



## Agenda for Housing Review Board Thursday, 14th March, 2024, 10.00 am

### Members of Housing Review Board

S Dawson, S Clarke, R Robinson, S Beer, S Chamberlain (Chair),  
P Faithfull, T McCollum, H Parr (Vice-Chair) and C Burhop

**Venue:** Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

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(or group number 01395 517546)

Tuesday, 5 March 2024

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- 1 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 10)
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of interest  
Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)
- 4 Public speaking  
Information on [public speaking](#) is available online
- 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 are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.
- 7 Housing Review Board forward plan (Pages 11 - 12)
- 8 Function of the Housing Review Board (Pages 13 - 17)
- 9 Finance report (Pages 18 - 21)
- 10 Key performance indicators and compliance, quarter 3 2023/24 (Pages 22 - 29)
- 11 Annual report of the Housing Review Board 2023/24 (Pages 30 - 34)

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****Minutes of the meeting of Housing Review Board held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 25 January 2024****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.30 pm

**37 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 November 2023 were agreed.

In response to a query relating to minute 29, review of housing compliance policies, the Assistant Director – Housing (Tenancy Services) confirmed that she would find out whether tenants had been contacted regarding on-going asbestos care and report back to the Housing Review Board.

**38 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct. Councillor Sarah Chamberlain declared that she was employed by Exeter City Council in the housing department. Sue Dawson declared that she was a council housing tenant. In relation to agenda item 8 Councillor Chris Burhop declared that he was a director and co-owner of Alarmtec Ltd, and a shareholder in Firemark Ltd and Extinguish Ltd but none of these companies were tendering for works under the fire safety policy. Non committee member Councillor Steve Gazzard declared that he was a council housing tenant.

**39 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

**40 Matters of urgency**

There were none.

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

There was one confidential/exempt item.

**42 Housing Review Board forward plan**

The Assistant Director of Housing (Tenancy Services) presented the forward plan and explained the revised format of the plan and the reasoning behind these changes in that it aligned with the Scrutiny Committee's forward plan format. Members were advised that the forward plan acted as a reminder of agenda items to come forward to future meetings. Dates for the future items would be populated once dates for 2024/25 Housing Review Board meetings had been agreed. Members were reminded that they could add further reports and topics for discussion to the next forward plan by either informing herself or the Democratic Services Officer.

**43 Gas and fire safety policies**

The Housing Review Board were asked to consider and agree the amended reviews of the gas safety policy and the fire safety policy for housing, to ensure compliance with current legislation and regulations relating to those statutory areas of compliance.

The gas safety policy set out East Devon District Council's approach to managing gas safety within properties owned and/or managed by East Devon District Council, including community centres, communal areas and district offices. The policy detailed how East Devon District Council met the requirements for gas safety under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, including all amendments. In addition to this, the policy provided assurance that measures were in place to ensure compliance with these regulations and to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with gas installations and gas appliances owned by the Council.

The fire safety policy set out East Devon District Council's approach to managing fire safety within properties owned and/or managed by East Devon District Council, including community centres, communal areas, district offices and houses of multiple occupation (HMOs). The fire safety policy detailed how East Devon District Council met the responsibilities under the Housing Act 2004, The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. The overall aim of the policy was to manage and reduce, as far as reasonably practicable, the risk of fire to occupiers of Council properties, visitors, staff, contractors and the general public.

It was noted that the policy and procedures for accessing properties were in line with best practice and should be followed. With regards to gas inspections every attempt was made before certification expired, with the process commencing in month ten, before the twelve months was up. It was important to ensure the procedures under the policies worked for the Council and allowed it to raise awareness at every opportunity for tenants.

Both the gas policy and the fire policy, along with the procedures, would be consulted with through the Resident Involvement Monitoring Group.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet recommend to Council approval of the amendments to the gas safety policy and the fire safety policy for housing service properties.

#### 44 **Resident Involvement Strategy**

The Tenancy Services Manager's introduced himself to the Housing Review Board and gave a brief description of his background. His report outlined EDDC's consultation and redesign of its Resident Involvement Strategy 2024-2027, which replaced the previous 2019 strategy. The report detailed the background of the Resident Involvement Strategy, the consultation undertaken over the past year and a summary of the key points of the new strategy and the legislation governing it.

A tenant focussed approach was needed to all aspects of work within the housing service. It was vital that tenants were included from the start of policy formation, that tenants were given the training they needed to be fully involved and that tenants were kept up to date with clear, concise and relevant information about service performance.

An in depth, and detailed approach to reviewing and updating the Residents Involvement Strategy (RIS) was adopted. Extensive consultation was undertaken and adherence to best practice and legislative requirements was ensured. Self-assessments of current performance against the Consumer Regulatory Standards, and the current RIS were

completed, and measured performance against the strategies of other social housing providers.

The five main objectives of the new Resident Involvement Strategy were:

- To understand more about the people who live in council homes.
- To improve the value of tenant engagement.
- To increase diversity within involved tenants.
- To improve communication and consultation with tenants.
- To value the involved tenants, volunteers and communities.

The Resident Involvement Strategy would be taken to full public consultation.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that Cabinet note the report and agree that the Resident Involvement Strategy can now go to open public consultation.
2. that Cabinet approve the Resident Involvement Strategy for the next three years in the event that no significant changes are made as a result of the public consultation. (Housing commit to bring the strategy back to the Housing Review Board should significant changes be made as a result of said consultation).

45 **Housing Review Board annual budget report**

The Director - Finance presented the draft revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25 for consideration by the Board.

At the same time as preparing the draft budget, draft service plans had been prepared for members consideration. Service plans and budgets were aligned and linked back to the Council Plan.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was underpinned and influenced by a business plan. This plan needed to be updated with revised financial modelling once the housing condition survey work was complete.

The draft 2024/25 budget approach had been similar to the current year with variations as noted in the report. The budget was balanced in that income raised by rents covered current expenditure. The budget was seen as an interim solution whilst restructured teams bedded in, which could also result in the re-organisation of budgets but within the same financial envelope. All planned expenditure was met from available income.

The Director – Finance highlighted to the Board that the budget did not reflect the stock condition survey results. It could be necessary to undertake a reallocation of budgets or the use of additional reserves to meet priorities in the financial year to reflect the findings of the housing stock condition survey but at this stage it was considered there were sufficient resources available. The Housing Review Board would be updated on any reallocations. Other pressures on the HRA budget were decarbonisation of the housing stock as well as expanding the housing stock.

The increase in any individual tenants rent was normally limited to inflation + 1% for the forthcoming financial year. Inflation was taken as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate at the prevailing rate for September 2023, which was officially registered at 6.7%. The draft budget assumed an increase in Council house rents to this level with a factor included for a reduction in stock numbers and voids giving £21.48m, an increase of £1.47m. An

increase of 3.5% had been assumed on garage rents giving an additional £8k in income, but members might consider this not to be appropriate.

The proposed Housing Revenue Account draft budget presented was a balanced budget, with any surplus to be included within an increased contribution to capital of £1.2m to invest in stock and fund capital projects. The HRA Balance was currently predicted to meet the £3.1m level at the end of 2023/24 once contributions to and from reserves were taken into account. There was an additional £1.6m being held in the HRA debt Volatility Fund, which remained unchanged.

A summary of the capital funding position was also provided for the Board. The HRA proposed expenditure in 2024/25 was £4.906m, funded from the HRA. This represented the same level of investment as currently provided and seen by the service as suitable to meet the requirements at present, until a full stock condition survey was completed and maintenance and improvement plans were fully developed. It was likely that further funding would be needed and a report would be brought back to the Board detailing any significant capital investments required.

Explanations were provided for the staffing and contractor spends and pay awards in the budget and a request was made for an update on the cyclo boiler project.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet approve and recommend to Council the draft Housing Revenue Account revenue and capital estimates, including the proposed rent increases for 2024/25.

#### 46 **Repairs and voids performance**

The Responsive Repairs and Voids Service Manager introduced herself and gave a brief description of her background. She went on to give the Housing Review Board a presentation which outlined the Council's approach to improving performance across its housing repairs contracts and in the management of empty Council homes. The report outlined the progress made to date and the actions being taken to further improve performance in these areas.

Since the last HRB meeting, the number of empty homes continued to reduce month on month and void turnaround times were also decreasing. In December 2023 127 empty homes were recorded, which was down from 168 in July 2023. A number of steps were being taken to ensure void performance and these were noted in the report and explained during the presentation.

The target for routine repairs to be completed within target by the two main contractors, Ian Williams and Liberty Gas, was 90% (100% for emergency repairs). Officers acknowledged there was further work to be done, but progress was now being made with 83% of repairs being completed within time in December 2023, against 75% of repairs in July 2023. A number of steps were being taken to improve performance across the repairs contracts and these were noted in the report and explained during the presentation.

To ensure the service was in a position to meet upcoming challenges and invest wisely in the housing stock portfolio some additional measures were being taken to future proof the service. A review of the service had been undertaken to ensure the right people were in the right places. Resources would continue to be reviewed in line with the demands on the service and the contractors would be supported to do the same. There was an upcoming skills review to inform a training plan for the teams for all staff to

develop and be further equipped to deal with the challenges of the large contracts. Data from the stock condition survey would inform the Asset Management Strategy and the Investment Plan for the next five years, which would improve the overall decency of the Council's homes and therefore impact the Council's position on responsive repairs.

The Responsive Repairs and Voids Service Manager was thanked for her presentation and a number of issues were raised and discussed, including:

- The efficiency and effectiveness of contractors' staffing.
- Challenging resource issues.
- Improvements and commitments made by Ian Williams
- Voids broken down into areas to identify trends and inform ward members.
- Importance of paper customer feedback forms.
- Carpets in good condition would be cleaned and left for incoming tenants.
- Use of tenant inspectors and the desire to introduce this in the future.
- Tenant involvement and the resident repairs forum.
- Breakdown of void costs.
- Reasons why properties were becoming void.

**RESOLVED:** that the Housing Review Board notes the report and the actions taken.

#### 47 **Asset Management Strategy**

The Housing Review Board considered the report of the Interim Compliance and Planned Works Manager which recommended the development of an asset management strategy (AMS) for EDDC's housing stock. The report covered how the AMS would ensure the service met legislation, regulation and be able to forecast budgetary requirements in maintaining Council homes. The AMS would assist in guiding future strategic property decisions to ensure EDDC managed the housing portfolio efficiently. The AMS would include fully costed five, ten, fifteen and thirty year plan of works based on the outcome of the stock condition survey programme. The report also recommended that a project board be formed to deliver the AMS.

At present EDDC did not have sufficient detailed information to enable it to accurately forecast and budget for the financial implications of managing its repair and maintenance obligations. It was important to take a knowledge-based approach. The outcome from the AMS would include detailed information on each property in the housing portfolio, including components, age, condition, life expectancy, energy efficiency, together with fully costed plans of works.

The purpose of an AMS was to set out and demonstrate:

- An understanding of the property assets owned and managed by EDDC, including their attributes and characteristics.
- An understanding of EDDC's liabilities, in particular the investment needs of the stock in the short- medium and longer term as identified through stock condition surveys and EDDC's database.
- Adopt an approach to the strategic management and maintenance of the assets to maintain them in good and tenable repair.
- An understanding of when disposal, purchase, and development would be recommended.

The Housing Review Board noted the profile of its housing portfolio. It was a mixed portfolio spanning several different property types. They were held on a mixture of tenures; general needs tenancy, freehold, licence and leasehold. The portfolio also included 15 community centres, which were part of the AMS.

It was noted that as part of the stock condition programme there were still about 100 properties remaining to be surveyed. About 80% of the portfolio had been inspected, with this reaching 90% by the end of January when the project would be completed. The surveyors, Currie and Brown, would provide a detailed report once the programme was completed. The report would set out the key findings of the programme and include comprehensive five, ten, fifteen and thirty year works programmes, which would form an element of any future AMS.

The Interim Compliance and Planned Works Manager described:

- the development of the specification/scope and approach to the AMS,
- how it linked to other EDDC strategies and plans,
- climate change and EDDC's commitment to be a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030,
- consultation/resident engagement, and
- mobilisation/timescales.

Those present agreed the need for the housing service to be ambitious and well informed by data and policy.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that Cabinet approve the appointment of a consultant, if required, to develop the Asset Management Strategy.
2. that Cabinet recommends to Council the approval of an additional budget in the sum of £50,000 to fund this appointment.
3. that delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Housing (Housing Tenancy Services) to agree a fee with this consultant, not exceeding £50,000.

48 **Housing Service Plan**

The Assistant Housing Directors' report presented the draft service plan for the Housing Service covering the period 2024/25. Each service area across EDDC produced a service plan that outlined key projects for the year ahead with information that related to the detail and timescales of how they would be achieved. The plans gave a summary and overview of the service delivered and the service plan also summarised key performance indicators that would be monitored.

The housing service plan presented to the Board captured a plan for the whole housing service, including the strategic homelessness function and other roles that would not be monitored by the HRB. The housing service plan had also been reviewed by the Council's joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2024 and comments from this meeting and the HRB would be incorporated into the final service plan.

Section one of the service plan gave a brief description of the day-to-day services and provided a staffing structure. A request was made for this useful staffing structure to be published in the Housing Matters magazine. Section two covered project management and additional workstreams for 2024-25. Section three of the service plan related to performance targets.

The Assistant Director of Housing (Tenancy Services) explained that the service 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 the services it delivered. The service plan was intended as a working document and service managers would cascade the contents at their team meetings and reflect priorities in officer objectives. The plan would also be presented to the appropriate



resident involvement panel in order to ensure awareness and understanding of the content of the plan.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet approve the Housing Service Plan 2024/25.

49 **Exclusion of the 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 in the agenda is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing these items in private session (Part B).

50 **Housing Task Force update**

The Interim Housing Strategy, Enabling and Project Manager introduced himself and gave a brief explanation of his background. His report updated members on the progress of the Housing Task Force. It outlined the new team structure and provided an overview of the objectives and direction of the new team, included an update on current sites, delivery options and the proposed development of a five-year investment and delivery plan.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that Cabinet note the revised Housing Strategy, Enabling and Projects team structure.
2. that Cabinet note the progress to date and future direction of the new Housing Strategy, Enabling and Projects team.
3. that Cabinet note the development of a new Housing Strategy and Housing Investment and Delivery Plan.
4. that Cabinet approve the creation of the Senior Surveyor post within the Housing Task Force on a permanent basis as set out in the report.
5. that Cabinet recommends to Council, the approval of additional budget in the sum of £74,000 to fund the Senior Surveyor post within the Housing Task Force.

**Attendance List**

**Board members present:**

Sue Dawson, Tenants  
Sara Clarke, Independent Community Representative  
Rob Robinson, Independent Community Representative  
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain (Chair)  
Councillor Peter Faithfull  
Councillor Tony McCollum  
Councillor Helen Parr (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Christopher Burhop

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

B Bailey  
S Gazzard  
R Jefferies  
D Ledger  
J Loudoun  
S Smith

**Officers in attendance:**

Simon Davey, Director of Finance  
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Assistant Director Housing (Tenancy Services)  
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor  
Tracy Hendren, Director of Housing, Health and Environment  
Andrew King, Interim Tenancy Services Manager  
Yusef Masih, Interim Housing Services Manager  
Andrew Mitchell, Housing Solutions Manager  
Liam Reading, Housing Strategy Enabling and Project Manager  
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer  
Susie Williams, Interim Responsive Repairs and Voids Manager

**Councillor apologies:**

Chair .....

Date: .....

<b>Housing Review Board Forward Plan</b>
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**Work for scoping and/or allocation to the Forward Plan**

<b>Proposed date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Meeting 1 24/25 (date to be confirmed)	Housing Performance Report for Quarter 4 (23/24) Housing Aquisition and Disposal Strategy
Meeting 2 24/25 (date to be confirmed)	Housing Performance Report for Quarter 1 (24/25) Housing Asset Management Strategy
Meeting 3 24/25 (date to be confirmed)	Housing Performance Report for Quarter 2 (24/25)
Meeting 4 24/25 (date to be confirmed)	Housing Performance Report for Quarter 3 (24/25)
<b>Dates to be confirmed</b>	
TBC	Review of the Contract with StreetScene Services for Estate Management
TBC	Review the eligibility criteria and service provision of sheltered housing
TBC	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund 2.2 application determination
TBC	Review of Tenancy Strategy
TBC	Housing Ombudsman; Statutory Complaint Handling Code (8 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 release)
TBC	Five year investment and delivery plan (housing delivery 2024- 2029)
TBC	Development of Housing Asset Management Strategy to include decarbonisation objectives.
TBC	Results of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)/Future proofing service delivery.
TBC	Future provision of responsive repairs delivery
TBC	Review and replacement of Home Safeguard equipment within housing stock
TBC	Annual tenant information and participation event.
TBC	Review of Objectives of Resident Involvement Strategy
TBC	Investment plan for planned maintenance
TBC	Investment plan for Housing Revenue Account play-sites
TBC	Management of leasehold properties
TBC	Review and implementation of digital capabilities for tenants including provision of a tenant portal

Note that following the recommendations from the Centre of Governance and Scrutiny Report- the forward plan for this Committee will be aligned to the forward plans for other Scrutiny Committees and this will then link directly into the Cabinet Forward Plan. All above topics will then be aligned to the most appropriate meeting.

This revised plan will come forward early in 2024/25.

Review/creation of Policy and Strategy documents as required will also appear on the Forward Plan.

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Review of Housing Review Board as a Scrutiny function.

### Report summary:

This report has come forward following a direct request for the function of the Housing Review Board Committee to be reviewed and refreshed. The report aligns with the recent scrutiny review carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as presented to the Joint meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, Overview Committee and the Housing Review Board on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Members of the Housing Review Board will receive further detail in relation to this once the recommended Action Plan, based on findings of the review is presented back, this will be done by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

The report sets out a proposed change to the frequency of Housing Review Board meetings and that this change is made formally within the Councils Constitution.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That the Housing Review Board recommends to Council that the Terms of Reference for the Housing Review Board be amended so that the number of meetings is decreased from 5 to 4 to read as follows:-

Meetings: 4 times per year (or more frequently as required).

### Reason for recommendation:

To ensure the correct frequency of meetings moving forward.

Officer: Amy Gilbert-Jeans. Assistant Director- Housing (Tenancy Services)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning

- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; .

**Links to background information** .

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

Priorities (check which apply)

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

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1. At the meeting of the Housing Review on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023, a request was put forward by the Chair for a review of the function of the Housing Review Board to be undertaken. This was done on the basis of ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of the Committee and to ensure the Committee were meeting their responsibilities in relation to the important role the Committee have in scrutinising functions that come under the remit of the Housing Revenue Account. This review was therefore added to the Forward Plan for an up and coming topic that would be presented back to Members.
  2. In July 2023, following a motion at full Council, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) were commissioned to conduct a scrutiny improvement review and this took place during October and November 2023. The wider objectives of this review were to ensure that all EDDC overview and scrutiny functions ( of which the Housing Review Board is one) are working effectively to ensure and maintain ongoing improvement at East Devon District Council.
  3. This review presented an excellent opportunity for the function of the Housing Review Board to be reviewed independently and it has therefore been deemed appropriate that the recommendations and findings from the review are directly used to undertake the request for a review that was put forward by the Committee in June 2023.
  4. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 at a joint meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, Overview Committee and the Housing Review Board the findings and results of the review were received with a recommendation centred around an Action Plan that will produced that is centred around the eight recommendations that the review highlighted.

The eight recommendations are set out below

### **Organisational commitment and clarity of purpose**

#### **Recommendation 1**

That the current structure of three committees is maintained but that work takes place to ensure that they operate in a complementary manner. This recommendation should include a rework of the terms of reference for the three committees.

#### **Recommendation 2**

That consideration is given to providing a short term investment to the scrutiny function to ensure that the actions and recommendations arising from this report can be implemented and that 'added value' scrutiny can take place. This recommendation might include backfilling some of the secretariat functions to allow democratic services officers to utilise their skills to providing additional support to the scrutiny function with a view to making this change permanent if the additional investment realises impact and a clear business case can be made.

## **Members leading and fostering good relationships**

### **Recommendation 3**

That the three scrutiny committees are assigned a senior officer to provide expertise and advice to guide and support each of the respective Chairs and to retain oversight of the function, work programmes and help ensure that they work within their terms of reference and within the scrutiny protocol.

### **Recommendation 4**

That the Council provides learning and development opportunities for all Elected Members to include (but not limited to) the following areas: •

- Questioning skills
- Scoping and Managing In-depth scrutiny
- Making recommendations
- Access and use of information and work programming
- An indepth look at the scrutiny protocol and terms of reference for the committees, focusing on expectations, behaviours, and garnering ongoing support for participation.
- Prioritising work and using evidence well.

### **Recommendation 5**

That the approach to work programming for scrutiny is redesigned so that the work programme is anchored by long term strategic issues for East Devon. This should include (but not limited to)

- Capacity to conduct in-depth scrutiny outside of the formal meetings
- Regular collaboration with scrutiny Chairs which might involve routine sharing of work programmes for committees or possibly the consideration of the development of a single work programme for the entire function which is agreed annually. (with scope to flex throughout the year)
- Chairs to collectively decide on member suggestions on proposal forms for what goes on the work programme – based on clear criteria that members themselves agree – process should look and feel challenging. Forward Plan could also go to this meeting for discussion (Portfolio Holder reports could go here too) •
- Planned space on the work programme for detailed scrutiny of forthcoming decisions in a way that is planned in advance – for most complex / contentious issues – allowing for managed and proportionate political debate.
- Use insight from the public (ward work, corporate complaints) to inform work programming – in a proportionate way.
- Proactively share Forward Plan with members outside of committee; signpost members to background reports where necessary.
- Organise separate All- member briefings for members on forthcoming / high profile things which are for information rather than taking up space on the formal agenda.
- Continue with production of regular Portfolio Holder reports but integrate this better into work programming.

### **Recommendation 6**

Consideration of cross-party pre-meetings being held (ideally) before the meeting and led in a way that helps committee members prepare for scrutiny sessions by reviewing the key lines of enquiry and coordinating their questioning approaches.

### **Recommendation 7**

Provide development support and training for Officers across the Council to build, refresh and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the role, purpose, and powers of scrutiny. This should also include the approach to report writing and presenting and answering questions at committee meetings.

### **Having an impact**

### **Recommendation 8**

We recommend that a process is designed and implemented that tracks recommendations made and impact arising and that this is communicated back to all Elected Members. An action plan, including a timetable for completing actions, will need to be developed to support the recommendations, including identifying any resources required to deliver the recommendations from CfGS.

5. As outlined at the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> February, Officers are now working to produce the detail that will be fed into the Action Plan and this will be presented back to a further joint meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, Overview Committee and the Housing Review Board by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
6. It is important to note the uniqueness of the Housing Review Board with regards to the Co-opted roles of independent and tenant Members. These roles are deemed critical in the additional level of scrutiny that can be applied in this area and there is a direct link to the Councils Resident Involvement Strategy that highlights the necessity of customer involvement and engagement in all areas of work within the housing service. Ensuring customer involvement at this level is also a key expectation from the Social Housing Regulator and there are a number of references to this in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
7. Alignment of the Forward Plan of the Housing Review Board to the Cabinet Forward Plan (as well as consideration of other Committee work plans) will be considered as part of bringing forward the action plan (recommendation 5) but in order to plan for the forthcoming year 2024/2025 it is proposed that the Housing Review Board will change the frequency of meetings to better align with quarterly performance information. The day to day performance of the functions within the Housing Revenue Account are a key consideration of the Housing Revenue Board in terms of how they set out and derive their work plans moving forward, in order to ensure this can be achieved the Committee therefore need to receive this information in a timely manner at the end of each quarter. It is therefore proposed that the Committee meet 4 times a year instead of the current 5 times a year. Committee Members are reminded that an extraordinary meeting can be proposed at any other time throughout the year as and when required.
8. The detail of the review highlights concerns that have been raised previously in relation to the effectiveness of the Housing Review Board, as an example there has been concern that reports are often being received for information only as opposed to the opportunity for deeper scrutiny into areas that can then result in meaningful recommendations. The action plan will pick up on such observations as well as others and will set out plans to ensure we



are addressing these issues moving forward in order to ensure the most effective scrutiny processes are in place across all of our scrutiny committees.

9. At the same meeting of the joint Committees, a recommendation to adopt a draft scrutiny protocol was carried and this will now be put forward for Council to approve. The protocol highlights the important relationship between the Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet and sets how we will ensure the relationship is clear, effective and consistent with best practice. The Portfolio Holder for Homes and Communities has an important relationship with the Housing Review Board and plays a key role in the link to Cabinet. The Portfolio Holder has been consulted in the drafting of this report and is in agreement that the findings of the CfGS provide an excellent opportunity for us to take a wider look at the functioning of the Committee.

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**Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the report.

**Legal implications:**

Changes to the Constitution require the approval of Full Council.



Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 14/03/2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Housing Revenue Account & Housing Capital Finance 23/24 Month 10 Update

### Report summary:

The report provides the Housing Review Board with a summary of the housing revenue account and housing capital program overall financial position for 2023/24 at the end of month 10 (31 January 2024). 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 variances identified as part of the Housing Revenue Account & Housing Capital Finance up to Month 10 be acknowledged.

### 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: Melissa Muir, [mmuir@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:mmuir@eastdevon.gov.uk) 01404 515616

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 [East Devon Financial information 2023/2024](#)

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 23/24 Reserve Levels as at Month 10 January

#### 1.1 HRA Opening Balances

HRA Reserves	£m
<b>Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>(12.472)</b>
HRA Balance & Volatility Reserve	(4.702)
Other Earmarked Reserves	(7.770)
<b>Capital Reserves</b>	<b>(5.731)</b>
Ring Fenced RTB Capital Receipts	(5.731)

#### 1.2 In Year Surplus and Approved Budget Variations

The following table sets out the impact on the originally agreed budgeted surplus of subsequently approved spend that was not originally included in the set budget.

HRA Position	£m	F/A
<b>Original Budgeted Surplus</b>	<b>(0.268)</b>	
Approved Staff Budget Variations during reporting period	0.241	A
Additional GF funding for Housing Complaints Officer	0.034	A
Remit Zero Pilot	0.475	A
Warm Hub project	0.050	A
Asset Management Strategy consultant appointment	0.050	A
Housing Task Force senior surveyor post	0.074	A
<b>Revised Budgeted Deficit (1)</b>	<b>0.656</b>	

## 2 Impact on income

Income was increased on rents by 7% and all other service charges by 3% in 2023/24. Lost rent due to voids continues to be above the budgeted levels and will likely add an additional £0.433m to the in-year deficit as the catch-up work to reduce void levels continues for the remainder of the year.

Additionally, due to the high levels of major works that are being addressed from the stock condition feedback the expenditure on decants during the year has been higher than expected. The forecasted implications of these two factors being;

HRA Position	£m	F/A
<b>Revised Budgeted Deficit (1)</b>	<b>0.656</b>	
Forecast Lost rent due to Voids	0.433	A
Forecast Emergency Accommodation/Decants	0.285	A
<b>Revised Deficit (2)</b>	<b>1.374</b>	

### 3 Integrated Asset Management Contract Expenditure

The stock condition has also significantly increased the demand on the IAMC contract with void levels and their associated expenditure as well as larger jobs outside of the Price Per Property framework requiring significant contributions from reserves.

#### 3.1 Final forecast deficit to be taken from earmarked reserves

The above factors combined would have the below impact to be funded from other earmarked reserves;

HRA Position	£m	F/A
<b>Revised Deficit (2)</b>	<b>1.374</b>	
IAMC related contributions	3.477	A
<b>Revised Deficit (3) – funded by reserves</b>	<b>4.851</b>	

### 4 Capital Program Position

The below table shows the current YTD actuals v budgets (using an equal annual spread over 12 months)

Rep Cat 1	Rep Cat 2	Rep Cat 3	YTD			Annual Budget	Residual Budget	
			Sum of Actuals	Sum of Budget	Sum of Diff			
4 CAPITAL	2 HRA Capital Programme	Remodelling Of Sheltered Schm	80,592	100,000	-19,408	100,000	-11,437	
		Social Serv Adaptations	54,199	250,000	-195,801	250,000	-194,386	
		Re-Roofing	6,261		6,261		6,261	
		Mjr Improv/Ext Existing Prop	2,316,448	150,000	2,166,448	150,000	2,595,511	
		Refurb Manor Close Seaton	20,738		20,738		20,738	
	<b>2 HRA Capital Programme Total</b>			<b>2,478,238</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>1,978,238</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>2,416,686</b>
	3 HRA Capital - FRA Works		Fra Capital Works	834,247		834,247		834,247
	<b>3 HRA Capital - FRA Works Total</b>			<b>834,247</b>		<b>834,247</b>		<b>834,247</b>
	4 HRA Capital - 2020 Specific		Capital Grants Hsg	432,298		432,298	0	444,520
	<b>4 HRA Capital - 2020 Specific Total</b>			<b>432,298</b>		<b>432,298</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>444,520</b>
	1A Grant Subsidised Affordable Housing		Local Authority Housing Fund	-224,200		-224,200	0	933
<b>1A Grant Subsidised Affordable Housing Total</b>			<b>-224,200</b>		<b>-224,200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>933</b>	
<b>4 CAPITAL Total</b>			<b>3,520,584</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>3,020,584</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>3,696,387</b>	

4.1 The position as at the end January is as above with retrofit catch up works relating to the Green Homes grant funding, Major project works and FRA Capital works driving the capital expenditure of £3.74m with an annual budget of £0.5m

4.2 Fire Risk Assessment Capital Works - The year to date expenditure allocated to capital is currently £0.83m which will be funded from the associated reserve leaving a residual balance of

£0.634m. A review will be undertaken of the associated FRA revenue expenditure to determine if it is appropriate to reclassify as capital and fund from the reserve.

## 5 Right to Buy Sales & Replacement Program

Year to date there have been three property acquisitions vs nine RTB sales with the acquisitions being funded 60% Capital Dev Fund and 40% RTB Receipts.

Rep Cat 3	Sum of Actuals
3 Redwood Close, Exmouth	387,250
19 Marpool Crescent Exmouth	274,455
65 Whitebridges Honiton Ex14 2rz	242,658
	904,364

- Ring Fenced RTB Capital Receipts increase to £6.226m (£5.731+£0.857-£0.362)
- Capital Development Fund reduction to £2.380m (£2.923-£0.543)

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### Financial implications:

The financial implications are considered within the body of the report. The forecast deficit position is funded by reserves/underspends in previous years and this is a position that we need to continue to carefully monitor moving forward. The timing of the completion of the stock condition survey and the creation of an asset management Strategy will now directly feed into this and Officers are now working on presenting a stock options appraisal position report that will consider longer term investment decisions that need to be considered.

### Legal implications:

There are no legal implications on which to comment.

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 14 March 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Key Performance indicators and Compliance Quarter 3, 2023

### Report Summary

The attached key performance indicator dashboard and compliance dashboard present our performance at quarter 3. A presentation will be available on the day and will summarise the quarter 3 performance and actions being taken to improve performance where we are not achieving target.

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

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

#### Recommendation:

The Housing Review Board receives the report and our performance at quarter 3, 2023

#### Reason for recommendation:

To ensure the Housing Review Board have assurance around service delivery, performance and compliance with our health & safety responsibilities. To enable the Board to scrutinise and challenge the performance of the housing service.

Officer: Amy Gilbert Jeans, [agilbert-jeans@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:agilbert-jeans@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

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

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

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

**Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications identified in the report.

**Legal implications:**

There are no legal implications identified

## Housing Service Performance

● Within Target, ● Close to Target, ● Outside Target

COMPLIANCE KPIs, 31 Dec 2023							
Compliance Area	PI Code	Performance Indicator	Risk	Target Number	Number Compliant	Total Overdue	Management Comment
Asbestos	BS03	Number of blocks & communal areas with a valid asbestos inspection (Yearly)		143	143	0	● We have 143 communal areas that require an asbestos inspection annually. All are within target.
Electrical Systems (contracted maintenance)	ET01(a)	Number of properties with a valid electrical inspection certificate (EICR - 5 yearly)		4176	4106	70	● We have 4,176 properties that require a 5 yearly electrical inspection; we have completed 4106, with 70 currently outside the 5 year test period. At the end of December there were 12 properties with access issues for which we are following our no access procedure. There were also a further 5 properties with hoarding issues which Tenancy Services are dealing with attempting access and de-cluttering.
	ET01(b)	Category 1 & Category 2 actions arising from an unsatisfactory EICR (residential dwellings)	C1 (point of test)	31	31	0	● We originally had 31 Category 1 actions and all of these were completed at the point of testing. The outstanding remedials for years 1 & 2 are being carried out by Dodds as part of the 5 yearly electrical testing contract. Outstanding Year 3 C2 remedial works were issued to IWS and were due to be completed by 31 October 2023, now likely to be late January due to access issues affecting progress. Year 4 remedials have been issued to MD, work was due to complete by 31st December 2023, now likely to be late-Jan 2024. Following initial issues with procurement, Year 5 remedials was awarded to MD & these works remain on target to be completed by 30th April 2024. Hope to be fully compliant on all outstanding C2 remedial works by end of April 2024, again this depends on access to properties which is continuing to prove challenging.
			C2 (urgent)			483	●
	ET02(a)	Number of distribution boards in communal areas with a valid electrical inspection certificate (EICR - 5 Yearly)		160	160	0	● All completed by Ian Williams between July & October 2023.
	ET02(b)	Category 1 & Category 2 actions arising from an unsatisfactory EICR (communal areas)	C1 (point of test)	0	0	0	● We had zero Category 1 actions.
C2 (urgent)					0	● We have no outstanding C2 actions	
Fire Risk Assessment	BS02(a)	Number of blocks & communal areas with a valid fire risk assessment (Yearly)		143	143	0	● All Fire risk assessments are in place for all communal areas, community centres & district offices. The latest FRA's were completed between June and September 2023.
	BS02(b)	Actions arising from fire risk assessments	High	1	1	0	● We had 1 high risk action identified on the latest round of FRA's which related to the fire strategy & the alarm system to Lymebourne House. Upon being notified of this and following a site meeting with DSFRS, we obtained a quotation for a new Fire Alarm system to be installed. This work was completed on 30.11.2023.
			Medium	346	351	306	● We commissioned a new round of fire risk assessments with FCS Live across all our blocks. We have implemented a fire door inspection programme across all our blocks, the contract includes remedial works as required: the inspection carried out by a BMTRADA accredited contractor. Our fire door inspection programme is on site: our inspection regime is line with statutory regulations. The Estates & Sheltered Housing teams conduct monthly fire safety estate inspections in all of our blocks and enforce a zero tolerance policy regarding items stored/left in communal areas. We currently have a major fire safety works project on site across a number of blocks to upgrade issues identified in the fire risk assessments - a further programme will be rolled out within the next 12 months, subject to funds. Our flats all have FD30s entrance doors installed. We work closely with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service & who have reviewed our position and have verified & agreed our approach to address the issues identified. We have met with DSFRS to review the programme & priorities with the next phase of the fire improvement works. We will then progress with the procurement of these works to address the outstanding actions. Following discussions with DSFRS, a draft Fire Safety report was prepared and sent to the Property & Asset Manager on 01 November 2023, setting out the current position regarding Fire Safety and making recommendations regarding door replacements, fire alarms, PCFRA's to address many of the actions within the FRA's. A meeting between the P&A managers was held in December to review the report, the report will require some amendments before it is presented to Senior Management. Many of the actions relating to communal fire doors are being addressed as part of the Fire Door Inspection Project. Some actions i.e. minor fire stopping works are being addressed by one off orders to IWS and Jones Building Group. Hope to be compliant by the end of 2024.
			Low (Recommendations)	121	214	104	● The recommendations primarily relate to doors which are being addressed as part of our overarching fire door inspection project. Items defined as recommendations are being addressed by future upgrade programme works in line with timescales discussed with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue.
Fire Protection Systems	FP01	Number of domestic fire doors with a valid inspection		22	22	0	● We have one in-scope building which is generally 4 storeys with a small section deemed as being 5 storey - therefore in scope. There are 22 flat front entrance fire doors which have all been inspected.



(contracted maintenance)	FP02	Number of communal fire doors with a valid inspection.	12	12	0	●	We have one in-scope building which is generally 4 storeys with a small section deemed as being 5 storey - therefore in scope. There are 12 communal fire doors which have been inspected, remedial & replacement works identified in the inspections have been completed. Doors are now on a quarterly inspection programme. No inspections are overdue.
Gas Safety (contracted maintenance)	BS01	Number of homes that have a valid gas safety check (LGSR)	3134	3134	0	●	100% compliant
Lifting Equipment (contracted maintenance)	BS05	Number of blocks with a valid lift inspection certificate (LOLER)	6	5	1	●	We have 6 passenger lifts which require a 6 monthly LOLER inspection. The LOLER inspection at Albion Court (due by 27.12.23) has not been completed due to ongoing repairs issues with the lift. Further repairs are due to be carried out this week, the LOLER inspection will be rearranged once the repairs are complete, so hope to be fully compliant within 1-2 weeks. All other lifts are compliant.
Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2022	SM01	Number of properties with a co detector	3291	3291	0	●	We have 3291 properties which require a CO detector, all properties have adequate detection installed.
	SM02	Number of properties with a smoke detector	4176	4176	0	●	We have 4176 properties which require smoke detection, all properties conform to a minimum LD3 Standard.
Water Management (contracted maintenance)	BS04	Number of blocks & communal areas that have a valid legionella risk assessment	21	21	0	●	All blocks have a legionella risk assessment which have been reviewed bi-annually in line with Statutory Legislation. These sites are tested monthly & flushed weekly.

# Housing Service Performance

(as at 31-Dec-2023)

● Within Target, ● Close to Target, ● Outside Target, 📊 Cumulative Measure, ⬇️ Minimum Target, ⬆️ Maximum Target, GF General Fund

TABULAR SUMMARY 2023/24											
PI Code	Performance Indicator	Final 2022/23	Q1 (Apr-Jun)	Q2 (Jul-Sep)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	December 2023	Year To Date	2023/24 Target	Top Quartile	Comments
<b>INCOME MANAGEMENT</b>											
IM01	% of rental income for all dwellings that was collected	100.2	99.4	100.09	100.04	N/A	100.04	100.04	98	100.48	Staying within target
IM01(a)	% of rental income for general needs housing that was collected	100.31	99.11	100.01	100.02	N/A	100.02	100.02	98	100.83	Staying within target
IM01(b)	% of rental income for sheltered housing that was collected	99.97	99.99	100.26	100.07	N/A	100.07	100.07	98	101.56	Staying within target
IM02	Rent arrears of current and former tenants as a % of annual rent debit	2.04	1.99	1.87	1.87	N/A	1.87	1.87	2.53	3.16	Staying within target
IM03	Rent arrears of current tenants as a % of annual rent debit	1.64	1.6	1.41	1.4	N/A	1.4	1.4	1.82	2.18	Staying within target
IM03(a)	Rent arrears of current general needs tenants as a % of annual rent debit	2.02	1.97	1.75	1.75	N/A	1.75	1.75	2.5	3.51	Staying within target
IM03(b)	Rent arrears of current sheltered tenants as a % of annual rent debit	0.86	0.85	0.71	0.7	N/A	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.32	Staying within target
IM04	Rent arrears of former tenants as a % of annual rent debit	0.4	0.39	0.46	0.46	N/A	0.46	0.46	0.65	0.72	Staying within target
IM05	% of rent lost through properties becoming vacant	3.32	6.79	5.32	4.02	N/A	4.02	4.02	2.5	0.9	Decembers performance is an improvement on Q1 and Q2.
IM05(a)	% of rent lost through general needs properties becoming vacant	2.55	4.94	3.91	3.1	N/A	3.1	3.1	2.5	0.71	Decembers performance is an improvement on Q1 and Q2
IM05(b)	% of rent lost through sheltered properties becoming vacant	4.86	10.4	8.09	5.84	N/A	5.84	5.84	3	1.63	Decembers performance is an improvement on Q1 and Q2
IM06	Rent written off for all dwellings as a % of rent debit	0.04	0.1	0.18	0.23	N/A	0.23	0.23	0.1	3.4	19 accounts over a 3 month period of write offs. 6 of these were tried with 3 different debt collection agencies with no luck, the remainder were all deceased tenants with no estate to collect from.
IM07	% of rental income for all garages that was collected	100.49	99.86	99.48	99.84	N/A	99.84	99.84	99	-	Staying within target
IM08	Rent arrears of current and former garage tenants as a % of annual rent debit	1.18	1.32	1.24	1.24	N/A	1.24	1.24	2	-	Staying within target
IM09	% of rent lost through garages becoming vacant	0.34	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	-	-	Nil Garages vacant and available to let.
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT</b>											
AM01	% of routine repairs completed within target	79.06	73.1	72.63	77.93	2/6/24 8:20:43 AM	74.14	74.61	90	95	Liberty Gas actual KPI 68%. 65 jobs within target. Issue with completion dates being incorrect but now resolved. IWS actual KPI is 98% for December. We are holding weekly Wip review meetings and our Data Analyst is monitoring completion dates to ensure we can quickly intervene and address concerns.

AM02	% of emergency repairs completed within target	80.14				84.57	N/A			100		100	Liberty Gas actual KPI for December is 94%, 8 jobs out of target.
AM03	% of repairs outstanding and overdue	40.89				68.73	N/A			5		-	Liberty Gas had 166 outstanding and overdue jobs. Working with Liberty Gas to get a plan in place to improve this. In December 8% of Ian Williams's jobs were recorded as issued and overdue, down from 10% in November. We continue to monitor this closely at operational and strategic level meetings. Ian Williams continue to grow their sub contractor network to ensure they are equipped to manage the increase in demand.
AM04	% of gas servicing carried out within 12 months of previous service	86.29				100	N/A			100		100	Within Target.
AM05	Average SAP rating (energy efficiency) of Social Housing rental dwellings	67.62				68.5	N/A			-		73.02	This is an EPC rating of C
AM06	% of social housing rental stock failing to meet the decent homes standard	No Data				24.93	N/A			-		-	Stock condition surveys still in progress
AM07	Number of dwellings taken out of management	6				16	N/A			N/A		-	This number has increased due to some Sold properties incorrectly showing as Void on OneHousing and as a temporary fix while we wait for our system supplier to fix this we have temporarily assigned these to Out of Management so they do not show in our voids.
AM08	Number of garages taken out of management	367				382	N/A			N/A		-	382 garages set as unavailable to let. This status is due to potential development on garage sites or the garages requiring substantial repair
AM09	% of garages vacant and available to let	0				0	N/A			1		-	Within Target
AM10	% of garages vacant and not available to let	0				0	N/A			-		-	Within Target
AM11	% satisfaction with completed day to day repairs	94.17				0	N/A			85		92.65	Market testing has begun to understand what 3rd party systems may be able to provide for us. Our next steps are confirming our requirements with Strata and clarifying potential procurement routes.
AM12	% satisfaction with planned works	No Data				66	N/A			85		-	3 properties (2 Kitchens/1 Bathroom); 2 satisfied, 1 not satisfied.
AM13	Number of dwellings in Housing stock	4,180				4,174	N/A			N/A		-	3 properties sold since the end of Q2
AM14	% of stock condition surveys completed	No Data				80.46	N/A			-		-	4352 out of 5409 complete
AM15	Ian Williams WIP (Work In Progress)	1,002				1,529	N/A			850		-	IWS December WIP stood at 1127. Staging issues remain in our system which we are working with IWS to resolve.
AM16	Number of new build homes	0				0	N/A			30		-	No EDDC new builds in 2023/24
AM17	Number of affordable homes delivered	181				20	N/A			N/A		-	3 shared ownership dwellings completed in Axminster in December

AM18	Number of acquisitions	3	1	0	1	N/A	0	2	N/A	-	zero for December	
AM19	Number of completed RTB sales	32	3	2	3	N/A	1	8	N/A	-	Sales down from 2022 which was to be expected with the rise in interest rates / cost of living increases	
AM20	Number of open Damp & Mould jobs		51	329	222	N/A	318	318	-	↗	-	The Damp and mould jobs rose a significant amount in December, peaking at 328, other RPs in the sector are also seeing an increase in damp and mould jobs. We are reviewing our damp and mould process to include a robust triage process and proactive measures for customers.
<b>TENANCY MANAGEMENT</b>												
TM01	% of self contained dwellings vacant and available to let	0.46	0.65	0.63	0.29	N/A	0.29	0.29	0.5	↗	0.33	Within Target. This equates to 13 properties
TM02	% of self contained dwellings vacant and not available to let	3.45	3.66	3.06	2.83	N/A	2.83	2.83	1.5	↗	0.32	Decembers performance is an improvement on Q2 performance. This equates to 114 properties
TM03	Average days to relet a social housing rental dwelling (Standard)	202.06	212.21	245.3	187.86	N/A	201.06	220.89	78	↗	29.6	We are pushing to let long term voids which is increasing the overall average void time.
TM04	Number of ASB cases reported	47	12	10	17	N/A	8	39	N/A	-	-	There is no target set for this KPI, this is a monitoring figure so we can understand the level of ASB work being overseen by the team.
TM05	Number of evictions	4	0	4	3	N/A	1	7	0	↗	-	1 in December - Tenant left without giving notice so we had to get possession through the Courts.
TM06	% of tenancy visits completed	0.08	0.18	10.05	16.51	N/A	16.51	16.51	-	↗	-	The majority of these visits have been completed in our Sheltered Housing portfolio. We had 2 roles put in place to support with this, however both are currently vacant. A review of this process and KPI is currently underway.
TM07	Number of current Decants	No Data	13	9	8	N/A	No Data	8	N/A	-	-	There is no target set for this KPI, this is a monitoring figure for decants. Decants continue to run at a high level due to the number of housing disrepair cases / serious repairs issues. The new decant policy and procedure is due to be rolled out in Q4 to ensure we are using decant resources efficiently and for the minimum time period needed.
TM08	% of 6 monthly Estate Inspections completed	0	4.52	47.64	25.26	N/A	25.26	25.26	100	↘	-	This is a 6 monthly figure, therefore we would not expect to see 100% until the end of March, which is when most estate inspections are due.
TM09	Number of current void dwellings	162	179	153	129	N/A	129	129	-	↗	-	127 at the end of December continuing the downward trend for the financial year.
<b>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS &amp; OPTIONS</b>												
HA01	Number of properties ready to let	19	27	26	12	N/A	12	12	N/A	-	-	Of the 13 Properties, 12 had TSDs and 1 under offer.
HA02	Number of properties allocated (including mutual exchanges)	247	60	117	100	N/A	27	277	N/A	-	-	27 properties allocated which includes 3 mutual exchanges.
HA03	Number of residential tenancies terminated	321	77	94	91	N/A	22	262	N/A	-	-	22 tenancies terminated which includes temp accom

HA04	Number of households on the waiting list	5,374				N/A			N/A	-	This is an 8.5% increase since the 1st April 2023.	
<b>BUSINESS MANAGEMENT</b>												
BM01	Average number of working days per person lost through sickness	23.54				N/A			8.5		7.9	
BM02	% of employee PERS completed	89.22				N/A			100		-	137 completed 19 still to be done
BM03	% satisfaction with the way your complaint was dealt with	16.3				N/A			85		-	Taken from 2023 TSM Survey. 2024 TSM Survey results due Feb 2024
BM04	% of complaints responded to and closed within 20 days	39.69				N/A			100		95.6	11 stage 1 complaints in November and 1 responded within 20 days 8x repairs; 1x Housing Allocations; 1xMSO; 1x EM
BM05	% of calls answered within 1 minute	46.58				N/A			80		74.5	December performance declined on previous quarters - Workshop to look analyse, identify issues and develop improvement plan - HSG manager to lead
BM06	Number of accidents reported	3				N/A			0		-	No accidents reported



Report to: Housing Review Board

Date of Meeting 14 March 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Annual report of the Housing Review Board

### Report summary:

To review the work of the Housing Review Board during the 2023-24 civic year.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That Cabinet and Council note the work that the Housing Review Board has undertaken during the 2023-24 civic year.

### Reason for recommendation:

To inform the Board, Cabinet and Council of the work of the Housing Review Board.

Officer: Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer, [athompson@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:athompson@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

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

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; .

**Links to background information** .

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

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

## Report in full

### **The Housing Review 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 Resident Involvement Strategy;
- Consulting with the Resident Involvement Monitoring Group, 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.

The Board has continued in its role of introducing service improvements and monitoring throughout the year, liaising with the Resident Involvement Monitoring Group as appropriate.

The Chair of the Housing Review Board was Councillor Sarah Chamberlain, with Councillor Helen Parr as Vice Chair.

### **Words from the Chair**

I would like to thank all officers, staff, members and tenants as always for their continued support and hard work within the housing department.

We have had some challenges in different areas in the last year but I truly believe that we are in a much better place now and looking to the future thanks again to the hard work of so many involved.

We have made some great improvements and will continue to do so with the works planned as part of the stock condition survey.

Once again thank you all for your support and hard work.

Some examples from the HRB work programme are summarised below:

#### **1. Draft Housing Service Plan 2024/25**

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 service plan was presented to the appropriate tenant groups in order to ensure awareness and understanding of the content of the plan, and the Board's input was welcomed.

## **2. Draft Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budgets 2024/25**

The draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2024/25 was a key document for the Board to influence. The annual HRA was underpinned and influenced by the 30 year HRA business plan. It was a balanced budget with the £3.1million minimum adopted level predicted to be met and an additional £1.6 million being held in the HRA debt Volatility Fund. The HRA business plan needed to be updated with revised financial modelling once the stock condition survey work was complete, which could mean reallocation of budgets or the use of additional reserves. The budget was in effect a 'stand still' budget based on existing stock data, whilst the updated stock condition survey data was awaited. The budget was seen as an interim solution whilst restructured teams bedded in, which could result in re-organisation of budgets but within the same financial envelope. Other pressures on the HRA were decarbonisation of the housing stock as well as expanding the housing stock. The draft budget presented to the Board in January 2024 assumed an increase in rents of 7.7%.

## **3. HRA financial monitoring reports**

A summary of the overall financial position on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), HRA Capital Programme and the Business Plan for 2023/24 has been regularly provided at meetings. Producing a HRA was a statutory requirement for Council's who managed and owned their housing stock and was a key document for the Board to influence.

The Board were kept up to date with revenue and capital budgets, which included acquisitions and right to buy sales. At the November meeting the Board noted the HRA reserves, original budgeted surplus and revised budget deficit figures. They were concerned that lost rents due to voids continued to be above the budgeted levels and emphasised the need for improved performance in relation to voids.

Careful monitoring throughout the year indicated that the HRA was in a healthy position.

## **4. Integrated asset management contract**

In June the Board received an overview of the first four years of the integrated asset management contract (IAM). There had been a year-on-year increase in demands on the contract and challenges facing the contract (both internal and external). Management of the contract had been a challenge and the structure of the property and asset team was reviewed. The delivery model needed to be reviewed and adapted to meet service demand and ensure that the contract was delivered in the most efficient and compliant manner possible.

## **5. Performance dashboard and repairs and voids performance**

The Board received key performance indicators and compliance dashboard, and actions were outlined to them that were being taken to improve performance where targets were not being achieved. As a result of the Board's concerns regular reports and presentations outlined the Council's approach to improving performance across its housing repairs contracts and in the management of empty Council homes. This included progress made and actions being taken to further improve performance. By the end of 2023-24 the number of empty homes continued to reduce month on month and void turnaround times were also decreasing.



In January the Board were told that in order to ensure the service was in a position to meet upcoming challenges and invest wisely in the housing stock portfolio some additional measures were being taken to future proof the service. A review of the service had been undertaken to ensure the right people were in the right places. Resources would continue to be reviewed in line with the demands on the service and the contractors would be supported to do the same. There was an upcoming skills review to inform a training plan for the teams for all staff to develop and be further equipped to deal with the challenges of the large contracts. Data from the stock condition survey would inform the Asset Management Strategy and the Investment Plan for the next five years, which would improve the overall decency of the Council's homes and therefore impact the Council's position on responsive repairs.

## **6. Gas and fire safety compliance and policies**

In June 2023 the Board were alerted to non-compliance regarding electrical safety and were presented with a summary on findings and actions in place to address non-compliance. In November 2023 the Board received a report updating them on the increased monitoring of compliance that was taking place and the progress that had been made. There had also been a review of the electrical safety policy, legionella plan and policy and the asbestos management plan and policy for housing, and the Board were asked to agree these amended reviews. The Board then received amended reviews of gas safety policy and fire safety policy for housing in January 2024, to ensure compliance with current legislation and regulations relating to those statutory areas of compliance. The policies and procedures were consulted with through the Resident Involvement Monitoring Group.

## **7. Tenant satisfaction survey**

A tenant satisfaction survey had been undertaken in March 2023, which demonstrated a significant decline across several aspects of the housing service. A communication plan and improvement plan were put together to address how tenant satisfaction could be improved and the Board recommended that a series of focus groups be held with tenants to further inform future improvements.

## **8. Changes to the housing leadership team**

The Board received updates throughout the year on changes to the housing leadership team. Following staffing challenges within the housing service capacity and resilience in the housing leadership team had increased, with more resource for the housing service following the restructuring of the housing leadership team. The new post of Head of Housing Operations had been created, as well as that of an additional Assistant Director. It was hoped that this gave the Board reassurance and confidence that the challenges of the service had been recognised and that a robust management team was in place to address the issues and ensure the housing service was able to function and meet the required level of service delivery for tenants and wider residents.

## **9. Social Housing White Paper and action plan**

The Board were kept up to date on preparations that were being made to ensure compliance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill, which provided the legal basis for many of the measures set out in the 2020 Social Housing White Paper. The Board also endorsed an action plan. The intention was to deliver transformational change for social housing residents and fulfil the Government's manifesto pledge to empower residents, provide greater redress, better regulation and improve the quality of social housing. The themes of the Charter for Social Housing Residents (Social Housing White Paper) were seen through many HRB agenda items.

## **10. Resident Involvement Strategy**

There had been a redesign of the Resident Involvement Strategy 2024-27 which replaced the previous 2019 strategy. A tenant focussed approach was needed in all aspects of work within the housing service. The Board considered the extensive consultation undertaken, the key points of the new strategy and the legislation governing it and recommended it for public consultation.

## **11. Asset Management Strategy**

The Housing Review Board considered the development of an asset management strategy for EDDC's housing stock. This strategy would ensure the housing service met legislation, regulation and enable forecasting budgeting requirements in maintaining Council homes. The strategy would assist in guiding future strategic property decisions to ensure EDDC managed the housing portfolio efficiently. In January 2024 the detailed results of the stock condition survey were awaited, but the key findings of the programme would enable fully costed five-, ten-, fifteen- and thirty-year plan of works to be included in the asset management strategy. The HRB recommended that a project board be formed to deliver the asset management strategy and also recommended the approval of the appointment of a consultant, if required, to deliver the strategy.

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

- Housing Task Force – the Board received progress updates during the year and approved the creation of a senior surveyor post within the Housing Task Force.
- HouseMark performance report and annual membership renewal – the HRB received a comprehensive report which gave useful insight into cost and performance. They agreed for the subscription to be renewed in 2023/24 and annually there on in.
- Advantage South West subscription – the noted the advantages of Advantage South West and agreed to continue to pay the membership subscription, with this being delegated to the Assistant Director Housing in future years.
- Self-assessment on Consumer Standards – the Council assessed itself against current consumer standards, as encouraged by the Social Housing Regulator, as a way of highlighting any areas of non-compliance. Tenant assessment was also undertaken and the HRB recommended that a joint workshop was undertaken with officers and tenants on receipt of the revised Consumer Standards from the Regulator.
- Chartered Institute of Housing Qualifications – work was being undertaken to understand the current levels of professional qualification in the housing service, in order to achieve the required standards by the Social Housing Regulator, taking into account capacity, budget and timeframes.
- Housing Ombudsman determination – the Board considered the Housing Ombudsman findings of severe maladministration and EDDC's response to the findings. The service would continue to take learning from the case in order to ensure the failures could not be repeated. The HRB endorsed the appointment of an additional complaints officer. It also received reports on housing complaints handling performance.

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### **Financial implications:**

The financial considerations are included within the body of the report.

### **Legal implications:**

There are no legal implications identified.