, the internet pages and the intranet.
- Review of all customer interaction across Ian Williams, including a visit to the Hub to ensure all targets, requirements and policies are fully understood.
- Ensure that the annual complaints report/updates on complaints data are shared with the Housing Service Lead and the Housing Strategic Lead and that consideration of complaints is included in the Housing Review Board.

- Developing the 'customer interaction' training for internal officers and Ian Williams operatives. This will include the development of a simple e-learning training course for front line staff to allow them to understand the role and purpose of customer expectations and satisfaction.
- Focus more on the lessons learned from upheld complaints and how these can be addressed effectively.
- Work to improve performance within statutory timescales (within set days as highlighted above).
- Commence and continue the Repairs Tenant Group, ensuring this is held regularly

Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## Request for 2 Grounds Maintenance Seasonal Staff for the 2021 season

### Report summary:

The budget for grounds maintenance seasonal staff was removed last year - £71k – impacting on the delivery of Grounds Maintenance throughout the district including the maintenance on our Housing sites (Individual Garden Maintenance and Communal Areas).

StreetScene have started to undertake a review of the Housing Contract and rough calculations indicate we are about £250k below market value.

Whilst we are not seeking to bridge this gap to the full extent, we do know that we need additional resource to service the Housing Contract and this request is an interim one until the full review is completed in the coming months.

If the HRB support this request, then StreetScene will be able to continue to provide a service on the current terms minimising complaints from Housing residents whilst the review of the contract is completed.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

**Acknowledging that StreetScene are undertaking a larger review of the Housing Contract, the request would be for the Housing Review Board to approve, recommend to cabinet and then on to council for resolution, the interim funding of 2 Grounds Maintenance Seasonal staff at a cost of c£30k to help see us through this coming season**

### Reason for recommendation:

The Housing Contract equates to 25% of the overall work that StreetScene carries out across the district. Any reduction in seasonal staff will impact the whole district including Housing sites and recognising that StreetScene is in the middle of a contract review, an interim increase in funding will go a long way to ensure that StreetScene can still fulfil the Housing Contract for 2021.

Despite budgetary savings there is still an expectation from Housing residents that the service they will get will remain the same – if StreetScene keep this the same and the reduction in service solely comes from the general classification areas (public gardens and open spaces) this will create an imbalance of service across the district.

Officer: Nick Christo, StreetScene Operations Manager;

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Medium Risk; Without the additional resource to service the housing sites, we run the risk of

**Links to background information**

**n Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## Report in full

1. The budget for the grounds maintenance seasonals has been removed - £71k. This presents us with challenges and although our rewilding and nature recovery will help with bridging the gap, the reality is that the impact this year will be very minimal if at all. The main issue is focused around the work we do in Exmouth (where 90% of the seasonals are placed) and the Housing Contract that StreetScene deliver.
2. We have started to undertake a review of the Housing Contract to ensure that the teams are staffed accordingly as rough calculations indicate we are about £250k below market value – we are not looking to recover true market value when reviewing our internal contracts and all pricing will be looked at with EDDCs best interest in mind, as it is right that StreetScene deliver these contracts where possible.
3. Under the current contract which was drawn up over fifteen years ago, StreetScene are subsidising the works that Housing residents pay and this will be exacerbated with the removal of the Grounds Maintenance Seasonals – staff who bolster the team during the cutting season enabling the teams to provide a good reliable service.
4. There does need to be awareness though that by removing the grounds seasonals from StreetScene there is still an expectation for us to deliver on the Housing Contract ‘as is’ as well as all the other general classification grass cutting areas across the district and the risk is without intervention, we will have an imbalance on the standard of service both areas receive.

5. With regards to Housing sites, we are unable to re-wild back gardens meaning we need to maintain the frequency on less resource. The Housing Contract equates to 25% of the overall work that StreetScene carries out yet we are not going to see a reduction against this for the reasons set out above. At the end of this document I have included the breakdown of StreetScene cutting by area as well as percentage against housing work and you will see that Exmouth equates to 41% of the total cutting that takes place across the district hence the seasonal staff working out of this team.
6. The current cycle of cutting is 3-4 weeks. If we are to enter the season as we are in Exmouth then we are looking at 5 -6 week cycle across all sites which is just untenable in terms of managing the grass sites, managing public expectations, managing complaints and staff morale. There is no slack across StreetScene to move staff around without impact and although we are committed to re-looking at the teams, the 'suffering' will take place across the district with each area having an impact to try to maintain a balance within the teams.
7. We knew that this would cause operational issues and stressed from the outset the impact it would have on the service, the impact in communities of longer cutting frequencies and the need to purchase additional equipment to cope with longer grass, however the budget was still put forward for removal.
8. As we carry out detailed work which ordinarily would've been done sooner had we not been in Covid recovery mode (the teams have also been operating throughout the winter with a 20% reduction in staff during periods of self-isolation) and needing to adapt our processes to ensure the front line teams are safe, this paper is now being brought forward to raise awareness of the real impact the full reduction of seasonal staff would bring to EDDC.
9. Acknowledging that we are undertaking a larger review of the Housing Contract, my request would be for Housing to interim fund 2 seasonal staff at a cost of c£30k to help see us through this coming season where people will be expecting and valuing the outdoor green space due to the situation the world is in – (£532.03 per seasonal per week for 29 weeks). This will still return a saving of c£41k however it will allow us to try to maintain service as normal for this year whilst we readjust, purchase other bits of kit and work up revised schedules to try to sustain the level of service for 2022. This funding will need to be subject to approval by the Housing Review Board.
10. StreetScene will also undertake a review of its placement of operational staff in order to try to level the impact across the whole district – so that not 1 single area suffers more than others. This will undoubtedly cause disruption to all rounds in every areas as the teams are operating on the line, and the public impact of StreetScene not maintaining minimal standards during the early days of the pandemic generated a significant public response.
11. If the Housing Review Board are able to consider the need to 'interim fund £30k to have 2 grounds seasonals for this year then I believe we can just about manage and will give us time to fully complete the Housing contract review, consider what future years could look like by undertaking a full review of StreetScene service including purchasing different equipment, reorganising teams where possible and ensuring we are compensated accordingly for the contract work StreetScene carries out for all partners. For info, below is a breakdown of our main team areas and the grass cutting rounds they have.

**Total Grass cut in the District - 1,424,896 m2**

**Total StreetScene managed grass cutting (general grass cutting) - 1,067,764m2:**

Budleigh - 100,541 m2

Exmouth - 457,441 m2

Sidmouth - 199,053 m2

Honiton & Ottery - 228,346 m2

Seaton & Axminster - 82,383 m2

**Total Grass cutting m2 and percentage of cutting in area associated with the Housing Contract- 357,132 m2 - 23% of total grass cutting in the district**

Budleigh - 61,417m2 - 38%

Exmouth -120,706m2 - 20%

Sidmouth - 45,049m2 - 23%

Honiton & Ottery - 82,210m2 - 26%

Seaton & Axminster - 47,750m2 - 37%

**Total breakdown percentage per area of Grass cutting that StreetScene manage including Housing Sites:**

Budleigh - 11%

Exmouth - 41%

Sidmouth - 17%

Honiton & Ottery - 22%

Seaton & Axminster - 9%

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**Financial implications:**

As this is a request for £30k of additional budget the recommendation will need to ultimately be resolved by council.

**Legal implications:**

The legal implications are contained within the report.

Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 29/04/2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## Housing Revenue Account & Housing Capital Finance Report

### Report summary:

The report provides the Housing Review Board with current draft financial outturn figures for the housing revenue account and housing capital program for the 2020/21 financial year. The report will also consider the implications of any forthcoming regulatory changes.

Producing a Housing Revenue Account has been a statutory requirement for Councils who manage and own their housing stock for some time, and therefore a key document for the Board to influence

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That the Housing Revenue Account & Housing Capital Finance Report is approved and recommended to cabinet.

### Reason for recommendation:

To give the Housing Review Board an opportunity to contribute towards the review and planning of all landlord service related finances.

Officer: Rob Ward, [rward@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:rward@eastdevon.gov.uk), 01404 515616 ext 2357

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** High Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; Risks have been considered in preparing the budgets and the financial implications have been assessed at the point of preparation. Various budget assumptions have been made including the treatment of inflation and interest rates; estimates on the level and timing of capital receipts; the treatment of demand led pressures; the treatment of planned efficiency savings/productivity gains; levels of income; financial risks inherent in any new arrangements; capital developments; the availability of funds to deal with major contingencies and the need for any provisions.

**Links to background information** [East Devon Financial Information 2020/21](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
  - Outstanding Homes and Communities
  - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
  - Outstanding Council and Council Services
- 

## Report in full

### 1 Regulatory Changes: Right to Buy

- 1.1 In response to a public consultation MHCLG are reforming both the regulations and agreements with councils which propose to improve the flexibility in how and when receipts can be used.
- 1.2 The benefits of these changes which take effect in the next financial year are;
  - Required Spending Timeframe to increase from 3 years to 5 years on all current and future receipts.
  - Funding Cap on Receipts to increase from 30% to 40%.
  - Reporting timeframe changed from quarterly to annually.
- 1.3 The one potential future issue for East Devon within the reforms is that there will be a phased reduction placed upon the proportion of acquisitions made within a year from the 22/23 financial year. The aim of this reform is to ensure councils are developing as opposed to acquiring properties which MHCLG deems to be better value for money. The limits imposed will be the following (East Devon's current supply is 100% acquisition);
  - From 22/23 – Max 50% of supply to be acquisitions
  - From 23/24 – Max 40% of supply to be acquisitions
  - From 24/25 onwards – Max 30% of supply to be acquisitions.
- 1.4 The return for Q4 20/21 has been completed and as the required capital expenditure has been held at the Q4 19/20 level which I assume is to roll out the 3 to 5 year change, this means we are no longer required to pay the £915k of unspent receipts previously advised to the board.

### 2 Housing Revenue Account – draft position before accruals and reserves

- 2.1 **Draft Surplus £3.2m (£2.3m increase v budget)**

The current draft surplus on the HRA is £3.2m against a budget of £0.93m before year end accruals and reserves are applied. This figure shows the large levels of underspend in repairs and maintenance due to the pandemic versus the less material impact upon income levels.
- 2.2 **Income £17.8m (£0.7m less than budget)**

Although dwelling income levels have remained consistent during the pandemic, there are two factors of note which have contributed to the overall reduction;

- Garage rents (£0.22m v a budget of £0.42 which equates to £0.20m less income)
- Lost rent due to voids (£0.54m v a budget of £0.36m which equates to £0.17m less income).

The remaining £0.34m reduction equates to an approximate 98% recovery rate.

### **2.3 Expenditure £13m (£2.2m less than budget)**

Programmed maintenance and major repairs have seen large underspends due the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. These underspends will be reviewed with the service lead and property and asset manager in the coming weeks to accrue and reserve amounts for catch up works in the 21/22 financial year.

### **2.4 Financing £0.74m less than budget**

The majority of financing charges are still being finalised as part of the year end process, however, due to the reduced levels of spend in the capital program the £0.8k capital contribution budgeted for will no longer be required. The capital receipts available received within the year which are able to fund the capital program are significantly more than the reduced spend levels caused by the pandemic.

## **3 Housing Capital: Affordable Housing**

- 3.1 As mentioned in Section 1, the rules governing RTB have been reformed and therefore the spend requirement for the year of £5.9m appears to be no longer an issue. The total spend on affordable housing in the year, solely on acquisitions, was £3.2m.
- 3.2 As the RTB receipts repayment schedule now extends to 5 years the council is in effect £3.2m ahead of the amount we need to have spent by the end of the next financial year. The imposed acquisition limits from the 22/23 financial year onwards requires future focus to be on development opportunities to prevent payback of receipts.

## **4 Housing Capital – Housing Capital Programme**

- 4.1 The general housing capital program has seen expenditure in the year of £0.3m versus a revised budget of £1.1m. The available capital receipts to fund this program within the year are £0.53m which means a capital contribution from the revenue account is not required.
- 4.2 The expenditure on Fire Risk Assessment related capital works within the year was £1.2m. This expenditure will be solely funded from the FRA Works & Lift replacement reserve created in 2018 and increased in 2019 to £3m. This will leave a reserve balance of £1.8m.

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### **Financial implications:**

Contained within the body of the report.

### **Legal implications:**

No legal observations are required. “Ultimately the approval of any new budgets rests with full Council.

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

### **Complaints and Feedback Report – Property & Asset**

Property & Asset are committed to providing a high-quality repair, maintenance and void service. We welcome both positive and negative feedback and view each as an opportunity to learn and improve our quality of service, provided by both East Devon District Council and by our Contractors.

Property & Asset recognise that being a reactive service working on and within people's homes there will always be occasions when we get things wrong or residents are unhappy about aspects of our service and the service we provide.

The Property & Asset complaint policy and report applies to all staff members, contractors and sub-contractors employed by or acting on behalf of East Devon District Council, carrying out work or instructing work to our properties.

#### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget                      Yes  No

Policy Framework      Yes  No

#### **Recommendation:**

- (1) That Housing Review Board recognise our process, policy and plan in the management of all feedback whether negative or positive in regards to the service provided within Property & Asset

#### **Reason for recommendation:**

To update all relevant parties, Officers and Councillors to the management of Complaints and Satisfaction within the department

Officer: Sophie Davies – Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

## Climate change Low Impact

**Risk:** Choose a risk level; Low risk

**Links to background information** Appendices: (1) Annual Report for Property & Asset Complaints 2020 (2) Ian Williams Compliment and Complaint Report (3) Complaints Policy

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
  - Outstanding Homes and Communities
  - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
  - Outstanding Council and Council Services
- 

## 1 Report in full

- 1.1 Whilst customer feedback provides a valuable insight into how both East Devon District Council alongside our contractors have been performing, complaints and compliments figures do not reflect the full picture. This report should therefore, be understood within the context of the number of customers interacting with our repairs service, averaging all repairs to 4200+ properties.
- 1.2 Within Property & Asset, as a service we want to make sure that:
- We listen to people's views and experiences of our services and act accordingly.
  - We learn from every complaint made and use them to improve our services and ways of working.
  - We ensure that there are always simple and effective ways for people to make a complaint.
  - We manage and discuss complaints fairly and consistently.
  - All residents who report a complaint receive a full response within the agreed timescales from East Devon District Council and, if required, the contractor involved (unless there is a valid reason as to why this is not possible or the complaint requires further investigation).

## 2 Complaint Type

- 2.1 *Informal complaint:* An expression of dissatisfaction made by the resident, directly to our Business and Customer Improvement Manager, which may be resolved by offering a solution or explaining the reason behind the dissatisfaction. An example would be a resident who telephones to report that a contractor has failed to meet a dedicated appointment slot and we can liaise with the contractor to arrange an alternative appointment at a time convenient to the resident. The close monitoring of informal complaints help Property & Asset, as well as our contractors, understand issues that could escalate if not dealt with appropriately at an early stage.
- 2.2 *Formal complaint:* An expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to be resolved informally. Formal complaints require investigation and a full response to be issued, managed by our Housing and Customer Improvement Manager
- 2.3 *Stage 1 and 2 Formal Complaint:* Complaint managed as above and a coordinated response and action plan provided to our corporate complaint team to provide the response.
- 2.4 *Compliment:* An expression of gratitude for the service, repair or operative provided on instruction from Property & Asset.

### 3 Response Times

3.1 In line with the Housing White Paper, we aim to acknowledge, respond and action all complaints, questions, comments and queries within the appropriate timescale/s.

We aim to:

- Acknowledge complaints within 5 working days

Advise residents that we have received their complaint and this will require further investigation

- Acknowledge Councillor queries in 5 working days

Advise Councillor that we have received the query and this is being investigated

- Investigate, comment and action complaints and queries with a full response inclusive of closure within 10-15 working days

3.2 Whilst we highlight the above timeframes, this is not always possible. We aim to keep the resident fully updated throughout the process.

3.3 Most complaints require further work plans and programmes, we aim to provide these within the context of our action plans.

3.4 If further works are required and to ensure works are completed to a high standard, our Business and Customer Improvement Manager will post inspect all of the works carried out, subject to the complaint, to ensure this matches our resident's requirements and all parties are satisfied.

### 4 Learning from our complaints

4.1 Every resident's opinion is really important to us and vital for us to learn and grow as a service. We learn from complaints and use them to improve our services across the team, both within East Devon District Council and our Contractors. Our Business and Customer Improvement Manager records all compliments, complaints and comments made.

4.2 With this information, we discuss each complaint and compliment in detail with the relevant teams in Property & Asset on a monthly basis. Not only do we discuss this with our teams, we ensure that we report and action lessons learnt in the following contractual meetings:

- Weekly discussions between both Management teams in the council and contractors
- Operational Group with Ian Williams (Monthly)
- Core Group, senior members meeting (Monthly)

4.3 We provide information about complaints to senior managers across the council. We also track the learning and changes made as a result of complaints in our reviews.

4.4 An annual report is created at the end of each calendar year summarising compliments and complaints received throughout the year. **Annexe 1**

4.5 The report identifies trends of complaints that we receive and highlight's any action taken as a result of feedback given. The annual report also covers 'Lessons Learnt' at the end of each report, actions are highlighted to help improve the service, working closely with our contractors to achieve this.

### 5 KPI (Key Performance Indicators) within the IMAC Contract

5.1 Within our monthly Operational Group with Ian Williams, we discuss the KPI report. Within the KPI report is a section on complaints and satisfaction; this is measured against a target score that we closely monitor MLAP (Minimum Level of Acceptable Performance).

5.2 The six KPIS which are in direct relation to customer service; i.e. complaints, service and satisfaction are as follows (examples extracted for February 2021):

<b>KPI 3</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
TARGET	0.5%
MLAP	2%
<b>Performance 0.2%</b>	

EDDC figure used – 2 complaints in direct relation to Ian Williams (work, service, performance, and attitude) against 1097 jobs raised for February 2021; in comparison to 8 complaints received in January.

<b>KPI 4</b>	<b>Complaints escalation to Stage 1</b>
TARGET	5%
MLAP	10%
<b>Performance 50%</b>	

EDDC figure used – 1 Stage 1 complaint, out of 2 complaints for the month which is why it shows at 50%; no complaints were escalated for January.

<b>KPI R1</b>	<b>Customer satisfaction – Repairs</b>
TARGET	95%
MLAP	90%
<b>Performance 98%</b>	

The KPI for February has been scored using EDDC’s & IWS data combined.

Breaking the data down;

- EDDC completed 74 satisfaction surveys, 65 happy with work and 9 were not – 88%
- IWS Issued 684 issued with 684 satisfied - 100%

<b>KPI R4</b>	<b>Post Inspection Quality</b>
TARGET	100%
MLAP	90%
<b>Performance 70%</b>	

EDDC data used; February EDDC completed 49 Post Inspections; these are automatically generated and we passed 34 as satisfied.

Typical reasons for Ian Williams failing Post Inspections being;

- Contractor told tenants job couldn’t be completed due to missing a part but hasn’t returned.
- Didn’t turn up to do work on the slotted appointment.
- Temporary repair completed, hasn’t returned to complete the job.

This is a drop of 10% on January’s figures which was disappointing to see.

<b>KPI R6</b>	<b>Average Repair Completion Time</b>
TARGET	8
MLAP	12

For February the average repair completion time has dropped by 1 day since January. Ideally, we still need to bring this number down to the national average of 10 days as per House mark, but it is pleasing we are moving in the right direction.

KPI V1	Post Inspection Quality (Void)
TARGET	100%
MLAP	95%
<b>Performance</b>	<b>100%</b>

EDDC data used; for February there were 18 post inspections completed and all 18 passed. This is an improvement of 5% on the figures for January.

- 5.3 Within our satisfaction survey, both paper and telephone versions, we have a 'call back from management' option, where tenants have the option to request that management call back directly, our recent report highlighted that a ratio of 1/24 residents wanted to discuss their service further.
- 5.4 With all telephone surveys where the residents are reporting bad service or workmanship, we will discuss this further with both the resident and provide the data to our contractor to also discuss this further with their Customer Liaison Officer and Operative who carried out the work.

## 6 'In House' complaints

- 6.1 Complaints made by residents about the direct service of the Property & Asset team are managed and discussed monthly via team meetings.

We discuss:

- Nature of Complaints
- Service within Property & Asset
- Complaint Resolution
- Lessons learnt

**Annexe 1** Annual Report for Property & Asset Complaints 2020' highlights the complaints received, nature of the complaints and in relation to which area of the service.

- 6.2 During the last 3 months, the highest context of complaints have been as follows:

- Mould and Damp within the property
- Lack of communication from our contractor's when follow on works are required
- Heating issues within the property

## 7. How do we receive complaints, compliments or feedback?

- Email: [repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk) [sdavies@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:sdavies@eastdevon.gov.uk)
- Via telephone – 01395 517458
- Letter to our postal services within Blackdown House
- Feedback form handed out by our contractors post repair
- PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) via contractor

## **8 How often reports are created and distributed**

- Operational Complaint Reports – Monthly
- Contractors Complaint and Compliment Report – Quarterly
- Property & Asset Annual Report – Annual (Calendar Year)

## **9. Conclusion**

9.1 In conclusion, please see below; our 2020 Annual Property & Asset complaint report and plan.

## EDDC: Property & Asset service – Annual Complaint Overview

<b>Project Start Date:</b> January 2020 <b>Project Completion Date:</b> December 2020	<b>Portfolio holder:</b> Cllr Megan Armstrong <b>Service Head:</b> Amy Gilbert-Jeans / Jo Garfoot <b>Officer lead with Complaints:</b> Sophie Davies
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### Background:

Property & Asset aim to maintain a high level of performance and improve the quality of service offered to customers, who feel that they have not received a high standard. This includes providing timely responses to complaints whilst continuing to learn and improve.

Property & Asset strive to ensure we respond to customer concerns in an open and transparent way within defined timescales that has been agreed with both ourselves and our contractors. The purpose of this report is to outline the complaints and compliments that our Housing and Customer Business Improvement Manager has received January 2020 – December 2020, highlighting key themes and trends.

### Complaint Objectives:

To ensure:

- Tenants feel supported and understand how they contact us to report a complaint if they are unhappy with our service
- All complaints are responded to within 2 – 15 days.
- Ensure we capture and communicate changes to lessons learnt throughout the service
- Ensure that our communications are always open, honest, clear, concise, simple and accessible to all.

page 75

Complaint Stats	
- Ian Williams January 2020 – December 2020	94 Complaints
- East Devon District Council Officers / Service January 2020 – December 2020	84 Complaints
- Planned Work Contractor Complaints January 2020 – December 2020	18 Complaints
- Liberty Gas Complaints January 2020 – December 2020	31 Complaints
- Social Media / Facebook Complaints	8 Complaints
- Airtech Complaints	3 Complaints
- Ace Complaints	2 Complaints

<p><b>Primary Audiences (in order of priority):</b></p> <p>Internal Staff</p> <p>Senior Members</p> <p>Housing Review Board Members</p>	
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**Links to priority: Meets all four council priorities**

- Lessons Learnt**
- Improvement required on all communication channels throughout Property & Asset with both contractors and residents
  - Toolbox talks manors, safeguarding and customer interaction improvement to be discussed
  - Identifying the operatives correct trades assigned to the job's
  - Further training was required for the Ian Williams contract for Surveyors and Repair Advisors
  - How to manage tenant expectations training to be progressed.
  -

Who else is involved / should have sign-off or sight of complaints?

- Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Sophie Davies, John Golding, Jo Garfoot, Graham Baker, Cllr Armstrong

Complaints channel	Activity	Timescale	Officer responsible
<p><b>Internal Communications on how we manage complaints in Property &amp; Asset</b></p> <p>i.e. Team brief, staff emails,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Team brief – all staff</li> <li>- Team Meetings</li> </ul>	Immediate affect	Sophie Davies: To send out communication to DL all staff
<p><b>External Communications</b></p> <p>i.e. Magazines, public meetings/events, Intranet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EDDC Social Media</li> <li>- Website Information</li> <li>- Housing Matters magazine ( housing tenants only)</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Sophie Davies to write
<p><b>Resident involvement on how we manage complaints</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents association meetings</li> <li>- Attendance at tenant Involvement Forum meetings</li> </ul>		Sophie Davies

<b>Media</b>	- See PR activities above		Sophie Davies and Alison Stoneman
<b>Social Media</b>	Twitter Facebook Instagram – graphics/photos – tbc. Information from relevant contractors / internal staff to be fed through, Possible joint media posts for increased coverage (key partners etc).	Ongoing	Sophie Davies with input from all of P&A
<b>Contractor Meetings</b>	Sophie to hold meetings with our contractors across Property & Asset to ensure Complaint and Compliment communication is acted upon as a priority.	Post Covid	Sophie Davies and Kerry Spittle

Key Risks:

- Increase of complaints as awareness of how to log them would increase
- Higher demand on immediate repairs required on service

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**Financial implications:**

The financial implications of complaints are not only those directly related to the complaints themselves but often more significantly of the employee and opportunity cost of the time taken in dealing with the complaints.

**Legal implications:**

It is believed that there are no comments of a legal nature arising from the contents of this report. However, should Housing Services become concerned at the level of KPI's linked to Ian Williams' performance under the Housing Contract, then early advice on the terms of the contract should be sought by Housing Services from Legal Services.

# EDDC: Property & Asset service – Annual Complaint Overview

<b>Project Start Date:</b> January 2020 <b>Project Completion Date:</b> December 2020	<b>Portfolio holder:</b> Cllr Megan Armstrong <b>Service Head:</b> Amy Gilbert-Jeans / Jo Garfoot <b>Officer lead with Complaints:</b> Sophie Davies	
<b>Background:</b> Property & Asset aim to maintain a high level of performance and improve the quality of service offered to customers, who fee that they have not received a high standard. This includes providing timely responses to complaints whilst continuing to learn and improved. Property & Asset strive to ensure we respond to customer concerns in an open and transparent way within defined timescales that has been agreed with both ourselves and our contractors. The purpose of this report is to outline the complaints and compliments that our Housing and Customer Business Improvement Manager has received January 2020 – December 2020, highlighting key themes and trends.		
<b>Complaint Objectives:</b> To ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tenants feel supported and understand how they contact us to report a complaint if they are unhappy with our service</li> <li>- All complaints are responded to within 2 – 8 days.</li> <li>- Ensure we capture and communicate changes to lessons learnt throughout the service</li> <li>- Ensure that our communications are always open, honest, clear, concise, simple and accessible to all.</li> </ul>		
<b>Complaint Stats</b>		
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<b>Primary Audiences (in order of priority):</b> Internal Staff Senior Members		

page 78

Housing Review Board Members			
<b>Links to priority: Meets all four council priorities</b>			
<b>Lessons Learnt</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement required on all communication channels throughout Property &amp; Asset with both contractors and residents</li> <li>Toolbox talks manors, safeguarding and customer interaction improvement to be discussed</li> <li>Identifying the operatives correct trades assigned to the job's</li> <li>Further training was required for the Ian Williams contract for Surveyors and Repair Advisors</li> <li>How to manage tenant expectations training to be progressed.</li> <li></li> </ul>			
<b>Who else is involved / should have sign-off or sight of complaints?</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Sophie Davies, John Golding, Jo Garfoot, Graham Baker, Cllr Armstrong</li> </ul>			
<b>Complaints channel</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>
<b>Internal Communications on how we manage complaints in Property &amp; Asset</b> i.e. Team brief, staff emails,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team brief – all staff</li> <li>Team Meetings</li> </ul>	Immediate affect	Sophie Davies: To send out communication to DL all staff
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<b>Resident involvement on how we manage complaints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents association meetings</li> <li>Attendance at tenant Involvement Forum meetings</li> </ul>		Sophie Davies
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See PR activities above</li> </ul>		Sophie Davies and Alison Stoneman
<b>Social Media</b>	Twitter Facebook Instagram – graphics/photos – tbc. Information from relevant contractors / internal staff to be fed through, Possible joint media posts for increased coverage (key partners etc).	Ongoing	Sophie Davies with input from all of P&A

<b>Contractor Meetings</b>	Sophie to hold meetings with our contractors across Property & Asset to ensure Complaint and Compliment communication is acted upon as a priority.	Post Covid	Sophie Davies and Contract Manager
<b>Key Risks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of complaints as awareness of how to log them would increase</li> <li>• Higher demand on immediate repairs required on service</li> </ul>			

## East Devon District Council

### Complaints Policy

Issue details	
Title:	Complaints Policy
Version number	Version 2.1
Officer responsible:	Sophie Davies
Authorisation by:	Graham Baker
Authorisation date:	April 2021

#### 1 Previous Policies/Strategies

Version 2.0

#### 2 Why has the council introduced this policy?

When responding to complaints the Property and Asset team follow the East Devon District Council corporate complaints policy.

This policy advises how we handle complaints within the Property & Asset service, whilst adhering to the governing standards and timeframes set by the Housing Ombudsman.

Within Property & Asset, as a service we want to make sure that:

- We listen to people's views and experiences of our services and act accordingly.
- We learn from every complaint made and use them to improve our services and ways of working.
- We ensure that there are always simple and effective ways for people to make a complaint.
- We manage and discuss complaints fairly and consistently.
- All residents who report a complaint receive a full response within the agreed timescales from East Devon District Council and, if required, the contractor involved (unless there is a valid reason as to why this is not possible or the complaint requires further investigation).

#### 3 What is the council's policy?

##### 3.1 Definitions

##### Complaint Type

*Informal complaint:* An expression of dissatisfaction made by the resident, directly to our Business and Customer Improvement Manager, which may be resolved by offering a solution or explaining the reason behind the dissatisfaction. An example would be a resident who telephones to report that a contractor has failed to meet a dedicated appointment slot and we can liaise with the contractor to arrange an alternative appointment at a time convenient to the resident. The close monitoring of informal complaints help Property & Asset, as well as our contractors, understand issues that could escalate if not dealt with appropriately at an early stage.

*Formal complaint:* An expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to be resolved informally. Formal complaints require investigation and a full response to be issued, managed by our Housing and Customer Improvement Manager

*Stage 1 and 2 Formal Complaint:* Complaint managed as above and a coordinated response and action plan provided to our corporate complaint team to provide the response.

*Compliment:* An expression of gratitude for the service, repair or operative provided on instruction from Property & Asset.

##### Response Times

In line with the Housing White Paper, we aim to acknowledge, respond and action all complaints, questions, comments and queries within the appropriate timescale/s.

We aim to:

- Acknowledge complaints within 5 working days

Advise residents that we have received their complaint and this will require further investigation

- Acknowledge Councillor queries in 5 working days

Advise Councillor that we have received the query and this is being investigated

- Investigate, comment and action complaints and queries with a full response inclusive of closure within 10-15 working days

Whilst we highlight the above timeframes, this is not always possible. We aim to keep the resident fully updated throughout the process.

Most complaints require further work plans and programmes, we aim to provide these within the context of our action plans.

If further works are required and to ensure works are completed to a high standard, our Business and Customer Improvement Manager will post inspect all of the works carried out, subject to the complaint, to ensure this matches our resident's requirements and all parties are satisfied.

### **What is not a complaint?**

We encourage all our staff to work with customers and to try to find a resolution to any expressions of dissatisfaction without the need to use the formal complaints process. In many cases we can resolve an issue very quickly – by putting the problem right straight away. We consider these types of cases as informal service issues.

An example might be where a team member has not yet contacted a resident, but once the team is made aware of this the tenant is contacted on the same day.

However, when a customer is unhappy about the way that a service issue or request was handled, this should be dealt with under the EDDC Complaints Procedure.

### **Unreasonable complaints**

A very small number of complaints may be unreasonable because of the way or frequency that complaints are raised with staff, or how complainants respond when they receive feedback about the complaint. These may include tenants who make frequent complaints which are not valid; who persistently make the same complaint; who request a complaint to be escalated when we have fully responded to all points; or are seeking an unreasonable or unrealistic outcome. In these circumstances we reserve the right to refuse to deal with the complaint.

### **Learning from our complaints**

Every resident's opinion is really important to us and vital for us to learn and grow as a service. We learn from complaints and use them to improve our services across the team, both within East Devon District Council and our Contractors. Our Business and Customer Improvement Manager records all compliments, complaints and comments made.

With this information, we discuss each complaint and compliment in detail with the relevant teams in Property & Asset on a monthly basis. Not only do we discuss this with our teams, we ensure that we report and action lessons learnt in the following contractual meetings:

- Weekly discussions between both Management teams in the council and contractors
- Operational Group with Ian Williams (Monthly)
- Core Group, senior members meeting (Monthly)

We provide information about complaints to senior managers across the council. We also track the learning and changes made as a result of complaints in our reviews.

An annual report is created at the end of each calendar year summarising compliments and complaints received throughout the year.

The report identifies trends of complaints that we receive and highlight's any action taken as a result of feedback given. The annual report also covers 'Lessons Learnt' at the end of each report, actions are highlighted to help improve the service, working closely with our contractors to achieve this.

## **KPI (Key Performance Indicators) within the IMAC Contract**

Within our monthly Operational Group with Ian Williams, we discuss the KPI report. Within the KPI report is a section on complaints and satisfaction; this is measured against a target score that we closely monitor MLAP (Minimum Level of Acceptable Performance).

## **'In House' complaints**

Complaints made by residents about the direct service of the Property & Asset team are managed and discussed monthly via team meetings.

We discuss:

- Nature of Complaints
- Service within Property & Asset
- Complaint Resolution
- Lessons learnt

## **How do we receive complaints, compliments or feedback?**

- Email: [repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk) [sdavies@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:sdavies@eastdevon.gov.uk)
- Via telephone – 01395 517458
- Letter to our postal services within Blackdown House
- Feedback form handed out by our contractors post repair
- PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) via contractor

## **How often reports are created and distributed**

Operational Complaint Reports – Monthly

Contractors Complaint and Compliment Report – Quarterly

Property & Asset Annual Report – Annual (Calendar Year)

## **4 Appendices and other relevant information**

[Click here to enter appendices and other information](#)

## **5 Who authorised the policy/strategy and date of authorisation.**

Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager April 2021

## **7 Related Policies/Strategies, Procedures and Legislation**

- Recharging Procedures
- Responsive Repairs Policy

## **8 Policy date for review and responsible officer**

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years with the next date due in April 2023.

Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## HouseMark Annual Performance Summary

### Report summary:

This summary HouseMark report provides key cost and performance comparisons for our organisation. The data relates to the financial year 2019-20, but has been supplemented by bespoke HouseMark forecasts built using in-year data and public data sources. Our bespoke peer group, chosen by us, is detailed in the appendix.

As well as annual cost and performance benchmarking, HouseMark also provides a range of other data services, including monthly COVID-19 impact monitoring and a bespoke budget forecasting tool for your organisation.

I have also appended our own generated weekly Covid-19 report.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

Performance reports be noted and the areas for further investigation identified in the report be examined by the Housing Leadership Group

### Reason for recommendation:

To monitor performance and gauge our performance against peers in the sector with the ultimate aim of learning and improving our performance for our tenants.

Officer: John Golding Strategic Lead - Housing Health and Environment

[jgolding@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:jgolding@eastdevon.gov.uk)

### Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

## Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

### Links to background information .

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
  - Outstanding Homes and Communities
  - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
  - Outstanding Council and Council Services
- 

## Report in full

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### 1. Performance reporting

- 1.1 We are a member of the HouseMark benchmarking club and have been so for many years. Membership provides a useful comparison if we benchmark ourselves against comparable organisations and consider differences in performance and costs. The HouseMark annual performance report is reproduced in **annex 1**.
  - 1.2 There are inherent difficulties in benchmarking with other Councils and housing associations, but despite difficulties I believe it is worth doing. There are no right or wrong results, however, differences can be investigated and it can open up ideas about how to bring performance in line with peers and/or celebrate higher levels of performance.
  - 1.3 Despite peer groups being selected to be comparable many organisations have very different stock profiles, different priorities and different ways of accounting. However, it is interesting to see the differences in a number of areas when compared to our peers. For example, our rent collection figures remain strong and in the higher performing group. Housing management costs at £268 per property seem to offer good value for money.
  - 1.4 Areas where I would like a better appreciation of the differences is in relation to our overheads which come out significantly higher than our peers; housing maintenance costs are quite high in comparison; tenant satisfaction; cost and speed of repairs are also showing marked differences to our peers reported data.
  - 1.5 I have asked the Housing Leadership Team of senior managers to review the data supplied by HouseMark and satisfy themselves that the data is accurate and reflects differences between us and our peers. I would like us to understand and account for the differences and identify ways of improving performance in order that future comparisons show smaller differences.
  - 1.6 We have also utilised our own Covid-19 performance reporting tool during the pandemic that provides a useful management dashboard of key performance indicators. This report is updated weekly and an example has been reproduced in **annex 2**. The report provides a useful weekly 'health check' agents activities that are core business and important to tenants and maintaining tenant services and safety. The report is a standard agenda item for management team meetings and briefing staff on Service performance.
-

**Financial implications:**

Contained within the body of the report and appendix.

**Legal implications:**

It is believed that there are no comments of a legal nature arising from the contents of this report.”

# East Devon District Council

## Annual Performance Summary

February 2021

As the largest UK-wide network of social housing businesses and the leading data-driven solutions provider for the sector, HouseMark is partnering with the sector to improve performance, deliver value for money and understand the impact of COVID-19 through on-time insight, data analysis and peer-to-peer sharing.

This report compares costs and performance for East Devon District Council with a bespoke peer group of similar social landlords. It forms just part of the new HouseMark offer to members and is supplemented by:

- In depth analysis and data downloads from our online reporting tool
- Monthly COVID-19 impact monitoring
- Bespoke budget forecasts for East Devon District Council

To find out more about any of these solutions, visit our website or call our helpline on: 024 7647 2707

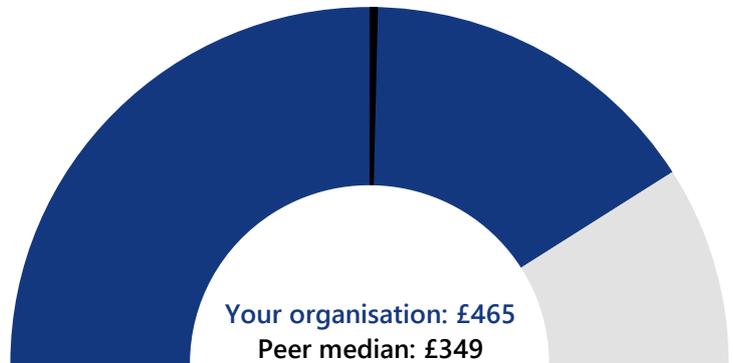
[www.housemark.co.uk](http://www.housemark.co.uk)  
[@housemarkltd](https://twitter.com/housemarkltd)  
[info@housemark.co.uk](mailto:info@housemark.co.uk)

## Executive summary

This summary report provides key cost and performance comparisons for your organisation. The data relates to the financial year 2019-20, but has been supplemented by bespoke HouseMark forecasts built using in-year data and public data sources. Your bespoke peer group, chosen by you, is detailed in the appendix. As well as annual cost and performance benchmarking, HouseMark also provides a range of other data services, including monthly COVID-19 impact monitoring and a bespoke budget forecasting tool for your organisation. For more information email [data@housemark.co.uk](mailto:data@housemark.co.uk).

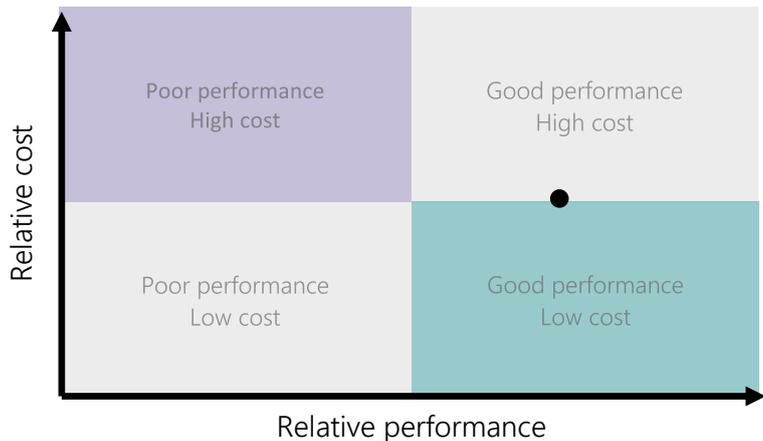
### Overheads

Your overhead cost per property was comparatively greater than your peers in 2019-20. Central overheads make up 25% of your operating costs. Finance, HR and IT contribute 34% and 41% is spent on premises. Organisations with high back-office costs can ask HouseMark for more detailed analysis by staffing or budget line to ensure they are getting value for money.



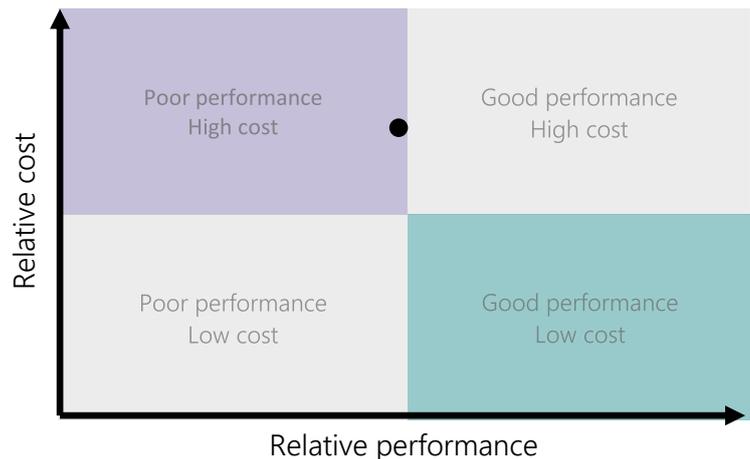
### Housing management

Your overall management performance was above that of your peers and your costs are close to the median. This is based on your front-line housing management cost per property of £268 and your average performance across five KPIs relating to arrears, voids and lettings.



### Housing maintenance

Your overall maintenance performance was slightly below that of your peers and your front-line costs are also greater. This is based on your responsive repairs and void works cost per property of £1,222, your cyclical maintenance and major works cost per property of £2,002 and your average performance across four repairs and maintenance KPIs.



# Overheads

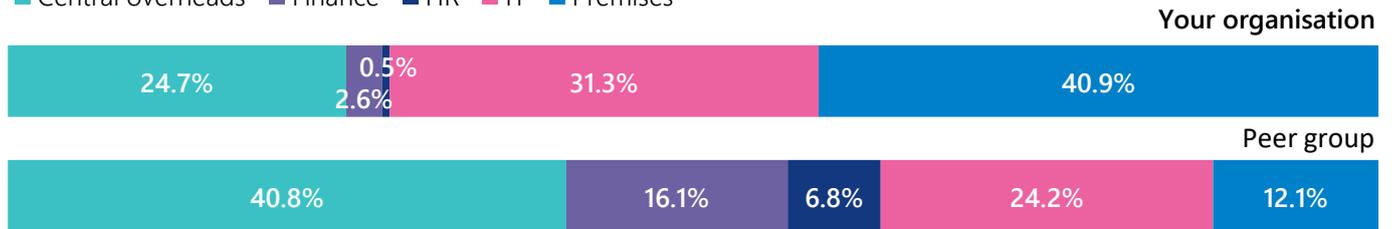
## Overheads cost per property

HouseMark's definition of overheads includes all spend on premises, ITC, finance, HR and other central back-office costs. Typically this is a mixture of staffing costs (including accountants, HR officers and ITC support) as well as other costs taken from the trial balance such as office rent and utilities, ITC hardware and software purchase and depreciation, audit fees and corporate subscriptions. For Local Authorities, this cost is largely made up of a recharge to the general fund.



## Overheads breakdown

Central overheads Finance HR IT Premises



## Average time to answer inbound telephone calls (seconds)



You did not submit data in 2019-20  
Peer median: 171.0

Long call waiting times correlate with lower tenant satisfaction. As landlords continue to shift more contact to digital channels, it is important to ensure the process remains as easy and efficient as possible, no matter which channel is used. HouseMark can provide granular analysis of your contact centre productivity and progress towards channel shift.

## Satisfaction with the service provided



2019-20: 73.7%  
This places you in quartile 4  
Peer median: 83.0%

This measure is sourced from perception surveys – a random sample of all residents rather than triggered by an interaction with the landlord. Perception survey results are typically lower than transactional results, but do provide a consistent barometer for how you are perceived by your customers.

## Percentage of staff turnover in the year



2019-20: 7.83%  
▼ down by 6.00 on 2018-19  
This places you in quartile 2  
Peer median: 9.69%

As employers and recruiters, the housing sector is likely to benefit from the stark effects of recession in other parts of the economy as the talent pool widens and sector activity remains constant. We found that the number of people employed by the sector increased by 3.7% since the pandemic started.

## Average working days lost due to sickness absence



2019-20: 10.1  
▼ down by 3.33 on 2018-19  
This places you in quartile 2  
Peer median: 10.7

There has been an unprecedented impact on sickness levels in 2020/21 as a result of the pandemic. Sickness levels peaked at 7% in March 2020 before falling to around 3-4% over the summer months. Levels started to increase again over the winter months. We estimate 5% of sector staff have suffered with COVID-19.

## Housing management cost per property

Housing management is a core landlord service that relates to the management of rented social housing. It is largely made up of employee costs and includes specialist staff such as rent collection officers, lettings teams, specialist ASB managers and generic housing, neighbourhood officers and administrators. It also includes a proportion of contact centre staff time as well as some additional items from the trial balance such as legal fees, choice-based lettings fees, cash collection charges and tenant incentives. A well-resourced housing management function has the ability to achieve better than average performance on key metrics such as arrears and void loss.



## Current tenant arrears

2019-20: 1.76%

▲ up by 0.75 on 2018-19

This places you in quartile 1

Peer median: 2.90%

HouseMark is forecasting that by the end of March 2021, the average landlord will have arrears 35% higher than they would have been without the pandemic. However, the picture varies by landlord and region. Landlords who have invested in additional rent collection staff have on average seen better performance on arrears. HouseMark can help you calculate the optimum resourcing levels to minimise arrears increases, given your context.

## Comparison against sector forecast



## Rent loss due to voids

2019-20: 2.57%

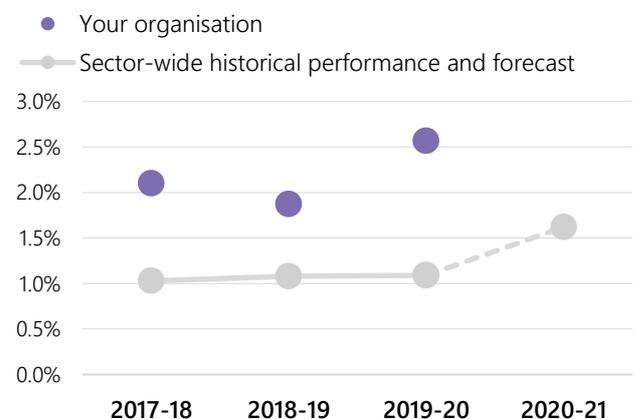
▲ up by 0.70 on 2018-19

This places you in quartile 4

Peer median: 1.31%

HouseMark is forecasting that by the end of March 2021 the average landlord will have void loss over 60% higher than it would have been without the pandemic. Tenancy turnover varies significantly by region, largely driven by housing availability and the relative difference between market rent and social rent. Landlords who quickly let empty properties following the first national lockdown have already minimised the impact on the bottom line.

## Comparison against sector forecast



### Former tenant arrears

2019-20: 0.04%

▼ down by 0.33 on 2018-19

This places you in quartile 1

Peer median: 1.85%



### Average standard re-let time (days)

2019-20: 23.0

▼ down by 1.97 on 2018-19

This places you in quartile 2

Peer median: 33.0



### Proportion of vacant properties

2019-20: 0.38%

▲ up by 0.21 on 2018-19

This places you in quartile 1

Peer median: 1.29%

# Housing maintenance

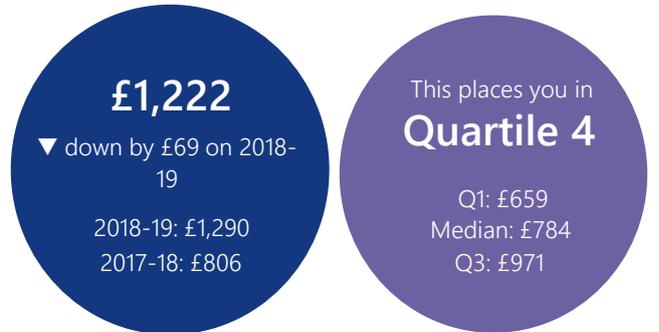
## Housing maintenance cost per property

Maintaining properties in a good state of repair is a social landlord's largest expenditure line. It includes payments to contractors for responsive repairs, void works and planned maintenance. The HouseMark definition also includes capital spend on major works. For landlords with a direct labour organisation, this category also includes the cost of operatives. Finally, this category also includes any employees responsible for managing responsive repairs and cyclical works programmes, any surveyors on the payroll and a proportion of contact centre staff time. Maintenance costs are heavily influenced by stock condition, but landlords can use HouseMark data to ensure they are achieving high-productivity from their operatives and that they are performing in line with peers.

## Major works and cyclical maintenance



## Responsive repairs and void works



## Number of responsive repairs per property



2019-20: 2.4  
 ▼ down by 0.35 on 2018-19  
 This places you in quartile 1  
 Peer median: 2.9

The number of repairs a landlord carries out is a key driver of overall costs. A high number can be reflective of poor stock condition.

## Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs



2019-20: 13.0  
 ▼ down by 2.70 on 2018-19  
 This places you in quartile 4  
 Peer median: 10.0

Completing repairs quickly is good, but the sector average end-to-end time has increased gradually over the past few years as landlords focus more on offering flexible appointment times that suit the resident.

## Proportion of properties with a valid gas safety certificate



You did not submit data in 2019-20  
 Peer median: 99.96%

Traditionally social landlords perform strongly on this key metric. The pandemic has however resulted in a greater number of access issues. At the height of lockdown average sector compliance dropped to around 96%, but has since recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

## Satisfaction with the repairs service received (transactional)



2019-20: 72.0%  
 ▼ down by 22.60 on 2018-19  
 This places you in quartile 4  
 Peer median: 94.0%

HouseMark's STAR review found that transactional surveys carried out following a repair typically deliver satisfaction that is around 12% higher than perception surveys. The pandemic saw an initial bounce in sector-wide satisfaction results throughout the first quarter, but they have since returned to pre-pandemic levels. Making the repairs service quick and easy should be a priority for landlords wishing to improve satisfaction.

## Appendix

The data in this report is based on cost and performance data for the financial year 2019-20 (and previous years where trend is provided). Where forecasts have been included, these are based on monthly data collected by HouseMark throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

All quartile comparisons are based on your bespoke peer group which is detailed below. Further analysis against different peer groups is recommended using [HouseMark's online reporting tool](#). Our online reporting tool includes hundreds of additional measures that can help you understand your performance in context.

Note we have issued this report now because we already hold data for most of your peers. However, due to mergers, acquisitions, entity name changes and late submissions, your peer group may change over time. HouseMark can provide information and advice on peer groups on request, including expected submission dates for any potential latecomers.

HouseMark data is an invaluable asset that helps drive improvement through evidence. See how some of our members have used HouseMark data to drive improvement in the case studies below:

[Resourcing teams optimally to drive down arrears](#)

[Improving void turnaround times and maximising income](#)

[Delivering value for money in anti-social behaviour management](#)

To find out more about unlocking the power of HouseMark data or to book in your membership inclusive annual tailored feedback, contact [data@housemark.co.uk](mailto:data@housemark.co.uk) or telephone 024 7647 2707.

The organisations in your peer group have the following characteristics:

### Peer group name

LA Club

### Size

0 - 53,432 units

### Region

North East	✓
North West	✓
Yorkshire and Humberside	✓
Eastern	✓
East Midlands	✓
West Midlands	✓
London	✓
South East	✓
South West	✓
Scotland	✓
Wales	✓
Northern Ireland	
Other	

### Organisation type

ALMOs	
London Boroughs	✓
Mets/Unitaries	✓
Districts	✓
Housing Association (LSVT)	
Housing Association (Traditional)	
Other	

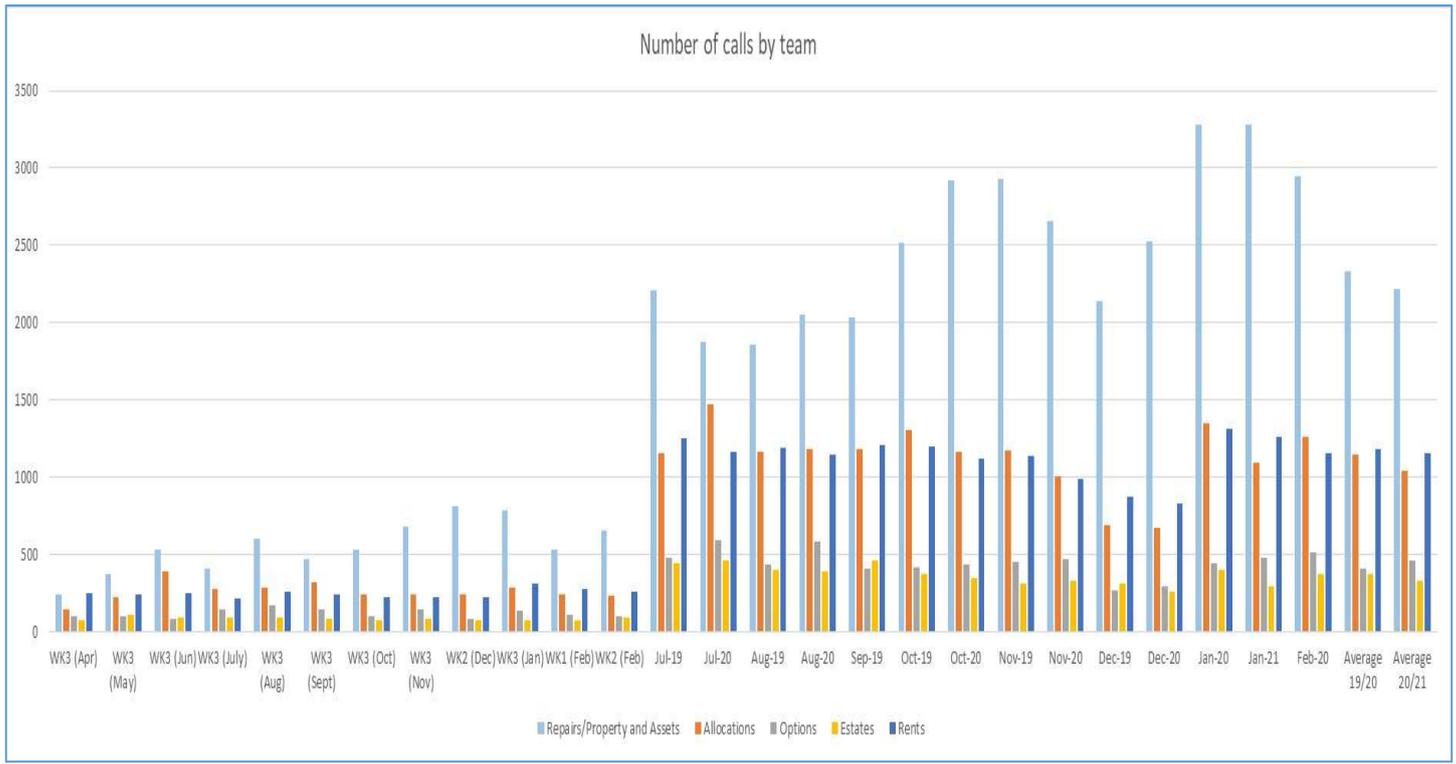
### DLO

Yes	✓
No	✓
No data	✓

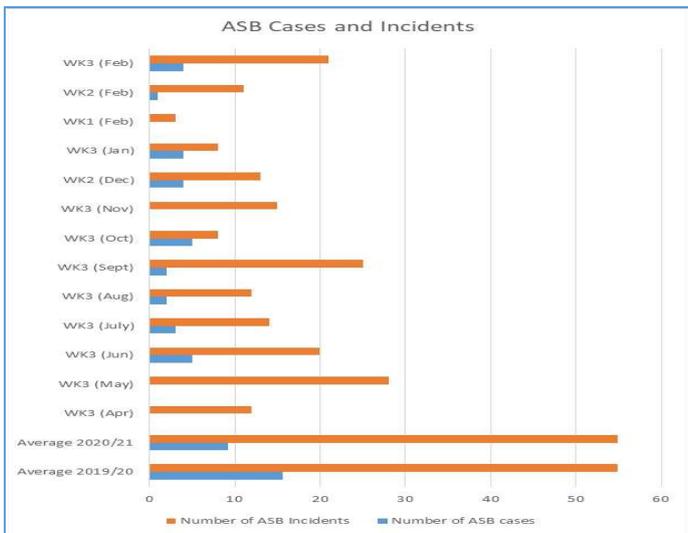
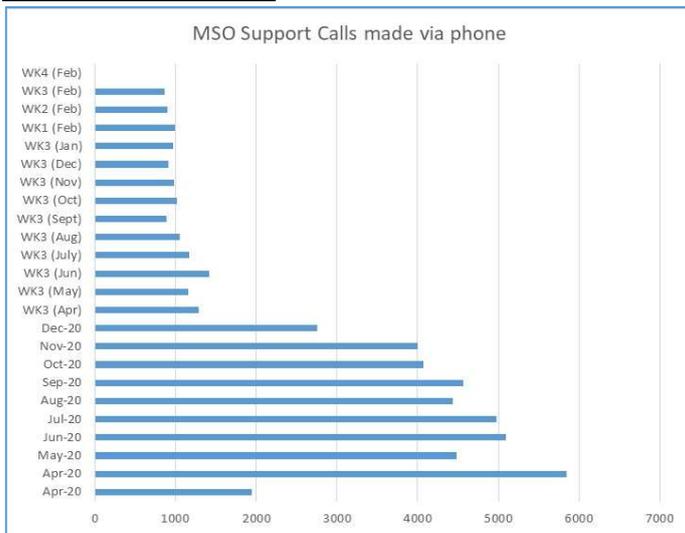
### Sample size

95

**Phone Call Demand**



**Landlord Services**



**Number of welfare calls to General Need Tenants**

April 20	May 20	Jun 20	July 20	Aug 20	Sept 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan-21	Feb 21
203	1218	1517	641	316	142	166	165	197	155	132

Number of homesafeguard call handled		
	2019/20	2020/21
Apr	13532	10870
May	13410	10745
Jun	12567	9408
July	13930	9949
Aug	13,145	10,098
Sept	12,218	9,826
Oct	13,115	11,917
Nov	12,029	13,508
Dec	11,890	15,299

## Rents

% Rent Collected	2020/21	2019/20
As at 26th April	71.5%	78.2%
As at 10 May	95.0%	96.5%
As at 17 May	92.1%	93.9%
As at 24th May	88.6%	91.0%
As at 31st May	97.9%	100.9%
As at 8th June	92.5%	99.4%
As at 15th June	91.5%	97.5%
As at 21st June	93.6%	94.7%
As at 28th June	93.0%	101.1% (as at 30th June 2019)
As at 12th July	98.1%	98.4%
As at 19th July	96.3%	96.8%
As at 26th July	99.3%	97.1%
As at 2nd Aug	99.8%	96.2%
As at 09 Aug	98.9%	99.3%
As at 16 Aug	97.6%	98.2%
As at 23 Aug	69.3%	97.0%
As at 30 Aug	100.2%	100.5%
As at 13 Sept	99.3%	98.9%
As at 20 Sept	98.6%	97.8%
As at 27 Sept	96.9%	97.1%
As at 11 Oct	99.6%	99.4%
As at 18 Oct	98.7%	98.7%
As at 25 Oct	97.7%	96.2%
As at 1 Nov	101.1%	100.2%
As at 8 Nov	99.8%	99.7%
As at 15 Nov	99.3%	99.3%
As at 22 Nov	98.6%	98.5%
As at 29 Nov	97.9%	100.5%
As at 06 Dec	100.1%	99.9%
As at 13 Dec	99.6%	99.7%
As at 10 Jan	99.6%	99.8%
As at 17 Jan	99.2%	98.8%
As at 24 Jan	98.5%	98.6%
As at 31 Jan	100.2%	100.1%
As at 07 Feb	99.8%	100.03%
As at 14 Feb	99.4%	98.3%
As at 21 Feb	98.9%	98.8%

\*Please note collection rates may differ depending on when date data is extracted.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, of the arrears £148,288.45 is from tenants on UC compared with in 2019 when it was £68,440.58

This is an increase of **£79,847.87**

Month	No UC Claimants
Feb	468
Mar	487
Apr	519
May	531
June	555
July	543
August	514
September	514
October	859
November	892
December	863
January	887

Unlike housing benefit, which hits the rent account at the start of each week and means if the tenant receives full benefit they will never show a rent arrear, the Universal Credit is paid in arrears every 4 weeks. Tenants will be in arrears initially until we get this payment from the DWP which puts a lump sum for the month into their accounts. In the fourth week of our collection figures you can see where this lump sum hits the accounts and collection is increased. The tenants also have a lead in time of 5-6 weeks between making their claim and receiving the first payment, so will automatically be in arrears unless they have some savings to pay us with. We cannot apply to have UC paid directly to us until the tenants has arrears of 8 weeks or more outstanding, so payment is generally reliant on the tenant themselves. Any arrangements we have had with the DWP to also pay an amount on top of the rent to clear arrears was stopped temporarily in March/April 2020 while the DWP redeployed staff to cope with the influx of new claims, as this was a manual process for them so they didn't have the manpower to continue it. This also caused a temporary drop in our collection, which will increase again slightly when they are able to take these on again in July/August 2020. The DWP will shortly be introducing a payment system which means we will receive the 4 weekly direct payment on the same date that the tenant receives their UC payment, which will mean our income stream becomes more steady and we will no longer have the lump sum from all our direct payment cases on one date of the month.

\*rent collection rate fluctuates across months for a number of reasons including when UC payments are made. Rent collection excludes arrears



## Voids

**99** open voids\* (10 move on accommodation - St Andrews & Morton Road as at 26 February 2021)

\*Please note a breakdown of these voids as at 17 February 2021

- 3 hard to lets
- 4 long term/major work voids
- 15 new properties (8 more than last week)
- 2 temp accom
- 7 unlettable

**Table 1: Number of open voids by mgt type**

	General Needs	Sheltered
As at 26 February	53	46

\*not include move on accommodation

**313** voids (33 temp voids) started between 01 April and 31 January 2021 compared with **339** voids (8 temp voids) in 2020



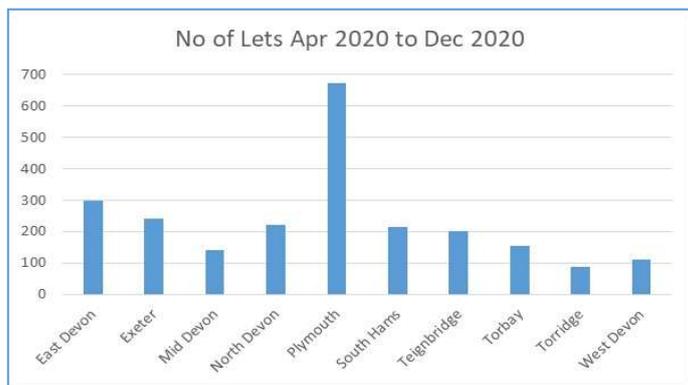
Please note graph above includes garage void loss. As at 26 Feb 2021 £111,012 is cumulative void amount lost on properties.

## Allocations

**83** diary entries in Open Housing which relate to Covid19 from allocations as at 04 February 2021

**231 coc\*& new** Devon Home Choice Applications in Jan 2021 (COC\* – change of circumstances – 74 applications)

**148** coc applications



**8** voids are with IWS as jobs and

**43** are at preinspection stage as at 17 February 2021.

**15** are with allocations as ready to let at 26 February 2021.

\*presinspection stage – properties still tenanted

## **Number of DHC Applications (including updates to form)**

\*since date of extraction some applicants would have withdrawn, been housed etc

Month	2019	2020/21
Apr	149 (7 homeless applications)	88 (2 homeless applications)
May	113 (9 homeless applications)	172 (5 homeless applications)
Jun	125 (10 homeless applications)	219 (13 homeless applications)
July	141 (14 homeless)	185 (6 homeless application)
August	161 (10 homeless applications)	199 (7 homeless applications)
September	148 (8 homeless applications)	202 (13 homeless applications)
October	155 (14 homeless applications)	194 (12 homeless applications)
November	130 (17 homeless applications)	158 (8 homeless applications)
December	80 (5 homeless applications)	117 (6 homeless applications)
January	199 (17 homeless applications)	233 (8 homeless application)
February	115 (11 homeless applications)	144 (6 homeless applications)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1442 (124 homeless applications)</b>	<b>1706 (121 homeless applications)</b>

## Options Team

As at 24 February 2021 **45** (incl 3 legacy cases) households are in temporary accommodation

**818** approaches since April 2020 with **62** approaches in February 2021.

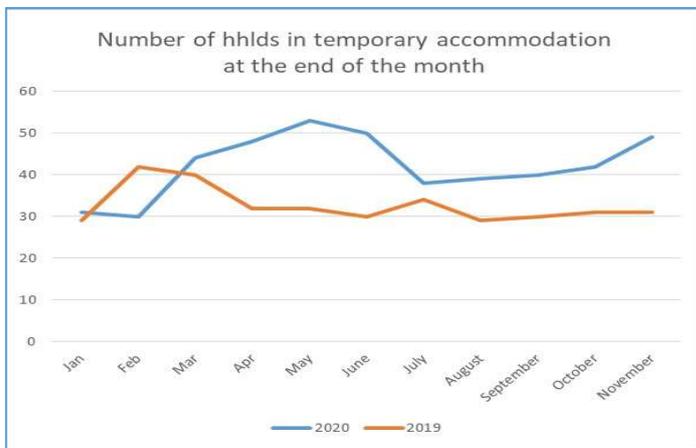
As at 24 February **257** cases.

**15** hhlds going into temporary accommodation since 01/02/2021-21/02/2021

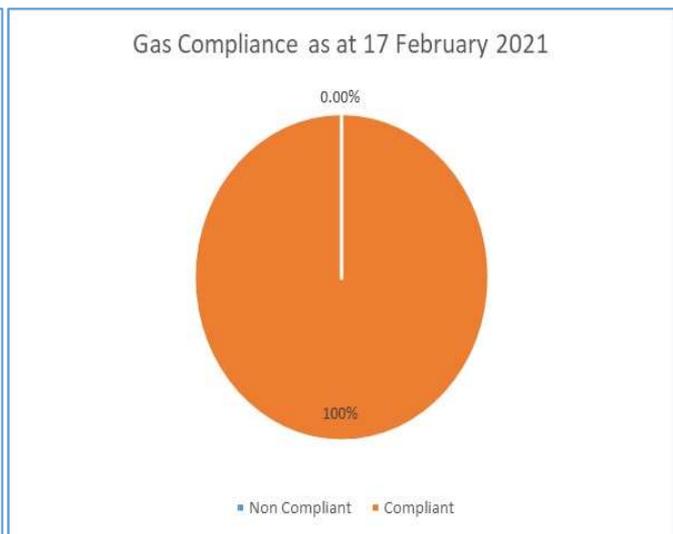
**57** approaches since April 2020 with COVID19 as a reason as at 24 February 2021.

Top 4 reasons for approaching in January 2021 –

- Family not willing to accommodate
- End of private tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy
- Friends not willing to accommodate



## Gas Compliance



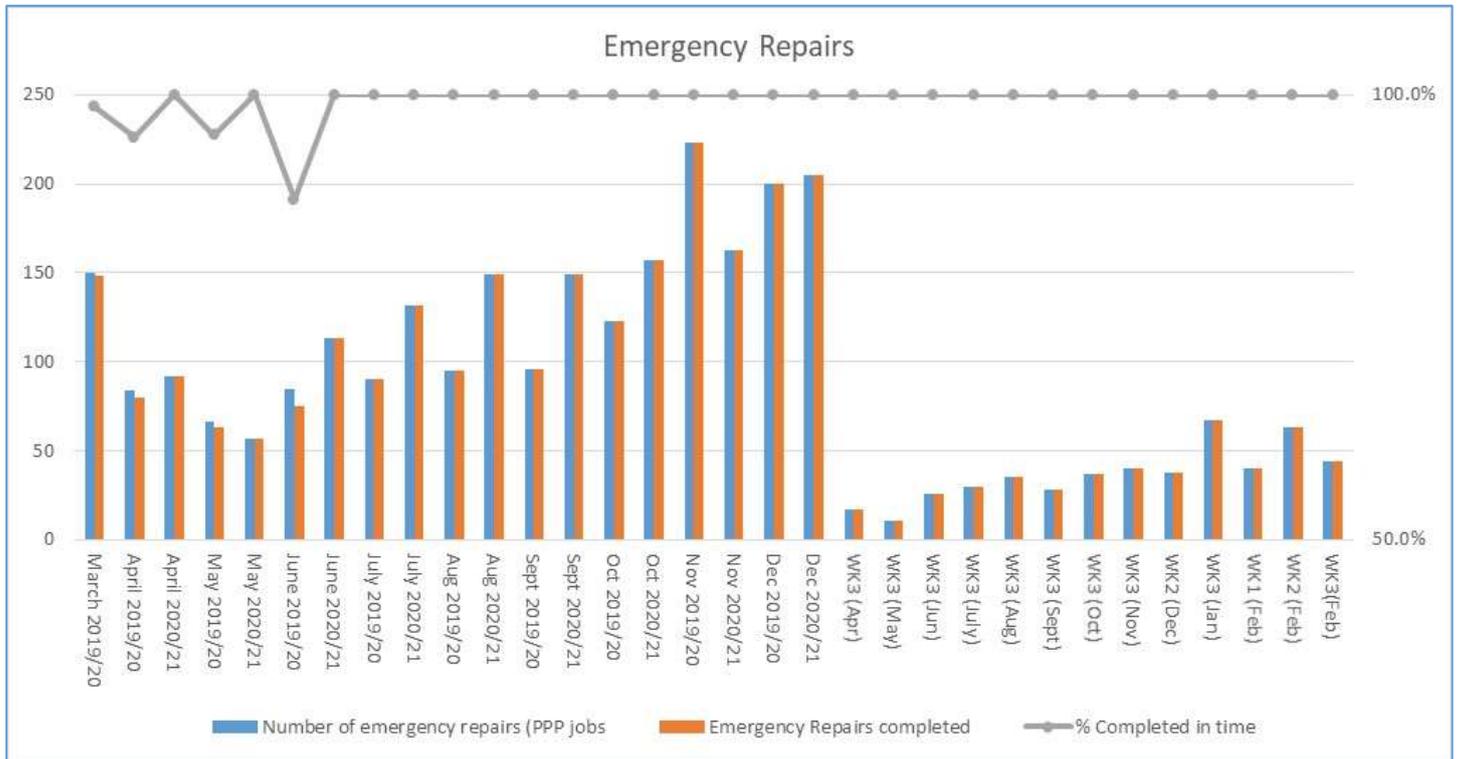
As at 17 February 2021

- 0 properties non-compliant
- As at 17 February 2021 **792** open repair jobs of which 2 jobs are on hold because of COVID19 compared with 709 open repair jobs in W1 January 2021.

# Repairs

Table 1: Routine Repair Jobs Completed as at 24 February 2021

	2019/2020		2020/2021	
	Total	% Jobs In Target	Total	% Jobs In Target
<b>TARGET STATUS</b>				
<b>In Target</b>	9113	88.12	8977	89.16
<b>Not in Target</b>	1228	11.88	1091	10.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>10341</b>		<b>10068</b>	



## **Annual report of the Housing Review Board 2020/21**

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Housing Review Board were Councillor Tony McCullom and Peter Sullivan, respectively.

The Board welcomed new board member Councillor Sarah Chamberlain. It also said goodbye to tenant representative Pat Gore during the year.

### **Words from the Chair**

As Chair of the Housing Review Board, I'd like to reflect on what must be the most challenging year for our officers and staff.

This Covid pandemic has affected our tenants in many ways, from isolation to losing income and unfortunately even losing relatives. There has never been a more devastating year since World War 2.

But, we as a people carry on and do our best to pull through by helping and supporting each other and I hope this council see what assets they have in our officers and staff.

Well done everyone and we can reassure our tenants that we will do our best to look after them.

### **The Board**

The remit of the Board covers:

- Advising the Cabinet on the Council's landlord activities and functions affecting tenants and leaseholders;
- Maintaining an active involvement in the on-going review of the options for the future ownership and management of Council owned homes, and to make recommendations;
- Promoting good practice and overseeing service improvements;
- Monitoring performance on core housing management activities and reporting to the Cabinet;
- Preparation of the Housing Revenue Account budget and Business Plan;
- Promoting tenant and leaseholder involvement and implementation of the Tenant and Council Partnership Statement;
- Consulting with the Tenant Involvement Forum, who liaise with tenant groups and representatives;
- Encouraging good practice in relation to equality and diversity issues, and ensuring that the needs of vulnerable tenants are satisfied;
- Advise on any other matters affecting the Council's landlord duties and responsibilities.

Despite service disruptions experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board has continued in its role of introducing service improvements and monitoring throughout the year, liaising with the Tenant Involvement Forum (TIF) as appropriate. Some examples from the HRB work programme are summarised below:

### **Draft Housing Service Plan 2021/22**

The Service Plan is produced annually and sets out the key achievements over the past year and the forthcoming issues to be faced by the service. A range of service improvements were identified, performance data reported, consultation proposals outlined and budget information provided to the Board. The Plan linked closely with the Housing Strategy and was designed to complement a number of other housing plans and policies as part of how the Council

managed its own housing stock, managed homelessness, and the services it delivered in the private sector. The Plan also considered service challenges and pressures over the next three years, including climate change implications, tenant safety measures, the implications of the Social Housing White Paper, and the ambitions to increase the supply of social housing. The Plan this year reflected some of the service interruptions due to the pandemic and the move of the Private Sector Housing team to the Environmental Health and Car Parks Service. The service planning day had been a virtual event. Ordinarily there would have been greater tenant involvement in the process, but the Board's input into the Service Plan was welcomed.

## **Draft Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budgets 2021/22**

The draft Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22 a key document for the Board to influence. The annual HRA was underpinned and influenced by the 30 year HRA Business Plan. This business plan needed to be refreshed to consider a number of issues which had evolved over the years, including a full stock condition survey to inform future programme costs, the implications of the climate change action plan, the implications of Universal Credit and the end of rent reductions. This future financial modelling and evaluation work was progressing for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget.

The draft 2021/22 budget continued to invest in and maintain existing properties to a high standard with a comprehensive planned programme of expenditure, adaptations and routine repairs. It also provided an acceptable surplus (£.0985m) which would need to be held for the purpose of additional housing and climate change measures.

## **HRA financial monitoring reports and Right to Buy spending**

A summary of the overall financial position on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), HRA Capital Programme and the Business Plan for 2020/21 has been regularly provided at meetings. Careful monitoring throughout the year indicated that the HRA was being maintained at the adopted levels and still included the volatility reserve. At the end of the 2019/20 financial year, due to the the onset of Covid-19 the decision was made to utilise all capital reserves ahead of the more flexible revenue reserves where possible.

Rent collection rates and income levels were consistent with the previous year, with the impact of Covid-19 being largely mitigated.

The Board was warned in September 2020 of the risk of having to return right to buy receipts and the challenges faced with spending these due to Covid-19.

In January 2021 the Board was informed that the council would be required to pay back to Government approximately £844,000 in receipts and £121,000 in interest on the returned amount. The Board acknowledged that whilst it was disappointing that receipts would have to be returned, the year's spend requirements was always going to be a challenge and that was before Covid-19. Investment in staffing and a different strategy for spending receipts was needed to ensure the Council was best placed to spend the receipts and provide the much needed replacement affordable housing for its stock. This would also ensure that EDDC was getting the right type of properties that would meet its climate change agenda.

## **Integrated asset management contract updates**

The Board noted progress with the contract and reviewed the partnership with Ian Williams Ltd over the past year. All elements of the contract were focussed on to continually seek improvements with both the day to day management and performance of the contract. Operations during 2020/21 had not been business as usual due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some operational works had been scaled back but the contract still endeavoured to offer as

much of a service as possible, with compliance across all areas. An independent cost review of voids was being carried out and consultants Echlon had carried out the first detailed review of the contract. A complaint management programme had been developed. Steps were being taken to improve on gaining customer satisfaction.

### **Covid-19 housing recovery**

The Board were informed of actions EDDC would take to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of recovery planning the housing leadership team met on a weekly basis to co-ordinate recovery across the service ensuring consistency and the adoption of central government guidance. The four key priority areas for the housing service were keeping residents safe, protecting residents and livelihoods, sustaining critical services, and supporting communities and recovery. There had been a huge amount of focus on communication with tenants and well-being calls had been made to every single resident across all of the housing stock, and officers had been able to assist tenants with a huge range of problems.

### **Climate change action plan**

The Board considered the work being undertaken by the Housing Service in response to the Council's commitment to carbon reduction and increased energy efficiency. The Council had committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 and had endorsed a Climate Change Strategy and plan to facilitate this. The Board recommended that an additional Programmed Works Officer be recruited to focus on energy efficiency measures and drive forward an improvement programme for the housing stock.

### **Disrepair**

The Board received a detailed presentation from the Council's solicitor on disrepair and the potential legal challenges to the condition of housing stock by tenants through a number of litigious lawyer firms. Disrepair was an important area of work for the Housing Service and ongoing work was required to reduce and manage future cases.

### **Advantage South West**

The Board recommended that the Council should continue paying the annual subscription to maintain the membership and continue the benefits of procurement, significant financial savings and the opportunity to work with other housing providers. In another report, the Board considered the benefits of participating in an ASW collaborative project to work with other members to pro-actively encourage and retain highly skilled staff within the housing sector through shared initiatives and training and development programmes. The Board approved participation in the project.

### **Regulator's review: Neighbourhood & Community Standard**

This involved a self-assessment of current service delivery against the Social Housing Regulators Home Standard, which set out the minimum requirements for what must be achieved to in terms of neighbourhood management, local area co-operation and how the service dealt with anti-social behaviour, so that safe and clean areas where tenants lived could be provided. The Board felt that a review of current requirements and processes was needed as well as an improvement in communication with tenants.

**Other issues** reviewed by the Board during the year have included:

- Stock condition survey – the Board recommended the delivery of the stock condition survey by an external consultant through an approved procurement framework.
- Formal complaints – annual report to the Board with information on formal complaints received in relation to the housing service from April 2019-March 2020.
- Sailor’s Rest, Exmouth – the Board approved an allocations and management policy for the properties known as 18A and 18B St. Andrews Road, Exmouth, which were to be used as move on accommodation.
- Furniture project – the Board recommended that the furniture and household recycling service be kept in house and funded through HRA budgets.
- Structure of the Housing Service – the Board noted changes to the housing service and how these had been implemented. The structure would be kept under constant review. The Board recommended that a specialist mental health support officer be recruited to work within the housing services team.
- Social Housing White Paper – the contents of this were likely to be translated into legislation and would signal a significant change to the governance of social housing. The Board recommended that the Housing Service start to prepare for this forthcoming legislation, focussing on complaints handling, tenant safety, satisfaction and involvement.
- Performance management reports – measuring performance across the housing service.
- Covid-19 performance monitoring report – monitoring different areas of the housing service since March 2020.
- Purchase of 51 St. Andrews Road, Exmouth – the Board’s authority was sought to proceed with the purchase of this property, subject to approval of the certificate of lawfulness, using right to buy receipts.
- Housing research study: Your wellbeing, your home – the Board were presented with the results and conclusions of a joint three year research partnership with the University of Birmingham and LiveWest, exploring the relationship between housing, wellbeing and landlord satisfaction.
- Air source heat pumps – the Board recommended the continued use and installation of air source heat pumps as a viable carbon efficient alternative to conventional boilers.

Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## Housing – Renewal of Advantage South West Subscription

### Report summary:

Members to note the benefits of membership of Advantage South West and to support the continuing membership of the organisation.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

To continue paying the annual subscription to maintain the membership to Advantage South West

### Reason for recommendation:

To maintain properties to a good standard whilst achieving good value for money.

To assist in achieving continuity of components and services across the Property & Asset service.

To assist in the ongoing training and upskilling of staff through regular product review workshops and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) events.

To provide a platform for networking with other Authorities and Housing providers across the South West

Officer: Graham Baker Property & Asset Manager – [gbaker@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:gbaker@eastdevon.gov.uk)

### Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; .

## Links to background information .

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
  - Outstanding Homes and Communities
  - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
  - Outstanding Council and Council Services
- 

## Report in full

1. Advantage South West is a limited liability partnership owned by LiveWest, North Devon Homes, Ocean Housing Group and Yarlinton Housing Group. Created in 2004, Advantage South West exists to improve homes and lives through collaboration and innovation.

### 1.1 Advantage South West carries out a range of activities including:

#### New Build:

- they have a range of standard house type designs
- they are working with Altair to develop an offsite new build solution for the South West

#### Procurement consortium:

- Has been active since 2008,
- Improves value for money for its Members in the products used in new build, planned and responsive maintenance.
- Saves its members in cashable savings and RPI avoidance.
- Arranges training sessions on technical and legal topics, usually free of charge

#### Credit Union Sustainability Partnership:

- Launched in 2018
- Partnership with Westcountry Savings and Loans
- To provide residents with an alternative to high cost loans

Advantage South West has two permanent full time employees, Neil Biddiscombe (Procurement Manager) and Mark Dobner (Contracts Manager).

Martyn Gimber, Chief Executive of North Devon Homes, is the chairman of Advantage South West.

## 2. Membership:

- Coastline Housing
- Cornwall Housing
- Cornwall Rural Housing Association
- East Devon District Council
- Exeter City Council
- Homes in Sedgemoor
- Magna Housing Group
- North Devon Homes
- LiveWest
- Ocean Housing
- Plymouth Community Homes
- Somerset West & Taunton Council
- Teign Housing
- Westward Housing
- Yarlinton Housing

Other organisations continue to and are always welcome to join.

### 3. Frameworks:

3.1 Frameworks are awarded on the recommendation of product groups. These product groups work on a participative basis. Product Groups are chaired by a senior manager from a Member organisation. Each Member has a representative who is responsible for bringing that Member's requirements to the project, contributing to key stages in the process such as creating the specification, deciding how tenders will be assessed and assessing the tenders.

3.2 Tenants also have played an important part in the process. It is essential to emphasise that without the input of the Member representatives and tenants the projects could not have been a success.

3.3 The Procurement Consortium Group directs and oversees the work of the Procurement Consortium. East Devon District Council on the Procurement Consortium Group.

3.4 Of the most recent Frameworks procured East Devon District Council's Michelle Davidson sat on the working Group that prepared the Tender Documentation, reviewed the submissions and assisted in preparation of the awards for both Asbestos Surveying and Fire Door Inspections

### 4. Areas of Activity:

4.1 ASW have many areas of activity that members have involvement in and can benefit from, typical examples are:

- Off-site manufacture of new homes:  
Deliver a new build solution through a Framework model that will mitigate the expected reduction in construction industry capacity and predicted resultant cost increases whilst improving the quality, asset value, specification and lead-time to sustain delivery across the South West.
- Financial inclusion:  
Continued development and expansion of the Credit Union Sustainability Partnership with Westcountry Savings & Loans.
  - Deliver KPI targets and household debt interest
  - Deliver online services – web and app
  - Deliver accounts targeted at social housing eg to help with universal credit

4.2 Develop SW Mutual Model to eventually provide Shared Ownership Mortgages and work closely with our communities to deliver the products that are needed on a not for profit basis.

- Procurement Consortium:  
Continue to deliver collaborative procurement of frameworks and supply chain management to help members deliver VFM and ensure continuity of quality and availability
  - Provide procurement advice and support for members
  - Facilitate expertise development through CPD and Legal Services updates
  - Facilitate expertise sharing through working groups, good practice groups and forum
  - Continually develop website access and resources available to members
  - Procurement of identified property compliance frameworks
- Energy efficiency and asset management strategy development:

Continued development of a more co-ordinated strategic approach to energy efficiency and planned maintenance in terms of compliance and regulatory requirements going forward to help us procure the labour and materials needed in a more co-ordinated way across ASW partners.

Continued working together as partners to understand the impact of compliance works required and start to position our strategic asset management to help deliver this and secure efficiency and manage risk

Continued development of the Energiesprong and wrap around technology to help look at how we can improve the energy efficiency of existing stock and the materials or solutions that are viable

Health, safety, energy and compliance standards we need to be aiming for within our stock

Procurement of some the additional works that will need to be planned for into the future

➤ **Recruitment and skills:**

Develop an approach to help the south west housing sector improve recruitment results more effectively and promote the sector

- Increase visibility of the housing sector to attract and retain skills
- Improve engagement with education establishments and sector trade bodies to help us recruit more effectively
- Develop options for using the apprenticeship levy more effectively across the sector
- Improve VFM in recruitment
- Deliver savings and efficiency on joint training and development.

## **5. Benefits for East Devon District Council:**

5.1 Whilst delivering savings through a range of frameworks is at the heart of our relationship with Advantage SW, we must not underestimate the benefits that our membership has brought in terms of access to the formal network of Members that provides valuable advice and guidance, as well as the specific procurement expertise that Advantage SW itself has.

## **6. ASW Projects over the past year:**

6.1 Over the past year ASW have re-tendered the following frameworks which are now available to and already being used by EDDC:

- Air source heat pump supply
- Asbestos surveys and works
- Fire risk assessments
- Fire prevention & protection
- Legionella risk assessments
- Legionella services
- Electrical testing & inspection
- Drainage clearance
- Tree surveys
- Cavity wall insulation extraction

In addition ASW have also created Frameworks for:

- Fire Door inspection
- Internal fire door supply and installation

6.2 With the impending introduction of the Building Safety Act EDDC will be exploring the options of utilising these new Frameworks

6.3 As well as the procurement Frameworks ASW have also explored a new Dynamic Purchasing Systems for:

- Flat and pitched roofing repair and replacement

## 7. Summary:

7.1 Membership of Advantage South West continues to be beneficial for East Devon District Council. Through the efforts of all involved, Advantage South West delivers

- sharing of information and good practice
- access to procurement knowledge and technology
- value for money
- good products
- an increasing range of multi-supplier frameworks
- opportunities for resident involvement
- access to the wider strategic priorities of Advantage South West

7.2 As can be seen there are many services provided by Advantage South West and these could be used by Housing as whole rather than predominantly by Property & Asset which is currently the case.

7.3 EDDC already get great value for their annual subscription but with more collaboration across the Housing team there more services available that could be tapped into and ultimately achieve even more benefit/value for our annual subscription.

## 8. Recommendation:

8.1 It is recommended that membership of the group continues for 2021/2022 at a cost of £12,283.70 ex VAT.

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### **Financial implications:**

The financial benefits of ASW membership are contained within the body of the report and is considered good value for money.

### **Legal implications:**

It is understood that this payment is to be made from a pre-approved Housing budget. It is believed that there are no comments of a legal nature arising from the contents of this report.”

Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting: 29 April 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release: N/A



## Full Housing Stock Condition Survey

### Report summary:

This report will outline reasons, benefits and risks associated with undertaking the proposed full Stock Condition Survey (SCS) on the EDDC housing portfolio.

The completion of a full SCS is a strategic imperative for the council. The data we will receive as a result of this complex and in-depth piece of work will enable us to:

- Produce an evidenced based 30 year Active Asset Management Strategy & delivery Programme;
- Produce a comprehensive 50 year Estate Regeneration Strategy & delivery Programme;
- Produce accurate Planned and Cyclical Works Programmes;
- Produce an accurate Housing Revenue Account Business Plan update and models;
- Achieve a significant reduction in our responsive repairs load;
- Secure improvements to the quality and futureproofing of our housing stock;
- Make efficiencies by maximising our ability to flex economies of scale;
- Fully understand the wider financial and delivery implications of our drive toward a carbon neutral housing stock;
- Better fulfil the obligations incumbent upon us as social landlords;
- Ensure compliance with all statutory and legislative implications, including those of the new Building Safety Act and the resultant inspection regime;
- Have full and meaningful 'conversations' with our tenants and communities enabling us to move forward together with EDDC's Sustainable Communities aspirations.

### Recommendation:

That the Housing Review Board (HRB) recommends to Cabinet and Council that sufficient budget (as detailed in the Part B Report) be set aside to complete the full stock condition survey and a dedicated Project Management Team as described in this report.

Delegated authority be given to the Housing Service Lead in consultation with the Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing, Housing Review Board Chair and Portfolio Holder for Homes & Communities to finalise the contract documents and commence the work in accordance with the Council's constitution

### Reason for recommendation:

The completion of a full and robust SCS is absolutely imperative for the strategic and economic health of both the Housing Service and the wider Council.

Without a SCS EDDC is at considerable risk of struggling to fulfil the full remit of its duty as social landlord and also to achieve its ambitions to provide a carbon neutral housing stock across the district by 2040.

Without the data from a SCS we will fail to comply with the requirements of the new Building Safety Act.

We currently do not have the information to enable us to effectively forecast and budget for the financial implications of managing our repair and maintenance obligations.

The output from the SCS will be detailed information on each property in our portfolio including components, age, condition, life expectancy, energy efficiency etc. A full database will be completed.

The EDDC membership of the South West Procurement Portal has enabled us to greatly reduce the time and cost implications of securing an appropriately qualified and experienced provider.

Use of the Portal also offers us the comfort that due diligence and value for money benchmarking is undertaken on our behalf.

Officer: Joanne Garfoot, Housing Service Lead – Acting

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

### **Financial implications:**

A stock condition survey is a vital element to influence the asset management strategy which ultimately drives the financial strategy of the HRA and its associated business plan. The 21/22 financial year's budget contains £150k for a stock condition survey which will be considerably overspent. As a final cost estimate is not yet available it is not possible for additional funding streams to be detailed, however, it is likely to be from existing and new reserves from current year underspends as detailed in the Finance Report.

### **Legal implications:**

It is key that the contract is procured appropriately in line with the Council's constitution and that the contract wording is then approved in accordance with the Council's constitution via Legal Services.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** High Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; EDDC is at greater risk if we do not undertake a full SCS

**Links to background information** [HRB Agenda and minutes June 2017](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## **1. Why we need a Stock Condition Survey**

- 1.1 At EDDC we are very fortunate to have a social housing portfolio of some 4200 homes. As with most Local Authorities much of our housing stock is now somewhat aged and in need of constant attention. We have never before undertaken a 100% stock condition survey, so this will give us total clarity on our property portfolio for the first time in EDDCs history.
- 1.2 Currently we have limited information about both the fabric of the buildings and the condition of the components within them.
- 1.3 This makes it practically impossible for us to effectively and efficiently plan our cyclical and planned maintenance programmes, we simply do not hold the required information within our systems. As a result we rely heavily on a relatively expensive responsive repairs programme to meet our tenants housing repairs needs in a timely manner.
- 1.4 It also prevents us being able to accurately forecast our housing maintenance spend and maximise the benefits of the Integrated Asset Management Contract.
- 1.5 The benefits gained from completing a SCS do not stop with the savings and efficiencies we will make through being able to effectively plan our pipeline works programmes.
- 1.6 The positive outcomes we will be able to achieve, using the data that will flow from the SCS are huge and wide-ranging, it will facilitate a complete sea change in our approach to managing not only our entire housing provision and the land it's built on, but also how we work with and alongside tenants to support the building of truly sustainable communities for the future.

## **2. Why we need it now**

- 2.1 The Council has ambitious and laudable aspirations to move toward a carbon neutral housing stock by 2040. The SCS will give us the information we require in order to be able to retro-fit the most economically advantageous green homes technologies into each home, based on the specific fabric of each building.
- 2.2 Having a clear understanding of which technologies offer the biggest benefits for each of our homes will enable us to bulk order and install, ensuring that we can maximise savings through economies of scale. This will lead to improved homes, quality of life and greatly reduced fuel costs for our tenants.
- 2.3 Sitting alongside this there is the release of Central Governments, Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) in 2022. In order to position ourselves to be able to submit a strong bid for funding, to support our 'Green Homes' works programme, we need to have a complete understanding of our housing portfolio including current EPC data on all individual homes. We have included these data requirements within the specification of the SCS.

2.4 To furnish ourselves with the information needed to submit a strong evidence based bid for the SHDF, we are recommending the SCS be undertaken and completed within one year. The SCS will also capture all HHSRS risks and hazards and all the compliance data required to bring us in line with the new Building Safety Act.

2.5 We have procured and are successfully managing a large and complex Integrated Asset Management Contract with Ian Williams, however, we are not currently able to maximise the benefits and savings we can achieve through such a partnership, as we don't have the data we require to efficiently plan our pipeline programmes.

### **3 Active Asset Management and Estate Regeneration**

3.1 There is an expectation that the SCS data will show that it may not be economically viable for us to bring a statistically significant number of our current homes up to carbon neutral standards. So the data will be used to develop a long term 50 Year Estate Regeneration Strategy that will sit alongside and compliment a 30 Year Asset Management Strategy.

3.2 Running a programme of Estate Regeneration will allow us to maximise our land assets and make good use of our Right to Buy receipts as they can be used to partly fund any re-developments where we are able to increase the density of social housing units on a given piece of land.

3.3 In the longer term using the Right to Buy receipts in this way will also ensure we are gaining housing stock that is already 'green' rather than our current acquisition programme which means we are purchasing properties knowing we will need to retro-fit later to bring them up to the required standard.

3.4 Active Asset Management and Estate Regeneration is a very long term strategy, it is most certainly not a quick fix. It also requires a skill set and knowledge base that we don't currently possess in house in sufficient numbers. However, it would enable us to incrementally update / divest / demolish and rebuild our housing stock making it fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond.

### **4 Building Safety Act**

4.1 Following the tragic Grenfell Fire a White Paper was presented to government detailing a new set of legislation backed housing and landlord safety delivery standards.

4.2 These standards are almost entirely data driven and in order to be compliant we will be required to hold, monitor, review and submit data about our housing stock that we historically didn't collect and so currently do not have within our Open Housing System.

4.3 The only way of capturing this broad and detailed range of information in a timely manner is by engaging a specialist external agency such as Currie & Brown to complete a SCS for us.

4.4 Once the SCS is complete the responsibility for keeping this key information database fully up to date will then come 'in house' and be delivered as a cyclical stock review programme by the Property and Asset surveyor team.

4.5 There will be an 'Ofsted' style inspection regime over seen by the Building Safety Regulator that sits alongside the new Act and again this will require us to evidence our ability to maintain the required standards using data that we have in our systems except we do not currently have what we would require to pass an inspection within our systems. Our current data is out of date in places and incomplete at best.

## **5 Technology Support and Data Capture**

- 5.1 Our Housing Systems team have been heavily involved in the negotiations to date and have undertaken a number of exercises and meetings to scope out the requirements and levels of commitment required from within Systems.
- 5.2 The SCS from a housing systems perspective is at the stage of completing a review of the scoped components that Property & Asset have agreed will be captured from the surveys. Our aim is to assign relevant Schedule of Rates (SORs) to the key components, which will allow automatic updates to components from job logging completions (specifically for replacement type SORs). This will enable components to be automatically updated if jobs are raised against the components in situ. This will reduce duplication of tasks and ensure that all component information is fully up to date within our systems at all times
- 5.3 We also need to fully understand at what level the data is captured and to which modules it will be relevant. The intention is to utilise flat file CSV exports from the kykcloud system as the estimated £5000 (per year) cost for a direct interface for the 2 year contract is not a feasible option. The cost for holding the EDDC data within the KyKcloud system for 2 years is included within the contract price. We then have 2 years to integrate the data into our Housing Systems.
- 5.4 At present the current data held within OPENHousing for stock condition is out dated and has not been fully maintained prior to the implementation of OPENHousing in 2015. There is currently no way to collate EPC/RdSAP data and implement the energy performance recommendations of the stock. We are also unable to abide by and utilise the HHSRs – Housing Health Rating System/decent homes modules which are in accordance with the Housing Acts (1985, 1989 & 2004) brought in by central Government to aid local authorities to identify and protect against potential hazards & risks to health and safety without the Stock survey information being up to date and relevant.
- 5.6 The HHSRs components need to be reviewed against those scoped in the SCS and integrated in such a way as to make extracting and loading the data streamlined and avoid manual data entry, as this will potentially incur human error issues and an increased cost for admin/resources.

## **6 History**

- 6.1 A paper highlighting the benefits of Stock Condition Surveys and requesting that authorisation carry out a fresh Stock Condition Survey on the EDDC Housing Stock was delivered to the HRB at their Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The paper was prepared and delivered by the Property & Asset Manager (Maternity Cover).
- 6.2 The last Stock Condition Survey was carried out in 2011.
- 6.3 Although the recommendation was approved the Stock Condition Survey was never delivered.
- 6.4 The paper (section 3) generally concluded that the Stock Condition Survey should be delivered in house although delivery by an external Consultant was referenced. There was minimal reference to follow on Stock Condition Surveys once the initial survey had been carried out (my view is we would require a dedicated resource with a rolling programme of Stock Condition Surveys).
- 6.5 Following approval to deliver the Stock Condition Survey at the HRB Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 no progress has been made on its delivery.

6.6 In January 2020 we met with representatives of the South West Procurement Alliance, they advised that they have a Framework that delivered Stock Condition Surveys that we could utilise, the Framework was due to expire but as long as we submitted an 'expression of interest' prior to the expiry date then the terms of the framework could be used.

6.7 The Framework that we expressed interest in and that can deliver the Stock Condition Survey was entitled **LHC Framework Agreement Workstream 1 – Energy Consultant and Project Management Annex 1**

6.8 Whilst the previous Property & Asset Manager submitted the 'expression of interest' in this Framework to which Currie & Brown responded to confirm their interest in delivering the Stock Condition Survey but unfortunately this was not followed up on our side.

6.9 Following the departure of the previous Property & Asset Manager a brain storming session was held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020; and following this session contact was made with Currie Brown in order to move the project forward.

## **7 Scoping**

7.1 Contact was made with Currie Brown and several meetings have taken place to discuss:

- The delivery of the Stock Condition Survey
- What would/would not be included
- Methodology for collecting the data.
- How data would be stored and ultimately transferred into our Housing Systems

7.2 As result of the scoping sessions we prepared a detailed brief/Specification for the Stock Condition Survey including an IT brief specific to East Devon District Council and shared this with Currie & Brown for them to finalise their costs in line with the requirements of the Framework.

7.3 Currie & Brown have completed their pricing exercise and it has been checked/reviewed by the South West Procurement Alliance to ensure that it aligns with the requirements of the Framework and offers value for money

7.4 East Devon District Council detail requirements for the Stock Condition Survey: Requirements/Programme is contained in a **Service specification** reproduced in **Annex 2**.

## **8 Information provided by East Devon District Council to facilitate the Stock Condition Survey**

8.1 Whilst a specialist Consultant is being proposed to deliver the Stock Condition Survey East Devon District Council will have a big part to play in providing all stock data that we currently hold; before undertaking the Stock Condition Surveys the following property information will be provided; a stock data list is also included as Property Information **Annex 3** to this document.

## **9 Resource required by East Devon District Council to deliver the Stock Condition Survey**

9.1 The resource required to deliver this project should include as part of a project team:

- A project lead
- A Senior Officer to oversee the day to day management of the project.

- A dedicated Officer to review/audit the Stock Condition data.  
Administration assistants to perform a tenant liaison role/address access issues and to upload data information onto our systems
- Dedicated IT support within Housing Systems

9.2 The above roles will need to be new posts as there is not sufficient capacity within the Property and Asset or Housing Systems team to oversee this pivotal and complex work

## **10 East Devon District Council IT Systems/Platforms**

10.1 We need to have re-assurance that we have the required platform in place to receive, store and manage/use the stock condition data whether that is Open Housing in its present format, an Asset Management portal as an add on to Open Housing or a standalone Asset Management Platform. Explorations are underway in how best to facilitate this going forward. OneHousing (an upgrade to OpenHousing) is one option we are considering as it has a dedicated SCS module within it

10.2 Consideration should also be given to providing dedicated Property & Asset IT support (within the Housing Systems Team); property requirements are very different to other Housing Services and therefore require the specialist support, particularly as much work carried out is driven by Statutory Legislation, all data and data management needs to be 100% correct and compliant.

## **11 The Future**

11.1 As well as carrying out this initial Stock Condition Survey we also need to look to the future to ensure all the data is regularly updated, it is recommended that this is delivered by a rolling 5 year Stock Condition Surveying programme e.g. 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the stock surveyed every 5 years, surveys would be tailored as required.

11.2 A rolling 5 year programme will require dedicated resource in the form of a dedicated Stock Condition Surveyor, the existing resource within the Property & Asset Team would not be able to deliver this element of work.

11.3 In addition to the surveying resource the Housing Systems Team would need to be configured to support and maintain the technology to deliver the continuous Stock Condition Survey programme at the end of the contract period

## **12 Capita/software**

12.1 Capita have outlined in our consultancy meeting which modules are currently purchased and those we will need to purchase to manage the extra data expected from the SCS. Below is the suggested number of relevant consultancy days each module setup will require. This has been estimated as follows:

- Stock condition and decent homes module – 1 days consultancy (module already purchased)
- Total mobile stock condition module – 4-5 days consultancy (module already purchased)
- RdSAP (energy data) module – 2.5 days consultancy (module not currently purchased)\*
- Scenario planner module – 0.5 days (module already purchased)
- Compliance manager – 4 days consultancy (module not currently purchased)\*

12.2 Capita have looked into our requirements for the SCS and have provided feedback in the attached “Silver Health Check - Assets Jan 2021” document. They have stated that it would be more cost effective to consider moving to “Capita one” on a relevant work package as this would also remove the duplicated work needed to configure each module. This decision is primarily based around the time frame for the SCS and when the migration to Capita one is available.

12.3 Consideration for module costs we currently do not have installed also needs to be assigned to the SCS once acquired. Consultancy days will be taken from the bulk days already purchased from Capita at (roughly) £900 per day.

### **13 Strata**

13.1 Strata involvement for the SCS is likely to be minimal. They may be required to purchase and setup additional hardware such as tablets to enable the transition of EDDC updating the stock condition data once imported into our systems. Flat file CSV exports from the Kykcloud system seems to be the most logical way to handle the data. Strata may also be required to develop scripting for automatic pick and processing of the flat file CSVs on OPENHousing batch services once extracted from the Currie and Brown system to reduce human error and admin time.

### **14 Time frames**

14.1 Data within the Currie & Brown - kykcloud system can be stored for the full term of the 2 year contract although it is not advised to wait until the end to bulk load the information. A phased approach will be needed to import the data on a weekly/monthly basis. The phased approach will also need to include the system setup and processes of the total mobile stock condition project to enable EDDC to continue keeping the stock data up to date once the surveys are completed.

### **15 Reports**

15.1 In line with the 2 year contract with Currie & Brown they have stated that one bespoke report can be created and any additional reports are likely to be chargeable estimated at £1000 - £1200 per additional bespoke report. It is estimated that dependant on the data types and breakdown of the data captured that at maximum additional x2 reports may be needed on top of the main bespoke component report.

### **16 Resources**

16.1 Operational admin will be required to extract and supply the relevant data to Housing systems until we know how much data and to what frequency it is coming back, the amount of admin involvement is still unknown. The pilot surveys should give us an idea of what these figures are and the amount of time it will take.

### **17 Risks**

17.1 The biggest risk to success is in regard to effectively capturing, transferring and managing the huge volume of data that flows from a major SCS and then keeping that data updated, so that it can continue to inform decision making

- Capita lead in time and structuring of relevant system setup to enable a more cost effective and streamlined approach
- Lack of overall project management (Liam leaving) and structure on phased approach to data transfer once the surveys are completed by Currie & Brown

- A lack of operational resourcing both in Property and Asset and Housing Systems teams to keep the data up to date
- Yearly recurring fee for use of the Kykcloud system from Currie & Brown - £3300 per year – after the 2 year contract ends (if we take longer to bring our systems on line to accept the data)
- Training - EDDC operatives will need relevant technical expertise to record and capture the stock component updates to ensure the information is always relevant
- Scoped SCS reports need to facilitate the actions and outcomes; information to produce Rdsap calculations & recommendations; capture all HHSRs hazards and risk components; position us to bid for the SHDF

## Stock Condition Survey - Annex 1

There are many sections within this Framework, the one specifically relating to the Stock Condition Surveys is **E2.5.2.1 Stock Condition Surveys and Reports (SWPA Framework)** summarised as follows:

Stock Condition Reports are mainly used to provide data or information which is used to make decisions about the stock for planning, management, maintenance and financing purposes.

It is essential to determine the questions which the LHC members want to address and to define the purpose of the survey clearly at the briefing stage.

The stock condition survey can then be designed to ensure relevant data is collected, processed and presented and the survey information and analysis answers the questions posed when the survey was commissioned.

The provision of stock condition surveys and reports for Public Sector Buildings

As a minimum this service should include:

- Property condition survey – to assess the age and condition of the major elements of the buildings, fitness for purpose, need for maintenance and existence of components and capacity to meet performance requirements, allowing an estimate of renewal year for each item (based on lifetime costing) and to ensure compliance with current legislation and or finance and funding requirements
- Energy audit – to assess the energy efficiency of homes and check any potential improvements that will impact on the running cost of homes assisting with statutory compliance requirements (including Decent Homes Standard).
- Health and Safety Risk Assessment – to highlight any potential risks to tenants and any visitors to the building including carrying out surveys in line with HHSRS.
- Production of a Stock Condition Report advising the LHC customer on the condition of the buildings and options for future programmes of work

Under this Framework the Stock Condition Survey will be delivered by competent, experienced Building Surveyors with relevant building qualifications, who can provide evidence of the following or equal and equivalent:

- Practical experience of carrying out stock condition surveys and producing stock condition reports for a range of building types, (e.g. domestic dwellings and schools)
- Qualified DEA (Domestic Energy Assessors) with a minimum HNC Building Studies
- Relevant experience coupled with an understanding:
- City and Guilds 6176 in Energy Level 3 of the National Vocational Qualification 6049-03.
- A qualification based on units one to five of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Home and Community Energy Advisers which qualification is awarded by a body which has been approved and quality assured by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator
- HHSRS Full Risk Assessment standard (or industry equivalent)

## Stock Condition Survey Annex 2

### The Requirement –

- To have a stock condition survey, as set out in the Overview above, carried out to 100% of the dwellings of the Housing stock and to include related assets such as garages, outbuildings, Community Centres, District Offices etc.
- Our current total stock is in the region of 4,200 dwellings plus garages, 14 Community Centres, Sewage Treatment Plants and a borehole.
- We will provide Decent Homes data as set out above and can confirm that the blocks are all properties under one roof regardless of the number of staircases.

### The Programme –

- Our target period for completion is 12 months, our target Completion date is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 or sooner depending on the actual start date.
- In addition to the 12 month Contract Period we also require that an initial pilot Stock Condition Survey is carried to ratify the methodology for the on-site work, the data collection, the transfer of data and the analysis of the same.

### Survey Form

- The Stock Condition data is to be collected using an electronic pro-forma questionnaire form; the content of the form is to be agreed between the parties
- Allowance is to be made by the surveying consultant to build the form and host (via a third party supplier as required) the form/data collection.
- The survey form will need to be suitably structured to collect all the information required by us to enable it to be easily linked into our attribute database, namely Capita Open Housing.
- The final survey question set must be agreed between the parties and signed off.

### Property Condition Survey:

- The requirement of the Property Condition Survey is to assess the age and condition of the major elements of buildings, fitness for purpose, need for maintenance and existence of components and capacity to meet performance requirements, allowing an estimate of the renewal year for each item (based on lifetime costing) and to ensure compliance with current legislation and or finance and funding requirements.

### Energy Audit/Energy Performance Certificates:

- The requirement for the energy audit is to assess the energy efficiency of homes and check any potential improvements that will impact on the running cost of homes, assisting with statutory compliance requirements, (including the Decent Homes Standard, Scottish Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing and Welsh Housing Quality Standard).
- In addition to the Energy Audit there is a requirement to provide Energy Performance Certificates for each and every individual property/dwelling.
- NOTE: energy audits/energy performance certificates are not required for garage blocks.

### Health and Safety Risk Assessment (HHSRS):

- The requirement of the Health & Safety Risk Assessment is to highlight any potential risks to tenants and any visitors to the building, including carrying out health and safety surveys in line with HHSRS.
- HHSRS information should be collected and reported on indicative ratings in accordance with the latest guidelines. This should utilise the 1 to 5 scoring system. High risk (score of 5) items must be forwarded when identified complete with photographic evidence.

### **Photographic Records:**

- As part of the survey include for the provision of elevation (front, side and rear) for individual properties surveys and all elevations for blocks containing flats.
- Additional photographs to support any specific maintenance or structural issues will be acceptable. Please also include photographs of the Kitchen, Bathroom, Separate Toilet, Consumer Unit, Boiler, Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) and solid fuel appliance. NOTE: include photographs of the aforementioned located in Communal Areas of blocks of flats, Community Centres and District Offices.
- The photographs should be in '.jpg' format.

### **Communication:**

The project will span a period of time (minimum 12 months) and it will be important to set out clear procedures for on-going communication and liaison between all parties. It will therefore be essential that direct points of contacts are established on both sides to ensure the successful delivery of the project.

It is also a requirement that a formal Communication/Meeting structure plan should be implemented, as a minimum it should comprise of the following:

- Scoping Meetings: to agree/finalise the structure of the Contract, the survey form, the methodology for the surveys, the data collection and the IT integration; frequency TBA and as required
- Pre-start/Contract Meeting: to agree and sign off the Contractual elements and the Programme including the Pilot scheme.
- Pilot Scheme Review: to carry out a detailed review of the pilot scheme and to sign off the survey form, the methodology for the surveys, the data collection and the IT integration in order to move forward with the project as a whole
- Progress Meetings: to review and monitor the progress of the Contract and address any major/Contractual issues; frequency monthly.
- Project Review Meeting: to be held at the end of the project to review the project as a whole including the data collection etc.

### **Quality Control:**

The quality of the Stock Condition survey will be essential to ensure it delivers the required result the Consultant requested to provide evidence of the Quality Control System they operate, BS EN ISO 9001 or similar qualification.

As part of Data quality the following processes (or similar) should be implemented:

- Accompanied visits – a proportion of all inspections should be carried out in the company of the fieldwork manager to check quality.

- Revisits – where necessary properties may be targeted for a revisit by another surveyor to confirm specific details although this should be kept to a minimum to reduce tenant disturbance.
- Desktop review of returned survey forms, firstly by the fieldwork manager and later in the office as noted below.
- Allow for a pilot survey (locations to agreed) to be reviewed to ensure consistency of data and correct correlation.

#### **Data Management:**

- **Data Collection and Input:** Data collection should either be carried out using pro-forma data on a suitable electronic device as agreed. Collected data may be downloaded onto the Consultants database for validation before conversion and uploading on to our own database.
- **Data Cleansing and Validation:** All work by surveyors should be subjected to checking to comply with QA accreditation, or equivalent. In addition, the Consultant is required to compare results on similar properties across the surveyors to ensure consistency in approach.

#### **Tenant Liaison and Access Arrangements:**

The success on delivering the Stock Condition Survey will be dependent on the surveying team accessing properties; this survey will span a significant period of time and will only be possible if the goodwill of the occupiers of the properties can be included in the process.

We have therefore set out a process that will hopefully maximise access into properties.

Prior to commencement of the Stock Condition Survey East Devon District Council will write to all Tenants to notify them of:

- The intention to carry out the Stock Condition Survey.
- The appointment of the selected Consultant to carry out the Stock Condition Survey.
- The request that the Tenant allows the Stock Condition Surveyor access to all areas of the property.
- The nature of the survey that will be carried out.
- The fact the selected Consultant will agree a mutually convenient date and time to carry out the survey.

#### **Appointments:**

- The Consultant will be required to draft a letter to the tenants, for agreement by East Devon District Council, informing the occupiers of the survey, requesting that access be provided for the surveyor; the surveyor will carry joint branded photo identification. All letters should be personalised by incorporating tenants' names where these can be provided.
- Letters to tenants requesting access are most effective when sent on the Consultants own letterheads (joint branding will be considered for letterheads). There is the risk that access letters using other letterheads can be mistaken for junk mail and treated accordingly.
- The letter should include a FREEPHONE number for tenants to contact and leave their details should they require a specific appointment. These details should then be passed to the relevant surveyors to contact the tenant and arrange a mutually convenient appointment.

#### **Special Groups:**

- There are two main groups of occupiers where access can sometimes be a little problematic, those with physical or learning disabilities (including sheltered schemes) and those where the main language is not English.
- In the case of the sheltered schemes, supported and homeless housing you will be provided with a list of Managers, Mobile Support Officers/Cluster Groups who should be written to as well, informing them of the survey and the FREEPHONE and appointment systems.
- Void properties should not be omitted and you should arrange a methodology with East Devon District Council for inspecting void properties, where these are targeted.

#### Maximising Access Rates:

- Where an initial visit to a property has not resulted in an inspection a letter should be left asking them to contact the Consultant to make an appointment. If they do not receive a response from the second visit or calling card your surveyor should call a third and final time.
- The Consultant must be able to demonstrate/document that a minimum of three attempts to access the property must be made before it passed back to East Devon District Council and classed as 'no access'; at least one attempt must be in the form of a written letter.
- Prior to commencement the Consultant is required to provide details of your no access procedure as the above is what East Devon District Council expects as a minimum. Examples of letters / calling cards will help with the decision making.

#### The Survey:

The following is a typical example of the data sets that need to be collected during the survey, the exact list will be subject to final agreement:

1. Chimney Pots
2. Coping Stone
3. Chimney Head
4. Chimney flashing
5. Ridge Ventilation
6. Ridge Board
7. Roof Finish
8. Valley Guttering
9. Hipped Ridges
10. Mansard
11. Dormer Projection
12. Dormer Flashing
13. Dormer Cheeks
14. Roof Light
15. Roof Felt
16. Trusses
17. Cut Roof
18. Insulation
19. Parapet Gutter
20. Parapet Wall
21. Eaves Gutter
22. RWP's

23. Soil Stack
24. Fascias
25. Bargeboards
26. Soffit Boards
27. Abutment flashing
28. Rendering
29. Brickwork / Pointing
30. Stonework/Pointing
31. Weather Boarding
32. Slate/Tile hanging
33. Concrete panels
34. Bay Window Projection
35. Lintels
36. Air Bricks
37. Structural Movement
38. Damp Proof Course
39. Water tank
40. Hot Water Tank
41. Windows
42. Doors (including Communal Doors in/accessing Communal Areas)
43. Door canopy
44. Porch Projection
45. Level Access
46. Level Access with ramp
47. Stepped Access
48. Fencing Front
49. Garden front
50. Fencing rear
51. Garden Rear
52. Gates
53. Outbuildings
54. Extensions / Additions
55. Onsite Parking Space
56. Off Site parking
57. Onsite Garage
58. Offsite garage
59. Bathroom
60. Consumer Unit (including those in Communal areas/Communal supplies)
61. Boiler
62. Heating
63. Street Scene (See diagrams 1 & 2 below)
64. Blocks (See diagrams 1 & 2 below)
65. Communal Facilities
66. Communal Spaces
67. Communal Block lighting Internal
68. Communal Estate lighting
69. Play Areas
70. Parking Facilities

71. Retaining Wall Identification

72. Water Course – proximity

Cyclical/Product Schedule:

See Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Element	Manufacturer/ Product e.g.
Bathrooms	Twyfords
Boilers	Worcester Bosch (Greenstar 24i/ 28i or 36 CDI - subject to M&E design for each particular house type).
Doors	***** Manufacturing
Kitchens	Moore's/ Rixonway
Windows	***** Manufacturing
Mechanical Ventilation	Vectaire ECO 1003
Fuse Boards	Wylex (NHR12RSLM/ NHRS9SLM split load consumer units)
Switches and Sockets	Voilex
PV Panels	Tier 1 manufacturers
Internal Doors	Solid-core FD 30 smooth 4 panel solid core door – National Hickman or similar approved.
Over-bath Showers	Mira Advance
Floor Finishes: kitchens/ bathrooms	Altro Walkway 20
Site and scheme signage	'The SignShop' ***** Manufacturing Services on 0800 0323401.

Component/Typical Lifecycle Schedule:

See Table 2 below.

Table 2:

Element	Component	Life years
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Foundations	Poured Concrete 200mm thick	175
	Concrete Blocks	150
Frame	Steel	80
	Concrete	80
	Timber	65
	Laminated Timber	60
Upper Floors	Profiled Steel & Concrete	70
	Pre-cast Concrete Slab	75
	Timber Joists	85
	SW Decking on Joists	70
	Chipboard on Joists	50
Roof	Concrete Tiles	60
	Natural Slate	70
	Profiled sheet Steel	30
	Composite Steel Sheet	35
	Light Weight Steel Tiles	40
	Copper Sheet	60
	Lead Sheet Coverings	70
	Zinc Sheet	45
Rainwater Systems	Plastic PVCu	30
	Aluminium	40
	Lead Box & Flashings	60
	Zinc Box & Flashings	40
	High Performance Felt	20
Fascias & Soffittes	Plastic PVCu	30
	Aluminium	40
	Lead Box & Flashings	60
	Zinc Box & Flashings	40
	High Performance Felt	20
Dormers	GRP - Insurance Backed	25
External Walls	Fair-Faced Brickwork	80

	Rendering to Blockwork	45
	Render Self Coloured	50
	Hung Tile Cladding	45
	Timber Weatherboarding	30
	PVCu Weatherboarding	30
	Fibre Cement Weatherboard	40
	Profiled Sheet Cladding	35
	Aluminium Curtain Wall	40
Windows	Softwood	30
To have guarantee 10 years minimum	Hardwood	50
	Aluminium	40
	PVCu	30
	Steel	50
External Doors*	Softwood	35
To have guarantee 10 years minimum	Hardwood	50
	Aluminium	40
	PVCu	35
	Steel	50
Internal Joinery/Items	Generally	35
	Timber Staircase	60
	Concrete Stairs	70
	Steel Stairs	55
	Aluminium Nosings	20
	Plastic Nosings	15
	Flexible Door	15
	Roller Shutter Door	25
Kitchens	Wall & Floor Units	20
	Wall Tiling	35
	Worktops	20
	Plumbing Generally**	40

	Altro Walkway Flooring	15
Bathrooms	Ceramic Sanitary Ware	50
	Fibreglass Bath	15
	Steel Bath	50
	Acrylic Bath	30
	Altro marine 20 Flooring	
	Cold Water Storage tanks	30
	Hot Water Cylinders	20
	Immersion Heaters	15
Heating & Electrics	Gas Boilers	15
	Electric Storage Heaters	20
	Radiators	30
	TRV's	30
	Air Source Heat Units	15
	Ground Source Heat Pumps	20
	Electrical Wiring	30
	Extract Fans	15
	Fire Alarm / Detection	15
	Door Entry Phone System	15
Site Works	Fences & Gates	20
	Conc Post & Wire	25
	Concrete Insitu Paths	35
	Block Paving	35
	Pedestrian Paving	25
	Vehicular	25
* doors protected by a projected overhang can extend the door life by 50% minimum.		
** Plastic fittings 30 years Copper 45 years It also depends on the hardness of the water		

Service Requirement

### Stock Condition Survey Property Information Annexe 3

A clean property database in MS 'Excel' (or other agreed) format containing relevant property information in a consistent columnar format all to enable the classification of dwellings will be provided this will include the following:

- UPRN.
- Postal addresses in clearly defined, consistent, columnar format suitable for analysis and mail merging.
- Age (year built) where known.
- Type (house, bungalow, flat, room, garage, Community Centre, District Office etc.).
- Built form (detached, semi-detached, terraced, block of flats etc.).
- No. of bedrooms;
- Construction (traditional, no-fines, BISFS, Orlit, etc.).
- Any other known information/special characteristics.
- Tenure (social rented, sheltered, key worker, leasehold, etc.).
- Location information to assist with lower level reporting (estate etc.).
- Archetype banding
- To include garages and outbuildings
- Retaining walls to be identified & visually inspected only

Clearly defined property specific information will be supplied relating to the current attributes held against each property, for example:

- Asbestos (permitted access will be provided to the Housing Asbestos Register).
- LGSR Certification/Test dates.
- Electrical Certification/Test dates.
- Solid Fuel Certification/Test dates.
- ASHP Certification/Test dates.
- Rainwater Harvester Certification/Test dates.
- Fire Alarm Certification/Test dates.
- Dry Riser Certification/Test dates.
- Smoke Detector Certification/Test dates.
- Passenger Lift/Stairlift/Platform Lift Certification/Test dates.
- Overhead Track Hoist Certification/Test dates.
- Legionella Test Certification/Test dates.
- Any other relevant cyclical servicing & compliance test certification and dates not listed above.

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